



# SEND Information Report - September 2020

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St Mary's Church of England Academy  
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) information report September 2020

Contents	Page
Teaching and Learning	
• Inclusive classrooms	2
• Bullying of children with SEND	2
• Identifying SEND and assessing needs	3
• Profile of SEND 2019-20	4
• Working with children who are looked after by the LA	5
• Adaptations to the curriculum	5
• Looking after children's social and emotional wellbeing	5
• Evaluating the effectiveness of our work with children	7
• Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision	8
• Access to extra-curricular activities	8
Working with Parents and Children	
• Working with children	9
• Working with parents	9
• Working with families	9
SEN administration	
• Transition arrangements	10
• Involving outside agencies	10
• Training and expertise of staff	10
• Funding for SEND	11
• Complaints Policy	11
• Strategic Management of SEND	12



## 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.

### *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.

### *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 SENCO. If the SENCO 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 SEN register.

Most children on the SEN register are accommodated at 'SEN Support' (SENS). 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 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 a record of support and a termly meeting to discuss progress in the same ways as children on SENS.

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

### *Profile of SEN 2019-20*

This 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. During the academic year 2019-2020 we had 94 children on our Special Educational Needs (SEN) register which was around 23% of our school population. Nationally, around 18% children are currently identified with SEN. This year our school population includes 11.1% who are Decile 2 of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index. The percentage in that Decile for the Local Authority as a whole is 9.2%. We have a significantly larger number of children for whom poverty is a real life issue than many other schools in the area. In our school, 8 children have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and drafts are being produced at County level for a further 2 children. We have 9 children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder who were supported by the County Inclusive support team. The support given ranges from fortnightly consultations for a child with an EHCP to targeted support around areas such transition. Each child's support is arranged in consultation with the SENCO. The types of special need our children have, listed under the broad categories of SEN 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: 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 expectation for language skills when they joined the school in September 2019. This year, 2020-21, we have 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 at least one year below their chronological age. As a hub 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 on a weekly basis 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. We have 11 fulltime members of staff that are ELKLAN trained to a level 3 in working with children aged 5-11 years. We also have a structured training programme in progress to ensure that all our Early Years staff are trained to deliver structured support through the ELKLAN 3-5 years language programme. 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 2019-20 we had 2 children who are in the care of a local authority in school. 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. Moving forward to 2020-21 we have 2 children in care 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.

### *Adaptations to the curriculum*

Children with SEN 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 SEN 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 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*

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. Last year 8 staff have 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. In 2016-17 the SENCO completed training on Mental Health first aid in schools. 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 anxieties 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. Mr Flynn provides feedback directly to parents and supports the family unit in working together to promote mental wellbeing. This provision will continue throughout 2020-2021. In 2020-21 we are taking 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 will bring a higher level of training to the staff of St Mary's to help all staff awareness of complex SEND needs.

In 2019-20 St Mary's took part in 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. We look forwards to seeing the difference that this additional level of support 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. In 2018-19 Mrs Torbitt worked with over 50 children in her nine Art Nurture groups, ranging from year 2 to year 6. Mrs Fincham worked with 34 children in her four weekly Talk Nurture sessions, ranging from Early Years to year 4 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.

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.

In 2020-21 this team of professionals became the Academy Pastoral team. The SLT lead is Mrs Rutter and the SENDCo supports as Mental health lead for the academy. The team meet half termly to ensure that they work together to meet need in the most efficient and effective way.

If the work we do in school proves not to be effective, we can engage outside services from Suffolk County Council, or refer to a pupil referral unit (PRU), 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 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 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 data base.

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

The Principal and SEN Governor support the SENCO 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 SENCO 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 plans to bring Provision mapping software on- line to support the recording and monitoring of SEND student progress.

#### *Access to extra-curricular activities*

The access to extra curricular activities in 202-21 is severely curtailed due to COVID 19 restrictions but it is hoped that some activities will be re-introduced in time.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities, both during and after school. Children on the SEN 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 extra-curricular activities.

## WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN

### *Working with Children*

The school operates a Person-Centred approach to involving children in their education. All children in the school, including those with SEN, 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 SEN 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 SEN action plan.

As part of their pupil passport, SEN 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 SEN 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.

A group of parents worked with the SENCO 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 SEN 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.

Although there is not necessarily any link between the families who link to a FSW and SEN, the FSW are knowledgeable about SEN and sympathetic to the additional stresses on a family when a child has additional or special needs. They receive regular training to make sure that they are fully up-to-date on how to contact support services and the services that may be appropriate and available.

Please contact your child's class teacher or reception to make an appointment to talk to our FSW, Mrs Goodall.

## SEN ADMINISTRATION

### *Transition arrangements*

Transition into our school, from our school and from class to class is given careful and individual consideration. Most children manage their transitions well as part of the whole class transition arrangements. However, we need to do additional planning and preparation for some of our children who become anxious when faced by change. This might include additional visits, taking photographs, doing work about what the children can look forward to in the new class or school, addressing concerns etc.

### *Involving outside agencies*

Outside agencies the school worked with during the year were mostly from Suffolk County Council or the local health authority: Educational Psychologists, County Inclusion Support Services, County Specialist SEN team, Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapists and Occupational therapists as well as the School Nursing service. We also have access to a privately employed play therapist and counsellor on a weekly basis. The SEN HUB employs a part time speech therapist who visits St Mary's on a weekly basis.

The school is a member of the Mildenhall SEN hub which is a collaboration of 15 local primary schools working together to support children with SEN. We benefit from sharing information and resources, networking meetings, annual conferences and the support of the Hub coordinator.

### *Training and expertise of staff*

All of our teachers are teachers of children with SEND and have a broad understanding of the needs of children with SEND. All of the staff have received training for working with children with dyslexia and creating a dyslexia-friendly learning environment. All staff have also received training on working with children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder Children by the County Inclusion Support Service. Many key staff have also had training in specific aspects of Nurture provision.

The role of the SENCO is to provide additional information and support to enhance teachers' knowledge and expertise. In addition, the staff have access to an extensive library of information books and, where applicable, teachers are directed to websites which are particularly useful for information about different SEND. If necessary, we can call on additional services to support our work with the children.

The school is a member of the Mildenhall SEN HUB which is a partnership of local schools who share ideas, expertise and resources. Training for teachers and TAs is often available through the SEN HUB. The HUB is often able to secure specialist expertise, particularly if more than one school can benefit from training.



### *Funding*

St Mary's Primary Church of England Academy receives funding from the Department for Education, some of which is intended to support children with SEN. For children who have particularly high levels of need and support, we apply for top-up funding (High Tariff 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 2018-19 the funding had increased to just over £71,000 for the school population of high level need children. In 2019-20 the funding received reached £84,000. We expect the level of funding to remain approximately the same for 2020-21

### *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 some classrooms do not have exterior ramps to accommodate wheelchairs. 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 SALT room in which the Speech and language therapists assess and support the children.

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 SEN in the school. They can all be contacted via the school office:

SEN governor: Mrs Nightingale- Rolfe  
SENCO: Ms. Lesley Osborne  
Principal: Mrs Lynne Stabler

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

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