

SEN Policy Statement

1. Aim of this Policy Statement

While we value the autonomous leadership of each setting and thus recognise that SEN provision and practice can and will look different in our academies for many reasons, the aim of this policy statement is to enable our academies to set their own SEN policies in accordance with the vision, values and principles of the Trust, which will in turn ensure the highest quality of SEN provision for their pupils.

2. Vision and Values

The vision of the Trust is summed up in our mission statement, 'Flourishing Communities'.

Though we are a Trust made up of faith and community academies, our vision is intentionally rooted in the Church of England's Vision for Education (2016). The CofE vision explores the principle of 'life in all its fulness' (John 10v10, The Bible) through four strands: dignity, wisdom, life together and hope. We aim to keep these intrinsic to our pursuit of enabling the flourishing of pupils, parents and staff of all faiths and none as a direct result of being part of our Trust.

Our vision is explored and expressed through our 'CHRIST' values. This is an acronym for collaboration, humility, respect, inclusion, stewardship and trust. All the Trust's values are pertinent to this policy statement, but the key value which applies here is inclusion, which we define as:

- our belief in seeing strength in our differences and doing our utmost to overcome each other's barriers to experiencing fulness, meeting every member of our organisation at their point of need;
- our belief that we are rightly judged by the height of our aspirations and the breadth of our offers of support for the weakest and most disadvantaged in our community (James 1v27), while recognizing that this can come at a cost;
- our belief that through fostering a deep sense of belonging at all levels within our Trust we open the door to new opportunities for growth and learning.

Our equal and complementary commitments to inclusion and stewardship create a healthy tension, within which we hold the needs of all our children and their families to be of paramount importance.

3. SEN Policy and Information Report

All academies will have their own SEN Policy, published on their website, which is reviewed annually by LGB, and has been written in accordance with the principles in this statement, alongside

- All relevant statutory legislation and guidance, especially the SEN Code of Practice (2014)
- The working arrangements of each locality's local offer, as determined by Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

All academies will have an SEN information report on their websites, about the implementation of the SEN policy. The information published should be updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year should be updated as soon as possible.

All academies will have a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and is readily accessible to parents and school staff.

4. Key Principles

4.1 SEN Register

All academies will keep an up-to-date register of pupils receiving SEN Support, including their specific areas of need, as set out in the Code of Practice. The register should be kept up to date and be reviewed regularly alongside the provision these pupils are receiving.

4.2 Identification of SEN

According to the Code of Practice (DFE, 2015), “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.” The notes in square brackets below express our interpretation of the definitions within the COP, in order to provide a fuller understanding of what SEN Support means in practice within St Christopher’s Trust.

“A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she

- a. has a significantly greater [severe, persistent, chronic, resistant to well-founded interventions] difficulty [i.e. needs, delays, gaps, impact on outcomes, failure to thrive] in learning [and development academically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, physically] than the majority of others of the same age, or
- b. 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

For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision [e.g. intervention, adaptation, personalised planning, internal/external support, transition arrangements] that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people by mainstream schools [especially within the same school, the wider Trust, and the local offers]”

While we recognise that there are children without SEN who receive additional support within the schools’ own graduated approach, and children with diagnosed SEN who may not require support that is ‘additional to or different from’ what is generally available, the clear implication of the definition above is in order to be classed as SEN Support a child must ordinarily have SEN *and* be receiving support within the setting towards meeting those needs, as shown in the school’s SEN planning (i.e. provision maps, IEPs, support plans, etc – see 4.3 below).

To support identification of SEN, regular and accurate assessments of progress for all pupils will help to identify those whose progress, in spite of high quality inclusive teaching:

- 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
- Widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social needs. However, slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a child is recorded as having SEN, as other factors such as health, school moves and family circumstances can also effect progress.

A range of diagnostic and screening tools are available for SENCOs to use in identifying strengths and needs, and may be helpful in considering whether a child has SEN or not.

When SENCOs are deciding whether special educational provision is required, the views and the wishes of the child and their parents must be taken into consideration, and external advice (e.g. from an Educational Psychologist) may be sought. When pupils have been identified as requiring SEN Support, children will be added to the SEN register. At this time parents (and children as appropriate to their age or need) will be made aware of this and what it means. When the SEN Support is no longer required, children should be removed from the SEN register. Parents and children will again be informed. Some academies may keep a separate monitoring register for children formerly receiving SEN Support, as part of their graduated approach.

4.3 Graduated Approach

All academies must have a graduated approach to supporting underachieving pupils, based on the highest standards of inclusive quality first teaching.

Staff and leaders should have regular opportunities to discuss pupils whose progress is a cause for concern, and to identify strategies for supporting these children to catch-up. All academies should also have clear protocols for alerting the SENCO when it is possible that SEN Support may be required.

Once a child has been identified as requiring SEN Support, clear planning must be put in place which shows the child’s planned outcomes, strategies and provision over a fixed period. This should be reviewed regularly and, where resistance to intervention or widening attainment/progress gap shows a higher level of support is required, protocols within the local offer should be followed and statutory assessment considered.

4.4 Role of SENCO

All pupils with SEN continue to be the responsibility of their class teacher, supported by the SENCO, who will:

- Work with the headteacher and SEN governor to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEN policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plans
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that pupils with SEN receive appropriate support and high quality teaching
- Advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support
- Advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- Liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure pupils and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- Work with the headteacher and governing board to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Ensure the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEN up to date

In view of the above, it is essential that the SENCO is allotted sufficient non-contact time to be able to fulfil the role, and given ongoing access to the SLT around matters affecting SEN provision within the school.

It is expected that all SENCOs will be extremely well supported within and beyond their academies, in what is a very challenging and strategic role. SENCOs need to be proactive in accessing development support from a range of sources, including:

- The Trust's Central Team
- Other SENCOs within and beyond the Trust
- SENCO Networks and Forums run by external partners, including Local Authorities

4.5 Assessment, Targets and Tracking

Assessing pupils with SEN requires a high level of precision and skill, and a clarity of purpose. While we have high aspirations for all our children, no child with SEN should be asked to undertake a form of assessment (e.g. tests) they couldn't possibly attempt, even with support.

Routine curricular assessment should focus on what children with SEN can do, as well as identifying gaps as the basis for short-term targets within the ongoing plan-do-assess-review cycle.

As with all pupils, long-term achievement targets (e.g. key stage or year) for children with SEN should be aspirational, and take a range of factors into account, including:

The range and severity of their needs

- Their attainment at the end of the previous key stage
- Their progress since the beginning of the current key stage
- The progress made by children in other schools with the same starting point and similar needs (e.g. FFT)

4.6 Child and Family Engagement

At every stage of the SEN process, the voices of parents and children must be taken into consideration. Every effort should be made to understand the child's strengths and needs holistically, from both a home and school perspective, and to forge a shared commitment to working towards agreed outcomes for the child and family.