

Special Needs and Disability Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency in approach to supporting children with special educational needs across the school and centre, through the journey from identification of need, to assessment and provision. All children in the school and centre are encouraged to be successful learners through the provision of a stimulating and challenging environment suitably adapted to meet the needs of each child and with the support of experienced, caring and professional staff.

Some children have needs additional to the general provision and we are committed to providing added support to ensure these needs are met.

We believe that:

- all children, including those with additional needs, have a right to access a developmentally appropriate curriculum;
- where suitable and appropriate provision can be put in place children have the right to be educated in the community they feel at home in;
- the early years are a foundation stone in every child's development and we have a responsibility to identify and support children with additional needs to ensure progress in their learning and integration into the setting;
- encouraging children to be independent learners, take risks and make mistakes, will build their self-assurance, self-confidence and self-esteem and support them in learning to get along with each other;
- good teamwork and communication between staff is a most important resource to support the special needs work in the school and we work together as a team, sharing professional judgements and information to ensure our understanding of each individual;
- parents know their children and understand them in the family context; practitioners will respect their deep knowledge of the 'whole child' and appreciate how distressing it can be as parents learn that their child may have additional needs.

Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (S.E.N.D)

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

Children have a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- A. has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- B. has a disability which hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or

mainstream post-16 institutions” (*Special Needs and Disability Code of Practice, January 2015*)

These needs are, “generally thought of in the following four broad areas of need and support:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs.”

Though it should be remembered that, “individual children often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time”. The “provision made for a child should always be based on the understanding of their particular strengths and needs and should seek to address them all....This will help to overcome barriers to learning.” (*Special Needs and Disability Code of Practice, chapter 5, section 5.32 – 5.33, page 85*)

It should be noted that children with English as an Additional Language (E.A.L.) are not regarded as having special needs.

The Needs of Children

Children need to feel secure, valued and important in the eyes of caring and supportive adults, in this way their self-belief will flourish and they will remain curious and inquisitive learners. However self-esteem can be a particular barrier for children with special needs and/or disabilities. A positive atmosphere is fostered where all children, abilities and achievements are valued and respected. To achieve this we must be sensitive to the different needs of each child and know them as individuals, then we are able to build on their strengths and celebrate their success. We adopt a variety of strategies to support an atmosphere of self-worth such as:

- the language used to children with S.E.N.D. is adapted to support comprehension;
- children are supported to take risks according to their own abilities and praised for their achievements, recognising that what might be easy for one child could be much more difficult for another;
- children are taught to accommodate and respect difference and disabilities are explained as the need to inform arises;
- resources are provided that include representations of people of all abilities, including those with special needs; these might include jigsaws, small world figures and books.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for the management of Special Educational Needs within the school. She will keep the Governing Body informed about children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities with a termly report. The Governing Body work in co-operation with the staff to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special education needs. In addition any significant changes in the policy and how resources have been allocated to children with special educational needs over the year are shared.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), is responsible for co-ordinating the special needs work, with the Nursery team and for the day to day operation of the Special Educational Needs Policy. The SENCO’s responsibilities include

- co-ordinating provision for children with S.E.N.D.;
- liaising with and advising colleagues;

- managing and supporting nursery assistants;
- contributing to and collating the records and registers of children with S.E.N.D.;
- maintaining regular contact with parents of children with special educational needs;
- liaising with external agencies including educational psychology services, health professionals and voluntary services.

Staff

When children start Nursery, whether in the Up to 3s' or Nursery School, they are placed in a group and allocated a keyworker, with whom they usually stay throughout their time at Nursery, until transition to Nursery School at 3 or when they move on to Primary School.

Keyworkers are a powerful resource because he or she can:

- work with parents to settle the child;
- gather information from the parent about the child's experiences;
- have daily contact with parent and child which gives the opportunity for a valuable ongoing relationship throughout the child's time at Nursery;
- collate the child's individual profile to which all staff contribute by:
 - collecting evidence of children's development through examples of work or activities, including their interaction with key people and other children;
 - recording observations when working with children using the 2simple program on the iPad;
 - support the implementation & assessment of any specific targets.

We consider teamwork and communication amongst staff as the most important resource available to support the special educational needs work in the school. We believe a whole school approach is vital and support for individual children is planned to meet their specific needs. This may include employing a variety of strategies, for example, using staff meetings to share information and targets and to ensure consistent implementation of strategies by all staff, and individual or small group work both in Nursery session and during group times.

Identification, Assessment and Provision

When a child has attended Nursery for 6 weeks, keyworkers will assess children initially to place them on the Pupil Tracker. This can indicate specific areas, experiences or skills which children need to develop, or areas of concern. In order to gather information it may be necessary to undertake further assessments, with parent's prior permission.

It is most helpful for any additional needs to be identified as soon as possible to enable strategies to be implemented and to minimise any associated frustrations.

Information may be gathered from a number of different sources such as;

- prior identification from professionals such as Health Visitors, Social Services, or Speech and Language Therapists;
- the parents informing the school of a child's special need;
- from observations made of the child in school by members of the Nursery team;
- more detailed assessment such as the Speech, Language and Communication Development Monitoring Tool.

If concern is raised about a child, staff, led by the Senco, will have a period of gathering information and monitoring progress.

A Graduated Approach

Using the *Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach* as required by the S.E.N.D. Code of Practice, January 2015 (Chapter 5, Section 5.39 – 5.46, page 87,)

The key-worker system provides the main screening process which helps to identify children with special educational needs and initial observations by staff may indicate specific areas, experiences or skills which children need to develop, or areas of concern. Our first phase will ensure that observations and interventions are provided to monitor and support children's progress, in these target areas. These children are not classified as having Special Educational Needs as we recognise that when children start Nursery School at three years of age or the Up to 3s' Nursery as babies and toddlers, they are at different stages of development and have received different experiences in their early years.

This stage may take different forms. For example, for some children it may simply be specific ongoing observation, other children will participate in structured individual or group activities. Progress will be monitored and at the end of each term most children will have made satisfactory progress and will no longer require monitoring. For other children it may be felt that, despite differentiated learning opportunities, they require additional support or intervention. Information might be gathered from some of the following;

- the child's learning and development shown over a period of time as shown on their 2simple profile;
- the parents view of their child and, where possible the child's view of her or himself;
- checks on 2 year olds such as the Progress Check, the Health and Development Review at age 2 or the Integrated 2 Year Check;
- advice, reports or information from health professionals.

Through discussion between parents, the Senco and key-worker a decision will be made on what action is needed to help the child to progress in the light of earlier assessment. This action will comprise individualised arrangements for learning and teaching which may include:

- the provision of different learning materials or special equipment.
- some individual or group support, or staff development and training to introduce alternative strategies.
- access to LEA support services for one-off or occasional advice on strategies or equipment.
- staff training to provide effective intervention.
- the writing of an Individual Plan/Play Plan which will highlight specific areas for the child and adult to focus on.

Should the decision be that a child has needs that are additional to the general provision in the Nursery and Centre's differentiated provision, a one-page profile will be devised and an Individual Plan/Play Plan will be produced with parents and key-worker. It may be that at this time it is decided to seek the advice of external agencies that will provide additional strategies and interventions that can be put in place. The Individual Plan/Play Plan will focus on up to three key targets and will be discussed and agreed with parents.

The plan will be continually kept 'under review', but is formally reviewed up to three times a year. Parents will be consulted as part of the review process.

A child may make satisfactory progress and no longer require support. However if, despite receiving an individualised programme and/or concentrated support they are not making progress, they may benefit from the involvement of external support services. These can provide more specialist assessments, give advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials, and in some cases provide support for particular activities.

The triggers for referral for seeking help from outside agencies could be that the child:

- continues to make little or no progress in specific areas.
- continues working at an early years curriculum level substantially below that expected of children of a similar age;
- has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's own learning or that of the group, despite having an individualised behaviour management programme;
- has sensory or physical needs, and requires additional equipment or regular visits for direct intervention or advice by practitioners from a specialist service;
- has an ongoing communication or interaction difficulty that impedes the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

When the setting seeks the help of external support services, those services will need to see the pupil's records in order to establish which strategies have already been employed and which targets have been set and achieved.

The external specialist may act in an advisory capacity, provide additional specialist assessment or be involved in teaching the pupil directly. The resulting Individual Plan/Play Plan for the pupil will set out new strategies

In co-ordinating with other professionals the Senco will generally take the lead, though co-ordinating day to day provision will remain the responsibility of keyworker.

Education, Health and Care Plans (E.H.C.P.)

For a very few children the help given by the early education setting through Early Years Support will not be sufficiently effective to enable the child to progress satisfactorily. At this point parents and Nursery will consult with any external agencies involved with the child in order to consider whether a multi-disciplinary assessment may be appropriate. Where a request for an assessment is made to a Local Authority (L.A.), the pupil will have demonstrated significant cause for concern and the setting will provide evidence to the L.A. The L.A. may decide that the degree of the pupil's learning difficulty and the nature of the provision necessary to meet the child's special educational needs is such as to require the L.A. to determine the child's special educational provision through an integrated Education, Health and Care Plan (E.H.C.P.). The time-scale from requesting assessment to the L.A. and the decision to proceed is six weeks. If the L.A. begins formal assessment, information is gathered from parents, the school, Educational Psychologists and other professionals. When considering whether to proceed the L.A. must have regard to The Code of Practice. If the L.A. does decide to write an E.H.C.P. it will describe the child and the help he or she needs to meet those needs. This should take no more than 20 weeks.

For children under five E.H.C.P's are reviewed every 6 months, the Senco and class teacher of the receiving primary school will also be invited to attend a final review in the early years setting, to allow them to plan appropriately.

Parental Involvement

The staff throughout the Centre are committed to fostering good, collaborative and respectful relationships with parents, recognising that this gives the best outcome for their children. We believe our key-worker system provides a sound foundation for building a good relationship with parent and carers. For many parents the realisation that their child may have special educational needs can be difficult and worrying, we endeavour to be supportive, working in partnership with parents and provide opportunities for informal discussion in which views of the child are shared. When we discuss Individual Plans/Play Plans with parents we talk about how they could be involved in helping their child achieve their targets and record this on the plans.

Permission will always be sought from parents before any referrals to outside agencies are made for example to the Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist or for referral to the Early Years Planning and Review Meeting.

Other Agencies

The Nursery and Children's Centre has established close partnerships with a range of professionals and we value their expertise, which helps in developing strategies to use in the setting. Drop-in sessions by the Speech and Language Therapy Service are held in the Centre for parents to access, with support from keyworkers if desired. The Health Visiting Team is also available for advice and support.

We liaise with the Child Development Centre at Westhampnett, where children might attend for assessment and therapy from Paediatricians, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech Therapists.

As a maintained setting, we attend the Early Years Planning and Review Meeting where children from the locality are discussed. The outcome can be that an Educational Psychologist is asked to visit the setting to compile a report in conjunction with parents and staff, in addition to offering advice and strategies.

The centre liaises with a number of other agencies which include the Sensory Support Team, Social Workers.

Transition

Transition between settings and within the setting are managed carefully to minimise disruption and ensure children transfer successfully.

Good relationships with other schools have been developed, which helps to support the transition of children with Special Needs to their new school. When a child with additional needs is transferring to school we invite the school concerned to meet with parents, key-worker, Senco and any other professional involved to ensure a smooth transition for the child, setting targets as necessary. If it seems visits to the receiving school would be helpful we arrange this with key-workers to support the child if parents feel it would be beneficial.

Receiving schools are sent information and copies of special needs reports, with parents' permission, to help them understand the needs of the children and to make preparations as necessary. We encourage schools to visit the setting as we find this helps with a smooth transition. Where an E.H.C.P. is in place parents are informed of their options with regard to school preference. If a special school is being considered parents are given the opportunity to visit with the Senco or key-worker if they wish.

Local Authority and the Local Offer

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, January 2015 requires Local Authorities to produce a Local Offer setting out clearly what provision they expect will be available from health, education and social care. Additionally each school will produce a Local Offer showing their provision for children with S.E.N.D. which is available to view online.

Governors

The Governing Body oversees the work of the setting and endeavours to ensure necessary arrangements and resources are put in place for children with S.E.N.D.

Complaints

Should parents have concerns regarding the provision for children with special needs their first point of contact should be the keyworker. Thereafter any complaints by parents may be made, to the Headteacher and then to the Board of Governors and finally to the Local Authority.

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To be reviewed: Summer 2019