

Special Educational Needs Policy

2020-2021



Rationale

The Birmingham Policy Statement says that:

"All children can learn and should have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, designed to meet their needs, which enables them to be included successfully in a life-long learning process leading to significant educational progress."

At St Mary's, we recognise that children of all abilities have specific learning needs and are committed to an individualised learning approach. Our teachers aim to meet the needs of all children in their class through their classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation. However, some children fail to make adequate progress, even when teaching approaches are targeted at their identified area(s) of weakness, or experience other barriers to their learning, such as sensory or physical impairment or social or emotional difficulties. This policy is concerned with the ways in which the needs of these children are identified and met.

Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures necessary for identifying and providing for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at St Mary's. It is integral to other school policies including Assessment, Teaching and Learning, Inclusion, Equal Opportunities, and all curriculum guidelines. It follows the regulations outlined in the Children and Families Act, Part 3 – concerned with 'Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities in England' (September 2014). The Code of Practice associated with the Act applies to children and young people from 0 to 25 years.

Definition of Special Needs

According to the Code of Practice, children have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a *significantly greater difficulty* in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or

- Have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities for children of the same age.

Some pupils find work difficult because their first language is not English. Whilst such children may require some additional support while learning to communicate effectively in a new language, they do not have Special Educational Needs unless they also have a learning difficulty as described above.

Aims

Our overall aim is to help each child to realise their full potential and to optimise their self-esteem. We value all children in school equally and our guiding principle is one of inclusion.

We aim to:

- Identify areas of special need as early as possible;
- Include children with Special Educational Needs in all aspects of school life;
- Seek children's views and take them into account;
- Provide all children with access to a broad and balanced curriculum through whole class, small group teaching and individual support;
- Prepare suitable programmes of work structured to each child's needs with the relevant resources;
- Provide a range of teaching strategies and effective differentiation;
- Provide specific input matched to individual needs, in addition to differentiated classroom provision, for children with Special Educational Needs;
- Provide appropriate support and training to enable all staff to play a part in the identification of Special Educational Needs and address pupils' individual needs;
- Encourage parents to understand and support their child's learning at home and at school;
- Liaise and consult with outside agencies where appropriate.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the SENCO are:

- Overseeing the day to day operation of the school's Special Educational Needs policy;
- Coordinating provision for children with special educational needs;
- Preparing and reviewing SEND Support Plans with the class teacher, parents, child and specialist, external support;
- Overseeing SEND Support Plans, making referrals to outside agencies and requesting statutory assessments;
- Liaising with class teachers, parents and outside agencies;
- Conducting Annual Reviews for children with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP);
- Liaising with SENCOs of other schools/ consortia to keep up to date with SEN developments.

Identification, Assessment and Provision

Provision for children with Special Educational Needs is a matter for the school as a whole. In addition to the governing body, the head teacher, the SENCO and all other members of staff have important day-to-day responsibilities.

All teaching and support staff are teachers of children with Special Educational Needs. Teaching such children is therefore a whole school responsibility.

Entering the school

On entry to the school, each child's current levels of attainment will be assessed to ensure that they build upon the pattern of learning and experience already established during the pre-school years. If the child already has an identified Special Educational Need, this information may be transferred from the Early Years setting and the SENCO and the child's class teacher will use this information to:

- Provide starting points for the development of an appropriate curriculum;
- Identify and focus attention on action to support the child within the class;
- Use the assessment processes to identify any learning difficulties;
- Ensure ongoing observation and assessment provide regular feedback about the child's achievements and experiences to form the basis for planning the next steps of the child's learning;
- Involve parents in implementing a joint learning approach at home.

The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of children whose first language is not English, requires particular care. Where there is uncertainty about an individual child, teachers will look carefully at all aspects of a child's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of the English language or arise from Special Educational Needs.

Monitoring children's progress

Our system for observing and assessing the progress of individual children will provide information about areas where a child is not progressing satisfactorily. Under these circumstances, teachers may need to consult the SENCO to consider what else might be done. This review may lead to the conclusion that the pupil requires help over and above that which is normally available within the particular class or subject. The key test of the need for action is evidence that current rates of progress are judged to be inadequate. Adequate progress can be defined in a number of ways. It might be progress which:

- Closes the attainment gap between the child and their peers;
- Prevents the attainment gap growing wider;
- Is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers;
- Matches or betters the child's previous rate of progress;
- Ensures access to the full curriculum;
- Demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills;
- Demonstrates improvements in the child's behaviour.

The SEN Process

In order to help children who have Special Educational Needs, the school will adopt a graduated response that recognises there is a continuum of Special Educational Needs and brings increasing specialist expertise to bear on the difficulties that a child may be experiencing. The steps taken to meet the needs of individual children will be recorded.

Difficulties are categorised into four areas of need. They are:

1. Cognition and learning
2. Social Emotional and Mental Health
3. Sensory and/or physical
4. Communication and interaction

Cause for Concern

Where a possible Special Educational Need is identified, the class teacher should discuss this with the SENCO. A brief description of the concern should be made, along with strategies that will be used to address the need and any requirement for additional provision.

SEN Support

Where a period of 'targeted' curriculum support has not resulted in a child making adequate progress, or where the nature or level of a child's needs are unlikely to be met by such an approach, provision via a SEND support plan may need to be made. The Class Teacher, in consultation with the SENCO and parents, will prepare a SEND support plan for the child. This will show the differentiation in provision that is additional to the usual class planning, any strategies that will be used and any extra provision of support that is available.

If insufficient progress is made by the child when supported as above, the SENCO, in consultation with the class teacher and parents, will seek advice from appropriate outside agencies. This advice will then be used to develop further SEND support planning.

Most help for such SEND support at school will be provided within the classroom. Extra help may be provided outside the classroom where

appropriate, but within the context of the Foundation Stage or the National Curriculum. The progress of children will be monitored closely by the class teacher, SENCO and SMT.

Request for Statutory Assessment

If a child does not make sufficient progress after the above support has been in place for an agreed and sufficient period of time, then, in consultation with the class teacher, head teacher and parents, the SENCO will make a request to the Local Authority for statutory assessment.

Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)

If a statutory assessment finds that there are serious learning difficulties, the Authority will prepare an EHCP. This will set out educational objectives that will be incorporated into ongoing SEND support.

Additional funding may be included in the EHCP to support the child. EHCPs are reviewed annually, with parents and any third parties involved, and the outcomes reported to the Local Authority's Special Educational Needs Assessment & Review service (SENAR). A representative from the Authority will attend usually the review.

SEND Support Plans

Strategies employed to enable the child to progress will be recorded within SEND support plan, which will include information about:

- short-term targets set for the child
- teaching strategies and resources to be used
- provision to be put in place
- when the plan is to be reviewed
- outcomes (to be recorded when support plan is reviewed).

The SEND support plan will only record that which is additional to, or different from, the standard differentiated curriculum. The plan will focus upon three or four individual targets that match the child's needs and have been discussed and agreed with parents and the child, if appropriate, depending on their age. The SEND support plan will normally be reviewed each term and communicated to the parents. New targets may be required. Wherever possible, the child will also take part in the review process and be involved in setting the targets.

Arrangements for partnership with parents

The SEND Code of Practice for children and young people 0 to 25 years states:

"Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), must have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood."

The school will always inform parents when their child is receiving help for Special Educational Needs.

Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling pupils and young people with SEN to achieve their potential. At St Mary's, we recognise that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents of pupils with Special Educational Needs will be treated as partners, supported to play an active and valued role in their child's education.

Parents of any pupil identified with Special Educational Needs may contact the Parent Partnership Service of the Local Authority (SENDIASS) for impartial and confidential information, support and advice.

Email: SENDIASS@birmingham.gov.uk Phone: 0121 303 5004

Pupil participation

Children with Special Educational Needs often have a unique knowledge of their own needs and circumstances and their own views about what sort of help they would like to help them make the most of their education. They will be encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes including the setting of learning targets and contributing to their support plans.

Links with other agencies

External support services play an important part in helping the school identify, assess and make provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs. The school receives regular visits from our SEND Consultant for Literacy, Pupil and Schools Support teacher (currently supporting children in Mathematics) and the Communication and Autism Team. We also seek advice from the Sensory and Physical Support Team, which helps us to support our pupils with physical difficulties, and Speech and Language Therapy.

Transition to Secondary School

We have developed strong links with SENCOs in local secondary schools. Our liaison with secondary SENCOs aims to discuss the needs of our pupils with SEND in order to ensure the smoothest transition possible into secondary education.

The success of the provision St Mary's Catholic Primary School offers to children with Special Educational Needs will be judged against their development as wholesome young persons - who have participated actively in living out the virtues of the Catholic Faith as part of our school community - and their academic progress and outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed annually
September 2020
For review: September 2021

Related policies:

Teaching and Learning, Inclusion, Equal Opportunities, Pastoral Care

Appendix 1

Code of Practice Definition of Special Educational Needs

Extract from the Code of Practice (2015)-

“Special educational needs (SEN)

xiii. A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

xiv. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

xv. For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.

For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

Definition of Disability

“Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’.

This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer.

Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

xix. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person’s disability

- They must make **reasonable adjustments**, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage
- Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and nondisabled children and young people.”

It should be noted that pupils may fall within one or more of these definitions.

Pupils with a disability will have special educational needs if they have any difficulty accessing education and if they need any special educational provision made for them.

The following legislation and guidance is also relevant to this policy:

Children and Families Act 2014	
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018):	Statutory guidance from the Department for Education which sets out what is expected of organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 (Care Planning Placement and Case Review) and Volume 3 (Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers):	Guidance setting out the responsibilities of local authorities towards looked after children and care leavers
Equality Act 2010: Advice for schools:	Non-statutory advice from the Department for Education, produced to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act
Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012):	Technical guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission
Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014):	statutory guidance from the Department for Education
The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)	