



SEND INFORMATION REPORT March 2025

St Mary's Catholic School is coeducational comprehensive secondary school for 11-18 year olds, judged 'Outstanding' in OFSTED 2024 for Quality of Education and Behaviour and attitudes. There are currently over 1120 students on roll and 12 % of these students have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Staff at SMCS strongly believe in the uniqueness of every student and the importance of meeting their individual needs. We are also aware that high quality teaching is a crucial foundation for outstanding education of all our students and it is our first response in supporting students with SEND.

We are fully aware, however, that some students may require more support than others and that we must recognise their needs and adjust the teaching methods so that these students achieve their full potential. We also acknowledge that many students will have special education needs at some point in their school career, or specific disabilities which may affect their learning. Depending on their needs, they may be provided with help throughout their time in school, or benefit from additional support for a short period of time, during which they will be equipped with the understanding and strategies of overcoming the barriers to learning, caused by their SEND.

At SMCS we have high expectations of our students, with the aim of producing independent learners; therefore, we focus on providing all students with strategies for dealing with their needs in a supportive environment, whilst giving them meaningful access to the National Curriculum.

Consequently, we aim to:

- enable all students to realise their true potential and flourish;
- ensure students become confident individuals and live fulfilling, loving and respectful lives, making a successful transition into adulthood, whether this be employment, further or higher education or training;
- use our best endeavours to make sure students with SEND get the support they need;
- ensure all students with SEND engage in activities alongside other students who do not have SEND;
- have a designated person responsible for coordinating SEND throughout the school;
- involve and include parents in all the decisions being made about their child's special educational needs provisions;
- prepare and display SEND Information Report on the website;
- ensure all arrangements for the admission of disabled students (including accessibility plan) are in place.

The St Mary's Catholic School SEND Information Report provides information about the implementation of the SMCS SEND Policy. The report is reviewed and updated annually. Should any changes arise during the year, the report will be updated as soon as possible.

How does the school know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

The school will assess a student's need through:

- assessment data, such as Key Stage 2, 3 or 4 data, additional diagnostic tests and reports, e.g. CATS, regular reading age reports, assessment point data, EHCP reviews, Student Profile reviews,
- transition information, such as visits to primary schools prior to entry, in-school visits, induction and taster sessions,
- teacher observations,
- parental meetings,
- regular assessments of progress by subject teachers (4 assessment points per academic year) for all students and identification of those whose progress is causing concern (this may also include progress in areas other than attainment; for example, social needs).

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a student is recorded as having SEND.

When deciding whether a child has a special educational need or disability and whether additional support is required, the desired outcomes are initially explored. These will include expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the student and their parents are considered. This is then used to determine the support that is required and whether it can be provided, by either adapting the core offer or by determining whether something different or additional is needed.

If a parent/carer believes that their child has SEND or should parents/carers have any concerns about their child, they are advised to contact the form tutor and/or head of year to discuss these in the first instance, via the school email: info@stmarys.net The form tutor or head of year would then seek the SENDCO's advice.

How will school staff support my child?

At SMCS, we consider all teachers to be teachers of students with SEND and we currently provide HQT, incorporating the needs within all four broad areas of need:

- communication and interaction (speech, language and communication need),
- cognition and learning,
- specific learning difficulty (dyslexia, dyspraxia, learning difficulties),
- social, emotional and mental health (ASD, ADHD).
- All students with SEND have access to and

benefit from:

- form tutor and pastoral team,
- HQT providing relevant differentiation and adaptation in lessons,
- reviews of students' progress to assess, evaluate and plan future provisions by their subject teachers in cooperation with the Learning Support Department.
- Interventions depending on the individuals and their needs.

At SMCM there are five part-time Learning Support Assistants who are trained to deliver interventions such as: reciprocal reading; literacy and numeracy intervention; EAL support; emotional support and wellbeing support. Learning Support Assistants may also support students on an individual basis (when a student is in receipt of Local High Need Funding or as a requirement in the student's EHCP). In some cases, small-group, short-term interventions are provided if a need is identified. There is also an Assistant SENDCo and SENDCo who coordinate the support for students with SEND.

All teachers and support staff who work with a student with SEND are made aware of their needs, the outcomes

sought, the support suggested, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required - Student Profiles are created and reviewed with students and parents termly. The effectiveness of the support and impact of interventions on a student's progress is regularly reviewed by the SENDCo, and pastoral and academic teams.

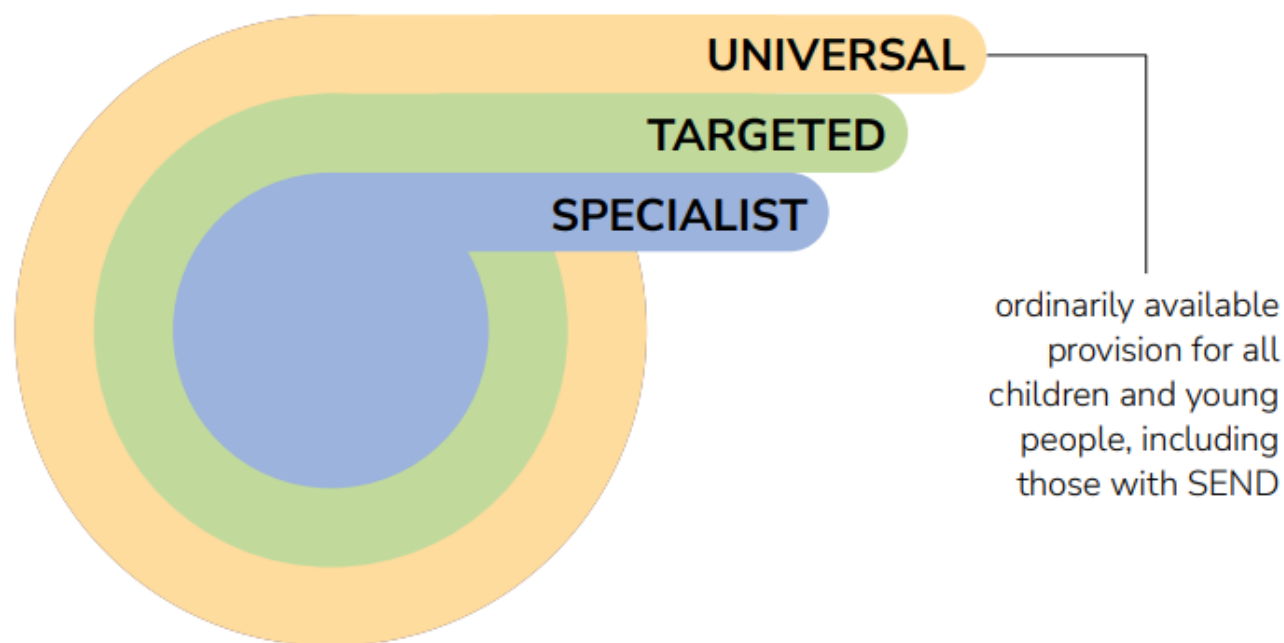
How will I know how my child is doing?

Information about students' progress is shared with parents/carers on GoForSchools and reported more formally during the academic year. There is also a parents' evening once a year, where parents are able to book appointments with all teachers and the SENDCO. Parents are able to email the form tutor, head of year or the SENDCO (info@stmarys.net), if they require information at any time during the school year.

How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

To meet the individual needs of a student with SEND, the school follows the Hertfordshire's Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance* [Hertfordshire Ordinarily Available Provision](#).

*In Hertfordshire we have levels of support for children and young people in education, according to their needs. The levels start with ordinarily available provision and move through a range of other targeted and specialist provisions. We call this the 'graduated offer' - an approach which is all about making sure that children and young people, including those with SEND, get the right support at the right time. Mainstream providers can support most children and young people



SMCS understands that every child or young person is an individual with a unique profile as a learner - their strengths should be celebrated and the things they need more help with or find difficult should be well understood. We recognise that children and young people learn at different rates and are likely to require different types of support to succeed - some will find learning and access to learning harder than others:

Wave 1 – ALL STUDENTS High Quality Provision which involves careful planning and adaptation by subject teachers and leaders.

Adapting the physical environment to meet the needs of all children and young people. This includes:

- considering how to improve access to the physical environment to make it fully inclusive
- planning to improve access to the curriculum, and to written information
- considering cognitive overload when selecting tasks and material
- being aware of lighting in rooms such as the use of natural light, glare from the board, or where a member of staff stands in relation to the light
- designing displays that are visually accessible and less cluttered to reduce sensory overload
- using a pale background, accessible font styles or live subtitles on the whiteboard when appropriate
- being aware of sensory factors such as light, temperature, sounds, touch and smell and mitigating when appropriate
- taking account of children and young people's individual needs when planning seating arrangements

Providing high quality provision

Understanding the nature and impact of children and young people's needs and responding to them.

This includes:

- incorporating identified strategies that provide an appropriate learning experience for all children and young people into planning
- implementing strategies in response to individual learning needs and barriers
- considering if a strategy is working and, if not, how it could be changed
- giving children and young people time to process information before being asked to respond
- varying the pace and order of activities or utilising their interests to maintain engagement and attention
- carefully planning the use of skilled additional adults where they are available to maximise impact on learning, and ensure that independence is promoted.

Using evidence-based approaches to adapt teaching to meet the needs of all children and young people and promote independence. This includes:

- engaging children and young people in high quality interactions
- supporting children and young people to think about their own learning, develop a range of strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate, and have the skills to pick the most suitable strategy
- teaching appropriate self-help skills, skills to manage routines and study skills
- providing opportunities to practice and develop independence
- using graphic organisers to organise knowledge, concepts, and ideas
- using explicit instruction approaches
- providing a visual scaffold to support children and young people to independently complete a task and reviewing the need for them over time
- explicitly teaching the meaning of unfamiliar words, pre-teaching or using objects of reference if appropriate and displaying key vocabulary with visuals
- providing a written scaffold such as a sentence frame, recording frame or word bank and continually reviewing the need for them over time
- using technology where appropriate to effectively scaffold learning, promote engagement, and provide opportunities for practice
- making technology tools available to assist access to text, writing and translations and teaching children and young people how to use them.

- **Wave 2 – STUDENTS IDENTIFIED** to receive short term targeted interventions.
- **Wave 3 – Students with EHCP or those for whom Wave 2 did not bring the expected outcomes** – LSA support, curriculum adjustments.
- Students with SEND also have access to pastoral mentoring.
- All students identified by teaching staff as requiring exam concessions at the end of KS3 (HT6 of Year 9)

undergo testing for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) by a JCQ approved assessor. Based on the results, the SENDCO applies for the concessions and, once they are approved, the student and the parents/carers will receive a letter with confirmation as to what those EAA concessions are.

What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

SMCS is committed to promoting good mental health and emotional well-being and provides support through the following: form tutor and pastoral team support and PSHEE programmes included in the curriculum; peer-mentoring; positive relationships between parents, children and school; ELSA – emotional literacy support assistant; school counselling service as well as support from external agencies such as: CAMHS, Safe Space, Herts Children's Services etc.

Should a concern arise with regard to changes in the behaviour of a child, views of the child and their family are always sought. Further details can be found in the SMCS Behaviour Policy, published on the school website.

What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

See Hertfordshire Local Offer for services. These can be found at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer

The SENDCO at SMCS also works with the following agencies to provide support for students with SEND: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS); Visual Impairment Team; Hearing Impairment Team; Social Communication Needs team (Autism Outreach); SafeSpace Counselling Service; Educational Psychology Service; Speech and Language Therapy Service; Targeted Youth Support and Family Solutions/Family First.

What training have the staff, supporting children and young people with SEND, had or are having?

The SENDCO has completed the NASENDCO qualification and participates in termly meetings with the area SEND Lead as well as SEND Briefings organised by the LA. All teachers are teachers of children and young people with SEND and receive appropriate and regular training organised by the SENDCO during INSETs – this year staff received training on graduated approach and HQT, dyslexia support, ASD and ADHD. The Learning Support Assistants have received Precise Monitoring Training. Two members of Staff (including the SENDCO) completed STEPS training in May 2021 and all teachers received STEPS training in September 2021. Further bespoke department led training and whole staff SEND training regarding specific targeted adaptation to learning techniques and understanding ASD/ADHD and other specific needs is delivered regularly and often

How will you help me to support my child's learning?

- Parental consultation - EHCP reviews, Student Profile reviews, signposting additional and external support.
- Contact with the pastoral team - form tutor, head of year.
- Virtual Learning Environment – SMHW, MS Teams, Virtual Parents' Evening.

How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's education?

Early discussions (pre-transition, concerns raised by staff, careers meetings in y9 and y11) take place with the student and their parents/carers when identifying whether they need special educational provision. These conversations aim to ensure that:

- everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty;
- parents' concerns are accounted for;
- the agreed outcomes sought for the child are fully understood by all parties;

- an action plan of reasonable adjustments is agreed as part of the graduated response*;
- students with SEND and their parents understand where additional help and guidance can be found (local offer).

Notes of these early discussions are added to the student's record and given to their parents. Parents are formally notified when a student is placed on the SEND register and out-of-lesson support is provided.

***Graduated response**

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 2015 identified the need for a graduated approach towards the identification of children who may have SEND. This is a circular model using **assess, plan, do, review**. We adopt a graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review.

How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

All extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all students, including our before-school and after-school clubs (in a non-pandemic climate) and appropriate adjustment or additional support is provided to ensure all students have equal opportunities to access these. All students are encouraged to take part in activities such as school sports day and inter-house events, as well as charity events and special workshops etc. Medical support is in place where necessary. No student is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEND. Where students with SEND have specific requirements, parents are consulted and invited to contribute to the planning of trips or activities.

How accessible is the school environment?

St Mary's is built on a large, physically challenging site and currently some areas and buildings are not fully accessible. The school will make every effort to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and encourages parents and students to discuss any requirements they may have with the member of SLT Coordinating SEND (email info@stmarys.net). Individual risk assessments connected with the student's disability are conducted when required.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with a disability to access the school site and the curriculum. Auxiliary aids can be provided and, if necessary, will be discussed with Hertfordshire's Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) team since all Hertfordshire schools comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Who can I contact for further information?

Should students or parents/carers be unhappy with any aspect of provision, they should discuss the problem with a class teacher or form tutor in the first instance. Anyone who feels unable to talk to the teacher, or is not satisfied with the teacher's comments, should contact the SENDCO at info@starys.net.

In the event of a formal complaint, parents are advised to contact the Head teacher or a governor if they prefer. The SENDIASS (sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk) is available to offer advice at <https://www.hertssendiass.org.uk/home.aspx>. The parents of students with disabilities have the right to make disability discrimination claims to the first tier SEND tribunal if they believe that our school has discriminated against their children.

They can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding: exclusions; provision of education and associated services; making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services. Complaints about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the local authority.

How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

We believe that smooth transition relies on effective communication between educational settings, parents and other professionals. Moreover, students and their parents are integral in this process and their views should be considered at any stage. Information is shared in the following ways:

- sharing information between primary and secondary school, or between secondary and post-16 educational settings
- career advice from the school career advisor and y9 and y11 consultations for students with EHCP provided by YC Hertfordshire Services for Young People, Children's Services Hertfordshire County Council
- information evenings
- Where required, we will arrange for students to come and visit us in school, so that they become more familiar with the school and key members of staff who will be supporting them.

Year 6 into 7 transition

- We provide a transition booklet, which includes a map of the school, photographs of key areas and people in the school, information about timetables, rules and uniform and answers to commonly asked questions.
- Additional induction sessions (and individual visits). These opportunities provide a chance for the new students to meet other young people in a smaller setting and to start to make connections.
- Information coffee morning for parents in order to explain how we will support their child and what is included in the local offer: [The Hertfordshire Local Offer](#)

How are the school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs? We need to discuss this in more detail so that I put relevant information on the website.

- Notional budget
- HNF funding distributed accordingly to needs
- Local High Needs Funding provided by application to County in exceptional circumstances
- Where a student with SEND qualifies for the Student Premium Grant, additional funding is also allocated to support the student.

How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

Decisions for supporting a student with SEND are made in consultation with students, parents/carers, teaching and support staff, and relevant external agencies.

How can I find information about the local authority's Local Offer of services and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disability?

Details of the local offer can be accessed at:
<http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer>