

SEN POLICY

Rationale

The school aims to enable all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of aptitude or disability. It seeks to enable pupils with special educational needs to overcome their difficulties, develop any special talents and to develop with confidence, receiving appropriate levels of support. Pupils learn when they feel valued and their achievements are recognised. All departments can provide the opportunity for each pupil to join in lesson activities and provide an acceptable response. The co-operative work of the learning support staff and subject teachers within a framework of overall school policy is the way to achieve a whole school response to meeting the special real educational needs of our pupils.

The school's policy on Learning Support incorporates attention to the learning of children across the full ability range. In this school, pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) are:

1. Pupils with moderate or specific learning difficulties.
2. Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties.
3. Pupils with physical disabilities.
4. Pupils with medical disabilities

The School also aims to meet the needs of pupils with particular gifts. (See Gifted and Talented Policy, available from the School Office).

Aims

1. To identify pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties and provide a graduated response of individual and group support, where appropriate, to meet their needs under the Code of Practice 2001.
2. To ensure that all staff know which pupils have special educational needs and how best to meet them.
3. To be actively involved in planning and putting into practice schemes of work which meet the full range of pupils' abilities and needs.
4. To monitor and review the progress of pupils identified as having SEN.
5. To provide school-based support and advice which addresses the professional needs of individual teachers, departments and tutors.
6. To co-ordinate the work of specialist staff engaged in educational psychology, ESTMA/ISS, speech therapy, sensory impairment, learning support, careers guidance, and other specialist support services.
7. To form close links with the families of pupils with special educational needs.
8. To liaise with external agencies for statemented pupils and those undergoing the statementing process.
9. To evaluate the work of the learning support department.

1. Basic information about the school's special education provision.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy.

The SENCO's responsibilities include:

- i. An initial screening of Year 7 pupils to identify pupils with difficulties and special educational needs.
- ii. Maintenance of records and a Special Needs register across all years for pupils with SEN
- iii. Liaison with subject teachers about pupils whom they later identify as having difficulties.
- iv. Close liaison with departments for individual education plans and provision maps for pupils identified on SEN register.
- v. Liaison with external agencies for pupils identified as being at the different Stages (School Action Plus, those pupils undergoing the statementing procedure and statemented pupils).
- vi. Co-ordination of study programmes, including the provision of additional support for pupils with statements of SEN or additional funding.

- vii. Teaching the Additional Literacy Support programme and Curriculum Support programme.
- viii. Chairing the school's Inclusion Training.

The SENCO is supported by 9 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who work from between 10h/week to full time. There is also administrative support.

Mrs Dickason is the Governor with the overview of SEN. She comes into school twice a term to discuss SEN issues, policy and progress.

St Mary's Catholic School is now a five-form entry mixed comprehensive. The school has a small Learning Support base equipped with appropriate I.T equipment. Parents of pupils with long term physical or other mobility problems should be aware that parts of the school are old, and have many flights of stairs, so access may be a difficulty

The school's admissions policy (see Admissions Policy) is laid down in detail. However, if there is a potential pupil with particular special needs, the school will liaise with both the School Psychological service and the feeder primary school through Mrs Vickers. Parents will be advised if the School believes it cannot meet the needs of a particular pupil.

2. Information about the school's policies for identification, assessment and provision for all pupils with SEN

The school has the same objective for all its pupils, that each one should realise their full potential.

Pupils are placed in tutor groups, trying to maintain the same balance between gender and ability in each one. The curriculum is organised to support the learning of all pupils with learning difficulties, whether or not they are subject to the provision of ~~Earmarked Pupil Funding~~ or a Statement. The emphasis is on the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills within mainstream classes with specialist support where necessary. Funds identified for SEN are used to create additional smaller groups in Mathematics and English, plus Additional Literacy Support groups at Key Stage 3 and Curriculum Support groups at Key Stage 4. Help is available to pupils throughout the school but the emphasis is on concentrating support at Key Stage 3 with the aim of addressing difficulties as early as possible.

In Year 7, pupils are generally taught in mixed ability form groups. In English and Maths the time is blocked in two half year groups, allowing the 15-20 lowest ability students to form a sixth set to develop literacy and numeracy skills for those with learning difficulties. There is often an LSA supporting in these groups. Similarly there is a top set for the most able, while the rest of the year are in parallel groups. For IT, classes are split in two groups. In Years 8 and 9 pupils are in mixed ability groups, apart from one "gifted" group. All departments are expected to devise suitable programs of study within their schemes of work and to differentiate appropriately for pupils with SEN

At Key Stage 4 pupils are expected to follow courses leading to GCSE and other recognised examinations. Core subjects are set according to ability and pupils with learning difficulties are advised on appropriate courses. NVQ and college courses are utilised as appropriate for SEN Pupils. Gifted pupils are provided with extension material and activities (see Gifted and Talented Policy.) Sixth form courses are available for all pupils, generally at AS and A2-level and N.V.Q. levels 2 and 3.

Pupils are assessed in a number of ways, including via liaison with our feeder primary schools. Each incoming pupil is visited, giving the opportunity for discussion with their teachers in person. Primary school records provide more written information about past problems, and give SATs predictions and final results. Special Educational Needs are identified and liaison with outside agencies is continued. A "moving up club" provides extra school visits to St Mary's for students identified as requiring additional support with the transition to a secondary school environment.

Once at St Mary's, pupils sit the NFER Cognitive Abilities Test, a standardised spelling test and a standardised reading test which give an overall view of the year and provide further help in identifying any

pupil who has special needs or who is under-achieving. Further assessments may then be undertaken with the results discussed with the student's parents.

All pupils are monitored regularly through the school's periodic monitoring system, and information about each subject is sent home. Provision Maps and IEPs are sent to parents and staff and they are reviewed with students and parents annually. Pupils supported by the ESTMA/ISS service are reviewed in meetings with parents every half term

The SENCO liaises with form teachers and Learning Coordinators. training/information sessions with all the staff in INSET and staff meetings. Departments are expected to develop strategies for high achieving pupils and those with learning difficulties. (See the School Development Plan on Teaching and Learning.)

Identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs and the Graduated Response

A pupil may be identified as having Special Educational Needs by primary school, parents, subject or form teachers. Problems identified in school are initially monitored by the teaching staff, who collect information. If needs are more than can be dealt with by normal differentiation in class, or it is felt that they warrant further attention, parents are consulted and the matter discussed.

School Action - A

The SENCO is responsible for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision with subject teachers.

- The pupil is put on the SEN register;
- SENCO gathers information from subject teachers (and others);
- Talks to the pupil and assesses the pupil, as necessary
- ensures that targets are drawn up and incorporated into a Provision Map
- monitors and reviews the pupil's progress with parents, staff and the pupil him/herself;
- a link LSA is allocated to the student

School Action Plus - P

This is characterised by involvement of specialists outside the school. Again the SENCO takes a leading role, working closely with the subject teachers to offer advice and strategies.

- ensures the child and parents are consulted;
- ensures that support programme is drawn up, based on the advice of outside specialists, e.g. educational psychologists and advisory teachers;
- SENCO monitors and reviews child's progress with outside specialists.

If the child does not progress satisfactorily at School Action Plus, despite appropriate arrangements and support, then the school and outside agencies must consider whether the child would meet the criteria for statutory assessment by the LA. Pupils are designated at "Q" while being assessed, and "S" once they have a Statement.

The SEN register is in two parts, recorded on a spreadsheet. The first part is the main register and consists of those pupils on A, P, Q and S. It is circulated to all teaching staff, Learning support staff and the Caretakers. Lunchtime support staff are organised by one of the LSAs who passes on necessary information. The second part consists of pupils who have come off the main register but who still need an eye kept on them.

Partnership with parents

The school values its partnership with parents, appreciating that they are the lynch pin in enabling pupils with SEN to achieve their full potential. In consequence the SENCO, Learning Coordinators, form tutors and LSAs regularly phone and/or meet parents regarding progress and reviews, in addition to normal parents' evenings. Students on the SEN register are allocated a link LSA who is their first contact if a problem/issue arises. The Link LSA spends time with their named students to help ensure they meet their annual SEN targets, and they give support and guidance when needed. Meetings may be held with/without

pupils being present, to ensure all necessary topics of discussion can be covered and that issues are fully understood. In addition parents have a responsibility to communicate any issues or concerns they have and to fulfil any obligations they may have under home/school agreements.

Additional support or exceptional funding is provided by Learning Support Assistants for those pupils with statements of special educational needs. This additional support is allocated by the SENCO, in the light of the pupil's needs. Additional support is used with pupils in their mainstream classes wherever possible. Some work (individual reading and spelling program) is not appropriate for in-class support, and pupils are withdrawn. Timing of these lessons and which subjects they come out of depends on discussion between staff and parents.

Support for pupils without additional funding comes via smaller groups in the lower band for English, Maths and Additional Literacy Support. The Learning Support Department adopt a variety of strategies to support the learning of pupils with learning difficulties with an emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, particularly at Key Stage 3. These strategies include:

- Reading programmes;
- an Additional Literacy Support lesson, once a week, to address literacy for some pupils in Y7 to 9;
- an whole school approach to spelling;
- access to specialist equipment;
- access to individualised learning software throughout the school;
- individual or group support where appropriate for Literacy and Numeracy.
- At Key stage 4, selected pupils are invited to follow a Curriculum Support option in order to give additional help with lessons and coursework. In addition to academic work in mainstream classes, the Learning Support department endeavours to develop pupil confidence and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Specialist Link LSAs trained in Maths, English, Science, ASD, speech and language, work-related learning, SPLD and behaviour management.
- Lunchtime homework/social communication clubs run by members of LS department.
- Short withdrawal programmes.

The Governors evaluate the success of pupils with SEN as part of their evaluation of the whole school. This includes plotting individual pupil GCSE results, FFT, Raiseonline and tracking average reading and spelling as pupils come in to the school. The LS department evaluate the success of learning support strategies through questionnaires to parents, students and staff.

If parents have complaints about SEN provision, they should initially contact the SENCO directly and if the matter cannot be resolved they should then follow the usual curriculum channels via the line management system.

3 Information about the school's staffing policies and partnership with bodies beyond the school

All staff are given the opportunity to go on courses each year. The SENCO has Diploma in SpLD. Another teacher has been awarded the Certificate in SpLD.

The SENCO maintains regular contacts with Educational Psychologists, the ESTMA/ISS service, Advisory teachers for SEN, Hearing disability and Behaviour, Speech therapists, the Educational Welfare Officer, Connexions and the Careers service and the Medical service via the School Nurse as well as autistic spectrum advisory teachers, social workers, Visual impairment advisory teachers, Hospital schools, the Probation service, and the Curriculum and Language Support Service. Contacts depend on the needs of pupils at any given time.

The SENCO has links with other primary and secondary schools in the area through termly cluster meetings, which she chairs. She is the local cluster representative at the District Support Group. She attends the East Herts secondary SENCO meetings and termly SEN training run by the LA.

Date of review: January 2009

Next Review: January 2012

Responsible Governor Committee: Curriculum