



# Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

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### **'In the light of Christ we will shine together'**

Jesus said: I am the light of the world. John 8.12

Live as children of light – for the fruit of light is all that is good and true and right. Ephesians 5.8-9

Our ambition is to serve our community by providing an excellent education, which is inclusive and distinctive within the context of Christian belief and practice, upholding our values in the daily life of the Academy and in our relationships with others.

## **1. POLICIES**

St Mary's Church of England Academy is an inclusive school. All of our school policies are interlinked and should be read and informed by all other policies. In particular, the SEND policy is linked to behaviour, anti-bullying, medical accessibility, equality and safeguarding policies.

## **2. SEN HUB**

St Mary's Church of England Academy is part of the Mildenhall SEN Hub which is a partnership of 15 local schools, working together to improve provision for children with SEND. Together with the other schools, we have produced a guide for parents of children with SEN.

## **3.SEN INFORMATION REPORT**

SEN Information is available from our website. It is a comprehensive guide which explains how we support children and parents at St Mary's. The Suffolk Mainstream Inclusion Framework can be found on our website. was produced in conjunction with our hub schools. The website also includes a link to Suffolk's Local Offer for parents and children with SEN and disabilities along with other useful links

## **4. SEN CODE OF PRACTICE**

This SEND policy is written to comply with the 2014 Children and Families Act, SEN Code of Practice 2015 and The Equality Act 2010.

## **5. DEFINING SEND**

The SEN Code of Practice 2015 says that:

'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.

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 '

SEND Code of Practice 2015

## **6. SEND AT ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY**

Our objectives are:

- To identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, barriers to learning and participation for pupils with SEND
- To ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and achieves to the highest possible standard
- To enable all children to participate in lessons fully and effectively
- To value and encourage the contribution of all children to the life of the school
- To work in partnership with parents
- To work with the Governing Body to enable them to fulfil their statutory monitoring role with regard to the Policy Statement for SEND
- To work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the need of individual pupils
- To ensure that all staff have access to training and advice to support quality teaching and learning for all pupils

Around 30% (25 children) of our children are either at SS (SEN support) or have EHC Plans (Education, Health and Care Plans). This is above the National Average and means that all teachers expect to include children with SEND in their classes. Another 2% of the school population have additional needs that require classroom adaptations but these needs do not have a significant impact on the student's ability to learn and cause them to be considered as SEND. In 2023 -24 we supported a total of 127 children on the SEND register.

## **7. THE SEND TEAM AT ST MARY'S PRIMARY ACADEMY**

The member of staff with responsibility for SEND is Mrs Lucy Blackford (SENDCo). She coordinates all SEND activities, working in conjunction with the SEND Governor, Mrs Lauren Nightingale-Roffe. The SENDCo's responsibilities are to:

- Coordinate provision for pupils with SEND
- Liaise with and advise teachers on all SEND matters
- Manage SEND learning support assistants
- Liaise with parents of pupils with SEND
- Liaise with primary/secondary school SENDCo's, educational psychologists, school nurse, S+L therapist, play therapist, Virtual School (for CIC) and other health/special education outreach services.

The SENCo will meet regularly with other schools and outreach services and will keep herself up to date with current initiatives locally and nationally to seek out and share best practice.

## 8. HEADLINES FROM THE 2015 CODE OF PRACTICE.

- No more statements will be issued by the Local Authority. Statements have been replaced by Education, Health and Care plans (EHC Plans) which can be used to support children from birth to 25 years.
- School Action and School Action Plus have been replaced by one school based category of Need known as 'Special Educational needs Support' (SS). All children are closely monitored, and their progress is tracked termly. Those at SS are additionally tracked by the SENDCO.
- There are four broad categories of SEND:
  - communication and interaction
  - cognition and learning
  - social, emotional and mental health
  - physical and sensory.

We support children across all categories.

- We work closely with parents and children to ensure that we take into account the child's own views and aspirations and the parents' experience of, and hopes for, their child. Parents are invited to be involved at every stage of planning and reviewing SEND provision for their child.
- All children benefit from 'Quality First Teaching': this means that teachers expect to assess, plan and teach all children at the level which allows them to make progress with their learning. In addition, we implement focused interventions to target particular skills.
- We have high expectations of all our children. Children on our SEND register should make progress which compares well with the progress made by other children in school.
- We do not discriminate against any children requiring admission to St Mary's or any subsequent SEND provision - we welcome them into our school.

## 9. IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AT SS (SEN SUPPORT)

Children with SEND are identified by one of three assessment routes all of which are part of the overall approach to monitor pupil progress:

- The progress of every child is monitored at termly pupil progress meetings. Where children are identified as not making progress in spite of Quality First Teaching they are discussed with the SENCO and a plan of action agreed creating targets in a termly IEP.
- Class teachers are continually aware of a child's progress. They 'seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances', characterised by progress which:
  - 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 the child and their peers
- We use early identification assessments and qualified advisors to undertake a range of standardised tests with children. These can be used to add to and inform teachers' own

understanding and assessments of a child. We work with families if they think their child may have ASD, ADHD or other specific learning disabilities and support the assessment process.

## **10. WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN**

We aim to have good and informative relationships with all of our parents. If a child is experiencing difficulties, parents will be informed either at parents' meetings (Autumn and Spring terms) or during informal meetings to discuss the child's progress. It shouldn't come as a surprise to a parent to learn that their child is being identified as having SEND.

Once a child has been identified, the class teacher will meet the parents to:

- formally let them know that their child is being placed on SEN Support
- discuss assessments that have been or will be completed
- agree a plan and provision for the next term.

This is part of the graduated approach cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review required in the Code of Practice. Depending on their age, and their interest, the child may be invited to attend meetings. Records are kept of these meetings on the schools Provision Map system and copies are available to parents. Thereafter, parents – and children- are invited to a meeting each term to review progress made, set targets and agree provision for the next term.

## **11. PAPERWORK FOR CHILDREN AT SEN SUPPORT**

Once a child has been identified as needing SEN Support the following paperwork is completed:

- Annually, a one-page-plan or passport is used to record the child's strengths and interests, what they enjoy about school, what they find hard and what helps them to achieve. This is completed with the child and parent and acts as a guide to their class teacher. The information may be updated during the year.
- Termly, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is produced and/or reviewed. The plan records specific and challenging targets for the child to achieve in term, together with the personalised provision (which may be 1-1 or in a small group) put in place to enable the child to achieve these targets.

## **12. MOVING TO AN EHCP (EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN)**

If children fail to make progress, despite high quality and targeted support as part of the graduated approach, we may apply for the child to be assessed for an EHC Plan. Generally, we apply for an EHC Plan if:

- The child is in the care of a local authority and therefore additionally vulnerable
- The child has a disability which is lifelong and which means that they will always need support to learn effectively
- The child's achievements are so far below their peers that we think it likely that the child may at some point benefit from special school provision.

Children who we think will manage in mainstream schools, albeit with support, are less often assessed for EHC Plans. Having a diagnosis (e.g. of ASD, ADHD or Dyslexia) does not mean that a child needs an EHC Plan. If the application for an EHC Plan is successful, a member of the Local Authority will call a meeting for parents, the child and the school together with any health or social care professionals who are involved with the family. The meeting will record the child's strengths, their dreams and aspirations as well as the barriers they face. Following the meeting, the Local Authority will produce the EHC Plan which will record the decisions made at the meeting.

### **13. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Our aim is for all children to be working independently, in class, at the cusp of their potential. Children with SEND are entitled to be taught by their teacher. Teachers aim to spend time each day working with all children with SEND, individually or as part of a group. When allocating additional TA support to children, our focus is on outcomes, we aim to put in sufficient support to enable the child to reach their challenging targets, but without developing a learned dependence on an adult.

Teaching is carefully and regularly monitored to ensure that all of our pupils receive the highest quality education. The progress of all children is monitored through lesson observations; work scrutiny and pupil progress meetings. This ensures pupils with SEND are equally monitored and taught to the highest standards.

The emotional and social skill development of all children is monitored using the Thrive Approach. This assessment tool was specifically developed for use in schools and provides a framework for the precise assessment of children who have social and developmental needs and are struggling to manage at school. It helps teachers to plan focused intervention for those children whose behaviour seems to make no sense. It focuses on what lies behind the behaviour. Through targeted intervention staff are able to help children who have developmental needs on either a 1:1 or small group basis providing a high level of support to very vulnerable children. If we have a child for whom their EHCP requires intensive SEMH support the SENDCo and class teacher will liaise to create a Boxall profile for the individual child which can be shared with supporting professionals. We do not use the Boxall profile for all students in the school but it is a vital tool when working with and monitoring the SEMH development of the most vulnerable children.

The school has a range of interventions available which are listed and costed on a provision map. When considering an intervention, we look first at the child's profile of learning in order that we can select the intervention which is best matched to the child.

Targets for children at SEN Support are deliberately challenging in the attempt to close the attainment gap between these children and their peers. Interventions are often crucial in closing these gaps, so are monitored closely by both the class teacher and by the SENDCO (who monitors overall progress after the intervention).

- Interventions are planned in half term blocks
- Staff leading interventions are expected to communicate if and when a child is not making progress with the class teacher at the earliest opportunity
- A decision is then made as to whether to continue the intervention, to swap to a new intervention or to allow a period of consolidation in class.

The SENDCo monitors interventions to identify 'what works' and apply to the school overall. The SENDCo applies for High Needs Funding from the local authority to fund the additional staffing and resources

that the most vulnerable children require. The SENDCo provides this information to the Principal in order that regular Pupil Premium reports can detail the interventions used, their costs and their impact. The reports also detail vulnerable group performance including attainment and progress.

## **14. ADAPTATIONS TO THE CURRICULUM TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

St Mary's Primary Academy is access friendly. The school is on one level, with automatic doors, wide corridors and easy access toilet facilities, a dedicated Nurture space and a variety of additional breakout areas. There is a medical room and generally find that no additional adaptations to the building are necessary for children with physical disabilities.

The school has a portable 'soundfield' system which can be used if a child is identified as having mild hearing loss. Other adaptations to the physical environment will be made, as appropriate, to accommodate children with other sensory disabilities. We have some adapted keyboards, switches and associated programmes to support children with limited motor control skills.

Our classrooms are inclusive environments: we aim to create learning spaces and teach in a way that will support children with tendencies towards dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD etc... Where necessary, the curriculum is adapted to suit individual needs. Such variations are detailed in our school's Universal Offer on our website and in Individual Education Plans (IEPs). All our children access a wide ranging and challenging educational curriculum, and we recognise achievement and expertise in all curricular areas. As part of normal class adaptation, curriculum content can be made more accessible in a range of ways including visual, tactile and concrete resources.

## **15. ACCESS TO EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

All children have equal access to educational activities and after school clubs. We support many children financially to participate in such activities including residentials, instrumental music lessons and holiday clubs. Where necessary, we adapt to meet the physical and learning needs of our children. Class trips are part of our curriculum and we aim for all children to benefit from them. No child is excluded from a trip because of SEN, disability or medical needs.

## **16. STAFF EXPERTISE**

All teachers are trained and supported to work with children with SEN. We offer training and self-help opportunities through access to in-house or development courses, provision of books or guidance towards useful resources. Teachers work closely with the SENDCo and follow detailed IEPs. A number of our TAs have ELKLAN (speech and language) training which helps them to support children with communication difficulties and we hold an ELKLAN Communication Friendly Status award. We have 5 staff trained in Makaton signing which also supports language development in children and we are accredited as a Makaton Friendly setting. Every member of the teaching team has received Sounds Write Phonics Training and are able to support the development of early reading. Additionally, TAs have expertise and training in other specific interventions including; Irlens, Hamish and Milo, Essex Maths, Precision Teaching, Dyslexia and British Sign Language). If children require additional or external support that is not currently available within our Universal Offer, we seek advice, guidance and support from external and local authority services.. This includes access to Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, art nurture and Family Support Practitioners.



## **17. CHILDREN WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**

Behaviour is not classified as an SEND. If a child shows consistent unwanted behaviours, the class teacher will assess the child's needs, taking into account family circumstances and the child's known history. If the child's behaviour is felt to be a response to trauma or to home-based experiences (e.g. bereavement, parental separation) we complete a CAF with the family and support the child through that process.

If parents and school are concerned that the child may have mental health needs, we encourage parents to ask their GP for a referral to a mental health professional through the Emotional Wellbeing Hub. If the child is felt to have long term social, emotional or mental health needs (e.g. with anger management) the school offers a range of social skills or therapeutic interventions. The Academy also accesses support from behaviour specialists. The school Pastoral Team, led by Mrs Rutter, are responsible for ensuring that all referrals from staff requesting additional SEMH support are allocated to a pastoral support pathway and that the class teacher is given additional support with meeting the needs of that child.

All children's behaviour is responded to consistently in line with our Behaviour Policy, although reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate individual needs.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. We will actively investigate all allegations and, if there is cause, work with both the bully and the victim to improve their social skills.

## **18. CHILDREN WITH SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS**

Some children and young people find it difficult to listen, understand and communicate with others and may need support to develop the surprising number of skills involved. SLCN is the umbrella term most commonly used to describe these difficulties. It stands for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. Children with SLCN may have difficulty with only one speech, language or communication skill, or with several. Children may have difficulties with listening and understanding, with talking or both. Each child has a unique combination of strengths. This means that every child with SLCN is different.

Speech, Language and Communication Needs, or SLCN, are common in young children. As such we undertake the Early Years baseline assessment which incorporates SLCN skills and every child is assessed using the WELCOMM Speech and Language Assessment. This enables us to act quickly and make referrals for any children with SLCN needs.

Needs can occur as a result of hearing loss, general developmental needs or as part of a disability or medical syndrome, such as Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy or Autistic Spectrum Condition. Difficulties with talking can also present as a child's main area of need but without an obvious cause. In addition to our ELKLAN training, we work directly with NHS Speech and Language Therapists to ensure staff are able to support SLCN needs and lead additional targeted interventions when required.

## **19. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Transition into and within school**



We understand how difficult it can be for children and parents as they move into a new class or a new school and will do what we can, according to the individual needs of the child, to make transitions between classes- including from the nursery- as smooth as possible. This may include:

- Additional meetings for the parents and child with the new teacher
- Visits in a child's current setting
- Home visits
- Additional visits to the classroom environment in order to identify where the toilets are, where the pegs are etc.
- Opportunities to take photographs of key people and places in order to make a transition booklet.

Enhanced transition arrangements are tailored to meet individual needs and may include an adjusted or individual timetable.

### **Transition to Secondary School**

Transition reviews for Year 6 pupils are held in the Summer Term of Year 6. The SENDCo provides details of each child's needs to their relevant secondary school once the school place has been confirmed by the Local Authority in order to facilitate a smooth transition. The secondary school SENDCo is invited to review meetings and additional transition arrangements may be made e.g. extra visits, travel training etc.

## **20. GOVERNORS**

It is the statutory duty of the governors to ensure that the school follows its responsibilities to meet the needs of children with SEND following the requirements of the Code of Practice 2014. The school has a Governor, Ms Lauren Nightingale-Roffe, with particular responsibility for SEND who meets with the SENDCo at least termly to discuss actions taken by the school.

## **21. COMPLAINTS**

The school works, wherever possible, in partnership with parents to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting pupils' needs. All complaints are taken seriously and are heard through the school's complaints policy and procedure. In the first instance, parents should talk to the class teacher, SENDCo and/or Principal.

## **22. SUFFOLK'S LOCAL OFFER**

The purpose of the local offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. It includes provision from birth to 25, across education, health and social care. Suffolk's Local Offer is available from their website <https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/>

In addition, <https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/> is available to provide free and impartial advice and support for families. It includes information about activities and breaks available for Suffolk children with SEND as



well as information for parents about how Suffolk aims to support children through education, health and social care.

### **23. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, faith/worldview, gender or capability in all aspects of school. We promote self and mutual respect and a caring and nonjudgmental attitude throughout the school.

### **24. MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS**

The SENDCO will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. It will be reviewed every year by the Community, Ethos and Mission Committee; or before at any time, if there is new relevant legislation or guidance.