



# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report - September 2021

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## Teaching and Learning

### Inclusive Classrooms

St Mary's is a fully inclusive school and we always endeavour to do our best for all of our children. We are committed to welcoming children of all abilities into our community and helping them reach their full potential through a wide and varied curriculum and individual support programmes where needed. All of our teachers are teachers of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). They all follow the school's SEND policy and know about ways in which their classroom organisation and their teaching may need to be individually tailored to accommodate children with a wide range of SENDs.

The SEN Code of Practice (2015) is the legal document which describes how schools should support children with SEN. According to that document:

*A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age*

Some children may have a disability, a diagnosis of ASD, a sensory difficulty or a medical problem which has a significant and long term impact upon the child's ability to learn and the school is required to provide support above and beyond the level required by the "average" child. These are the children registered on the SEND register. Where children need a specific provision in the classroom, such as the use of a sound field system for a hearing impairment, but are able to work at an age appropriate level they will be registered on the SEND register. Children who are registered on the SEND register have a student passport which details the support that is required to be in place in the classroom. Children on the SEND register have an Individual Record of Support (ISR). ISR documents detail the areas of difficulty for the students as well as the provision that is in place to support the student. ISR documents and pupil progress are reviewed with parents and teaching staff on a termly basis. From September 2021 ISR information will be in the Provision Mapping database.

### Bullying of children with SEND

As a school, we have a policy of zero tolerance towards bullying of any nature (see our anti-bullying policy). We recognise that bullying of children with SEND is particularly sensitive, especially when the children may not be aware they are being bullied or they struggle to communicate their experiences. The playground and school are always patrolled during playtimes and lunchtimes and members of staff - often the class teachers and members of the senior leadership team - are always available to listen and intervene where there is any suggestion of bullying.

We teach children that bullying is everyone's responsibility and encourage them to come forward if they think another child is being bullied. We will also investigate complaints of bullying from parents. In the year 2019-20, we had 6 complaints of bullying of children with SEND, all of which were investigated thoroughly and resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the figures for 2020-21 are incomplete.

## Identifying children with SEN and assessing their needs

Our schools SEND Policy can be accessed at [www.smpsac.org](http://www.smpsac.org). It states in our policy that children, parents, class teachers and teaching assistants are all involved in identifying children's learning needs. All teachers regularly talk to the parents of the children they teach and keep them informed about any concerns. Concerns may also be raised at termly pupil progress meetings when teachers and senior leaders sit together and identify children whose progress is below that expected.

Initially, the teacher will use their knowledge of the child to change something about the child's learning opportunities in order to see whether the child begins to make better progress. Often, this will solve the problem. This might include:

- Changing seating arrangements
- Printing learning objectives
- Providing table-top resources which help the child
- Giving the child a visual timetable or communication cards

Some children, however, need something which is 'different from or additional to' the opportunities offered to all children in the class. These children are often identified by parents or by school staff who know how the child works, interacts and engages with learning. Alternatively, they are highlighted when poor progress is noted. With their parents' permission, these children are discussed with the SENDCo. If the SENDCo and teacher together think that there is an additional need, the parent is invited to a meeting and together we agree whether or not to put the child on the SEND register.

Most children on the SEND register are accommodated at 'SEND Support'. These children have targets which they are supported in meeting. The support may take the form of:

- an intervention,
- additional adult support,
- access to ICT or
- some change to their environment

The support is individual to the child in order to help them to meet their targets. There is a termly meeting to discuss progress with parents. This support is documented on an Individual Record of Support (ISR).

A very small number of children, national statistics suggest 1 %, will be referred for assessment for an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These have replaced statements. Most of these children are likely to be referred to either a specialist school or a specialist support team at some point during their education. Children with EHCPs have an individual record of support and a termly meeting to discuss progress in the same ways as children on SEND Support

More information on SEND Support and EHCPs can be found at the Schools' Offer which answers over 300 questions put by parents.



## Profile of SEN 2020-21

This last year was an exceptional year due to the COVID 19 lockdown. Due to this lock down we do not have full attainment data for our children and so it is not possible or appropriate to make direct comparisons with previous year groups. During the academic year 2020-21 we had 114 children on our Special Educational Needs (SEN) register which was approximately 27% of our school population. Nationally, around 15% of primary school students are currently identified with SEND. This year our school population has 24% on SEND support and 3.8% with an Education Health Care Plan, EHCP. Of the 16 students we currently support with an EHCP, 3 have gained a place in a specialist provision for 2021-22 and 3 are waiting to be allocated specialist provision for 2021-22. We have 2 EHCP referrals in process with the Local Authority and anticipate having another 7 referrals processed and accepted before the end of 2021. The National expectation is for only 1.8% of a primary school population to have an EHCP. In Suffolk that rises to 2% of primary school students but we are still well above average numbers of SEND population. The support given to our SEND children ranges from fortnightly consultations for a child with an EHCP to targeted support around areas such as transition. Each child's support is arranged in consultation with the SENDCO. The types of special need and disability our children have, is listed under the broad categories of SEND as defined in the 2014 Code of Practice, include:

- Communication and interaction: autism, speech and language difficulties
- Cognition and learning: dyslexia, global delay and moderate learning difficulties
- Social, emotional and mental health: challenging behaviour linked to social and emotional difficulties, attachment difficulties
- Physical & Sensory: mobility difficulties, visual processing difficulties; auditory processing difficulties

Over the last two years it has become recognised that we have increasing challenges accessing sufficient support for students with speech and language difficulties. Over 20% of the children in our Early Years cohort were assessed as below age expectations for language skills when they joined the school in September 2019. Last year, 2020-21, we had 33% of the Early Years cohort either awaiting or receiving language support. These children are identified as having speech and language skills at a level which is, at least one year below their chronological age. The decision was taken to buy in an independent SALT specialist to work with the children and provide ongoing guidance for the staff to support speech development. The specialist is now in place and ensuring that we give the highest possible level of language support to our youngsters. The specialist provides individual programmes for each student, delivered by ELKLAN trained staff, and assesses progress on a termly basis. At St Mary's we employ the specialist SALT for three full days a month in order to give the children with speech and language difficulties the best possible support at an early stage. We believe that language and language development is a key area of concern for our students. We have 14 full time members of staff that are ELKLAN trained to a level 3 in working with children aged 5-11 years and key Early Years staff are trained to a level 3 in working with children aged 3-5 years. Our Early years setting is an accredited Communication friendly setting by ELKLAN and has a high level of support available for all children with Speech and Language difficulties. All Early years students are assessed for language skills using the Wellcomm assessment system. Early years and Key stage 1 support staff have also had training in using Makaton signing as a support for the students with the greatest language difficulties. As a whole school we are fully accredited as a Makaton Friendly setting.

## **Working with children who are looked after by the local authority**

In 2020-21 we had 3 children in the care of the local Authority on role and a further 8 children who are now in permanent placements following a period in care. All of these children are identified to staff as students of special concern whose progress and wellbeing are monitored closely. These children have full access to the same processes and support as all other children. The staff member in charge of reviewing the progress of Children in Care, (CIC), is the SENDCo, Lesley Osborne. All CIC students have termly reviews which include all aspects of their care and education. These reviews are carried out with children, carers and teaching staff present.

## **Adaptations to the curriculum**

Children with SEND need provision which is 'different from and additional to' their peers. Most of this provision is through the class teacher planning different work for the child. This is known as differentiation. Differentiation can refer to:

- allowing access to additional resources,
- doing different activities or
- doing the same activity as others but with additional support.

All teachers plan in this way for the whole class and consider the needs of their SEND pupils when identifying the best pathways through learning. This inclusive teaching is called Quality First Wave teaching. Teachers are supported in their differentiation for individual children by the information provided on the Pupil Passport.

In 2018-19 the gap between SEN and Non-SEN children in KS1 achieving the required standard in Reading, writing and mathematics dropped to 26% which is well below the national gap of 54%. The gap between the SEN and Non-SEN children at KS2 achieving the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics dropped to 28% last year which is just over half the gap nationally of 52%. These are statistics that we can be very proud of since they show the difference that we are making to children's learning. We do not have the full range of data for 2019-20 or 2020-21 so cannot draw comparisons between the two years.

In addition, whole school strategic planning supports children with SEN. This is laid out in more detail in the school's accessibility plan (see [www.smpsac.org](http://www.smpsac.org)).

## **Looking after children's social and emotional well-being**

In 2020-21 the Academy Pastoral team was formed. The SLT lead is Mrs Rutter and the SENDCo supports as Mental health Lead for the academy. The members include the Emotional Literacy Support assistant, ELSA, the Thrive practitioner, the Nurture staff, the Mental Health Support Worker, MHSW and the school counsellor. The team meets half termly to review requests for Pastoral support, the progress of supported children and to ensure that they work together to meet need in the most efficient and effective way.

We recognise that children's mental health and emotional state impact significantly on their ability to concentrate and make progress in school. Social and emotional difficulties are often communicated through angry, aggressive, hard to manage behaviours, through self-harming or through withdrawn, introverted behaviours. In 2019-20 8 of our staff completed a level 2 training course on challenging



behaviours in children and 2 staff have completed a level 2 qualification in understanding and recognising mental ill health in children. These courses complement our fundamental belief that all behaviour is a communication rather than an isolated choice.

The Pastoral Lead, Thrive practitioner and SENDco are all trained mental health first aiders. This training is funded by the Department of Health and organised through Mental Health first aid England, (see [mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org) for more information). The aim of the programme is to raise the profile of supporting mental health to the same level as the support for physical health. The programme gives guidance on recognising and dealing with students with anxiety or low emotional resilience and 'low level' mental health issues as well as giving guidance on how to ensure that individuals with long term issues with mental health and wellbeing are supported adequately and effectively. In 2017-18 we commissioned a counsellor and play therapist Mr Keith Flynn to work with some of our most needy students. This provided them with expert support and a safe space in which to explore their feelings and emotions and has proved to be invaluable during the COVID19 pandemic. Mr Flynn provides feedback directly to parents and supports the family unit in working together to promote mental wellbeing. This provision will continue throughout 2021-22.

In 2020-21 we took part in the "Supporting and understanding children with Medical Needs at School" project run by the Radwael Trust and Oxford University Hospital Schools. This project allowed us to access a higher level of training in managing medical needs of all types and provided the staff of St Mary's with webinar training on specific medical conditions and their management.

In 2019-20 St Mary's took part in a pilot scheme to train Educational Mental Health Support Practitioners through the newly created NHS Mental Health Support Team. We now have a practitioner, working in the school on a weekly basis to support both children and parents. Due to the pandemic she has only been able to support with Virtual training sessions in the last year. We look forward to seeing her in and around the community more this year and welcome the support that this brings to our community.

St Mary's is part of the Nurture Schools Network. Nurture work is based in the principles of attachment theory and has its basis in sociological research. The six principles of Nurture run throughout the policies of St Mary's Academy and are reflected in all our interactions with children.

The six principles of Nurture are:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transition in children's lives

*Ref: Lucas,S., Insley,K. and Buckland,G. (2006) Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve, The Nurture Group Network.*

For more information regarding the Nurture Schools Network please see [www.nurturegroups.org](http://www.nurturegroups.org).



All teachers are very aware of the social and emotional needs of the children in their classes and make adaptations to accommodate individual needs. This might be by having additional access to the teacher or a familiar teaching assistant, through a social skills intervention such as Lego Therapy, Drawing for talking sessions, through individual reward systems, meet and greet, break cards or another intervention that meets the child's individual needs.

Throughout the school year we offer Art Nurture intervention sessions with Mrs Torbitt and Talk Nurture sessions with Mrs Fincham for our students. Our nurture intervention sessions take place on a weekly basis and are directly linked to the Nurture Schools Network programmes. Small groups of children are given the opportunity to be creative and develop their social skills and interpersonal skill levels in a safe environment away from the pressures of the classroom. These sessions are especially useful to support children with low confidence levels or who need an opportunity to reflect on their efforts and successes. Many children who are managing a period of change, such as a new family member or significant illness, have found these sessions to be both enjoyable and uplifting.

Nurture group work was only possible in the late Spring and Summer term of 2020-21, but despite this, Mrs Torbitt worked with over 40 children in her eight Art Nurture groups, ranging from year 3 to year 6. Mrs Fincham worked with 20 children in her weekly Talk Nurture sessions, ranging from year 1 to year 6 students. Students are selected to attend one of these groups in liaison with parents and teachers on a termly basis. We celebrate the creativity of these groups as part of our celebration assemblies. Teachers and children are encouraged to give feedback to both Mrs Torbitt and Mrs Fincham through questionnaires at the end of a termly project. Small group interventions such as these are very important in ensuring that we are able to best support some of the students for whom school is emotionally challenging and often exhausting.

In 2019-2020 the decision was taken to introduce the role of a fulltime Thrive Practitioner in school. The Thrive approach is based in neuroscience and was developed in the 1990's to combat the growing issue of students struggling with their emotional development. Thrive is a therapeutic approach to help support children with their emotional and social development. The Thrive approach offers practical strategies and techniques and is built around online assessments which identify children's emotional development and provides action plans for their individual needs. The Thrive practitioner works 1:1 with children to help them process and manage emotional issues that are preventing them from interacting successfully. She also supports staff with ensuring that the Thrive approach is embedded into the extended curriculum. All children are assessed using the Thrive framework to identify their developmental areas of strength and those requiring development. Some children then require an individual Thrive programme which is overseen by the Thrive Practitioner.

The school employs a Family Support Worker, (FSW), who is available to talk to parents on an informal basis and offer support and guidance. She also offers support through family difficulties that affect students. The FSW can also support on an individual basis with some children, offering therapeutic activities to help students to understand their own emotions.

If the pastoral work we do in school proves not to be effective, or sufficient to meet need, we can engage outside services from Suffolk County Council, or refer to a pupil referral unit (PRU), or to the NHS Mental Health Support team workers or, through the children's NHS Emotional wellbeing hub, to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).





## **Evaluating the effectiveness of our work with SEND children**

All of the work we do with our children is carefully monitored. Overall progress is discussed at termly pupil progress meetings and any causes for concern are highlighted. In addition, all staff are asked to complete intervention monitoring sheets which record the progress made by individual pupils and allow us to decide whether the intervention is effective or not. Ineffective interventions are stopped.

As a school we use the Insight assessment system to evaluate progress and track student progress throughout the full curriculum. In line with the national curriculum children are assessed against National age expectation standards. For children whose progress against age expectation is unlikely to provide a full picture of their achievements we use the PIVATS system. This assessment system is skill based and allows us to track the level of skill development independently of age expectations. The progress of children as monitored by their Individual Support record is also added to this database.

## **Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision**

The Principal and SEN Governor support the SENDCo in constantly evaluating and improving our SEND provision. We review the progress made by all children with SEND, then look more closely at the progress made by groups of children in the same year group or with similar needs. This enables us to ensure that we target provision appropriately. In addition, the SENDCo makes an annual report to the school's governing body during which all governors have the opportunity to ask questions about overall provision and its effectiveness. In 2020 - 2021 the Academy has brought Provision mapping software on- line to support the recording and monitoring of SEND student progress

## **Access to extracurricular activities**

The access to extracurricular activities in 2020-21 was severely curtailed due to COVID 19 restrictions but it is hoped that activities will be reintroduced in September 2021.

The school offers a range of extracurricular activities, both during and after school. Children on the SEND register are actively encouraged to attend clubs which enable them to learn new skills and to develop confidence. We are pleased at the number of children who have at least tried to participate in extracurricular activities.



## **Working with Children**

The school operates a Person-Centred approach to involving children in their education. All children in the school, including those with SEND, have targets which they work towards and the school marking policy explains how teachers give children feedback to help them to move towards their targets. Children with SEND are invited annually to complete a short questionnaire in order to capture a snapshot of children's views about learning, friendships, opportunities to access extra-curricular activities and their feelings of being safe in school. These are collated and considered, alongside the parent questionnaires, when we draw up the next SEND action plan.

As part of their pupil passport, SEND children are asked to think about their futures, although we know these ideas are likely to change. We want all of our children to have aspirations and to plan for possible futures. If we know about children's hopes and dreams, we can sometimes direct them towards local opportunities for developing their skills and interests.

## **Working with Parents**

All of the children who are identified as having SEND needs have an Individual Record of Support which is updated termly during a meeting with parents and, where appropriate, the child. At the meeting, the child's progress towards their targets is discussed and the parent is involved in deciding what the next steps might be and what kind of support will be necessary for the child to achieve these outcomes. In addition, parents are invited to share their views on the school's provision via an annual questionnaire and some face to face meetings. All parents have been given access to the Creative Education website and resources to support them with their parenting and understanding of their children's emotional and developmental needs.

A group of parents worked with the SENDCo to participate in the creation and updating of our Schools' Offer which can be accessed [here](#) or from our website. This document was produced in collaboration with local schools who are members of the Mildenhall SEND HUB.

## **Working with Families**

It is much harder now for families to seek face to face help with supporting their children. The national cuts in funding to Local Authorities have meant that the threshold for engagement with services that support families has risen dramatically. We have a very experienced Family Support Worker (FSW) working at the school who can help with early intervention, give good advice or sometimes just be a friendly, non-judgemental listener who is happy to sit and chat with a cup of tea. We are investing in supporting and training for this role. We are very aware of the lack of support that has been available to parents of our 2021-22 reception class and are providing a series of workshops to help bridge this knowledge gap and reduce the anxiety that they may be feeling in sending their children to school without having been able to access pre-school facilities.

Although there is not necessarily any link between the families who link to a FSW and SEND, the FSW is knowledgeable about SEND and sympathetic to the additional stresses on a family when a child has additional or special needs. She receives regular training to make sure that she is fully up-to-date on how to contact support services.

## **Funding**

St Mary's Church of England Academy receives funding from the Department for Education, some of which is intended to support children with SEND. For children who have particularly high levels of need and support, we apply for top-up funding (High Needs Funding) from Suffolk. In 2017-2018 we received £36,000 of this funding which was used primarily to employ additional teaching assistants to work with these high level need children. In 2019-20 the funding had increased to just over £84,000 for the school population of high level need children. In 2020-21 the funding received reached £100,000. The level of increase in funding indicates the increase in levels of need we are seeing in our cohorts of students. We expect the level of funding to remain in the region of £80,000 for 2021-22.

## **The School's Facilities to support children with SEND**

The school is compliant with the demands of the Equalities Act and the Disability Discrimination Act. This means that all areas of the school are equally accessible to all children. The exception to this is that one Reception year classroom does not have an exterior ramp to accommodate wheelchair users. Risk assessments are routinely completed for all our children with additional mobility needs and, where necessary, modifications to the school are made. If necessary, the school is often able to secure funding for new or specialist equipment as recommended by a medical professional.

Where appropriate, adults are trained for manual handling to ensure that they know how to support and help children in a manner which keeps both the adults and the child safe. The school has a large disabled toilet which includes a bed for changing children.

The school has quiet outbreak areas which can be used by children to relax, to calm down or for specific sensory interventions.

The school has a Thrive room in which the Thrive practitioner carries out assessments and interventions.

The school has a family room for training and meetings with families.

## **Complaints Policy**

We work hard to support all of our children, but sometimes parents have concerns which they don't feel are addressed. If you have any complaints, please follow the complaints policy as outlined on our website, but can be summarised as follows:

Step 1: informal discussion with class teacher or head of year

Step 2: informal meeting with headteacher

Step 3: formal written complaint to headteacher

Step 4: referral to the governing body or the local authority



## Strategic management

Below is a list of people in the school who are particularly concerned with the organisation of SEND in the school. They can all be contacted via the school office:

SEN governor: Mrs Nightingale- Roffe  
SENDCo: Ms. Lesley Osborne  
Principal: Mrs Lynne Stabler

The way in which we identify and work with our SEND children is clearly explained in our SEN policy. In addition, the school has worked with Mildenhall SEND hub to create an extensive library of questions and answers about SEND. The questions were asked by parents of member schools. You can access the School's Offer at: . <https://www.smpsac.org/policies/>

The school forms part of Suffolk's local offer which can be accessed at .

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/localoffer.page;jsessionid=54124B1E686795D3A33EA66166C2A371?localofferchannelnew=0>