

SEND Information Report



MacIntyre Academies
Discovery Academy

This Version Updated March 2025

Review Date: March 2026

Review Owner: Principal with input from LAB Parent Representatives

The SEN information report will be updated annually to reflect any changes within the Academy. The report states the current provision within Discovery Academy. In this document we will refer to individuals on the autism spectrum as "Autistic" in line with research-based recommendations for good practice - [Which terms should be used to describe autism? Perspectives from the UK autism community - Lorcan Kenny, Caroline Hattersley, Bonnie Molins, Carole Buckley, Carol Povey, Elizabeth Pellicano, 2016 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

1. The kinds of SEND that are provided for in our Academy

Discovery Academy is a co-educational academy for Children and Young People (children and young people) aged 9 -19 years with autism and / or a social, emotional or mental health diagnosis. Some children and young people may also have additional disabilities but ASC or SEMH must be their main barrier to learning. The children and young people attending the academy are those who need a low arousal, autism specific setting with high levels of adult support. We build our provisions around our children and young people and our commitment to our ambitions as a school:



Our post 16 unit is subject to its own admissions process and pupils in year 11 with us or from other settings will have to request consideration through the annual review process involving their local authority. Our post-16 cohort tend to be pupils who would struggle with noisy, busy and socially demanding/complex larger college settings. These pupils are most often Autistic with co-existent anxiety.

2. What are Discovery Academy's policies for identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs?

Regarding Admission

Children and young people must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that refers to a diagnosis of ASC or SEMH in order to be considered for admission. The Academy works closely with the child's placing authority to ensure the academy can meet the needs of the children and young person as outlined in their EHCP. Before admitting any child or young person the academy will receive consultation papers from the local authority. If needs can be seen to be met from this paperwork the child or young person will be observed in their current placement and usually at home as well to confirm that the child or young person's needs can be met in the academy. If this is agreed then we will inform the SEN education department.

It is important to note that the school will consider both the needs of the individual in the context of pupils already on roll, in order to inform a best interest decision. This can mean that although we may have the right provisions in the school for a child, placing them with other very similar or vastly different children in a class may not be considered in the best interests of either child e.g. the school would have to carefully consider whether placing a child with a high level of hyper-vigilant behaviour with another child who is very similar in profile and behaviours would be in the best interests of both children and the efficient education of the school community.

Regarding pupils on our roll

If staff suspect that a child has a previously unidentified/undiagnosed difficulty such as a specific learning difficulty like Dyslexia, the school will explore the best approach to investigate these concerns and in some cases commission screening and/or diagnostic testing. It is important to note that the school is responsible with its funding (which is public money from local authorities) and so it will need to balance the educational benefits of such investments for the child with the cost in some cases.

3. Arrangements for consulting parents of children with SEN and involving them in their children's education.

The academy has regular opportunities for parents and carers to meet with staff and be involved in their child's education. We organise transition meetings with parents prior to their child entering the school and wherever possible take the views of the parent and child into account in plans to support our pupils. We then carry out the following throughout the year to ensure parents are kept fully informed about their child's education.

- Parent/carer meetings and/or coffee afternoons in all 3 terms (Health and Safety Permitting e.g. illness outbreaks)
- Written reports including internal data Terms 2 and 3
- Annual reviews/EHCP meetings hosted at school or online if this supports families to attend
- Parent/Carer input into Individual Pupil Personal Plans

- All statutory reviews held at school (i.e. CLA meetings, PEP meetings etc)
- Home visits can be carried out by the class teachers, support staff, or Therapists to support and/or inform the work carried out in school (where safe to do so)
- Class Charts for rewards and during a transition period, Class Dojo and Class Charts for communication which both provide two-way communication between staff and parent/carer
- For some pupils there are specific arrangements for daily contact with families through class phones or email updates
- Family representation on the Local Advisory Board
- Seeking parent opinion through consultations and questionnaires.

4. Arrangements for consulting young people with SEND and involving them in their education

Our children have a range of communication difficulties and in some cases can find expressing their thoughts and feelings very challenging. However, we do all we can at Discovery to facilitate their involvement and understanding of their education and learning including the following:

- Every child in our Academy has a Personal Plan (sometimes referred to as a MALP). Wherever possible these are co-produced with children and families in order to ensure they are kept current, supportive and ambitious.
- We have a broad team of academic and pastoral staff in order to give pupils a significant amount of support for their barriers to learning.
- Student Council where children share views and help to make some decisions about what happens in the academy
- Capturing the pupils' voice in our EHCP and annual reviews. This is normally carried out in the children's communication mode (normally using the computer or dictating but some will write their own)
- Staff carry out regular formative assessments activities and discussions with the children, talking to them about what they are learning and helping them to complete self-assessments and reflect on their learning and plan next steps.
- Arrangements for assessing and reviewing pupils' progress towards outcomes whether they are EHCP targets or those generated by systems or accredited pathways.
- Where possible we involve pupils in the process to recruit staff

5. Arrangements for assessing and reviewing pupils' progress towards outcomes.

The following areas are assessed and reported on for the children and young people:

- National Curriculum and Adult curriculum (with particular focus on PSHE, communication and functional skills.)
- Therapeutic goals are monitored by the relevant specialist and reported back on annually in line with the annual review schedule

- IEP targets (taken from agreed EHCP targets and academic baselines) based around children's ability to access a wider range of effective strategies in order to access learning, communicate and self-regulate in times of over-arousal – whatever form this can take.
- Behaviours
- Emotional Wellbeing (Pilot from February 2023)
- Qualifications including GCSEs, Entry Level and/or vocational pathways.
- Work sampling and photo observations through our third party platform "Evidence for learning"
- SOLAR academic tracking to measure progress against curriculum goals and milestones

The academy uses a number of ways to report these findings including:

- Individual Progress review reports
- Evidence for Learning journals which the students update and are shared with parents termly
- Pupil progress and assessment forms (showing progress towards educational targets)
- Educational reports
- Therapeutic reports
- Accreditation assessments and/or portfolio work
- Discussion at meetings and reviews
- Any other identified accessible format to meet the needs of a pupil

6. Arrangements for supporting pupils moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood

Once it is decided that a child or young person is joining us we will liaise closely with their current placement / setting and with families to ensure we organise a tailor-made transition package. This often involves staff from Discovery Academy visiting the current provision to see the children and young person and talk to the staff in these settings. Staff can also carry out home visits if this is something the families would like. We can then arrange for the child or young person to visit Discovery Academy, supported by their current staff. Our staff can, if necessary, prepare photographs and booklets of new staff and rooms at the Academy so children and young people can look at these in their own time. Children who move age phases within the academy are supported with social stories and photographs/symbols of their new classroom and staff members. This supportive nature of our inward transition has a high success rate and receives positive feedback from families and pupils.

For young people leaving us at year 11, or aged 18 or 19 we look at transition plans in our annual reviews. We work closely with the young people and their families in researching and looking at provisions and opportunities that may be suitable for the young person's adult life. The Academy will then ensure that the young person's curriculum and functional living skill activities are designed to support them towards their adult placement.

Careers interviews (sometimes called Careers, information advice and guidance or CIAG) are provided to year 11 pupils in the autumn and to post-16 learners half termly.
<https://www.thediscoveryacademy.org/careers>

For those transitioning onto other placements at any stage we will work with the new placement to arrange a suitable transition plan. This can involve visits supported by our staff and social stories to prepare our children and young people for change. We will work closely with families to ensure that they feel fully supported and ready for the move. Some families prefer to take charge of this for themselves and if you do, we ask that you inform us and keep us informed so that we do not duplicate work and/or applications. We also hold a meet the provider event annually so that pupils and families can meet a range of providers in the region to discuss next steps courses, education and training.

7. The approach to teaching pupils with SEND and how adaptations are made to the curriculum and learning environment of pupils with SEND:

Our class sizes are generally 8-10 pupils working with 3 adults. Where ratios seem higher, this is often due to special funding arrangements that are often specific to a child and should not be an assumed position.

We are a mid-sized special school with up to 110 pupils on roll. This generally means our environment is quieter and less 'busy' than larger or mainstream environments. We have standard classrooms, access to IT hardware and software for pupils to support adjustments and a team of specialists such as SaLT or Occupational Therapy (OT) who will work with class teams and students to ensure provision is accessible and plans are integrated.

Staff differentiate the National Curriculum in order to meet the individual needs of each children and young people. Our young people are generally below age-related expectations at their point of entry and we design their provision to close those gaps in learning over time.

Our curriculum is planned over a stage of learning. This is broadly in line with a pupil's key stage but for some pupils who have missed large chunks of learning or with complex barriers this may not always be the best fit initially.

In some subjects (particularly lower down the school) themes of learning (or programmes of study as we refer to them) are likely to last up to 7 weeks across a half term. As pupils get older and more capable, this may decrease to a couple of weeks if pupils are ready and the pathway demands it e.g. accredited courses that require a number of learning hours and modules across the course.

Subjects and modules are taught through individual direct teaching, small group work and whole class learning experiences. Skills are generalised in different contexts in line with our ambition to support pupils to be ready for life so that they grow to understand the connections between academic learning and the wider world. Staff plan opportunities for young people to learn to cope

with change, increase their resilience, to make choices and to problem solve. The high staffing ratios we have support this work.

Where possible we teach in a way that is practical, interactive and functional for our children and young people. We concentrate on the following areas throughout all of our teaching as these are the main areas of deficits for our children and young people.

- Intellectual and Learning Skills (thinking and be able to learn)
- Communication Skills (Receptive and Expressive)
- Wellbeing (Emotional, Sensory Regulation, Behaviour)
- Social Skills (Interactions, Relationships and Social Understanding)
- Independence (personal care, social experiences and ability to be independent in situations)

We also use a number of different strategies, found to be effective for individuals who are autistic, to facilitate our learning. These include:

- Sensory integration programmes. We employ a part time OT to work directly with the children and young people on their targets and to offer advice and guidance to staff, as well as training all staff to deliver these programmes where needed.
- Speech and Language Therapy and approaches
- Low arousal environment with high staff ratios
- Our pastoral structure includes compassionate schools coaches who work within the THRIVE model to support pupils with their social development and family footings facilitators who try to support families and ensure we are ‘joined up’ in our understanding and approach for our children and young people.
- Specialist support and advice from the Education Psychology Service we commission
- We may additionally use third party providers such as other clinical psychologists or other paediatric professionals where agreed with family and other professionals

8. The expertise and training of staff to support pupils with SEND, including how specialist expertise will be secured

All staff receive robust, autism focussed training including the following:

- Understanding autism and what it means to be autistic to ensure empathy and compassion in our approach coupled with ambition for every children and young people
- Training in sensory integration and occupational therapy for Autistic children and young people as a collective and individuals
- Positive Behaviour Support strategies
- Team Teach de-escalation and restrictive physical intervention
- Restorative Scripting and Practice to reduce conflict and encourage empathy and restoration

- The Solihull approach for Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Practice in our Academy to ensure we can reach our most vulnerable learners who may have a complex history and lived experience

We observe classes regularly and meet with teachers and HLTA's to recognise any training needs that staff or classes may have.

We liaise closely with Warwickshire SENDAR, health teams and social care personnel to ensure that we meet the statutory needs of our pupils as outlined in their EHCP or statements. We also use the skills of a number of outside providers to enrich our curriculum such as, gymnastics, boxing, forest school and some individual programmes such as equine engagement.

If a specific admission would necessitate specific training this would be reviewed on a case by case basis to ensure it would be viable and impactful, in the context of doing all we can to make reasonable adjustments under statutory guidance.

9. Evaluating the effectiveness of the provision made for pupils with SEND

The academy has a development plan and a self-evaluation report in line with the Ofsted framework.

The Principal and SLT carry out regular scrutiny and reporting on teaching and learning and attainment and progress. This in turn is reported to the Executive Principal.

The academy is governed by Discovery Local Advisory Board (LAB), a committee of the MacIntyre Academies Trust Board. The Local Advisory Board provide support and challenge to the Principal and carry out monitoring visits. The Local Advisory Board reports to the Trust Board who have overall responsibility for the academy. A Scheme of Delegation details the authority delegated from the Trust Board to the Local Advisory Boards.

The Principal reports half termly on all aspects of the school to evaluate effectiveness. LAB meetings occur six times a year.

The Principal reports to the MacIntyre Academies Trust CEO on school improvement matters through monthly 1:1 meetings and Bi-monthly school review meetings.

10. Where can parents and carers find information about the local offer

Information about the local offer in this country can be found on the Warwickshire County Council web page [SEND Local Offer – Warwickshire County Council](#). There is also a link on the Discovery Academy website to the local offer.

For other areas please follow the link (correct at time of review)

Solihull [Solihull Local Offer | solihull.gov.uk](#)

Leicestershire [What is the Local Offer | Leicestershire County Council](#)

Coventry [Coventry's Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Local Offer – Coventry City Council](#)

11. Appendix 1 - Glossary of Acronyms:

SEN(D) – Special Education Needs (and Disability)
NC – National Curriculum
SLT – Senior Leadership Team
H&S – Health and Safety
CLA – Children Looked After
PEP – Personal Education Plan
TA – Teaching Assistant
HLTA's – Higher Level Teaching Assistant
WCC – Warwickshire County Council
LAB – Local Advisory Board
MAT – MacIntyre Academies Trust
OT – Occupational Therapy
SaLT – Speech and Language Therapist
ASC or ASD – Autistic Spectrum Condition (or Disorder – less used now)
SEMH – Social Emotional and Mental Health
PHSE – Personal, Health and Social Education
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
SENDAR – Special Educational Needs and Disability Advice and Review