

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

2024-25

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Local Offer: <https://www.medway.gov.uk/localoffer>

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Our values and vision for SEND in our setting

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School we believe that every child is unique. The achievement, attitude and well-being of every child matters and inclusion is the responsibility of everyone within our school. A strong Catholic ethos and sharing of faith underpins all teaching and learning that takes place, ensuring that all children are treated with equality, fairness and respect.

Every teacher is a teacher of every pupil, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We respect the unique contribution which every individual can make to our school community.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for provision for children with SEND at St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School.

It provides a framework for the identification of and provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It has been written for the benefit of the whole school community to ensure that all are aware of the principles underlying identification and provision and are confidently committed to the agreed strategies.

We work in partnership with external agencies and the appropriate local authority services to ensure that all children, including those with SEND, make the best possible progress.

The SEND Code of Practice (2014), states that all children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:

- achieve their best
- become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
- make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training.

Compliance

This policy complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years. It has been created in consultation with governors, staff and pupils St Thomas More Catholic Primary School and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools DfE Feb 2013
- SEND Regulations 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Statutory Guidance on Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions April 2014
- The National Curriculum in England Key Stage 1 and 2 Framework document September 2013
- Teachers' Standards 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

This policy draws links to and should be read alongside other school policies relevant to SEND such as Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Medical Needs, Accessibility, Complaints, Safeguarding and Pupil Premium.

Context - Definitions of SEND provision and SEN Support

Definitions of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Disability (SEND) taken from section 20 and 21 of the Children and Families Act 2014:

A child or young person is identified as having SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

A child under compulsory school age has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

Additional aspects of assessment (including diagnostic) are linked to the four areas of need:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Physical and Sensory
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Our approach to identification and support for SEND

(To be read in conjunction with the SEND information Report)

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from Learning Support Assistants or specialist staff.

High quality and adaptive teaching meeting the needs for all pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. We regularly and carefully assess, plan, do and review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement, through termly provision mapping and Pupil Progress Meetings.

This also includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered through rigorous and effective continuous professional development.

The graduated approach of 'Assess, Plan, Do and Review' is embedded as part of whole school teaching covering universal, targeted and specialist provision.

Class teachers will make provision that is additional to and different from that provided as part of the usual high quality, adaptive teaching offer, to enable pupils who are not working at age

related expectations to learn more effectively. Whatever the level of difficulty the key test of how far the learning needs are being met is whether the child is making expected progress.

Expected progress can be defined in a number of ways:

- Closes the gap between the child and peers
- Prevents the attainment gap from growing wider
- Is similar to that of peers starting from the same baseline but less than that of the majority of peers
- Matches or betters the child's previous rate of progress
- Demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- Demonstrates improvements in the child's attitude and behaviour for learning

How do we decide if SEN support is required?

Once a teacher has expressed a concern about a pupil they will discuss the child with the SENDCo. Forms collating evidence of suspected or identified barriers to learning in all curriculum and social aspects of schooling will be completed by the class teacher and parents/carers. During this period before identification takes place, identifying pupils about whom we have a concern will be recorded on our monitoring list as Early Intervention Support. This information will act as a pre-register identification and will be reviewed regularly by the class teacher and the SENDCo

Pupils will then receive intervention to address the area of concern. The triggers for intervention could be the teacher's or others' concern, underpinned by evidence, about a child who despite receiving high quality adaptive teaching and learning opportunities:

- makes little or no progress when teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a child's identified areas of weakness
- shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematical skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas
- presents persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not modified by the positive behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school
- has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum.

If a child continues to have difficulties, in spite of adjustments made to the curriculum via adaptive teaching and intervention, then the SEND team will become more involved. The child may undergo further assessment to identify specific areas of difficulty. In partnership with parents, outcomes and targets will be discussed and the child will be added to the SEND Register. A Pupil Provision Form (PPF) will be written for the child detailing specific outcomes with detailed targeted approaches for helping the child. This is reviewed termly and PPF plans are shared with parents three times per year. In addition to this Pupil Passports are also created for SEND

support pupils to ensure detailed information on barriers identified, strategies to support and assessments undertaken is available as a one page snapshot for all staff members working with the pupil. This in turn aids effective communication and supports transition at the end of each academic year. Quality assurance and monitoring takes place termly through SEN register analysis, progress and attainment data analysis and pupil progress meetings. Governors are kept up to date with assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of provision through SEND Reports shared at full governing body meetings.

Learning Support Assistant time will be allocated to support those targets within school through a combination of in-class support, group work and/or targeted 1:1 precision teaching. Targets will be set, reviewed and adjusted termly by the class teacher. This will be closely monitored and recorded on year group provision maps. Pupil progress meetings will take place to analyse and discuss the impact of the interventions throughout the year.

If the class teacher and the SENDCOs feel that a child is not making adequate progress, despite the measures in place, then more specialist input may be required. Outside agencies might be called upon to assist us in meeting the child's needs. At this stage children may be moved onto a School Based Support Plan (SBSP), in line with local authority guidance to further detail and track the graduated approach. A child with a SBSP may go on to need an Education and Health Care Plan.

Each term an 'In School Review' is held which allows teachers and non-school based professionals to consult together about children who are causing concern. Suggestions and decisions will be made as to how to proceed with the child's future support and whether referrals need to be made to specialist agencies. Parents are consulted before their child is discussed at the In School Review and their permission gained and parents will be then be informed, via the class teacher, of any outcomes. We would also use the review to discuss any children for whom we wish to apply for a referral for an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)**.

Referral for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If a child has lifelong or significant difficulties they may undergo a Statutory Assessment Process which is usually requested by the school but can be requested by a parent. This will occur where the complexity of need or a lack of clarity around the needs of the child are such that a multi-agency approach to assessing that need, to planning provision and identifying resources, is required.

The decision to make a referral for an Education, Health and Care Plan can be taken at an 'In School Review'.

The application for an Education, Health and Care Plans will combine information from a variety of sources including:

- Parents

- Teachers
- SENDCO
- Social Care
- Health professionals

Information will be gathered relating to the current provision provided, action points that have been taken, and the preliminary outcomes of targets set. A decision will be made by the Local Authority Medway County Council, using advice and evidence sought from education, health and social care about whether or not the child is eligible for an EHC Plan. Parents have the right to appeal against a decision from the Local Authority not to initiate a statutory assessment leading to an EHC Plan.

The SEND officer assigned to our school is currently Tara Ellis and she is our point of contact with the Local Authority at Medway.

Following Statutory Assessment, if successful, an EHC Plan will be provided by Medway County Council, if it is decided that the child's needs are not being met by the support that is ordinarily available. The school and the child's parents will be involved developing and producing the plan.

Parents have the right to appeal against the content of the EHC Plan. They may also appeal against the school named in the Plan if it differs from their preferred choice.

Once the EHC Plan has been completed and agreed, it will be kept as part of the pupil's formal record and reviewed at least annually by external agencies, staff, parents and the pupil. The Person Centred Annual Review enables provision for the pupil to be evaluated and, where appropriate, for changes to be put in place, for example, reducing or increasing levels of support.

Further information about EHC Plans, how to request one and information relating to Medway's Local offer can be found via the Medway Council website below

[Education, Health and Care Plans | Medway Council](#)

[About Medway's Local Offer | About Medway's Local Offer | Medway Council](#)

Individual Healthcare Medical Plans

When a child has a special educational need, the individual healthcare plan should be linked to the child's statement or EHC plan where they have one. Please refer to the school's Medical Policy.

Our partnering approach to involve parents/carers/children

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School believes that a close working relationship with parents is vital in order to ensure

- a) Early and accurate identification and assessment of SEND leading to appropriate intervention and provision
- b) Continuing social and academic progress of children with SEND
- c) Personal and academic targets are set and met effectively

All children are closely monitored and follow the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review. Any gaps or areas for concern are swiftly identified and Class Teachers and/or the SENDCO will talk to parents/carers if their child is experiencing difficulties of any kind. Parents are encouraged to be full partners in their child's education and great emphasis is placed on parental support.

Formal appointments can be arranged with the SENDCO, as well as class teachers, as part of parent consultation evenings.

We aim to have an 'open door' policy and try to see parents as soon as we can, in order to alleviate any problems quickly. Concerns about SEND provision should be addressed initially to the SENDCO who will respond by meeting with parent/carers to discuss the situation.

Pupil voice is highly valued, children with individual support plans such as Pupil Provision Forms, School based support plans or EHCP are actively encouraged to contribute their thoughts and feelings in response to their progress and attainment, target setting, and are encouraged to reflect on their areas of strength as well as areas of difficulty.

We invite parental views, feedback and suggestions at least three times per year through sharing of individualised outcomes and targets, parent meetings, open door policy and appointments and pupil/parent questionnaires.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the SENDCO

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator is responsible for:

- Work with the head teacher 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 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

The role of the Head teacher

- Work with the SENDCO and SEN governor to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision within the school
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEN and/or a disability

The role of Class teachers

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- The progress and development of every pupil in their class
- Working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- Working with the SENDCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- Ensuring they follow this SEN policy

The role of support staff

The majority of our LSAs support our SEND children and work on individualised targets as detailed on children's provision plans, School Based Support Plans or EHCPs within the classroom setting during the morning sessions. In addition, specific and enhanced provision sessions run in the afternoons through 1:1 and small group work. These include Social Skills, Better Reading Programme, Speech and Language support and Emotional Literacy Support groups.

The role of the SEN Governor

The SEN Governor will:

- Help to raise awareness of SEN issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEN and disability provision within the school and update the governing board on this
- Work with the head teacher and SENDCO to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school

Funding

School funding system and SEND Funding is agreed locally and is given to schools under three main headings:

Element 1 - Core funding: The amount of money for every pupil in the school. This is the core budget for each school and it is used to make general provision for all pupils in the school including pupils with SEN.

Element 2 – Notional SEN funding: Every school receives an additional amount of money to support special educational provision to meet children’s SEND needs. This is called the ‘notional SEN budget’.

The government has recommended that schools should use this notional SEN budget to pay for up to £6,000 worth of special educational provision to meet a child’s SEN. Most children with SEN need special educational provision that comes to less than £6,000.

Element 3 – Top up funding: If a pupil with SEN needs more than £6,000 worth of special educational provision, schools can apply to the local authority to provide top up funding to meet the cost of that provision. Where the local authority agrees, the cost is provided from funding held by the local authority in their high needs block. Element 3 is provided by the local authority for an individual pupil who has a high level of needs and schools are expected to use this funding to make provision for that individual pupil.

Admission Arrangements

Admission arrangements follow Medway Council criteria and guidelines as set out by the Diocese of Southwark. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is an inclusive mainstream school. Generally it is not expected that there will be any different admission arrangements for children with SEND. For further details, please refer to the school’s Admission’s Policy.

Curriculum Access and Inclusion

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities at St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School are regarded as full members of the school community and we strive to make our provision fully inclusive. Children have full access to the environment, curriculum, resources, staffing, activities and peer group integration. Where access to any of the above areas poses difficulties to our children, additional strategies and reasonable adjustments will be implemented.

Extra LSA or specialist agency support is available to enable access and careful choice of resources will be made to facilitate inclusion. The curriculum is planned to meet the known needs of all children and can be further modified, on a short term planning basis, to meet the specific needs of individual children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The majority of the school is housed in one storey buildings with either ground level or ramped access. The exceptions to this are the learning centre, one toilet block and there is a stepped entrance to the main building adjacent to the Year 3 and 4 Block. (see Accessibility plan)

An enhanced provision classroom 'Stepping Stones' is utilised as an extension of the classroom for children with more complex needs that benefit from a highly differentiated curriculum, more enhanced targeted support and multisensory approaches. This provision is overseen by the class teachers. LSAs working within have been trained to work with TEACCH style strategies. Training and advice is sought from Outreach services such as Marlborough ASD and Fortis Trust specialist Outreach.

Staff SEND training

We strive to ensure that our SEND team have current knowledge in methods for supporting all of our special needs children. The SENDCO attends regular Local Authority briefings and training sessions to keep up to date with local and national developments

Our Learning Support Assistants regularly attend courses both internal and external. LSAs have the opportunity to meet weekly with the SENDCO to discuss any problems that may have arisen during the previous week, share information and receive information from the SENDCO. Regular INSET is provided by the SENDCO on target setting and monitoring, intervention delivery and areas identified for continuous professional development. Individual feedback and suggestions for development are given to LSAs via SEND file monitoring, LSA observations and appraisals.

Key Learning Support Assistants have specialised in the areas of Speech, Language and Communication, SpLD and Emotional Literacy Support and Reading recovery in order to deliver more specialised programmes. Current individual and group programmes include Reading Reflex, BRP, Early Literacy Support, Word Wasp, IDL, Play and Learning to Socialise (PALs), the Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) and Sensory Circuits.

We also have access to specialised support including Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy programs devised by the Children's Therapy Team subject to meeting criteria.

To support pupils' Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, we have access to Play Therapists and Dog Therapy. We have an LSA who has completed the ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) qualification through Medway Educational Psychology service who runs a support group. We use Boxall Profiling as an SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) assessment tool to identify children who may need support in this area. All staff have been trained to use this to identify areas of need and it is used to allocate children to the most appropriate intervention to support their needs.

The Head Teacher, SENDCo and Outreach Support Advisors provide school-based INSET for class teachers during staff meetings and/or staff development days. Newly qualified teachers and newly appointed staff meet with the SENDCO during the first term of their appointment to be introduced to the school's SEND procedures as part of their induction programme. In addition, the SENDCO will meet with class teachers individually to introduce and discuss new support packages for individual children. Where necessary, the SENDCO will arrange for the teacher to meet personally with specialist agencies, such as the Educational Psychology Service to exchange information and provide individual training.

External Support Agencies

St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School maintains a good working relationship with a wide variety of outside agencies including health and social care bodies, local authority support services and voluntary sector organisations, in meeting pupils' SEND needs and supporting their families.

Parents are always informed when the school consults an external agency that becomes involved with their child

Support for children is sought from:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Medway Children's Health Team (Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy)
- School Nurse
- Consultant Paediatricians
- Physical and Sensory Service
- Pre-school Advisory Service
- Marlborough ASD Outreach Service
- Fortis Trust complex needs Outreach service
- Other agencies and voluntary organisations as appropriate
- NELFT (formerly known as CAMHs) Children and Adolescent Mental Health service

Primary / Secondary Links - Transition

We will share information with the school, college, or other setting the pupil is moving to. We will agree with parents and pupils which information will be shared as part of this.

The records of all children transferring from St. Thomas More to either another primary school or into secondary education will be sent on promptly to the new school. These records will include any SEND records and details of support packages in place. Where necessary, meetings between the SENDCOs' of both schools can be arranged.

In the case of secondary transfer, in the summer term, letters are sent to all of the schools allocating places to our SEND children, detailing their SEND levels and arranging meetings with the SENDCO to transfer information. In certain circumstances, arrangements are made for SEND pupils to visit the new school with their LSA to lessen anxieties and aid a smooth transfer.

Similarly in the case of children transferring from preschool or nursery, meetings can be arranged to share information and support plans to ensure smooth transition of children identified as having additional needs. This can take place with parents prior to pupils starting and the SENDCo is available to attend home visits with the class teacher should the need arise.

Before a child comes to school, we ask parents to fill in a pre-admission form. This is the first opportunity parents have to tell us of any problems that may concern them, of any external agency involvement or support plans that have been in place. If we felt that it was necessary we would arrange a meeting prior to the child coming to school either with the parents and/or the pre-school providers.

We have an early years screening programme for every child during the first term in the reception class. This helps us to identify problems at the earliest possible opportunity and gives us a baseline to enable us to monitor their progress. Children are then reassessed at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.

Complaints about SEN provision

Complaints about SEN provision in our school should be made to the class teacher/SENCO/headteacher in the first instance. They will then be referred to the school's complaints policy.

Reviewing the policy

This policy will be due for review in September 2025 in line with the Code of Practice. It will be reviewed with an evaluation of the effectiveness of:

- Systems for identifying and assessing children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- The provision made to meet children's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities , including a review of whole school training needs
- The record-keeping for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- The allocation of resources for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Jennifer Austin
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator

Review date September 2025