

St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School



Special Educational Needs Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

At St. Margaret Ward R.C. Primary School, we seek to promote the academic, spiritual and personal development of every child in a happy, welcoming and inclusive Christian environment. As a Catholic school, we are committed to offering a high quality education in which Christian values are taught and practised, as reflected in our Mission Statement. We seek to provide a high quality academic education for all pupils according to their needs, and to develop attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility.

2. DEFINITION OF 'SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS'

We believe that all children have individual educational needs and that teaching and learning opportunities ought to be differentiated as much as possible in order to cater for these individual needs. However, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) face barriers that prevent them from learning at the same rate as their peers, and/or require specialist provision beyond that which is offered to children of the same age in their school.

The official definition of SEN, according to the SEN Code of Practice, remains as:

"Children have special educational needs if they have a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them. Children have a *learning difficulty* if they:

- a. have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b. have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority."

(SEN Code of Practice, 2001)

According to the SEN Code of Practice (2001), *special educational provision* is:

"... educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area."

(SEN Code of Practice, 2001)

By the term 'disability', we refer to the Disability and Equality Act (2010):

"A person is considered to have a 'disability' under the Disability and Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment; and the impairment has a *substantial* and *long-term* effect on their ability to perform day-to-day activities."

Disability and Equality Act (2010):

At St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School, we agree with the SEN Code of Practice (2001) that children for whom English is an additional language (EAL) must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty¹, but we do acknowledge that in some cases, additional educational provision may be made in order to overcome linguistic barriers.

Equally, we do not regard children who are gifted and talented in certain curriculum areas to have SEN², in that they do not experience a *difficulty* in learning. However, we do recognize that for these children, additional educational provision is required in order for them to remain challenged and interested in their learning.

Any pupil at some stage within their school career may develop SEN on a temporary basis, whereas for other pupils, they may begin their education with existing long-term SEN. The level of SEN will vary from one individual to another, as will the nature of need. We would consider a child to have SEN if they face barriers to learning due to:

- Moderate learning difficulties in more than one curriculum area;
- Specific learning difficulties (i.e. unique to one curriculum area, but would impact on *all* learning, e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia);
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- Social and communication difficulties (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder);
- Speech and language difficulties (e.g. articulation difficulties, poor understanding of language);
- Physical and medical needs³;

^{1, 2} Indeed, that is not to say that a child with EAL or gifted and talented status cannot have SEN of some variety, in which case they would equally hold SEN status and the necessary educational provision would be made, e.g. a child who is gifted and talented may also be autistic and require additional educational provision in order to access learning in the mainstream classroom.

³ This refers to physical and medical needs which impinge on the child's learning. For example, a child with mild asthma would not be considered to have SEN unless it had an impact on his learning, whereas a child who required

- Sensory needs (e.g. vision impairments, deafness).

A child with SEN might experience difficulties in one of these areas, or a combination of difficulties, as is often the case for children with severe and complex needs.

This policy ensures that the provision for children with SEN takes account of the type and extent of difficulty experienced by the child. We acknowledge that any obstacle to learning will prevent a child from realizing their full academic potential, and that it is our responsibility as educators, to minimize these barriers.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of this policy are:

- To identify, assess and make provision for children with SEN as early as possible, in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice (2001).
- To ensure that the procedures for identifying children with SEN are known and understood.
- To highlight the responsibility of all teachers in identifying and teaching children with SEN.
- To differentiate the curriculum, teaching and learning opportunities to enable equal chance of success in lessons.
- To work in partnership with the governors.
- To provide a learning environment which is conducive to the needs of children with SEN.
- To emphasise the importance of staff training in order to appreciate and support the needs of pupils with SEN.
- To understand the importance of setting termly targets with children who have SEN, which are both challenging yet attainable.
- To understand the importance of accurate record-keeping for children with SEN and the transfer of information when children move to another school.

specific equipment or adjustments to his learning environment due to a medical condition, would be considered to have SEN.

- To highlight the necessity for parental permission before making referrals to external services or requesting any assessment that is beyond the norm of the classroom.
- To work in partnership with parents, maintaining open channels of communication, providing timely updates and feedback on their child's progress.
- To encourage active involvement from the children themselves in meeting their own needs.
- To maintain close links with agencies and services whose professional advice and recommendations are called upon for children with SEN.
- To maintain adequate and up-to-date SEN resources.
- To follow the SEN guidelines and recommended provision as outlined by Trafford Authority.
- To nurture a friendly and non-discriminatory Catholic environment, in which the children of our school feel welcome, respected, safe and able to learn.
- To support the Every Child Matters agenda within the school.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

At St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School, we recognize that the provision for children with SEN is the responsibility of the school as a whole. It is the responsibility of all staff to be familiar with this policy. The responsibilities within designated roles are as follows:

a. The Headteacher

The responsibilities of the Headteacher are as follows:

- To appoint staff and allocate roles and responsibilities to staff so that the special educational needs of pupils are met.
- To liaise with staff, SENCo, external agencies, parents and pupils.
- To report to governors on the issues regarding children with SEN.
- To ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met within the school.

b. Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

The responsibilities of the SENCo are as follows:

- To play a key role in delivering the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision.
- To oversee the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy.
- To monitor the needs of children with SEN, together with the Headteacher and class teachers.
- To assist with and advise on the teaching and assessment of children with SEN.
- To advise on strategies and resources to support the learning of children with SEN.
- To oversee the termly writing and review of individual targets for children with SEN.
- To maintain well-organised records on individual children with SEN.
- To coordinate annual reviews for children who receive funding as part of their individual SEN provision.
- To ensure that the provision for pupils with SEN is mapped.
- With the Headteacher, to oversee the expenditure of pupil premium funds, for children who have SEN.
- To coordinate intervention programmes and ensure that their effectiveness is assessed.
- To meet regularly with the Headteacher to discuss the needs of individual children with SEN and any other pertinent issues regarding SEN.
- To lead the review of the school's SEN policy.
- To make referrals to and liaise with external agencies and services in order to seek advice and recommendations to support the learning of children with SEN.
- To meet with parents and pupils to discuss needs and progress.
- To obtain parental permission in order to seek advice from outside agencies or pursue assessments beyond the norm of the classroom.
- To report to governors as requested by the Headteacher.
- To lead staff training on SEN matters in school and coordinate external training opportunities for staff.
- To work in conjunction with the class teachers, teaching assistants and SEN support assistants.
- To keep abreast of current relevant issues in SEN and maintain up-to-date professional knowledge of SEN through reading, research and attending appropriate related external courses.

c. Class Teachers

The responsibilities of the class teacher are as follows:

- To identify children in their class who may have SEN and bring these concerns to the attention of the SENCo.
- To know which pupils in their class have SEN and understand their learning needs.
- To keep well-organised working records of children with SEN in their class.
- To write and review challenging (yet attainable) termly targets for children in their class.
- To direct and manage the teaching assistants in their class, in order for them to provide optimum support to children with SEN.
- To ensure that other staff in the classroom are aware of the needs of children in their class.
- To provide learning experiences which are appropriate to the needs of the child.
- To create a learning environment which is conducive to the needs of each child in the class, in which all children feel safe, respected and able to learn.
- To attend appropriate staff training, as directed by the Headteacher and SENCo.

d. Teaching Assistants / SEN Support Assistants

Under the direction of the class teacher and SENCo, it is the responsibility of the teaching assistant to:

- Implement activities and learning programmes as directed by the class teacher and/or SENCo.
- To support children in class or by withdrawing individuals and small groups.
- To attend staff training as directed by the SENCo.
- To supervise other children in the class when the class teacher is elsewhere teaching those with SEN.
- To keep records of interventions and children's work, as requested by the SENCo.
- To approach the class teacher with any concerns that they may have regarding the learning needs or progress of the children they support.

e. The SEN Governor

A named governor is to have responsibility for the implementation and development of the SEN policy. Specifically, they are required:

- To have up-to-date knowledge about the school's SEN provision, including funding.
- To know how resources are deployed within the school (including personnel).
- To ensure that SEN provision is an integral part of the School Development Plan.
- To ensure that the financial resources are available to carry out the SEN policy.
- To ensure that the quality of SEN provision is continually monitored.
- To ensure that the SEN policy is subject to regular evaluation and review.
- To liaise with the Headteacher and SENCo on the above.

5. ADMISSIONS

No pupil will be refused admission to school on the basis of his or her special educational need. In line with the SEN and Disability Act we will not discriminate against children with SEN and/or disabilities and we will take all reasonable steps to provide effective educational provision. Regardless of SEN or disability, a child will be offered a place within the family of St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School if:

- a. A place is available (in conjunction with our Admissions policy);
- b. The parents wish for the child to attend our school;
- c. The child's SEN can be met in a mainstream setting;
- d. Other pupils will not be disadvantaged;
- e. Resources will be used efficiently and effectively.

It is essential when registering a child that the parent/carer informs the school of any previously identified special needs. This enables us to collect all relevant information in advance and establish suitable provision prior to the child attending the school.

6. ACCESS FOR CHILDREN WITH SEN AND/OR DISABILITIES

a. Access to the school environment

St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School is on a level site, with wheelchair access points to allow entry in all parts of the school building. Low-level steps are found to gain entry to the school hall, however, wheelchair users can access the hall from a separate external door.

At St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School, we are prepared to make reasonable adjustments to allow the building and surroundings to be more accessible to individuals with SEN and/or disabilities. We take recommendations and advice from Trafford's SEN Advisory Service (SENAS) regarding matters of accessibility for individuals, and ensure that we are fully compliant with the latest Disability Discrimination Act.

b. Access to the school curriculum

All children have access to all National Curriculum subjects at the appropriate stage. We strive to overcome barriers to learning and enable access to the curriculum through:

- Differentiation of teaching and learning opportunities to match the ability and learning styles of children;
- Use of TAs to provide support to groups and individuals within lessons;
- Withdrawal of small groups and individuals to work on set intervention programmes or focus on group/individual targets (by a teaching assistant or class teacher);
- Access to resources to support pupils with specific difficulties;
- Alternative means of accessing the curriculum through ICT and use of specialist equipment;
- Use of positive behaviour modification strategies (see our Behaviour policy);
- In-service training for all staff on meeting the needs of children with SEN and/or disabilities.

At St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School, our aim is for all children to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, meeting their educational, emotional, social and spiritual needs. We are prepared to make reasonable adjustments by differentiating our teaching and providing learning opportunities which are inclusive of every child in the class.

c. Access to the wider life of the school

We strive to be a fully inclusive school and understand the positive impact that extra-curricular opportunities can have on all learners. All pupils whether they have SEN and/or disabilities or not will be involved in the wider life of the school, including:

- Access to differentiated homework;
- Class trips and residential visits;
- Extra-curricular clubs during and outside school hours;
- Swimming lessons;
- Extra-curricular sports activities during and outside school hours;
- Plays and productions;
- School and class masses;
- Extended provision (e.g. breakfast club, Bright Stars after-school club).

No two children with SEN and/or disabilities are alike, and therefore provision to accommodate the needs of the child will be agreed in joint discussion with the pupil, the parents, the Headteacher and any other agencies involved (e.g. the trip provider on a school visit). Staff will be considerate of the needs of children with SEN and/or disabilities when planning class trips. We will seek advice from the local SEN Advisory Service regarding potentially contentious issues and we will ensure that we are compliant with the latest Disability and Equality Act.

7. RESOURCES

For children who have a Statement of SEN or have provision at Enhanced School Action Plus level, the school receives an amount of funding which is decided by the Trafford SEN Assessment Team, according to the severity of the child's needs. This money enables us to employ SEN/teaching assistants to work on a 1:1 basis with individual children, whose needs would perhaps not be otherwise met in our mainstream school setting. Occasionally, where appropriate, funding for individuals may be pooled together, allowing us to (for example) employ a full-time teaching assistant to support two children who have similar needs. Pooling of funding or resources is done at the Headteacher's discretion and follows the advice of the SEN Advisory Service. Any additional monies remaining from the funding of individual pupils can be used to purchase specialist equipment or resources to benefit

the learner (e.g. assistive technology items, software, etc). A detailed breakdown of the funding for individual pupils can be found on their individual provision maps.

For children who do not receive individual funding (i.e. for children whose SEN are at the level of School Action (Plus) or School Monitoring), any monies which the school receives for SEN are spent in the following ways:

- A vast proportion of funds is spent on teaching assistants, which enables us to have one teaching assistant in each class, who are instrumental in supporting children with SEN.
- The employment of other non-classroom based teaching assistants, who deliver intervention programmes to children with SEN.
- The allocation of teaching assistants to our Earlybirds groups, to teach children with literacy and numeracy difficulties, outside school hours.
- The provision of a teacher to tutor individual children with SEN in Years 5 and 6, in preparation for secondary school.
- The provision of a teacher to teach our 'Booster Group' intervention programme to Year 6 children with literacy and numeracy difficulties.
- Training of staff (on an individual or whole-school basis).
- The purchase of SEN resources, including assistive technologies (e.g. software to aid writers with literacy difficulties).

For those children with SEN who qualify for pupil premium funds, part of the monies allocated to that child will contribute towards additional interventions that are targeted to their individual needs, either in a small group or on a 1:1 basis.

The effectiveness of resources and interventions is reviewed at the end of the school year. However, the progress of children with SEN is closely monitored, and adjustments would be made to resources throughout the school year if it was felt that they held little impact.

A budget is allocated for the purchase of SEN resources each year (i.e. non-human resources). The school's SENCo is responsible for this budget and will utilise funds to purchase resources and equipment that will be of benefit to many children. Expensive purchases will need to be agreed with the Headteacher and any other members of staff upon which it may impact (e.g.

it would be prudent to discuss an SEN reading scheme with the school's Literacy Subject Leader).

8. IDENTIFICATION, CATEGORISATION, ASSESSMENT AND REVIEWS OF CHILDREN WITH SEN

a. Identification of children with SEN

Children may be identified as having SEN by the following routes:

- A class teacher voices their concerns to the school SENCo about the poor progress of a child and/or other difficulties that pose a barrier to the child's learning (e.g. speech and language difficulties, behavioural issues);
- A parent raises concerns with the class teacher or school SENCo, about the progress of their child and/or any difficulties that they perceive to prevent their child from learning;
- Systematic tracking of school assessment data by the school SENCo and Senior Management Team, identifying any children who are falling behind the attainment of their peers and/or making inadequate progress.

Once reasonable concerns have been raised with the school SENCo, the following process ensues:

- The class teacher (with the SENCo, if necessary) arranges a meeting with the child's parents, to discuss their concerns. This gives parents the opportunity to share reasons why their child is having difficulties (e.g. disruption at home, medical needs, etc).
- At the next SEN review, the child is placed at the appropriate level of intervention, according to their level and type of need (as agreed by the class teacher and SENCo).
- If specialist advice is required, the school SENCo will contact and refer the child to the necessary agencies (only with parental permission).
- The SEN of the child will be reviewed each term (see section 8c, 'Review').

b. Categories of SEN

At St. Margaret Ward RC Primary School, we have the following categories of SEN:

- **School Monitoring:** Children for whom staff have minor concerns (regarding their learning, behaviour, social skills, etc), whose difficulties are short-term in nature. They may receive interventions in school as a short-term solution.
- **School Action:** Children who experience difficulties in their learning (and/or behaviour, socialisation, communication, etc), whose attainment is behind that of their peers and are not felt to be making adequate progress. These children receive in-school interventions.
- **School Action Plus:** As per the School Action category, but the child is in receipt of an intervention which is unique to them. This additional provision may be in the form of specialist advice (e.g. Educational Psychology, SENAS input, etc) or specialist resources or equipment in school (e.g. dedicated laptop, assistive technology, etc).
- **Enhanced School Action Plus:** The school receives funding for educational provision which is unique to that child. This is given as an interim measure for children whose educational needs are acknowledged to be demanding and worthy of specialist support, but are not necessarily long-term in nature.
- **Statement:** For children whose needs are "long-term and pervasive in nature". School receives funding for specialist educational provision (e.g. additional support, resources, equipment, etc), which is usually in the form of a dedicated teaching assistant for the child.

c. Assessment of SEN

The assessment of children with SEN follows the same procedure and policy as all children in our school (see 'Assessment policy'). Children may be identified as having SEN on the basis of routine assessments in school, which all children are subject to.

However, on occasions, it can be appropriate and necessary to carry out assessments on children to help us diagnose specific learning difficulties. For example, for a child who is felt to be dyslexic, it may be helpful to assess the child using a dyslexia screening test within school, to give us a better idea of where the child's exact difficulties lie.

It is often necessary to seek specialist advice from services in the local area, who may wish to carry out their own assessment of individuals in order to gauge a better understanding of their learning needs. For example, an educational psychologist may pursue a series of assessments which investigate a child's cognitive ability, in order to underpin exactly where their learning difficulties lie. Parental permission is required in order to refer a child to these services.

d. Reviews of SEN

SEN reviews are conducted three times a year (i.e. once per term), following each half-term break: in November, February and June. The reviews are conducted for children at all levels of SEN (see 8b 'Categories of SEN'). At each review, the child's progress towards existing targets is assessed, and a new set of targets is given accordingly. The targets ought to be short-term, achievable and measurable, and agreed in discussion with the child. Please refer to Appendix A for a sample target sheet.

At each SEN review, the class teacher will judge whether or not the child should remain at their present level of SEN intervention, or if the level ought to be increased/decreased accordingly.

At the summer SEN review, parents whose child is at School Action/School Action Plus level of SEN are invited to attend an Annual Review meeting with their child's teacher and the SENCo, at which their child's progress and needs is discussed, and plans for the following year are agreed.

For children who receive funding at Enhanced School Action Plus or for a Statement of SEN, an Annual Review is conducted at a different time of the year, when the child's Statement/funding is reviewed by the local authority. For a child with a Statement of SEN, the SENCo arranges an annual review meeting, which is attended by the child's parents, staff involved with the child, the Headteacher, SENCo and any agencies involved with the child (e.g. speech and language therapy, physiotherapy). All present are required to give their thoughts on the child's progress and suggest any changes that may be required to the child's educational provision in the coming year. If any contentious issues are expected, the SENCo will invite a representative from the SEN Assessment Team to attend the meeting.

9. COMPLAINTS

Should a parent or carer have a concern about the progress or special provision made for their child, they should in the first instance discuss this with the class teacher. If parental concerns remain, then the SENCo will meet and mediate with the class teacher and parent.

If the concern cannot be satisfactorily dealt with at this stage, then the parent will be referred on to the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is unable to resolve the difficulty, then the parent is required to put their concerns into writing to the SEN Governor (Dolores O'Suillivan). The Chair of Governors (Anne Risdon), will be involved if the preceding avenues have been exhausted.

We understand our responsibility to make parents aware of the option of contacting the local Parent Partnership service, and how to make representations to the local authority, if necessary.

10. TRAINING

The governors will ensure that they are kept abreast of their statutory responsibilities by receiving updates from the Headteacher and SENCo as and when relevant.

The SENCo and Headteacher will maintain an up-to-date knowledge of SEN issues through attendance at training, cluster meetings and the SENCo Forum (SENCo only). In addition, the SENCo will develop his/her skills through attendance at training sessions with outside specialists and through research and subscription to professional bodies. Following the current statutory requirement, the SENCo will hold (or be working towards) the National Award in SEN Coordination (Post-Graduate Certificate of Education).

Teaching staff will be kept up to date by the Headteacher and SENCo regarding relevant updates in the field of SEN. The SENCo will deliver SEN training to school staff and arrange for training to be delivered by external

providers (e.g. autism specialists, speech and language therapists). Staff training is to be relevant and applicable to the needs of children in the school.

Teaching assistants who support individual pupils may require specialist training from external providers from time-to-time, which are unique to the needs of the pupil whom they support.

The SENCo will maintain a record of training delivered (to staff as a whole, and individual members) to avoid repetition of training.

11. PUPIL INVOLVEMENT

We understand the importance of treating every child in our school as an individual and we pride ourselves on knowing our children well. We firmly believe that it is essential for children to take responsibility for their learning, which can only be done through their involvement in planning their learning.

At each SEN review, the class teacher will meet with all children with SEN, to discuss the progress towards their targets and jointly set targets for the following term.

For children who receive funding for their SEN (Enhanced School Action Plus or a Statement of SEN), their views are a statutory part of the funding review process. Where appropriate, children who have the ability and maturity to voice their views are invited to do so in their annual review meeting.

12. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We recognise that parental involvement in a child's education is essential. We respect the contributions that parents make to their child's education and we strive to work in partnership with parents to realise their child's full learning potential. We operate an open-door policy, and encourage parents to informally meet with class teachers at the start/end of the school day to

voice any concerns. For lengthier discussions, it is important to schedule a meeting with the class teacher (or SENCo or Headteacher, as appropriate).

Parents receive copies of their child's SEN target sheet at each SEN review (once per term), and are invited to meet jointly with the class teacher and SENCo (for children who receive intervention at School Action/School Action Plus).

For children who receive funding for their SEN (Enhanced School Action Plus or a Statement of SEN), parental views are a statutory part of the funding review process. Parents are invited to supply their own documentation and their attendance is essential at annual reviews of their child's SEN funding and provision.

13. INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES

From time to time, it may be important for the SENCo to seek the advice and recommendations of specialist services beyond our school. These such outside agencies include:

- Educational Psychology;
- Speech and Language Therapy;
- Physiotherapy;
- Occupational Therapy;
- School Nurse;
- SEN Advisory Service (encompassing: Social & Communication Difficulties, Medical & Physical Difficulties, Specific Learning Difficulties, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties and Early Years Specialists).

Occasionally, it is appropriate for the SENCo to refer parents on to outside agencies, from local family services (e.g. Parent Partnership, SureStart's Family Support Service), charities and parental support/education groups (e.g. Earlybirds training for parents of children with autism).

For the SENCo to discuss or refer a child to any of these outside agencies, parental permission is required (following explanation from the SENCo).

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will not share any information or contact details for a child or parent unless we have parental permission to do so. However, the Child Protection Coordinator has the right to waive the need for parental permission, if we have serious concerns for the welfare of the child.

15. EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured by the senior management team and governors. They may wish to base their judgement on quantitative results (e.g. the attainment of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities at our school) or on a qualitative basis (e.g. assessing the quality of provision and care given to the children with SEN and/or disabilities in our school).

This policy will be due for review in three years time, in March 2016, unless a dramatic change in current SEN legislation requires us to make alterations sooner.