

SEN Information Report

Reviewed September 2023



The Stour Academy Trust

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Report

Welcome to Thistle Hill Academy SEN information report which is part of the Kent Local Offer for Learners with special needs. Through the Local offer all schools are supported to be as inclusive as possible, with the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities being met in a mainstream setting wherever possible.

The four broad 'areas of need' are Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties, and Sensory and Physical Needs.

At Thistle Hill Academy, we embrace the fact that every child is different, and, therefore, the educational needs of every child is different. We value and nurture each and every child at an individual level, whether or not they have formal additional needs identified.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress or well-being, then please speak to either your child's class teacher in the first instance. Following that, if you still have concerns, you should contact Mrs Bethan McIntosh (Deputy Headteacher/SENDCo) or Naomi Allchin (SENDCo) to discuss your concerns.

1. Does the setting / school / know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child/young person may have special educational needs?

At different times in their school life, a child or young person may have a special educational need. The Code of Practice 2014 defines SEN as follows:

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

- a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others 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-16s institutions."*

Where pupils' progress is significantly below age related expectations, despite high quality teaching targeted at specific areas of difficulty, provision of SEN Support may need to be made.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress or well-being, then please speak to either your child's class teacher or Mrs Bethan McIntosh (SENDCO) to discuss your further.



2. How will early years setting / school / staff support my child/young person?

The class teacher:

Responsible for...

- Checking on the progress of your child and identifying, planning and delivering any additional help your child may need (this could be targeted work or additional support) and letting the Special Education Needs/Disabilities coordinator (SENCo) know as necessary.
- Writing provision maps, including identified children, sharing and reviewing these with parents at parents evening and planning and implementing for the next term.
- Personalised teaching and learning for your child as identified on the school's provision map.
- Ensuring that the school's SEN Policy is followed in their classroom and for all the pupils they teach with any SEN.
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Our SENCOs: Mrs Bethan McIntosh and Miss Allchin

Responsible for...

- Provide professional **guidance** to colleagues and works closely with staff, parents and other agencies.
- Write SEN Information Report which **MUST** be published on the setting website and updated annually
- Overseeing day to day operation of the school's SEN policy
- Co-ordinate provision for children with SEN
- Advising on a graduated approach to provide SEN Support
- Advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils needs effectively
- Liaising with parents of pupils with SEN
- Liaising with EYFS providers, other schools, EP, health and social care professionals and independent or voluntary bodies, LA
- Manage the transition process
- Ensure school keeps the records of pupils with SEN up to date
- Work with head teachers and school governors with regards to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

The Head teacher: Miss Rebecca Handebeaux

Responsible for...

- The day-to-day management of all aspects of the school; this includes the support for children with SEND.
- The Head teacher will give responsibility to the SENCO and class teachers, but is still responsible for ensuring that your child's needs are met.
- The Head teacher must make sure that the Governing Body is kept up to date about issues relating to SEND.



- Regularly review staffing structure, ensuring that appropriate provision and adult support is in place.

The SEND Director: Mrs F Trigwell (Chair of the Board of Directors)

Responsible for...

- Making sure that the necessary support is given for any child with SEND who attends the school.
- To support and challenge the Head teacher and SENCO with regards to SEND within the school.

3. How will the curriculum be matched to meet my child's needs?

If a learner is identified as having SEND need, we will provide support that is **additional to** or **different from** the differentiated approaches and learning arrangements normally provided as part of Quality First Teaching Strategies teaching intended to overcome the barrier to their learning.

When providing support that is “additional to” or “different from” we engage in a four-stage process:

Assess – this involves taking into consideration all the information from discussions with parents/carers, the child, the class teacher and assessments.

Plan – this stage identifies the barriers for learning, intended outcomes, and details what additional support will be provided to help overcome the barriers. Decisions will be recorded on a SEN Support plan and will form the basis for review meetings.

Do - providing the support – extra assistance for learning – as set out in the plan.

Review – measuring the impact of support provided, and considered whether changes to that support need to be made. All of those involved – learner, parents or carers, teacher, SENDCO and outside agencies contribute to this review. This stage then informs the next cycle.

Thistle Hill Academy adheres to the following inclusive principles:

Staff value pupils of different abilities and support inclusion so that all learners can access mainstream education. Staff and pupils will be constantly involved in the best ways to support all pupils needs within the school. There is flexibility in approach in order to find the best provision for each child. Within each class, teaching and learning styles and organisation will be flexible to ensure effective learning. Through this approach, all learners will benefit, not only those with special educational needs. We aim to ensure that all learners feel welcome and valued, and that they get the right support to help them develop their talents and achieve their goals.

4. How will both you and I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

If your child has personalised plans, in addition to normal reporting arrangements, there will be the opportunity for parents to meet with their child's class teacher and SENDCO to review the short term



targets and to discuss the progress the child has made. Obviously, we also encourage an “open door” approach whereby teachers are accessible at the end of the day.

- Your child’s progress will be continually monitored by his/her class teacher.
- His/her progress will be reviewed formally and tracked with the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and SENDCO every term in reading, writing and numeracy. Through Parent Consultations, termly reports and end of year reports, teachers make clear the attainment against age related expectation and the level of progress made.
- At the end of each key stage (i.e. at the end of Year 2 and Year 6), all children are required to be formally assessed. This is something the government requires all schools to do and the results that are published nationally.
- The progress of children with a statement / EHC Plan (Educational Health Care Plan) will be formally reviewed at an Annual Review with all adults involved with the child’s education.
- The Head teacher, Assistant Head Teacher and SENDCO will monitor the progress made by SEND children in their class work and any intervention that has been put into place
- Regular book scrutiny and lesson observations will be carried out by the SENDCO and other members of the Senior Management Team to ensure that the needs of all children are met and that the quality of teaching and learning is high.

The school delivers Parent workshops for the core areas of learning. These are in line with School Improvement Priorities and/or parent voice.

Each class holds a termly Fabulous Finish when parents are able to join their children for fun and informative curriculum based events. This enables our learners to show off their achievements and to tell their parents all about their learning.

Additionally, we send regular electronic class and whole school newsletters with information about things that have happened. Extra information can be found on the school website including class news, photograph gallery and useful links.

Our popular app-based communication system, called WEDUC, keeps parents fully up-to-date. This includes a calendar of events, a live news feed and a parent/school messaging system.

Finally, our regularly updated Facebook page provides a further link between home and school.

At a more personalized level, where necessary we also communicate via home/school contact books.

4b) What support will there be for my child’s/young person’s overall well-being?

We recognise that some children have extra emotional and social needs that need to be developed and nurtured. All classes follow a structured PSHE curriculum to support this development. However, some children find these aspects of development more difficult than others so we have developed an established nurture provision which is facilitated by two professionals.

Our full-time nurture assistants have undertaken comprehensive training to enable them to identify and address individual pupil needs. They are available for parents to speak to, to spend time in class supporting individuals and to facilitate specific interventions in the nurture classroom



When deemed necessary, some pupils will join a full or part-time nurture class for a specified period of time until they are emotionally ready to re-join their mainstream class. They will continue an educational curriculum in an environment that is able to fully address their social and emotional needs using a more targeted approach.

The full range of social and emotional interventions that are offered are;

- Social awareness games and activities
- Lunch time and play time support, including organised lunchtime activities run by adults
- Lego therapy sessions
- Buddy system
- Drawing and Talking sessions
- Advice from external agencies and professionals
- Teaching Assistants trained in how to support pupils' mental health

Thistle Hill Academy also has a designated Specialist Resourced Based provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Pupils with Education, Health and Care plans access this facility until they are ready to return to a mainstream classroom. This facility is facilitated by a trained teacher who is specialising in ASD. They also support class teachers with their knowledge. Under exceptional circumstances, and always in full consultation with parents, pupils without an EHCP but experiencing acute social communication needs can also benefit from the ASD provision.

The school benefits from a Behaviour Policy with clear rewards and sanctions and in each class the exact same rules are applied. In respect of Anti Bullying, there is a policy in place that has been drawn up with staff and pupils and is accessible to Parents. As part of the curriculum, the school plans activities during Anti Bullying week and each year sets out to Parents its core principles regarding inappropriate behaviours and bullying.

Any pupils with additional medical needs are well catered for. All medical requirements are requested from parents prior to admission and these are added to the school medical needs folder, class medical needs folder and also circulated to the Breakfast/after school clubs and canteen. We will seek advice from medical professionals if necessary.

All medicines are kept in individual sealed containers in a locked cupboard that are accessible to appropriate members of staff. For those pupils needing medicine regularly, we complete an individual Health Care Plan which is reviewed annually, or more frequently if needed. Each classroom also has a medical container, which includes emergency first aid such as epi-pens and asthma inhalers.

There are various opportunities for pupils to have a voice on decision making in the school. The school has a proactive school council that meet regularly. Pupils have input into medium term planning and the SLT carry out pupil voice questionnaires. Prior to SEND Annual review meetings, pupils have the opportunity to share their views.

5) What specialism services, experience, training and support are available or accessed by the school?



Once the school has identified the needs of SEND pupils, a decision will be made about the resources/training and support that is needed.

School Provision:

- Range of Literacy and Numeracy small group interventions delivered by TA's and designated teacher.
- ICT support in the form of reading, writing, phonic and maths programmes.
- Teaching assistants offering social skills support including regular social support groups.
- Lunch time chill out club and nurture group to support children with social development.
- Speech and Language programmes, supported by a Speech and Language Therapist.
- Teaching Assistants trained on how to support pupils with a full range of additional needs.

Local Authority provision available:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Parent Partnership service (IASK)
- Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
- Specialist Teaching and Learning Services (STLS)
- School nursing service
- NELFT (North East London NHS Foundation Trust), which is a mental health and community service
- Community Child Health
- Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists
- CHATTS (Children and Adult Talking Therapy Service)

What training are the staff supporting children and young people with SEND had or are having?

- Precision Teaching – all TAs
- National Award for SEN Co-ordination – Bethan McIntosh
- Auditory Memory Training - all staff
- Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants – All TAs
- The principles of Nurture/ attachment training – Teachers
- Boxall Nurture Group Training – Mrs Lassnig
- Restorative Justice - Teachers
- Makaton Stage 1 – All Staff
- Switch-On Reading and Inference – all staff
- Team Teach Positive Behaviour Management – senior leaders, Nurture & SRP staff
- Lego Therapy training – Mrs Lassnig
- Drawing and Talking – Mrs Lassnig
- Little Wandle Phonics Training – KS1 Teachers and all TAs
- One Note Teacher Academy – all staff
- Childhood Trauma training- all staff
- Autism awareness- all staff
- Personalised learning- all TAs
- Masters in Special Needs- Autism- Miss Bailey



7. How will my child/young person be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

At Thistle Hill Academy we believe all learners are entitled to the same access to extra-curricular activities, and are committed to make reasonable adjustments to ensure participation for all. Any additional support or necessary adjustments are recorded on the risk assessment for that activity. Please contact us if your child has any specific requirements for extra-curricular activities.

8. How accessible is the setting / school / college environment?

- The school was built recently and is therefore fully compliant with DDA requirements
- The main building has two floors with easy access, double doors and a Lift.
- The front desk has a wheel-chair height section and is DDA compliant.
- There are two disabled toilets, one upstairs and one downstairs. They both have handrails that are visually friendly, and lever function taps.
- There are disabled parking bays in close proximity to the main entrance. There is also a pedestrian crossing.
- We ensure wherever possible that equipment used is accessible to all children regardless of their needs. The SENDCO manages a SEN budget, used to ensure that all pupils have access to the equipment needed to meet their needs.
- After-school provision is accessible to all children, including those with SEND.
- In respect to pupils with English as an additional language we access support from the EAL advisor and follow their recommendations.
- The school is fully accessible to wheelchair users.
- Extra-curricular activities are accessible for children with SEND.
- The school has an outside learning area.
- The school has an up to date accessibility plan which is reviewed each year.

How will the setting /school prepare and support my child/ young person to join the setting /school, transfer to a new setting / school / college or the next stage of education and life?

Pupils starting school at Thistle Hill Academy

We hold an Open Evening for all prospective parents in Term 2 of the year before children are due to start school. We also hold Rising 4's sessions starting in January each year which allows parents and children to form strong relationships and familiarity with the school and staff before formally attending in September.

Foundation Stage staff will meet with parents prior to pupils starting school. There will also visit nurseries to liaise with nursery staff that have supported pupils.



Concerns about particular needs will be brought to the attention of the SENDCO. Where necessary the SENDCO will arrange a further meeting with parents, previous setting, health visitor etc.

Class teachers of children joining from other schools will receive information from the previous school; if required the SENDCO will telephone the previous school, or meet in person, to discuss individual pupil's needs.

Preparing for next steps

Transition is a part of life for all learners, whether that involves moving to a new class or moving to a new school. We recognise that transition is an important time for all children, but especially so for a child with SEN. Consequently, we work closely with parents, pupils and staff to ensure these transitions run as smoothly as possible.

Planning for transitions with the school will take place in the Summer Term; arrangements for transition to Secondary School for pupil with SEND will be planned according to individual need. We offer transition support groups facilitated by the Nurture staff for those children identified as needing extra reassurance. Where possible we also arrange additional transition visits to new schools.

10. Provide examples of interventions, equipment, resources that settings/ schools allocate to match children's/young people's special educational needs?

- Time to Talk/ Socially speaking programme of social interventions
- Switch on Reading programme
- Little Wandle phonics programme
- Boxall
- Tams Journey
- Lego Therapy
- PECs
- Social Stories
- Black Sheep Speech and Language resources
- Memory skills programme
- Dynamo Maths
- Sensory resources
- Fizzy and Beam motor skills programmes
- Clever Hands and Clever Fingers fine motor skills programmes
- Clicker 8
- Specific iPad Apps for individual needs
- Language Through Colour
- A full range of resources to support quality first teaching for all pupils in the form of ear defenders, move and sit cushions, visual task boards, fidget objects, calming resources, etc
- Immersive Reader

The School is currently developing the use of I-Pads and technology to enhance children's learning and give them skills for life in the 21st Century. Technology can be used very effectively to support children with SEN and over the coming year we will be exploring the range of apps and features available, such as



immersive reader and speech to text software, which will not only enable greater access to the curriculum but provide children with independent support strategies that can be utilised beyond the classroom.

11. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child/young person will receive?

The school budget, received from Kent Local Authority, includes money for supporting children with SEN.

The Head Teacher decides on the deployment of resources for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, in consultation with the school governors on the basis of needs in the school.

Where the needs of a pupil are more complex and element 1 and element 2 funding have already been used and evaluated, we would then consider additional support through element 3 funding. This is top up funding from the Local Authority where a child has significant and complex needs.

The Head Teacher and the SENCO discuss all the information they have about SEND in the school, including the children getting extra support already, the children needing extra support and the children who have been identified as not making as much progress as would be expected. From this information, they decide what resources/training and support is needed.

The school identifies the needs of SEN pupils on a provision map. This identifies all support given within school and is reviewed regularly and changes made as needed, so that the needs of children are met, and resources are deployed as effectively as possible.

12. How are parents involved in the setting / school? How can I be involved?

At Thistle Hill Academy, we value the importance of building positive relationships with parents and families within our School community. Where a pupil is identified as needing extra provision for Inclusion or a SEND profile, parents are given the opportunity to be part of the assessment and review process.

Mrs Williams is our Parent Support Advisor. She is available to speak with families as part of her role and works closely with all staff, outside agencies and other organisations to improve opportunities for our children and their families.

13. Who can I contact for further information?

We hope to resolve any concerns or complaints you may have, which in the first instance should be directed to the Head Teacher. In most cases, we find that complaints can be dealt with successfully at this level. However, if this is not possible, please see the complaints policy on the school website.

There are many SEND terms that are abbreviated, please see the glossary below.

AD	Attention Deficit
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ADH	Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity
AS	Autistic Spectrum
CI	Communication & Interaction
CL	Cognition & Learning
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfE	Department of Education
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EP	Educational Psychologist
HI	Hearing Impairment
HNF	High Needs Funding
LIFT	Local Inclusion Forum Team
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
OD	Oppositional Defiance
OT	Occupational Therapist
PD	Physical Disability
PDA	Pathological Demand Avoidance
SALT	Speech & Language Therapy
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDCO	Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator
SENI	Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund
SEMH	Social, Emotional & Mental Health
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
SRP	Specialist Resource Provision
STLS	Specialist Teaching & Learning Support



This report details our annual offer to learners with SEN. To be effective it needs the views of all: Parents/carers, pupils, governors and staff.

If you have any comments, please contact Mrs Bethan McIntosh (Deputy Headteacher/SENDCO) or Miss Allchin (SENDCO)

