

Special Education Needs Policy



Reviewed December 2020

Introduction

This policy outlines the aims and objectives, strategies and stakeholders involved in ensuring that pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are provided for effectively in each of the eight member schools of The Stour Academy Trust. It is written in line with the requirements of:-

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEN Code of Practice 2014
- SI 2014 1530 Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Part 3 Duties on Schools – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
- Schedule 1 regulation 51– Information to be included in the SEN information report
- Schedule 2 regulation 53 – Information to be published by a local authority in its local offer
- Equality Act 2010
- Schools Admissions Code, DfE 1 Feb 2012
- SI 2012 1124 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- SI 2013 758 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Behaviour/Discipline Policy, Equalities Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Homework Policy, Complaints Policy, Well Being and Involvement Policy, Accessibility Policy

This policy was developed in collaboration with parents/carers, representatives from the governing body and parents of children with special educational needs and will be reviewed annually.

Aims of this policy

- To support and uphold the strong ethos in member schools across the Trust of being fully inclusive establishments in which all children can access an education which enables them to reach their full potential
- To inform Parents, Pupils, School Staff, Governors, L.E.A. and Support Agencies how we work to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEN are met
- To encourage a collaborative and positive partnership between all those involved in the care and provision of pupils with SEN
- To contribute towards an atmosphere of high expectations, encouragement, acceptance, respect and sensitivity to individual needs

- To ensure that the Trust works in line with County Guidelines and the SEND 2014 Code of Practice
- To operate a robust and consistent approach to SEN which extends across the Trust
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved in the provision for pupils with SEN

Objectives of this policy:

- To identify all pupils with a possible SEN at the earliest possible opportunity
- To assess and continuously monitor the needs of the individual child making full use of outside agencies and a full range of assessments
- To identify and provide a well targeted continuing programme of CPD in relation to SEN
- To value and take into account the wishes and views of the pupil (being mindful of his/her age and level of understanding)
- To work in close partnership with parents, external agencies, previous educational establishments and advisors
- To fully implement advice regarding SEN provision that we are given by outside professional agencies
- To implement strategies and classroom environments which enable pupils to feel happy and secure so that they can learn and develop
- For all class teachers to confidently take responsibility for the provision of pupils with SEN in their class
- To include pupils with SEN in all aspects of school life
- To implement a graduated approach to SEN provision
- To identify and remove barriers to learning for all pupils
- To facilitate the full involvement of parents/carers in provision for their child by ensuring that they understand our SEN procedures and practices and have regular meetings with us

Definition of Special Educational Needs

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

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

(a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or

(b) Has a disability that 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. SEN Code of Practice (2014, p 4)

The 2014 SEN Code of Practice identifies 2 levels of support for pupils identified with SEN. These are:

SEN Support

External support services will usually see the child so that they can advise teachers with targets and strategies, provide specialist assessments that can inform planning and give advice. SEN support will be triggered when, despite receiving high quality whole class teaching and concentrated support, the child:

- Continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period
- Continues working at levels substantially below that expected of children of a similar age
- Continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and mathematics skills
- Has emotional or social difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's own learning or that of the class group, despite having an individualised behaviour management programme
- Has sensory or physical needs and requires additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits by a specialist service
- Has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

Statutory assessment

In a very small number of cases, where a child has more severe or complex needs that do not respond to support offered at SEN Support, the LEA will need to make a statutory assessment of special educational needs and then consider whether or not to issue an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). An EHCP is a legal document and requires two in-year reviews followed by a third end of year final review. Personalised plans are devised which are linked directly to the provision identified in the EHCP.

Definition of disability

Many children and young people who have SEN may also 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’ SEN Code of Practice (2014, p5)

The range of special educational needs that we make provision for

Most children identified with SEN will fall into one of the following broad categories of SEN, but some have more than one area of need. These are the areas of SEN recognised in the 2014 Code of Practice.

- Communication and Interaction (Speech/Language and Autistic Spectrum Disorders)
- Cognition and Learning (General Learning and Specific Learning Difficulties)
- Physical and Sensory Impairment
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

We are currently making provision for every kind of frequently occurring special educational need without an Education, Health and Care Plan, for instance dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, speech and language needs, autism, learning difficulties, ADHD, sensory integration and social & emotional difficulties. There are other kinds of special educational need which do not occur as frequently and with which we are less familiar, but we access training and advice so that these kinds of needs are fully met.

Our cycle of SEN provision

We always aim to identify a special educational need as soon as possible; the importance of this really cannot be over emphasised. If we are able to address needs in a timely fashion, longer-term educational outcomes are improved.

Our first approach to teaching children with SEN is always quality first teaching;

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered SEN Code of Practice (2014, 6.37)

We follow the Mainstream Core Standards

http://www.kelsi.org.uk/pupil_support_and_wellbeing/targeted_support/inclusion/inclusion_and_achievement/publications_and_documents.aspx advice developed by Kent County Council to ensure that our teaching conforms to best practice. Classroom teaching is monitored regularly to ensure that high standards, in line with the Mainstream Core Standards, are maintained and consistent across the academies.

Where a special educational need is identified we have a graduated approach. This is a 4 part cycle which has the ultimate aim of providing us with a thorough understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil to make good progress and achieve the best possible outcomes. Our approach follows the following format:

1. Identify and Assess (the needs of the individual child)

- A range of assessments are used with all the pupils at various points of the academic year such as the Y1 phonics screening, Speech Link, Language Link, Leuven Scales, Boxall Profiles, spelling and reading age tests.
- Information is provided by parents and carers, other educational settings or outside agencies.
- We will gather pupil views.
- Observations will be carried out by the SENCO.
- The pupil's class exercise books will be scrutinised.
- Views will be sought from all members of school staff that are involved with the pupil, e.g., the nurture team, teaching assistants.

- Previous assessment data will also be scrutinised.

All of these strategies will help to give us an overall picture of the child, i.e., their strengths as well as their weaknesses. This will help to ensure that our assessments of need and provision are as accurate and effective as possible from the very start.

2. Plan (for provision)

Strategies are planned for pupils to support them to make progress that will address the areas of difficulty. At this stage planning will be done on the whole class provision map. As well as providing an overview of provision in the class, the provision map helps to inform the deployment of teaching assistants and can be used to monitor the effectiveness of interventions for the children involved.

Examples of extra support/interventions that we can provide are:

- A range of social and emotional well-being interventions, such as Lego Therapy and Drawing and Talking
- Additional maths programmes (dyscalculia and maths developmental delay)
- Clicker 7 (for children that benefit from an alternative form of recording) has not been taken up by teachers so
- Precision teaching (to support children that struggle to retain information)
- Letters and Sounds/Sounds-Write (to support spelling, reading and writing)
- Language Through Colour (to support sentence construction when writing)
- Fizzy or BEAM (to develop balance and coordination skills)
- Speech and Language (for children that struggle to understand language and/or articulate speech sounds adequately)
- Clever fingers/hands (to develop fine motor skills)
- Phonic Bug (an on-line resource to support reading skills)
- Sensory Circuits (for pupils that struggle with sensory integration)

Following very close monitoring to determine the impact throughout the term, and high-quality targeted teaching, some pupils may continue to make inadequate progress. For these pupils, and in consultation with parents, we are able to access external advisors who can use more specific and detailed assessments and provide further strategies. This may result in the use of additional resources and different approaches to remove barriers to learning. All provision will be recorded either on the whole class provision map or on personalised plans.

If you think that your child may have an unidentified special educational need, the first step is to approach their class teacher for a discussion.

3. Implement (the planned provision)

The class teacher will be responsible for working with the child on a daily basis ensuring that all planned provision takes place and, as far as possible, additional support will take place in the normal classroom setting. We will ensure that all other teachers and support staff who work with the pupil are aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used.

The SENCO will work closely with the class teacher sharing responsibilities with any external specialist services relevant to the child's needs. A range of different teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, including the use of information technology, will be considered. All interventions are tracked regularly so that they can be adjusted as soon as the need arises.

4. Review (the effectiveness of provision)

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on pupil progress will be reviewed in line with an agreed date; normally two terms. If the provision has not had the intended impact, school may seek further support by applying for High Needs Funding.

At whole school level

Headteachers and SENCO's support teaching staff with the implementation of provision with a '9-3 approach' which means that they spend time in the classrooms and reviewing progress in books on a daily basis. Provision maps are used termly to measure progress and review the impact of interventions. Additionally, progress of pupils is monitored and evaluated three times a year as part of the school's assessment cycle, which includes pupil progress meetings led by experienced leaders and academy strategy meetings led by the Chief Executive Officer. If a child has personalised plans, their provision will be subject to more frequent reviews.

At individual level

The SENCO will complete on-going assessment of pupils with additional needs. Personalised plans for pupils with more complex needs are reviewed three times a year, more frequently if necessary, and the attainment of every child on the SEN register is evaluated six times a year.

If adequate progress is not being made, support will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

The SEN Code of Practice (2014, 6.17) describes inadequate progress thus:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between rate of progress
- Widens the attainment gap

All pupils with SEN have targets set for them which are informed by the views of pupils, parents, class teachers, the SENCO and assessment information which will show whether adequate progress is being made. The targets may support academic progress and/or social and emotional development.

We hold parent consultation evenings twice a year and parents of pupils with personal plans will be invited to attend additional review meetings. At these meetings pupil support will be informed by the views of parents and the advice from any outside agencies which may be involved.

For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan there will also be a final annual review of the provision made for the child, which will inform future provision.

Adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment for pupils with special educational needs

We follow the advice in the Mainstream Core Standards on how to adapt the curriculum and the learning environment for pupils with special educational needs. This may include:

- Differentiating our curriculum to ensure all pupils are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1:1 work, teaching style, content of the lesson, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing

- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Differentiating our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.

We also incorporate the advice provided as a result of assessments, both internal and external, and the strategies described in provision plans for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plans.

Additional financial support for learning that is available for pupils with special educational needs

As part of our budget we receive 'notional SEN funding'. This funding is used to ensure that the quality of teaching is of a high standard and that there are sufficient resources to deploy additional and different teaching for pupils requiring SEN support. The amount of support required for each pupil to make good progress will be different in each case. In a very few cases a very high level of resource is required. The funding arrangements require schools to provide up to £6000 per year of resource for pupils with high needs, and above that amount the Local Authority may provide top up funding in the form of High Needs Funding.

All clubs, trips and activities offered to pupils are available to pupils with special educational needs either with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan. Where it is necessary, the school will use the resources available to it to provide additional adult support to enable the safe participation of the pupil in the activity.

Supporting the emotional and social development of pupils with special educational needs

We have a whole school nurturing approach which all members of staff fully support. Class teachers plan targets and strategies specifically to address social and emotional needs identified in pupils on the whole class provision map. These interventions are valued, implemented and reviewed as rigorously as academic targets. For further information, please refer to our Well Being and Involvement Policy.

We also adopt the Restorative Justice approach as part of our whole school behaviour management system. This supports pupils to reflect upon their actions and to identify better outcomes for the future.

Expertise and training of staff in relation to children with special educational needs

There is a full audit of training needs each year from which evolves a programme of training that ensures that all members of staff are equipped with the skills needed to meet the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs.

We regularly update awareness training for all teachers and teaching assistants. Recently we have received the following training:

- English as an Additional Language
- Attachment
- Autism training
- Dyslexia training
- ADHD training
- Positive Behaviour training
- Team Teach training
- Sensory Processing training

Some members of staff have received enhanced and specialist training such as Nurture Group Network training and Speech & Language training. All children that have an Education, Health and Care plan and are under the care of the Speech and Language Therapy Service receive direct therapy and assessment throughout the academic year. Trained teaching assistants also provide individual sessions with pupils that do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan under the guidance of the Speech and Language therapist.

Where a training need is identified beyond what we can offer within the Trust, we will find a provider who is able to deliver it. The cost of training is covered by the notional SEN funding.

Enabling pupils with SEN to engage in activities available to those in the school who do not have SEN

There are no barriers to pupils with SEN enjoying the same activities as other pupils in school.

All of our extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all our pupils, including our before-and after-school clubs and, when in Year 6, are encouraged to go on our residential trip.

All pupils are encouraged to take part in sports day, school plays and special workshops and no pupil is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability.

We aim to support pupils with disabilities. Admission arrangements for all pupils do not discriminate against, or disadvantage, disabled children or those with special educational needs.

We regularly review our practice, facilities and consult with other professionals in order to prevent disabled pupils from being treated less favourably than other pupils. Further information regarding this can be found in our school's accessibility plan.

Equipment, facilities and other forms of support for children with special educational needs

We engage with the following bodies in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and in supporting the families of such pupils:

- Specialist Teaching Services
- Kent Educational Psychology Service
- Access to local authority's service level agreement with Speech and Language Therapy Services / Occupational Therapy Services / Physiotherapy Services/School Nursing Services for pupil with requirement for direct therapy or advice
- ISSK (Inclusion Services for Kent)
- Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Autism specialists
- Early Help to provide integrated support for children, young people and families
- CYPMHS (The Children and Young People's Mental Health Service) (in Canterbury area it is NELFT- North East London Foundation Trust)
- Kent CAT Team (Kent & Medway Communication and Assistive Technology service)
- Virtual Schools Kent (specifically for children in care)
- Child Health and Assessment Centre
- Social Services
- Early Help

Arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education.

As part of our normal teaching arrangements, all pupils will access some additional teaching to help them catch-up if the progress monitoring indicates that this is necessary; this will not imply that the pupil has a special educational need. All such provision will be recorded, tracked and evaluated on a class provision map and termly strategy reports.

If improvements in progress are not seen, we will contact parents to discuss the use of internal or external assessments which will help us to address these needs better. From this point onwards, the pupil will be identified as having special educational needs because special educational provision is being made. Parents will be invited to all planning and reviews of this provision so that they can be actively supported to contribute.

Where a child with SEN is looked after by the local authority (CIC), planning and reviews of provision will take place during the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings. These meetings take place 3 times a year and enable the authority with legal responsibility for the child, the Virtual School and the child's carers to contribute to the process.

Parents of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to attend an annual review meeting which is in addition to a minimum of two other review meetings in the school year. Wherever possible, other agencies involved with the pupil will also attend these meetings. Information will be made fully accessible for parents.

We offer the following methods to enable parents to support their child outside of school:

- Regular parent workshops throughout the year designed to equip parents and carers with a range of strategies
- Outside agency reports often include strategies that can be used in school, as well as at home
- Homework is an ideal opportunity for you to support your child with their learning
- All children should read at home on a daily basis with an adult so this is highly encouraged. Parents can also refer to personalised plans for further strategies.
- Advice from our parent support advisor
- Sharing of personalised plan strategies and, in some instances, provision of visual resources that are working successfully in school

Transition arrangements

Nursery to Foundation Stage

Our SENCO and Foundation Stage teachers will visit nursery settings to gather relevant information.

The pupils themselves are able to make several enjoyable visits to school as part of our Rising 4's project. Parents attend Rising 4's with their children and engage in activities that help to prepare children for school.

In T6 there is a new entrants meeting which we encourage all parents/carers to attend and, later in that term, parents meet 1:1 with their child's class teacher to be.

The SENCO will also meet with specialist agencies that are involved with supporting the child so that essential information is shared.

Foundation Stage to year one

Children make visits to their new classroom in T6 of the FS year. They also have the opportunity to meet their next teacher for a specially planned activity.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is mirrored for the first term of year one to help children transition to the national curriculum.

Transitions to new classes

Some children with special needs find the transition to a new class and teacher more challenging than others. These children are provided with an individual transition plan to help reduce anxiety.

Transition to secondary school

We arrange visits to the new placement for year 6 pupils. Occasionally, when needs are very high, we will arrange for a member of staff to accompany a pupil 1:1 to a secondary placement.

We also offer a weekly support intervention in term 6 with a focus on various aspects of life in secondary school

Arrangements for involving young people with special educational needs in their education

When a pupil has been identified as having special educational needs because special educational provision is being made for him or her, the pupil will be involved in the arrangements made for them as part of child-centred planning. Parents will always play a significant role in this process.

Complaints from parents of pupils with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints is used for complaints about provision made for special educational needs. We encourage parents/carers to discuss their concerns with the relevant class teacher, the SENCO, the Parent Support Adviser or the Head Teacher to resolve the issue before making a formal complaint.

Please refer to the Complaints Policy for further information.

Special Educational needs and disabilities service for children, young people and parents

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provides free, impartial, confidential, advice, support and options around educational issues for parents who have children with special educational needs or disabilities (0-25). They empower parents to play an active and informed role in their child's education. They can be contacted on:

HELPLINE: 0300 041 3000

Email: iask@kent.gov.uk

Address: Shepway Centre, Oxford Road, Maidstone, ME15 8AW

The local authority's local offer

The local authority's local offer is published on <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs> and parents without internet access should make an appointment with the SENCO for support to gain the information they require.