



## **LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY**

Responsible member of SLT: **Susie Brooks**

Review date: **October 2023**

Next review: **May 2025**

This policy complies with the statutory requirement set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 (2015), Part 3, and is a statement of the aims, principles and provision to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It refers to the following guidance and documents:

- SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015)
- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, Joint Council for Qualifications (2023/2024)
- Schools Guide to the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice, DfE (September 2014/2015)

For clarity, the term SEND will be used to describe the needs of all pupils identified (by the school) as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, regardless of whether an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is in place or not.

### **Definition of SEND**

Special Educational and Additional Learning Needs as defined in section 20 of the Children and Families Act (Part 3) 2014:

20 (1) A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

20 (2) 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 difficulty in learning 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.

20 (3) A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age (or would be likely, if no special educational provision were made).

20 (4) A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home.

We recognise that some pupils may have been diagnosed with a condition (e.g. ADHD, ADD, ASC or Asperger's Syndrome) which may prevent them from realising their full potential without recognition of their needs and the appropriate provision which is usually a natural feature of high quality teaching.

Disability is defined under the Equality Act 2010. A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Pupils may have either a disability or SEND or both, and actions taken to comply with the Equality Act should complement the support already provided by schools' SEND procedures where relevant. Not every pupil with SEND will qualify as disabled under the statutory definition; this will depend on the severity or extent of his/her needs.

This policy applies to, but is not restricted to:

- Pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils with disabilities
- Pupils whose first/home language is not English
- Minority ethnic groups
- High potential learners (HPL)

Alton School aims to observe the principles described in the SEND Code of Practice:

- We aim to deliver a whole school approach to SEND, where the Head of Learning Support works alongside teachers to deliver appropriate support as identified.
- We take into account the views of the pupils and their families, thus enabling them to participate in decision making.
- The Head of Learning Support collaborates where necessary with partners in health, social care and education to provide appropriate support.
- The pupils' learning needs are identified and high quality provision is offered to meet those needs.
- We aim to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential, to develop independence, and to maintain self-esteem in preparation for adulthood.

- We focus on inclusive practices, and on removing barriers to learning.
- We work in partnership with parents.
- We liaise with examination boards to ensure that each student with identified SEND is able to access exams through obtaining the necessary concessions.

## Admissions

Admission to the school is based on successfully fulfilling the entry requirements as stated in the Admissions Policy. We welcome pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, providing that we have the facilities and teaching skills to offer them the support that they require. We advise parents of children applying to the school, who have special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the school before he or she sits the entrance exam or visits the school. Parents should provide a copy of an EHCP, Educational Psychologist's report, Specialist Teacher assessment or a medical report to support their application.

We will discuss thoroughly with parents and, if necessary, their professional advisers, the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he/she becomes a pupil at the school.

## Procedures

A pupil's needs may be identified through the admissions process; this includes the GL assessment CAT 4, CEM results, primary school reports and information submitted by parents on the registration form.

A pupil's needs may also become apparent through the school's system of assessment tracking. For Early Years and Reception children this involves the foundation stage profile through Tapestry. The Lower school uses end of topic assessments in maths followed by check up assessments, In English there are termly 'Big Write' assessments. Annually, the Lower School pupils are assessed using GL Progress Tests in English and Maths. uses Rising Stars (Reception class uses this later in the year, too) GAPS, PUMA, PIRA. In the Senior School the assessment tracking includes the GL assessment CAT 4 (for external candidates), CEM Select assessments: MidYIS, Yellis and ALIS, plus half termly summative assessments, end of year examination results and standardised scores.

Every teacher is responsible for the learning and development of all the children within his/her class, including those with SEND. Thus, it is the responsibility of any subject or class teacher to identify and raise any concerns that may arise, with the Head of Learning Support, so that further appropriate advice and/or help may be sought.

In addition, the Lower School, Curriculum Group Leaders' Group, the Senior School Pastoral Tutors' Group and Sixth Form Tutors undertake regular reviews for all pupils. The Annual Performance Review and Staff Forum Meetings provide specific opportunities for raising concerns and suggesting targets and action plans.

The school recognises that parents have the knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best way of supporting them. Parents who are concerned about their child's progress are able to discuss their views with the Head of Learning Support. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept informed of their child's progress regularly and their views are valued.

Similarly, the children are encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes and to contribute to the review processes which assess their needs.

## **Monitoring children's progress**

The progress of individual children is monitored through the school's system of assessment tracking. This provides information about areas where a child is not progressing satisfactorily. More formally, progress is reviewed termly in the Lower school and half termly in the Middle and Upper schools through the use of standardised testing. Progress tracking is in place within Early Years as described in detail in the Appendix.

Unsatisfactory progress can be defined as:

- a significant attainment gap between a child and his/her peers
- not similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline
- not matching or showing improvement to a child's previous rate of progress
- not showing an improvement in social or personal skills
- not showing improvements in the child's behaviour

## **Provision**

In order to help children who have special educational needs, the school adopts a *graduated response* that recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and brings specialist expertise to bear on difficulties that a child may be experiencing. This mirrors the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs that is currently followed in maintained schools.

Alton School offers extra support for students who would benefit from more focused support and who have been identified as having additional needs.

### **Provision: Nursery**

In the Nursery and in Reception, the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs in Maintained Schools is fully implemented in accordance with EYFS regulations. The Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's (SENCo) have responsibility for ensuring that the records are kept and are available as needed for liaison with outside agencies. (Refer to Appendix.)

### **Provision: Lower school**

The majority of children in the Lower school learn and progress within the school's cycle of planning, teaching and assessment which takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the children.

Teachers are expected to differentiate **(adapt)** their lessons and resources to accommodate the pupils' learning needs. In addition Alton School offers:

- Classroom TA support for targeted areas of the curriculum and for specific pupils who need more individual support.
- One-to-one support with a specialist teacher

- Mentoring

### **Provision: Middle and Upper schools**

As with the Lower School, the majority of children learn and progress within the school's cycle of planning, teaching and assessment which takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the children.

In the Middle and Upper schools, in addition to the support provided by the Learning Support Department, teaching staff provide help for pupils who need support, with individual or group sessions at lunchtimes or through additional sessions after school. **These measures have allowed the school to achieve higher outcomes and Value Added scores year on year for pupils, including those who have been identified with having learning difficulties.**

Teachers are expected to differentiate their lessons and resources to accommodate the pupils' learning needs. In addition the Middle and Upper schools can offer:

- Study skills class for some year 10 and 11 pupils
- One to one lessons for pupils on level 3 (as outlined in the four tier approach detailed below) if required
- One to (up to 6) group lessons for pupils on levels 2 or 3 if required
- Exam access arrangements in accordance with the JCQ guidelines

### **Learning Support and Monitoring registers**

The Learning Support Department, alongside teachers and subject staff, meet regularly to discuss the progress of pupils on the Monitoring and Learning Support Registers.

Where a child is a cause for concern, they are placed on the Monitoring Register (pupils at Level 2) which records their need, any access arrangements and any reasonable adjustments that have been made. All teachers have access to the Monitoring Register.

If further support is required then, after discussions with parents and teachers, a pupil is placed at Level 3 on the Learning Support register which records their need, any access arrangements and any reasonable adjustments that have been made. All teachers have access to the Learning Support and Monitoring Registers.

### **Our four tier response:**

The graduated four tier response is designed to match the level of pupils' needs as appropriate:

#### **Level 1: Classroom intervention**

The pupil is monitored by the class teachers who liaise with the Head of Learning Support for advice or strategies. The individual subject teachers give support in lessons.

#### **Level 2: Pupil passport, monitoring register**

The Learning Support Department is notified of pupils of concern, and will analyse their level of need, through observations and assessment data. A pupil passport will be given with tailored strategies and techniques for the pupil and staff to follow to support their learning needs. Some

pupils may attend group sessions on a regular basis for targeted sessions on a particular skill. In Years 10 and 11 a pupil may also have a timetabled Study Skills session.

Pupils at Level 2 are placed onto the Monitoring Register, where their needs are outlined for staff, and any access arrangements are recorded on a Pupil Passport.

### **Level 3: Specialist support**

If a child subsequently makes little or no progress they will be referred, with the approval of the child's parents, to the Head of Learning Support, who will assess the needs of an individual child by understanding the assessment report or EHCP or by carrying out formal and informal testing and diagnosis-informed teaching.

If needed, lessons may take place on a weekly basis or when required and are financed by the parents. An Individual Action Plan will include:

- Short term targets
- Review dates
- Outcomes (Success criteria)

Pupils on Level 3 are listed on the Learning Support register and given targets, to work towards. The Head of Learning Support is able to provide staff with strategies on how to support learners. Some pupils on level 3 may also attend group sessions on a regular basis for targeted sessions on a particular skill.

### **Level 4: Education and Health Care Plans**

Pupils with an EHCP are automatically placed on Level 4. Pupils with an EHCP are also given a pupil passport which outlines information from their plan. The Head of Learning Support works with the Local Authority (LA) and other external agencies to ensure the EHCP is followed and annually reviewed in accordance with guidelines from the LA and the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

Although it is the responsibility of the LA to review the EHCP, the school will ensure that the review takes place and will cooperate with the LA in the review process. If the school is named on the EHCP then the provision specified in the EHCP will be made.

If there is a request for an EHC Assessment the school will provide evidence through:

- Action plan (Nursery)
- Pupil passport
- Individual targets (if applicable)
- Educational and other assessments
- Views of the parents and of the child
- Views of the school

## **Accessibility**

The school has an Accessibility Plan which sets out the existing provision of reasonable adjustments where possible to ensure disabled students are not put at a substantial disadvantage in accessing education. It also outlines an accessibility strategy and accessibility plan to increase the accessibility of education in the school for disabled students.

Currently pupils with physical disabilities are timetabled into ground floor teaching spaces where disabled access is possible and teachers are encouraged to make use of innovative IT based methodologies. In addition, Microsoft Teams may be utilised where access to a specialist provision is currently restricted. Appropriate access arrangements are put in place for public examinations.

## **The role of the Learning Support Department (Including teaching and support staff)**

The Head of Learning Support is responsible for the day-to-day management of provision. This will encompass:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of this Learning Support policy
- Co-ordinating provision for the children with special needs and liaising with external specialists (where appropriate) and class and subject teachers
- Liaising with parents of children with special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Liaising with external agencies if and when necessary
- Maintenance and availability of records
- Monitoring progress and taking actions if concerns are identified
- Ensuring with SLT that appropriate whole staff training is put in place so that all staff may support and understand SEND children
- To determine the needs of individual learners from assessment and other reports or by carrying out formal and informal testing and diagnosis informed by teaching
- To provide structured lessons to suit individual learners
- To liaise with staff about the specialist programme of work and, when necessary, to suggest strategies to help individuals cope in class
- To liaise with parents about the programme of work and progress made by the pupil

## **The role of other teaching and support staff**

All teaching and support staff are expected to provide for diverse pupils' needs, maximising their access to the whole curriculum. This will involve:

- Being involved in the development of the school's policies relevant to inclusion and fully aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with additional needs
- Being aware of which pupils in the school have additional needs
- Having a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and those of high ability, those with EAL, and those with disabilities, and be able to personalise their approach in order to overcome barriers to learning and engage and support them
- As practitioners, being responsible and accountable for the progress and development of pupils in their class, planning and delivering teaching with resources to take account additional needs
- Assessing and monitoring the progress of pupils with additional needs and recording and reporting relevant information.

## Partnership with Parents

We recognise the importance of effective dialogue between teachers, parents, guardians and outside agencies. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress at every stage. However, we do not advocate that any individual class or subject teacher should suggest at any time to a parent that a pupil may have a SEND. Any concerns will be managed through the Head of Learning Support or the Senior Leadership Team.

All parents are entitled to view the school's SEND policy on the website and can request a hard copy. A summary of our approach is also laid out in the school's prospectus.

Parents with children with learning difficulties or disabilities who are concerned about their child's progress should in the first instance speak to the Head of Learning Support.

Some children attending Alton School receive additional tuition outside school. These children may not always be identified by the school as needing additional support; however, the school is happy to liaise with tutors and parents of these children to make the best use of this additional provision.

## Liaison with other schools and agencies

In order to ease any transfer problems for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, arrangements are in place for liaison between playgroup/nursery and the reception class. In addition, Year 6 children will be given some training in the skills they will need to operate successfully at secondary school. Specialists from external agencies provide support through training or visits to maximise progress. Pupils transferring into the senior school or to other institutions will have details transferred with them.

## Access arrangements for public exams

Access Arrangements are reasonable adjustments for students who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010, a temporary injury or a special educational need that significantly affects them in exams. Decisions to apply for Access Arrangements will always be made by the school acting for and on behalf of the GCSE, IGCSE and GCE awarding bodies. They will be guided by reports produced by specialist teachers or psychologists, the SENDCo/Head of Learning Support and the school teachers' own knowledge of the candidate's needs and normal way of working both in school and at home.

In order to qualify for Access Arrangements (e.g. extra time, word processing, rest breaks, prompter, reader, practical assistant and scribe) the candidate must meet the requirements as set out by Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. A Form 8 –JCQ/AA/LD or a Form 9 – JCQ/AA must be used to record information about a candidate's access arrangements.

The Head of Learning Support must complete Part 1 of the Form 8 prior to the specialist assessment. In order for the Head of Learning Support to be able to complete Part 1 of the Form 8, there must be a clear justification based upon:

- A history of need and history of support based on the candidate's significant and persistent difficulties



- That the candidate's difficulties/disabilities impact on teaching and learning within the classroom
- The normal way of working within the school (centre) and support given to the candidate relate to a proposed access arrangement

The school's Specialist Assessor (Head of Learning Support) will complete Part 2 of the Form 8. The school has one in-house specialist assessor. The school holds evidence of the assessors' qualifications for inspection purposes. Part 3 is filled in by the Head of Learning Support after the assessment is complete and identifies the access arrangements that are being requested.

The school is unable to accept privately commissioned reports without prior consultation with the school as they do not satisfy JCQ criteria 7.3.6 of *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations*.

### **Use of a word processor in examinations**

Where it is a candidate's normal way of working and appropriate to their needs, a word processor is allowed with the spelling, grammar, and predictive text disabled. The following list, although not exhaustive, sets out types of candidate who may benefit from the use of a word processor:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting

A word processor may not be granted to a candidate on grounds of preference, or that the candidate can work faster on a keyboard or uses this at home.

The Head of Learning Support authorises its use; the Exams Officer, together with the IT Department, ensures the JCQ rules are adhered to and that the laptop complies with them.

### **Separate invigilation within the centre**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved for separate invigilation within the centre will be based on whether:

- ...the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect
- ...it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

5.16 of *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations*

Separate invigilation will reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests (such as end of topic tests and/or summer examinations) and mock examinations, as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.

## Appendix Early Years Department

The Head of Learning Support works with the Director of Nursery. Alton School Nursery has its own dedicated SENCOs who support nursery staff to implement the SEND policy and in coordinating provision for children with SEND.

- We ensure that the provision for children with special educational needs is the responsibility of all members of the setting.
- We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.
- Children with special educational needs will be supported and have their individual needs met through our SEND provision which will include those children classed as High Potential Learners (HPL).
- We use a graduated approach system: assess, plan, do and review, for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs or disabilities.
- We refer to Early Years Outcomes (DfE September 2021) to assist in assessing children as a means to inform judgement about the developmental age band within which the child is comfortably working. We use the ICAN stages of speech and Language poster to help us assess the children's development.
- We provide an action plan with short term targets containing appropriate intervention to achieve the best outcomes for the child. We will plan for the four main areas of need: communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social emotional and mental health, sensory and/or physical needs. We will keep records of progress for each child and review regularly with parents.
- We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children with special educational needs, including High Potential Learners (HPL).
- We work closely with the local Inclusion Setting Support Officer (ISSO) and will attend support group meetings with them where needed. We also work with Portage and the Thomas Outreach Programme (TOPs) if required, who in turn offer support to the families.
- We work closely with parents to create and maintain a positive partnership.
- We ensure that parents are informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their child's education.
- We ensure that children with special educational needs are appropriately involved at all stages of the graduated response, taking into account their level of understanding.
- We liaise with other professionals involved with the children and their families, including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools.
- We have systems in place for supporting children and families through the graduated approach system, the Early Help Assessment, the statutory Education and Health Care Plan assessment and through the transition process when moving on to school.
- We provide resources (human and financial) to implement our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.
- We provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support.
- We ensure that our staff are aware of our Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy and the procedures for identifying, assessing and supporting children with SEND.
- We actively encourage and expect our practitioners to attend training both in-house and through sold services.

- We raise awareness of any specialism the local sold services have to offer, e.g. Makaton training for staff.
- We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources, e.g. action plans from graduated approach system, staff and management meetings, parental and external agencies' views, and inspections. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed annually.

Signed on behalf of Alton School

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