

**St John's Church of England VA Primary School**



# **Special Education Needs and Disability Policy**

**Agreed: July 2025**

**Review: July 2026**

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## Special Education Needs and Disability Policy

### Sharing joy and hope in the community

***When considering matters of SEND it is important for all the school community to reflect, considering our vision statement, 'Sharing joy and hope in the community'; along with the school values Respect, Compassion, Friendship, Service and Endurance. Through this we will ensure we are guided into good decisions to support all those in the St John's community.***

St John's is an inclusive school. We take safeguarding very seriously and all of our policies are developed with a high priority on children's safety and in the light of our safeguarding policy. All of our school policies are interlinked and should be read and informed by all other policies. In particular, the SEND policy is linked to accessibility, behaviour, anti-bullying, medical and curriculum policies.

St John's Primary School is part of the Wellington Cluster which is a partnership of 7 local primary schools, working together to improve provision for children with SEND. SEND Information is available from our website and within the Information Report there is a comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions which explain how we can support children and parents. The School Offer SEN Information Report was produced in conjunction with parents, governors and staff from our school. The website also includes a link to Somerset's Local Offer for parents and children with SEN and disabilities.

This SEND policy is written to comply with the 2014 Children and Families Act and its SEN Code of Practice together with the Equality Act 2010.

#### **The SEND team at St John's C of E VA Primary School**

Inquiries about an individual child's progress should be addressed at first to the class teacher since he or she is the person who knows the child best. Other enquiries can be addressed to:

**SENDCo: Jane Nicholls**

Please make an appointment with the school office if you wish to speak to the SENDCo.

#### **Defining SEN**

The 2015 Code of Practice says that:

*A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:*

- *has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
- *has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.* Taken from 2015 SEN Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years – Introduction xiii and xiv

## **SEN at St John's Cof E VA Primary School**

Our objectives are:

- To identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, barriers to learning and participation for pupils with SEND, (see also curriculum and assessment policies).
- To ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and achieves to the highest possible standard.
- To enable all children to participate in lessons fully and effectively.
- To value and encourage the contribution of all children to the life of the school.
- To work in partnership with parents.
- To work with the Governing Body to enable them to fulfil their statutory monitoring role with regard to the Policy Statement for SEND.
- To work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the need of individual pupils.
- To ensure that all staff have access to training and advice to support quality teaching and learning for all pupils.

Around 22% of our children are at SENS (SEN support) or have EHC Plans (Education, Health and Care Plans). This is above the national average and means that all teachers expect to have children with SEND in their classes.

Types of SEND which we currently have in school include children with a diagnosis as well as those with learning profiles consistent with the diagnosis:

### *Communication and Interaction*

- Autistic spectrum and language disorders

### *Cognition and Learning*

- Dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, global developmental delay.

### *Social, Emotional and Mental Health*

- ADHD, attachment disorders and emotional difficulties.

### *Physical and Sensory*

- Hearing impaired, visually impaired, Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) and sensory processing difficulties

### *Medical Needs*

- Bowel disorders, epilepsy

## **Identifying children at SENS (SEN Support)**

Children with SEN are identified by one of three assessment routes all of which are part of the overall approach to monitoring progress of all pupils:

1. The progress of every child is monitored at termly pupil progress meetings. Where children are identified as not making progress in spite of Quality First Teaching they are discussed with the SENDCo and a plan of action is agreed.

2. Class teachers are continually aware of children's learning. If they observe that a child, as recommended by the 2015 Code of Practice, is making less than expected progress, given their age and individual circumstances, they will seek to identify a cause. This can be characterised by progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers

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3. Parents sometimes ask us to look more closely at their child's learning. We take all parental requests seriously and investigate them all. Frequently, the concern can be addressed by Quality First Teaching or some parental support. Otherwise, the child is discussed with the SENDCo, and assessments may take place.

The SENDCo can undertake a range of standardised tests with children. She can use these assessments to add to and inform teachers' own understanding and assessments of a child. Although the school can identify special educational needs, and make provision to meet those needs, we do not offer diagnoses. Parents are advised to contact their GP if they think their child may have ASD or ADHD or some other disability.

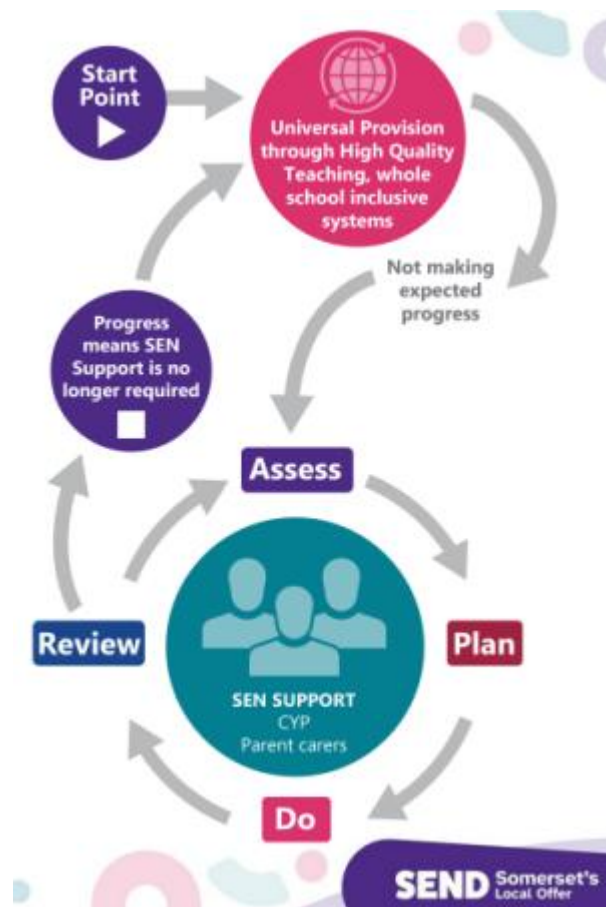
### **The Graduated Response**

**ASSESS:** In identifying a child as needing SEN support, the class teacher working with the SENCO, carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. This draws on the teacher's assessment and experience of the pupil, their previous progress and attainment, as well as information from the school's core approach to pupil progress, attainment, and behaviour. It also draws on other subject teachers' assessments where relevant, the individual's development in comparison to their peers and national data, the views and experience of parents, the pupil's own views and, if relevant, advice from external support services.

**PLAN:** Appropriate support and intervention provided to meet the identified outcomes for the child/young person. Where it is decided to provide a pupil with SEN support, the parents are formally notified, although parents will have already been involved in forming the assessment of needs. The teacher and the SENCO agree in consultation with the parent/carer and pupil the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review. All teachers and support staff who work with the pupil are made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required.

**DO:** The class teacher remains responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. Where the interventions involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they still retain responsibility for the pupil. They will work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching. The SENCO supports the class or subject teacher in the further assessment of the child's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on the effective implementation of support.

**REVIEW:** The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress are reviewed in line with the agreed date. The impact and quality of the support and interventions are evaluated, along with the views of the pupil and their parents. The class teacher, working with the SENCO, revise the support in light of the pupil's progress and development, deciding on any changes to the support and outcomes in consultation with the parent and pupil.



### **Working with Parents and Children**

We aim to have good and informative relationships with all of our parents. If a child is experiencing difficulties, parents will be informed either at parents' meetings (autumn and spring terms) or during informal meetings to discuss the child's progress. It shouldn't come as a surprise to a parent to learn their child is being identified as having a SEN.

Once a child has been identified as having SEN, the class teacher will speak to the parents to:

- formally let them know that their child is being placed at SENS
- discuss assessments that have been completed
- agree a plan and provision for the next term.

This is part of the graduated approach cycle of 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' required in the Code of Practice.

Depending on their age, and their interest, the child may be invited to attend all or part of the meeting.

Thereafter, at parents evening meetings a review of progress is made, targets set and provision agreed for the next term.

Targets may also take the form of care-plans written by health e.g. speech and language targets. These are then reviewed by the health profession involved.

### **Paperwork for children at SENS (SEN support)**

Once a child has been identified as needing SENS the following paperwork is completed:

- Annually, a pupil passport is used to record the child's strengths and interests, what they enjoy about school, what they find hard and what helps them to achieve. This is completed with the child and acts as a guide to their class teacher. The information may be updated termly.
- At parents' meetings, the pupil passport will be reviewed. The pupil passport records specific and challenging targets for the child to achieve in a term, together with the personalised provision (which may be 1-1 or in a small group) put in place to enable the child to achieve these targets.
- Weekly, on planning the teacher or teaching assistant may annotate a short comment about progress made towards the targets.
  - Health care-plans will be sent to parents and school and reviewed appropriately by the relevant professional.

### **Moving to an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)**

If children fail to make progress, in spite of high quality, targeted support at SENS, we may apply for the child to be assessed for an EHC Plan. Generally, we may apply for an EHC Plan if:

- The child is Looked After and therefore additionally vulnerable
- The child has a disability which is lifelong and which means that they will always need support to learn effectively
- The child's achievements are so far below their peers that we think it likely that the child may at some point benefit from special school provision or alternative provision.

Children, who we think will manage in mainstream schools, albeit with support, are less often assessed for EHC Plans. Having a diagnosis (e.g. of ASD, ADHD or dyslexia) does not mean that a child needs an EHC Plan.

If the application for an EHC Plan is successful, a member of the Local Authority (LA) will call a meeting for parents, the child and the school together with any health or social care professionals who are involved with the family. The meeting will record the child's strengths, their dreams and aspirations as well as the barriers they face. Following the meeting, the LA will produce the EHC Plan which will record the decisions made at the meeting.

From April 2018, a pupil with additional needs will require an Education Health and Care Plan in order to access high needs funding.

### **Teaching and Learning**

We believe that all children learn best with the rest of their class. Our aim is for all children to be working independently, in class, at the cusp of their potential. Children with SEN and disabilities are entitled to be taught by their teacher, not always by a TA. Teachers aim to spend time each day working with all children with SEN, individually or as part of a group.

When allocating additional TA support to children, our focus is on outcomes, not hours: we aim to put in sufficient support to enable the child to reach their challenging targets, but without developing a learned dependence on an adult.

The school has a range of interventions available.

When considering an intervention, we look first at the child's profile of learning in order that we can select the intervention which is best matched to the child.

Targets for children at SENS are deliberately challenging in the attempt to close the attainment gap between the children and their peers. Interventions are often crucial in closing these gaps, so are monitored closely by both the class teacher- who monitors progress towards the targets during the intervention- and by the SENDCo who monitors overall progress after the intervention.

- Interventions are often planned in ten-week blocks
- At the end of each block, children's progress towards their targets is assessed and recorded.
- A decision is then made as to whether to continue the intervention, to swap to a new intervention, or to allow a period of consolidation in class.

The SENDCo monitors interventions to keep track of impact.

### **Adaptations to the curriculum teaching and Learning Environment**

St John's C of E VA Primary School is disability friendly. The school is one level, corridors are wide, and we have an easy access toilet. We generally find that no additional adaptations to the building are necessary for children with physical disabilities.

Other adaptations to the physical environment will be made, as appropriate, to accommodate children with other sensory disabilities.

All of our classrooms are inclusion-friendly: we aim to teach in a way that will support children with tendencies towards dyslexia, Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), ASD etc. This is good practice to support all children but is vital for those who particularly need it. All of our children access the full National Curriculum, and we recognise achievement and expertise in all curriculum areas. As part of normal class differentiation, curriculum content and ideas can be simplified and made more accessible by using visual, tactile and concrete resources. We also try to make our learning as multi-sensory as possible.

### **Access to extra-curricular activities**

Our children have equal access to before school, lunchtime and after school clubs which develop engagement with the wider curriculum. Where necessary, we make accommodation and adaptation to meet the physical and learning needs of our children. If parents are concerned about their child attending clubs, please speak to the class teacher or the SENDCo. Class trips are part of our curriculum, and we aim for all children to benefit from them. No child is excluded from a trip because of SEN, disability or medical needs.

### **Staff Expertise**

All of our teachers are trained to work with children with SEN. Some are very experienced, and others less so, but all have access to advice, information, resources and training to enable them to teach all children effectively. We offer training and self-help opportunities through access to in-house or LA courses, provision of books or guidance towards useful websites. The teachers also have opportunities to liaise with other professionals working with specific children, such as the Educational Psychologist.

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The SENDCo holds termly 'SENDCo surgeries' with teachers, when problem solving may take place along with, training, advice and signposting of resources for staff.

The SENDCo also holds meetings with the TAs, and training is given generally alongside specific courses.

If we identify information we can't access without the aid of additional, more specialist help, the school is able to access additional expertise from the local authority. This includes access to Educational Psychologists and The Inclusion Advice Line.

### **Children with social, emotional and mental health needs**

Behaviour is not classified as an SEN. If a child shows consistent unwanted behaviours, the class teacher will record the behaviour and then use it to try and assess the child's needs, taking into account family circumstances and the child's known history of experiences.

If the child's behaviour is felt to be a response to trauma or to home-based experiences (e.g. bereavement, parental separation) we may refer the family to the Parent Family Support Advisor (PFSA) who may be able to support the child at that period of time – at home and in school. If parents and school are concerned that the child may have mental health needs, we can make a referral to the MHST (Mental Health Support Team). We would also encourage parents to either ask their GP for a referral to CAMHS, or we may do this referral.

If the child is felt to have long-term social, emotional or mental health needs- for example with anger management- the school offers a range of social skills or therapeutic interventions. These are generally delivered by trained TAs who develop good, trusting relationships with the children.

All children's behaviour is responded to consistently in line with our Behaviour Policy, although reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate individual needs. The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, especially towards children with SEND and disabilities. We will actively investigate all allegations and, if there is cause, work with both the bully and the victim to improve their social skills.

### **Transition Arrangements**

#### Transition into and within school

We understand how difficult it is for children and parents as they move into a new class or a new school and we will do what we can, according to the individual needs of the child, to make transitions between classes- including from pre-schools - as smooth as possible. This may include, for example:

- Additional meetings for the parents and child with the new teacher
- Additional visits to the classroom environment in order to identify where the toilets are, where the pegs are etc.
- Photographs of key people and places may be taken in order to make a Photo booklet to reinforce transition.
- A peer to peer buddy may be placed with the child to support them initially.

Enhanced transition arrangements may be tailored to meet individual needs.

#### Transition to Secondary School

Transition reviews for Year 6 pupils are held in the autumn term of Year 6. The secondary school SENCO is invited to Annual Reviews and other review meetings during Year 6. Early transition information is passed onto secondary schools around Easter time, with needs of the children being discussed in more depth later in the year. Additional transition arrangements may be made at these reviews e.g. extra visits, photo books given, use of the website to familiarise pupils.

### **Governors**

It is the statutory duty of the governors to ensure that the school follows its responsibilities to meet the needs of children with SEND following the requirements of the Code of Practice 2015.

There is a governor who is responsible for SEND children as part of their work with vulnerable children. They meet with the SENDCo to discuss actions taken by the school.

### **Complaints**

The school works, wherever possible, in partnership with parents to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting pupils' needs.

All complaints are taken seriously and are heard through the school's complaints policy and procedure.

### **Somerset's Local Offer**

The purpose of the local offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. It includes provision from birth to 25, across education, health and social care. Somerset's Local Offer is available from the website;

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/the-local-offer/>

### **Equal Opportunities**

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, faith, gender or capability in all aspects of school. We promote self and mutual respect and a caring and non-judgmental attitude throughout the school.

### **Review Framework**

The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance).

Signed: O. Priestley

Date: July 2025

Headteacher

Signed: J. Leigh

Date: July 2026

Chair of Governors