



## Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

St Philomena's School is committed to the equal treatment of all pupils including those with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Admissions Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Accessibility Plan. It applies to the whole school, including the EYFS.

This policy works towards eliminating disadvantages for pupils with SEN and disabilities by:

- Using best endeavours to ensure that all pupils (including those with medical conditions) get the support needed in order to access the School's educational provision.
- Not treating disabled pupils less favourably than their peers.
- Making reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage in matters of admission and education.
- Ensuring that pupils with SEN and disabilities engage as fully as practicable in the activities of school alongside pupils who do not have SEN and disabilities.
- Ensuring parents are informed when special educational provision is made for their child and are kept up to date as to their child's progress and development.

In drawing up this policy, the School has had regard to the following guidance and advice (in so far as they apply to the School):

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (April 2017).

### Definition of Special Educational Needs

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 them. In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age.
- Have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age by mainstream schools or early years providers.
- Are under five years old and would be likely to have such difficulties if special educational provision were not made for them.

Children will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. The School's support for those children whose first language is not English is set out in the School's English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy.

## **Definition of Disability**

A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

Not all pupils who have SEN are disabled. Not all disabled pupils have SEN.

## **Governor and Staff Responsibilities**

The governing body is responsible for determining school policy and provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

The Headteacher is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the School's SEN provision and keeping the governing body fully informed of the implementation of the School's policy in practice.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at St Philomena's School is the Headteacher. The SENCO's responsibilities include:

- Determining the strategic development of the SEN and disability policy and provision in the School, together with the governing body.
- Having overall day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN and disability policy.
- Coordinating specific provision for children with SEN and disabilities, including those who have Educational Health Care (EHC) plans.
- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the School's approach to identifying and meeting SEN.
- Ensuring that teachers are given any necessary information relating to a child's learning support needs and/or disabilities (if known) so that teaching practices are appropriate.
- Ensuring parental insights are considered by the School to support their child's SEN and disability.
- Liaising with external professionals and agencies, as appropriate.
- Ensuring that the School keeps records of all pupils with SEN up to date.

## **Identifying and Supporting Pupils with SEN and Disabilities**

The School's curriculum, plan and schemes of work take proper account of the needs of all pupils, in terms of ability, need and aptitudes, including those with SEN and disabilities. The School regularly reviews pupil progress to help monitor whether children are making expected progress. Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEN (and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having SEN). However, where the School reasonably considers that a pupil may have a learning difficulty, for example where there are early indications that a pupil is not making expected progress, the School will do all that is reasonable to report and consult with parents and the pupil (as appropriate) to help determine the action required including whether any additional support is needed, such as in-class support.

The School may request a formal assessment of a child (such as by an educational psychologist), the cost of which will be borne by the parents. Where parents wish to request a formal assessment from outside of school, they should ensure the School is given copies of all advice and reports received.

If there are significant emerging concerns, or identified SEN or disability, the School will take action to put appropriate special educational provision in place taking into account any advice from specialists. Parents should always be consulted and kept informed of any action taken to help their child, and of the outcome of this action. Due weight will also be given to a pupil's wishes (according to their age, maturity and capability).

## **High Quality Teaching**

St Philomena's School acknowledges that the needs of children are mostly met by teachers who have a good and comprehensive understanding of the needs of each individual child; teachers cater for the needs of pupils in the classroom through well thought-through differentiation in planning and delivery of the curriculum. Sometimes that differentiation is supported by a Learning Support Assistant.

In the Reception class all children are given equal opportunity to access the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning is modified to meet the individual needs of all children, including those with SEN. This could include adapting the learning environment, such as providing extra support (for example allocating adult support to a child who finds it hard to sit at group times), providing carefully chosen resources (for example chubby and triangular pencils) and ensuring all pupils are regularly observed to monitor their progress. The Reception class teacher is responsible for identification, monitoring and recording of children with SEN and for ensuring a high quality provision to meet their needs.

Dedicated learning support lessons are available if it is recognised that a child's individual needs cannot be met by in-class support alone or if such sessions are recommended by an external agency.

## **Identification**

Pupils at St Philomena's School may come under the remit of the SENCO for any one of the following reasons:

- A pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan).
- They have a Specific Learning Difficulty that has been formally identified by an Educational Psychologist.
- Standardised testing shows that they are achieving scores well below their chronological age in reading, spelling or Maths.
- They are struggling to keep up and sustain progress within the classroom.
- They are identified through class work and standardised testing to be working at a level well above average for their age.
- They have been identified as needing support in terms of emotional, behavioural, physical and sensory needs.
- They speak English as an additional language (EAL).

It is important to note that the phrase 'pupils with special educational needs' does not only refer to pupils who have an EHC plan.

## **Initial Meeting**

Once a pupil has been identified as in need of support for reasons listed above, the SENCO (or Assistant SENCO) will convene a meeting with the parent(s), pupil (if age appropriate), and relevant teachers. From this meeting agreement will be made as to the details of the school's support provision.

## **Short Term Need Intervention**

The School recognises that some pupils might need a short burst of intervention support, for example to improve spelling or reading over a short time period. In these circumstances, the pupil will be recorded on an intervention register.

Parents will be informed, but there will be no Individual Education Plan written. Parents may request a meeting with the class teacher to discuss further.

## **Provision**

Arrangements for special educational provision and support are made through the School's graduated approach to SEN support: assess - plan - action - review:

**Assess:** Once identified, using the methods detailed above, and following the initial meeting, a pupil receives an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the support of a Learning Support Assistant. IEPs are created in full consultation with the pupil and parents and reviewed at least annually for those over five years old.

**Plan:** Teachers, collaborating with the LSA, using the information gathered during assessment, adapt and differentiate their teaching, therefore making provision for the pupil's identified areas of need. In general, this will mean that classroom provision is widened to meet a greater need, rather than additional provision being created, thus ensuring proper and appropriate inclusion for the pupil with SEN. Where provision is made outside of class, this will have a clear reason and purpose, with specific desired outcomes which will be recorded on the Individual Education Plan.

**Action:** The teacher is at the centre of day to day working with all pupils, including those with SEN, even when interventions and specific provision involves one-to-one teaching away from the class. Teachers work closely with the LSA to plan and deliver all support and intervention which will mean there is a shared perception of desired outcomes. Feedback from the LSA forms part of the review process.

**Review:** Progress towards meeting planned outcomes will be tracked at least termly, in line with standard reviewing procedure, including assessing whether the gap is narrowing between pupils with SEN and all pupils. The teacher is at the centre of this process, and ideally, a termly review meeting with SENCO (or Assistant SENCO), parents, support staff and pupil (if age appropriate) will evaluate the provision laid out in the IEP and analyse the pupil's forthcoming needs. If a termly review meeting is not possible or appropriate, the SENCO (or Assistant SENCO) will hold a review meeting at least annually and will enter into communication termly with the pupil and parents in some form and record that communication. In addition, pupils with an EHC plan will receive an annual review with invited representatives from the Local Authority.

### **Screening**

All pupils from Years 1 to 6 are screened using well-established computer adaptive tests which reveal strengths and weaknesses in cognitive profiles. Information from feeder schools/nurseries is monitored and, where necessary, liaison prior to intake occurs.

All teachers are responsible for helping to meet a pupil's needs (irrespective of any specialist qualifications or expertise). All staff are expected to understand this policy so that the School can identify, assess and make provision to meet those needs.

### **Recording progress of pupils with SEND**

Any child receiving help through SEN support is recorded as having 'special educational provision' on the school's register of SEND.

The School recognises that some pupils with a SEN may also have a disability. The School will do all that is reasonable in order to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can adequately cater.

The School will record the progress of, and any support for, pupils with significant learning difficulties or disabilities or where they have an Education Health Care Plan. This will be recorded by way of an Individual Education Plan. This is drawn up in consultation with the pupil's teacher, the SENCO (or Assistant SENCO), the pupil and their parents. The Individual Education Plan contains key information such as:

- Progress and attainment levels.
- Targets and outcomes sought.
- Teaching strategies.
- The additional or different provision of support in place.
- Involvement of any specialists or professionals.
- Information the pupil would like to share about themselves, for example strengths, weaknesses, diagnosed learning difficulties, disabilities or medical conditions and what these mean to the pupil and how these affect them.
- Date the Individual Education Plan was drawn up and date for review.

The Individual Education Plan may be amended as and when circumstances change and at the request of the pupil, parent, teacher, or SENCO (or Assistant SENCO).

The pupil (subject to their age and understanding), together with their parents and teachers, review the plan regularly and the child is encouraged to take ownership of it and to set their own targets.

The School will measure the overall progress of pupils with SEND at the end of each key stage to see how much progress they make compared with that of their peers.

### **Early Years Provision**

The School monitors progress of all pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Reception class teacher will discuss with parents any concerns they may have about a pupil's needs and/or progress, in accordance with this policy.

### **Admissions**

The School welcomes all children who can make the most of the opportunities offered and can flourish in its caring environment. The School's Admissions Policy aims to eliminate from the admissions process, as far as possible, any substantial disadvantages which may be encountered by applicants with disabilities. The School will treat every application from an SEN and disabled pupil in a fair, open-minded way.

The School endeavours to ensure that it is able to fully support the needs of all prospective pupils. Parents of children with disabilities, SEN or learning difficulties are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the School before the School considers the application for a place. Before an offer of a place is made, the School will assess whether it is able to adequately cater for and meet any SEN and disabilities (if known) through discussion and meetings with parents, consideration of any professional reports and references from previous schools, assessment of the pupil at a taster day, as appropriate.

An offer of a place may not be made if the School determines, following consultation with parents, that they are unable to meet and provide for a child's needs, or if the school deems that its capacity to meet the needs of its pupils has been reached (reasonable adjustments notwithstanding). The School will always consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The School's Admissions Policy can be found on the School website. It applies equally to all prospective pupils and details how the School supports those applicants with SEN and/or a disability.

### **Withdrawal**

Where, after all reasonable adjustments have been made or considered, the School feels that it is unable to accommodate a disabled pupil or meet their needs, the School may require parents, after appropriate consultation, to withdraw their child. Fees in lieu of notice will not be chargeable in these circumstances and the acceptance fee returned.

### **Pupils with an Education Health Care Plan (EHC plan)**

The needs of the majority of pupils with SEN will be met effectively through the School's SEN support. However, where the child or young person has not made expected progress despite the SEN support in place, parents and the School have the right to ask the Local Authority to make an assessment with a view to drawing up an EHC plan for their child. Parents are asked to consult with the School before exercising this right. The School will always consult with parents before exercising this right.

If the Local Authority refuses to make an assessment, parents have a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Health, Education and Social Care Chamber). The School does not have this right of appeal.

Where a prospective pupil has an EHC plan, the School will consult with the parents and the Local Authority (where appropriate) to ensure that the provision specified in the EHC plan can be delivered by the School. Any additional services that are needed to meet the requirements of the EHC plan may need to be charged, either directly to the parent or to the Local Authority if the Local Authority is responsible for the fees and the School is named in the EHC plan. In all other circumstances charges may be made directly to parents, subject to the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The School co-operates with the Local Authority to ensure that relevant annual reviews of EHC plans are carried out as required.

### **Accessibility Plan**

A copy of the School's Accessibility Plan can be provided upon request by writing to the Headteacher. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

### **Bullying and Behavioural Issues**

The School recognises that disabled pupils or those with SEN may be particularly vulnerable to being bullied. The School's behaviour and anti-bullying policies make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment and that appropriate sanctions will be applied to any pupil who displays inappropriate behaviour.

The School also recognises that bullying or other matters such as bereavement can lead to learning difficulties or wider mental health difficulties. Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN but where there are concerns, an assessment may be undertaken to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues.

The School recognises that children with SEN and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and additional barriers can therefore exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

The School's Safeguarding Policy will be followed if there are any safeguarding concerns relating to a child.

### **Entitlements to Additional Time and/or Support In External Assessments**

Children who have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty may be entitled to support, such as additional time and/or modified provision, to complete external assessments. Parents should speak with their child's class teacher or SENCO (or Assistant SENCO) with regard to any application for additional support as soon as reasonably practicable. The SENCO (or Assistant SENCO) will process applications for appropriate examination access.

### **Concerns**

The School will listen to any concerns expressed by parents about their child's development and any concerns raised by children themselves. Parents must notify their child's class teacher if their child's progress or behaviour gives cause for concern.

### **Limitations**

St Philomena's School's Admissions Policy states:

'St Philomena's School is non-selective on the basis of academic ability, but applicants must show suitability to become a member of the School community. Admission to the School is at the Headteacher's discretion'.

### **Complaints**

It is hoped that close home-school liaison will minimise the need for complaints concerning learning support, but should they arise parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher at the school in the first instance.

We undertake to reply to the complaint within twenty-four hours wherever possible.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the class teacher, then the matter is referred to the SENCO (or Assistant SENCO).

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the SENCO (or Assistant SENCO) then parents should follow the school's Complaints Procedure which is published on the school's website.

### **Review**

This policy is ratified by the Board of Governors to ensure the School meets the needs of those pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.