

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

This policy was updated by Kelly Whittington on: September 2024

The renewal date for this policy is: September 2025

SENCO: Kelly Whittington.

Introduction

It is our policy to provide access to learning opportunities for all pupils regardless of diversity. With each child having a unique combination of abilities we need to be fully aware of the diverse needs of children and the importance of a differentiated programme of study matched to their individual capabilities. 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 academy policies are interlinked and should be read and informed by all other policies. In particular, the SEND policy is linked to behaviour, anti-bullying, medical and curriculum policies. Please read this policy in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

The SEND team at Norbridge Academy

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 Kelly Whittington - SENCo Please make an appointment with the academy office if you wish to speak to the SENCo.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

Any pupil at some stage within their academy career may develop an individual educational need that differs from the majority of their peers. The 2014 Code of Practice says that: "A person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. At compulsory academy age this means he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others 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 academies." - Taken from 2014 SEN Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years

Headlines from the 2014 Code of Practice.

From September 2014:

- No more statements will be issued by the Local Authority. Statements have been replaced by Education, Health and Care plans (EHC Plans) which can be used to support children from birth-25 years.
- Academy Action and Academy Action Plus have been replaced by one academy-based category of Need known as 'Special Education Needs Support' (SENS). All children are closely monitored, and their progress tracked each term. Those at SENS are additionally tracked by the SENCo.

There are four broad categories of SEN:

- communication and interaction
 - cognition and learning
 - social, emotional and mental health
 - physical and sensory.
- We are working more closely with parents and children to ensure that we take into account the child's own views and aspirations and the parents' experience of, and hopes for, their child. Parents are invited to be involved at every stage of planning and reviewing SEN provision for their child.
 - All children benefit from 'Quality First Teaching': this means that teachers are expected to assess, plan and teach all children at the level which allows them to make progress with their learning. In addition, we implement some focused interventions to target particular skills.
 - We have high expectations of all our children. Children on our SEN register make progress which compares well with the progress made by other children in academy.

Aims and objectives

- To identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, barriers to learning and participation for pupils with SEND;
- 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 academy
- To work in partnership with parents
- To work with the AAB (Academy Advisory Board) 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

Identifying children as 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:

- The progress of every child is monitored weekly at pupil progress meetings where children are identified as not making progress in spite of Quality First Teaching. They are discussed with the SENCo and a plan of action is agreed.
- Class teachers are continually aware of children's learning. If they observe that a child, as recommended by the 2014 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
- 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 placed at SEN on our SEN register.

Although the academy can identify special educational needs, and make provision to meet those needs, we do not offer diagnoses. Parents are advised to contact the SENCO if they think their child may have ASD or ADHD or some other disability to discuss GDA referrals (General Development Assessment).

Working with Parents and Children

We aim to have good and informative relationships with all of our parents/carers. 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.

Once a child has been identified as having SEN, the class teacher will invite the parents to a meeting 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.

Records are kept of these meetings and copies are available to parents.

Thereafter, parents – and children- are welcome to make an appointment to review progress made, set targets and agree provision for the next term.

Accessibility for children with disabilities

At Norbridge Academy we comply with guidance in the 2014 School Admissions Code. This states that: Admissions authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child.

Our accessibility plan will:

- Ensure we plan for the accessibility of provision from all pupils, staff and visitors
- Improve the physical environment of Norbridge Academy, adding specialist facilities as necessary, and making reasonable adjustments

- Further increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, including participation in extra-curricular clubs, leisure and cultural activities and educational visits and considering the provision of specialist aids and equipment.
- Further improve and make reasonable adjustments to information available to pupils, staff, parents and visitors, within reasonable time frames considering the various preferred formats.
- Provide on-going training for staff and the Academy Advisory Board on matters of disability discrimination

Paperwork for children at SENS (SEN support)

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

- Termly, an Individual Education plan is produced and/or reviewed. The plan 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.

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 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 academy provision.

Children, who we think will manage in a mainstream academy, 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 will call a meeting for parents, the child and the academy 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.

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 academy has a range of interventions available which are listed and on a provision map. 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 SENCo who monitors overall progress after the intervention.

Adaptations to the curriculum teaching and learning environment

Norbridge Academy is disability friendly. The academy is one level, corridors are wide and we have easy access toilets. 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, dyspraxia, 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 curricular 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.

Norbridge Academy work with external agencies to support adaptations.

Access to extra-curricular activities

All of our children have equal access to before academy, lunchtime and after academy 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. 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 courses, provision of books or guidance towards useful websites.

Some TAs and HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistants) have expertise and training on other areas or specific interventions. All TAs work with children with SEN and disabilities. The co-ordinator of

Norbridge Academy is an experienced SENCO with the Advanced SENCO Award. She offers training and advice and shares resources with all staff. If we identify information we can't access without the aid of additional, more specialist help, the academy is able to buy-in additional expertise or make a request for support at termly Springboard meetings. This includes access to Educational Psychologists and Advisory Teachers.

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 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 complete an Early Help Intervention with the family and support the child through that process.

If parents and academy are concerned that the child may have mental health needs, we encourage parents to ask their GP for a referral to CAMHS and we are happy to support parents with making this request.

If the child is felt to have long-term social, emotional or mental health needs- for example with anger management- the academy offers a range of social skills or therapeutic interventions (ELSA and THRIVE). These are led by our ELSA and THRIVE practitioner who develops 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 academy 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 academy

We understand how difficult it is for children and parents as they move into a new class or a new academy and will do what we can, according to the individual needs of the child, to make transitions between classes- including from the nursery- 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.
- Opportunities to take photographs of key people and places in order to make a transition booklet. Enhanced transition arrangements are tailored to meet individual needs.

Transition to Secondary

Transition reviews for Year 6 pupils are held, where possible, in the Spring term of Year 6. Additional transition arrangements may be made at these reviews e.g. extra visits, travel training etc. Transition meetings take place with secondary schools where key information is discussed. Additional transition

visits are arranged according to children's needs, these are referred to as Big Transition and Bespoke Transition.

Pupil documents relevant to their SEN are transferred to Secondary Schools.

Academy Advisory Board (AAB)

It is the statutory duty of the governors to ensure that the academy follows its responsibilities to meet the needs of children with SEND following the requirements of the Code of Practice 2014.

Complaints

The academy 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 academy's complaints policy and procedure.

Equal Opportunities

Norbridge Academy is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, faith, gender or capability in all aspects of academy. We promote self and mutual respect and a caring and non-judgmental attitude throughout the academy. Teachers will consider the inclusiveness of all trips and activities before going ahead with planning. Teachers will meet with parents where necessary to discuss potential barriers and how they may be overcome. The health and safety of the child and others will take priority in the decision-making process for the outcome of the trip/event.

SEN Link to Local Offer

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