

# Simon Balle All-through School

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



## SEND offer and SEND Annual Report, 2023-2024

### Context:

Simon Balle All through School embraces the needs of all students and has a whole-school approach to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We are a mainstream school, our curriculum is academic and our expectations high. Every year we celebrate student destinations to Oxford and Cambridge, Russell Group Universities, high level apprenticeships and exciting employment and other higher educational opportunities. Therefore, we endeavour to provide opportunities to all students by responding to their individual and sometimes complex needs, setting suitable learning challenges and overcoming barriers to learning. Simon Balle All through School is an inclusive school that believes strongly that all students, regardless of academic or physical ability, background, or ethnicity, have the right to participate fully in the life of the school and be equipped to be successful learners and model citizens. The richness in the range of ability and characters is welcomed as it enhances our ethos and culture.

During recent years we have recognised that the pandemic has created both opportunities and challenges not only for schools but for families and local external services that support families who have a child who demonstrates SEND. During the past year (2022-2023), our all through school has continued to grow and the number of children requiring support has increased as the year has moved on. The statutory duties remain the same but the importance of working with 'front line' staff who are delivering the curriculum have grown. Also access to the curriculum continues to provide challenges and for those reasons, from September 2022, in response to staff vacancies, we have established a team approach to SEND, whereby training and provision are divided into phases in line with all the all through school. The remit of this team is the ultimate responsibility for and accountability with regard to impact of strategies and communication, ensuring that structures and systems are in place, clear and easily followed. Every member of staff is responsible for supporting the progress of young people with SEND at Simon Balle, led by this important strategic team. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation, through purposeful team meetings, enhanced by governor involvement, is critical and mirrors the individual SEND approach of assess, plan, do, review.

SEND provision will be coordinated and analysed for impact by the SEND team. In some cases this will involve collaborating and gathering information from other teams within school, and purposeful use of external networks beyond school too.

Our links with a Hertfordshire SEMH primary school has influenced our policies and practices on restorative practice and will further shape the work in the coming year so that all staff understand, and are fully implementing, what an inclusive classroom looks like for the full breadth of needs, including when specialist and targeted support is needed. We adhere to the

'Hertfordshire's Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour strategy' and we are implementing the tiered approach.

### **Key Questions:**

#### **1. How does Simon Balle All-through School know if a student needs extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?**

The school has a rigorous tracking and monitoring system - in all areas- and this will highlight to us any student who appears not to be making expected progress (or more) or where there is an academic or social or behavioural need. In addition, as part of our transition process, the school liaises closely with parents/carers, the student and their primary school, or pre-school, to ensure that we understand both the social and academic needs of the student. With our youngest children, we believe in early identification and this might mean that we use specific assessments, or we might suggest a period to monitor and then review. We spend considerable time discussing the best and most effective strategies we can use to ensure that students make good progress.

If you think that your child may have learning needs or additional needs, you can talk to the class teacher, Head of year/Primary phase leader or SEND Team, to see how we can investigate this further so that needs are met. We will follow a graduated response (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) when assessing needs. This is in line with the Code of Practice for SEND and ensures that your concerns are heard, and that the child's needs are assessed to agree on next steps.

#### **2. How will school staff support my child?**

We believe that the best support for any young person, including those with SEND, is the highest quality teaching and learning, within a classroom environment.

The staff at Simon Balle All-through School work very closely with the students and their families to ensure that we support their needs together. Staff will ensure that needs and strategies are reviewed and that the student feels happy and safe. Across all phases of our school, pastoral care, social and academic support are prioritised - supported by the class teacher, phase leader and support staff in the primary phase, and the form tutor, Head of Year and support staff in the secondary phase. All teaching staff and any support staff who are involved with the student will not only receive regular updates and training but also work together to ensure that the strategies being used are making the desired difference. It is the responsibility of all teachers to address each student's needs ensuring that the curriculum is accessible. Indeed, we are aspirational for all learners. Therefore, teachers will regularly access the progress of students and seek to identify those making less than expected progress. Staff may choose to modify or adapt methods to meet individual needs before intervention is put in place. Student profiles are set up for students with SEND and shared with staff.

Our all-through PSHRE curriculum, beginning with personal development in the Early Years, is progressive and sequential to support every young person, including those with SEND.

As a school we place great emphasis upon effective, regular training, learning from educational research and best practice. We know that the most important factor for all children, including those with SEND, is high quality teaching and learning.

### **3. How will I know how my child is doing?**

Your child's class teacher or form teacher is your first point of contact to discuss how your child is getting on. Parents at Simon Balle All through School receive regular feedback from staff. Each year group has at least one parents evening and an annual report. Within the primary phase there are more opportunities for contact, where we recognise the essential partnership between home and school for young children to thrive and grow. Across the all-through school, using our online assessment and homework system, parents are able to see the progress their child is making. If appropriate, meetings between parents/carers and the SEND team will be arranged. Parents can contact the SEND team with any questions throughout the school year.

Simon Balle All through School is well known for its excellent level of pastoral and academic care, alongside outstanding communication with parents/carers. Any interventions that are provided for students involve parental consultation. These are closely monitored, and outcomes shared. Parents are encouraged to use all means of meeting regularly with staff, either face to face or online if more convenient.

There are various levels of accountability for student progress, through line management and governance.

### **4. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?**

At Simon Balle we are aware that needs vary and that they change over time. We track and monitor progress to ensure that strategies are timely, relevant and have impact. Intervention may be varied, it may be used in the short term to address specific targets, or longer term as part of an overall plan. We focus on effective and adaptive teaching and learning, so that teaching staff implement resources for all students to access within a class setting. We believe the best place for students to progress is in the classroom with their peers, led by a subject specialist. However, from time to time intervention or catch up is appropriate using the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' model to identify what needs to be in place. Our interventions are informed directly by educational research, including active research of our own, and often those recommended by National Association for Special Educational Needs (Nasen).

We follow the EEF guidance which suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider, emphasising these for students with SEND. Teachers at Simon Balle will develop a repertoire of these strategies to flexibly use in response to the needs of all students.

- Flexible grouping;
- Cognitive and metacognitive strategies;
- Explicit instruction;

- Using technology to support students with SEND;
- Scaffolding.

From time to time, our review might indicate that a further modification and personalisation of the curriculum is needed, often on a temporary basis. An example might be that short-term additional literacy intervention is put in place to support students to access further curriculum reading content at KS3, or that, in rare examples, additional study support is given in place of a GCSE option. These decisions are always made with a clear rationale, and with a focus on ensuring the breadth and ambition of the curriculum for all.

Our all-through progression of careers education ensures that students are supported at each stage of their journeys through Simon Balle and beyond. For example, during Year 9 parents of students who have identifiable SEND needs will work with the SEND team and senior staff to explore what subject choices would be appropriate for their child at GCSE. Services for Young People (Hertfordshire) will meet with families of Year 11 to help plan the transition process into post 16 education and explore options available locally. In addition, testing takes place to ensure that those students who 'qualify' for access arrangements during formal examination processes, have the correct modifications granted.

## **5. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?**

The provision for pastoral care is outstanding and parents at Simon Balle All-through School regularly praise us for how we deal with each individual child in a holistic way. We follow guidance from 'Hertfordshire's emotional wellbeing and behaviour strategy plan' using this approach in terms of support. For individual concerns, the school will discuss with you any specific concerns and an agreed approach will be taken. We will let you know the names of the key points of contact. These members of staff will be your link: a two-way process of communication will be established. In addition, our Director of Care and wellbeing, a member of the Senior Team, works particularly closely with families and children where there are safeguarding concerns, and when external care professions are involved. We want all members of our community to strive for good mental health and therefore much time is spent on being proactive and offering a range of strategies and information to help the community.

From time to time we recognise that some students may need somewhere away from the classroom where they can study and learn. This typically would be for a particular lesson or a short transition period. In this 'space', our CALM (Centre for Alternative Learning and Mentoring) room in the Secondary building, staff can provide an increased nurturing approach, along with delivering specific programmes of learning.

When and if additional interventions are needed, our senior mental health lead is James Pooley and he along with several staff who are trained in mental first aid, can offer support. This might include using our partnership with the local Hertford Charity, Future Living.

<https://www.futurelivinghertford.co.uk/> . Not only does this charity offer targeted support for young people and families who experience domestic abuse, they are able to both offer and signpost to a range of external support services.

We continue to work closely with and seek advice from a range of professional services and external agencies, including NHS, Rivers Education Support Centre, Education Support for Medical Absence (ESMA) and other outreach agencies and SEND Specialist Advice and Support (SAS). We aspire for all students to be happy, feel safe and to access our Simon Balle bespoke curriculum.

#### **6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?**

The school is committed to using a range of external services including medical, social and mental health professionals as appropriate. These include Speech and Language therapy, the Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS, PALMS, Specialist SAS teams (eg. VI, Autism), Services for Young People, Herts SEND, Families First Assessments, Social Care and the Virtual School.

#### **7. What training have the staff supporting young people and young people with SEND, had or are having?**

Professional development and training is key to our success at Simon Balle All Through School, and as such is a driver for our continuous improvement. Leaders keep up to date with both educational research alongside pedagogic approaches. Teaching assistants and those with particular responsibilities for delivering strategies, regularly attend training and during the past year topics have included autism; approaches with literacy - reading and oracy; visual impairment; behavioural strategies; attachment and trauma training and assessment for students working below age related expectations. Within our Primary Phase, a number of staff are trained in using WellComm and Elklan, to help those children who may have speech, language and communication needs.

Our SEND Team are proactive in seeking and organising training for staff where appropriate.

#### **8. How will you help me to support my child's learning?**

We believe that students will only be making progress and be successful if we work in close partnership with parents and carers. It is our aim to develop some level of independence so that all our students, from Reception to Year 13, can take appropriate responsibility for themselves. As a mainstream setting, we expect developing independence and self regulation, both in terms of learning and physical and emotional development. We hold a number of events and meetings for all parents/carers so that they can support and understand their children's learning and sometimes this is specifically aimed at those parents who have children with SEND. Parents/carers will be informed regularly about SEND provision for their child.

Our local SEND hub (DSPL3) frequently organises courses for parents whereby the focus is on a specific issue, for example, autism, transition or speech and language.

## **9. How will I be involved in discussions about planning for my child's education?**

From well before children join Simon Balle (at any entry point), transition support is extensive. Then, as your child joins the school, or indeed at any point where needs are identified, all parents/carers of SEND students will be expected to work closely with us. We will talk with you and organise an appropriate programme, strategy or simple monitoring of progress. Your views will always be listened to as we continue to work cooperatively with all parents/carers in making key decisions for your child. However, as professionals we understand the requirements both legally of a school and also we do need to consider the effective and efficient use of resources, and indeed the needs of other students.

In the primary phase, particularly on entry to Reception, we recognise that parents are a child's first and most important educators. Therefore, we aim to work in partnership with parents - on a daily basis through contact with the class teacher. Where plans are needed, meetings can be arranged with the class teacher, primary SEND lead and/or phase leader as appropriate.

During Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, parents will be involved in a number of ways, both in terms of educational progress but also in terms of future planning. Each parent/carer will be given the opportunity to discuss options and curriculum provision at transition points with a member of staff. We use 'services for young people' to help us with this work, particularly as your child moves through KS4.

If your child has an EHCP the annual review is a key meeting to review needs.

If a student has SEND and is enrolled on one of our sixth form programmes, Our SEND team and Heads of Year are always available to our students and parents to discuss progress, educational concerns and next steps. Specialist staff are available to guide students and parents through the UCAS process, apprenticeships and gaining employment.

## **10. How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?**

Simon Balle is an inclusive school, and we ensure that all children can access trips and other extra - curricular activities such as our extensive selection of lunchtime and after school clubs.

Therefore, it is an expectation that students with SEND fully participate, hopefully finding an area, or more, in which to thrive. Many students with SEND love to participate in sport or feel passionate about learning a musical instrument and playing or singing as part of a musical group. Indeed, we are proud of our musical and sporting provision which is fully inclusive and offers such a wealth of provision for all. In music, this includes musical grades and medals, concerts for all (beginners and those more experienced musicians), music therapy, nurture groups and at KS4, a residential music tour. In sport, we focus on both participation and performance, providing clubs for all (in such a wide range of sports), and seeking out extensive opportunities to progress within fixtures and competitions.

Our trips and visits are plotted across the all-through school to ensure that, just like the curriculum, they are progressive and sequential, and always with a clear rationale for enrichment and directly linked to curriculum content to ensure a deepening of knowledge. Day trips are numerous, residential also include outdoor activities, field work, sports and music tours and our Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

We do recognise that some children and young people who have SEND needs may require a 'risk assessment' to be made if they are able to attend events off site or residential activities and these are always discussed with parents.

### **11. How accessible is the school environment?**

The school tries to ensure that the campus is accessible to all students. We have a lift to access upper storey classrooms and there are disabled toilet facilities. Key markings feature visibly around the school for visually impaired students and relevant policies are on our website.

The primary building was built in 2015 and thus is light, airy, with wide corridors and a lift. However, most of the buildings and rooms on the secondary site are at least 50 years old and at times can be challenging. We endeavour to ensure that the buildings are accessible; we therefore encourage all parents considering the school for a secondary place, to visit. In the Secondary buildings, lessons for students with disabilities are timetabled to ensure they can access areas as independently as possible.

### **12. Who can I contact for further information?**

The SENCo Mandy Wood ([wooda@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:wooda@simonballe.herts.sch.uk))

The Primary SENCo Ali Raven ([Ravena@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Ravena@simonballe.herts.sch.uk))

KS5 SEND lead Steve Robins ([robinss@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:robinss@simonballe.herts.sch.uk))

Our SEND Team is overseen and led by Rachel Kirk our Co-Headteacher.

All children, including those with SEND, thrive when teaching and learning is of the highest quality, so please contact your child's teacher(s) regarding their academic learning and their phase leader or head of year for more general queries.

If you are not happy with any aspect of our provision, please contact us at school to sort this out as soon as possible. We usually find that problems and concerns are best discussed as quickly as possible, and often by phone or in person. If resolution is not possible, the last resort is our [Complaints policy](#).

### **13. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?**

We manage all transition phases in consultation with providers and parents/carers. We organise a personalised programme for each young person with SEND so that they are familiar with the new setting, prior to the official transition. This will include a tour of the school, meeting new key staff and a meeting with parents to discuss needs. The child is usually visited in their prior setting and there is close communication between professionals. Those with SEND moving on from Simon Balle post 14, will be supported by our implementation of 14-19 Preparing for Adulthood Young Persons Transition Plan led by Services for Students - Hertfordshire's service. Specialist staff are available 1:1 to guide students and parents through the UCAS process, apprenticeships and gaining employment.

#### **14. How are the school's resources allocated and matched to young people's special educational needs?**

At each stage of the child's educational journey, we review with parents the needs of the young person. Many parents choose Simon Balle All through School because of its ethos of high-quality teaching and learning, coupled with a deep sense of caring and dignity for all. Whilst we do from time to time withdraw children and young people from the classroom and we do employ a number of specialised teaching assistants and mentors, most children thrive in the classroom, having access to adults but not being over-directed in their learning. We have high but realistic expectations and aspirations for all of our students, and we expect a level of independence from all. We value our teaching assistants, buy specialised resources, allocate time to certain students for personalised programmes and train staff to meet needs.

We are expecting all EHCPs to be moderated using the descriptors of need centrally as part of Hertfordshire's SEND model. Using the knowledge from this plan alongside the available funding that the school can give, we will talk with parents about the strategies which we will put in place. This may be individualised support or group work, however, it will almost never be full time one to one support as this is not in line with our philosophy for meeting SEND within a mainstream setting. Sometimes it will be more relevant to fund enrichment activities which will enhance learning and where the students can see great success. We are aware of the 'notional funding' budget which now has heavy demands placed upon us, to meet the large number of students with EHCPs, and more widely all students with SEND, within the all through school.

At all times, we are guided by this important research:

[https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/send/EEF\\_Special\\_Educational\\_Needs\\_in\\_Mainstream\\_Schools\\_Recommendations\\_Poster.pdf?v=1696176287](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/send/EEF_Special_Educational_Needs_in_Mainstream_Schools_Recommendations_Poster.pdf?v=1696176287)

#### **15. How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?**

The decision on how much support is a very serious and important one. This will be discussed with parents/carers. We will use our professional judgements, external advice and also the child's views, alongside those of parents/carers to put together a plan. However, we always take a flexible and realistic approach for often high support may be needed initially but following a review it may need to be changed.

At Simon Balle we have very high expectations for all students. We believe that all students, regardless of their SEND needs, should make good educational progress. We do not believe in a 'fixed mindset' nor a focus on what cannot be achieved. Instead, we will academically challenge all students and ensure that they develop those skills of resilience, independence and a 'can do' attitude, which will equip them well for the wider world. The school believes in a holistic approach to 'Creating tomorrow's Citizens today' through a broad and ambitious curriculum.

**16. How can I find information about the local authorities' Local Offer of services and provision for young people with special educational needs and disability?**

Local authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. The Hertfordshire Local Offer can be accessed on the following link:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/nicosites/local-offer/the-hertford-local-offer.as.px>