



# WHICKHAM SCHOOL

SEND (Special Educational Needs and  
Disabilities)

**Information Report 2023-24**

## Policy Review

| Last reviewed | By whom    | Next review |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
| June 2022     | D Crosland | June 2024   |
| June 2023     | D Crosland | June 2024   |
| July 2024     | S Maher    | July 2025   |

## About the School

Whickham School and Sports College (Academy Trust) is a mainstream school for students from the ages of 11 to 18 years. The school caters for students with a range of additional education needs with an additional resources provision (ARMS) for learners on the Autistic Spectrum.

As part of the Children and Families Bill 2014, all schools are required to provide a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information Report to families. This report details how the school can support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

## SEND Vision

We value diversity, understand difficulties, and celebrate individual differences. We work hard to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to flourish, regardless of their barriers to learning.

We adopt a Person-Centred Approach to ensure that all learners have the very best chance of success in the modern world.

We have high ambitions for all of our young people. We believe that our learners should be the Very Best They Can Be by:

- Developing Enquiring Minds and Learning Skills
- Being Reflective and Resilient Learners
- Developing Empathy towards others and understanding their own barriers to learning
- Developing Self-Regulation skills for both learning and managing emotions

It is our duty to provide equal opportunities for every person in our care and a safe and fully equipped learning environment which caters to the needs of every child as an individual. We are committed to inclusion within the school curriculum and participation in all aspects of school life. We pay close regard to the key principles of inclusive education:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.
- Raising awareness of additional needs and creating an inclusive learning environment throughout Whickham School.

## **Admission arrangements for pupils with SEND**

Whickham School caters for pupils of all abilities, including those with identified learning difficulties and disabilities.

If you would like your child to attend Whickham School, you should discuss the suitability of Whickham School as a secondary placement with their current school and participate in a review with any professionals who work with your child. At the review meeting, yourself and the professionals involved will discuss possible next steps or you may wish to contact the SEN department of your local authority. They will then advise you on what steps should be taken. The local authority will signpost parents to schools that can meet the needs of their child.

Parents/carers are welcome to visit Whickham School and this is especially important before making a decision about a placement. If you make a decision about the school you would like your child to attend, you should inform the Local Authority of your first choice of school. Once the placement is agreed, we will work with you to support your child during the transition period.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is Mr Andy Purvis – [Apurvis@whickhamschool.org](mailto:Apurvis@whickhamschool.org)

### **Identifying Needs**

All students follow a broad balanced curriculum that is appropriate to their age and stage of development which is personalised to take into account their needs and abilities. In order to identify a student's special educational needs we use all of the information about the student's progress (end of Key Stage 2 results, transition review meetings, on-line digital reading screener, ten weekly data collection, a range of standardised tests, advice from the Educational Psychologist and SENIT) and compare it with the progress of other students in the school and against national performance information, such as, national average progress indicators as found in RAISE or from the Department of Education. If a student is not making the progress that would be expected, their parent/carer will be involved as soon as possible. We will discuss our concerns with the parent/carer and student and get their views about:

- the student's strengths and areas of difficulty
- concerns that the parent/carer and student has
- agreed outcomes

### **Agreed next steps**

Following discussions with parents/carers and the student, we will then agree outcomes that the student will be working towards and the support or programmes of study that are needed to meet these outcomes. From the records of progress and discussions with parents/carers, the school will then decide the support or programmes of study that are needed to meet these outcomes. Concerns are not always based on academic progress but could also be linked to the social and emotional development of the student. Any concerns that school staff or parents raise in this area may lead to a further investigation by the SEND Team.

### **Assessment, Monitoring and Review**

Each student's progress is continually monitored by their subject teacher and the SEND Team in a number of ways, including additional educational testing completed within school and analysis of the data collection monitoring process. The SEND team oversees any

additional support the student may need and at the end and beginning of each academic year, data is analysed and tracked to get a clear indication of which students need support with their academic work. Progress is discussed in regular Pastoral and Faculty meetings, tracked closely by departments and staff and is reviewed formally at regular intervals throughout the academic year.

Other tests may be used to monitor progress, such as tests which give a reading and spelling age or a standardised score. These tests and levels will also be discussed in detail, along with staff comments within the review meeting. The level of support given to each student depends on their additional needs and any other factors that may improve or hinder their progress. When a student has been assessed and is not making progress against their outcomes with the help that they have been given, we can refer students to a number of different services for more specialist assessment and advice.

Depending on the student's needs, referrals can be made to the Special Educational Needs Improvement Team (SENIT), the Educational Psychology Service or Behaviour Support Service within Gateshead Council, health services such as speech and language therapy, school nursing service, occupational therapist, Emotional Wellbeing Team or Children and Young People's Service or social care teams such as SEND social workers or the Family Intervention Team.

We might suggest completing a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) form in order to get a team of professionals (Team around the Family (TAF)) together to work with the student and their family but this will only be done with the parent/carers agreement. If the student does not make progress with support that has been suggested by specialist staff, we can make a referral to the Local Authority (LA), for an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (called a Single Plan in Gateshead). This is a legal process, which is carried out by the LA which sets out the amount of support that will be provided for the student.

### **Involving Parents/Carers and Students**

Parent/carers can contact school with any concerns about their child by telephoning, writing or coming into the office and requesting a meeting or speaking to staff at the start and end of the school day. Parent/carers will be kept informed through home/school books/diaries/ letters home/ class charts/ school reports and phone calls.

Staff will contact parents/carers to discuss issues, concerns or progress of individual students as soon as additional need is identified. We hold regular parent evenings for all parents/carers. If your child has special educational needs, parents/carers and the student are involved with regular termly review meetings to discuss progress towards current outcomes and setting outcomes for the future.

Annual Reviews are held for students with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs). These reviews focus on achievements, the progress made towards the outcomes, support and future plans and is held with parents/carers, the student and any other agencies involved. Progress reports can be provided to parents/carers in alternative formats if required.

Students are encouraged to share their aspirations and views in review meetings especially letting school know how they prefer to be supported. During the course of the school year, parents will be given the opportunity of meeting with the SEND Team and other parents to discuss specific learning issues. This will relate to the four areas of need as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.

## **Staff**

There are a number of people in school who are responsible for special educational needs in school:

### **The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- The day to day management of all aspects of the school, including support for students with SEN.
- Making sure that your child's needs are met but they will give this responsibility to the SEND Team and class teachers.
- Making sure that the Governing Body is kept up to date about any issues in the school relating to SEN.

### **The SEND Team is responsible for:**

- Coordinating all the support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and developing the school's SEND Policy to make sure all students get a consistent, high quality response to meeting their needs in school.
- Ensuring that parents/carers are:
  - involved in supporting their child's learning
  - kept informed about the support their child is getting
  - involved in reviewing how they are doing
  - involved in planning for their future.
- Contacting other people who may be coming into school to help support your child's learning for example, an Educational Psychologist.
- Making sure that there are excellent records of your child's progress and needs.
- Providing specialist support for teachers and support staff in the school, so they can help students with SEND in the school make the best possible progress.
- Writing Student Learning Plans that specify how learners are best supported with teaching and learning.
- Regularly gathering the views of students and their families to improve our SEND offer.
- Ensuring students' progress in relation to set targets is regularly analysed and interventions are put in place as appropriate.
- Ensuring that all staff working with the student in school are helped to deliver the planned work/programme so the student can make the best possible progress. This may involve the use of additional adults, outside specialist help and specially planned work and resources.

### **The Subject Teacher is responsible for:**

- Making sure that all students have access to excellent classroom teaching (this is known as quality first teaching) and that the curriculum is adjusted to meet your child's individual needs (this is called differentiation).
- Checking on the progress of your child and identifying, planning and providing any additional help your child may need and letting SEND Team know if necessary. This could be things like targeted work, additional support.
- Following the advice and Pupil Passports produced by the SEND team. These will be shared and reviewing with parents at least once each year.
- Planning for the student's next term based on their progress.
  
- Ensuring that the school's SEND Policy is followed in their classroom and for all the students they teach with any SEND.
- **Planning for the deployment of Teaching Assistants. Our Teaching Assistants work with the class teacher to identify areas of support for students with SEND.**  
They:
  - Support students to access the curriculum
  - Help to implementation of differentiation and specialist support strategies in the classroom
  - Keep students focused on learning activities during lesson
  - Attend all training opportunities related to SEND and differentiation.
  - Are mainly classroom based, however Higher-Level Teaching Assistants are able to deliver specific SEN programmes outside of the classroom. They may also provide support during social time and unstructured parts of the day.
  - Help students to develop effective ways of becoming independent learners.
  - Pass on any concerns regarding progress/emotional and social development to the SEND Team.

### **The SEND Link Governor is responsible for:**

- Making sure that the school has an up to date and fit for purpose SEND Policy.
- Making sure that the school has appropriate provision and has made necessary adaptations to meet the needs of all students in the school.
- Making sure that the necessary support is made for any student who attends the school, who has SEND.
- Other members of staff that support students with SEND include pastoral staff, learning mentors, home school liaison staff, Inclusion Manager, school counsellor, Attendance Manager, EWO, Progress Officers, teaching and learning co-ordinators, specific subject Faculty link personnel and Child Protection Officers.

### **Training**

School staff are trained in specific areas where there is a current SEND. The Headteacher collects information on areas for development through appraisals and staff meetings and

asks the appropriate professionals to deliver it as whole staff or individual training. Training is also provided for staff when students are admitted to school with a SEND that no-one in school has experience of.

Staff within school have different levels of expertise in order to support students with special educational needs:

- Awareness – this is basic awareness of a particular type of SEND. All staff who come into contact with the student will have this level of training offered and it will be carried out by the SENCo, SENIT, Educational Psychologist or other specialist service.
- Enhanced – this level of training will be carried out by staff working with the student regularly, such as class and subject teachers, and will focus on how teaching and learning can be adapted to meet the student's needs. The training can be carried out by SENIT, Educational Psychologist, staff from special schools or other specialist services.

## **Transition**

Transitions can be difficult for a student with SEND and we take steps to ensure that any transition is as smooth as possible.

Students with Educational Health and Care Plan (Single Plans) will have a review in the Autumn term before they move to secondary school to discuss the transition. You will be told by 15 February of the year that they transfer which secondary school they will attend in September.

Before your child moves to Whickham School, staff will visit them at their previous school. Whenever possible, we will arrange for your child to visit us to meet their new teachers and classmates. We will invite all parents to an open evening once their secondary placement has been allocated. We will also speak to parent/carers of children with a Single Plan of SEND before their child begins at the school as they know their child better than we ever can.

We will develop a personal transition plan for your child with their primary school and review staff training to ensure that staff teaching your child have a knowledge of their needs.

If your child is moving to another school we will contact the SENDCo at the new school and ensure they know about any special arrangements or support that need to be made for your child. We will also make sure that all records about your child are passed on as soon as possible. Where possible your child will visit their new school before they start and in some cases staff from the new school will visit your child in this school. When your child moves to secondary school, staff from Whickham School will discuss the specific needs of your child with the SENDCO of their primary school.

Students also move to college or apprenticeships at the end of Year 11 or the end of Year 13. Students will have support from a Connexions Personal Adviser from Year 8 who will provide independent support and advice about Post 16 options. In some cases, it may be suitable to use the support of Disabled Social Work Team to support the transition into adult services for the student. Please note - if your child has a Single Plan they must have an annual review before they move to a new school.

## **Support**

## **Academic**

All students receive excellent targeted classroom teaching also known as Quality First Teaching. For your child this would mean:

- That the teacher has the highest possible expectations for your child and all students in their class.
- That all teaching is based on building on what your child already knows, can do and can understand.
- Different ways of teaching are in place so that your child is fully involved in learning in class. This could involve things like using more practical learning.
- Specific strategies are in place to support your child to learn.
- If your child's teacher has decided that your child has gaps in their understanding/learning after carefully checking on your child's progress they could receive some extra support to help them make the best possible progress.
- Differentiated academic pathways at KS4, to include vocational qualifications as appropriate
- Alternative education opportunities for learning outside of the school setting if appropriate.

All students will get this level of support but other types of support are available for students with SEND:

- Specific work with a small group of students. This type of support is available for any student who has specific gaps in their understanding of a subject/area of learning and will be put in place if the SENDCo or Head of Faculty thinks that they need extra support in school. The Intervention group will work with specific targets to help your child make more progress. The targets will be identified in advance and need to be achieved within a specific time period, normally a term. The progress made with the intervention is tracked and monitored closely to decide whether any additional support is needed for your child.

## **Specialist groups run by outside agencies**

This type of support is available for students who are not making progress through Quality First Teaching and intervention groups and means they have been assessed as needing some extra specialist support in school.

This may be from:

- Local Authority services such as the SENIT, an Educational Psychologist or Behaviour Support Service.
- Outside agencies such as the Speech and Language therapy (SALT) Service, Occupational Therapy, Emotional Wellbeing Team.

For your child this would mean:

- Your child will have been identified by the SENDCo as needing more specialist input instead of or in addition to Quality First Teaching and intervention groups.
- You will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss your child's progress and help plan possible ways forward.



- You may be asked for permission for the school to refer your child to a specialist professional e.g. a Speech and Language Therapist or Educational Psychologist. This will help the school and yourself understand your child's needs better and be able to support them better in school.
- The specialist professional will work with your child to understand their needs and make recommendations, which may include:
  - Making changes to the way your child is supported in class e.g. some individual support or changing some aspects of teaching to support them better.
  - Support to set targets which will include their specific expertise.
  - A group run by school staff under the guidance of the outside professional e.g. a social skills group.
  - A group or individual work with outside professionals.

### **Individual support**

This is usually provided through an Education Health Care Plan (known as a Single Plan in Gateshead). This means your child will have been identified by a specialist professional as needing a higher level of support than the school can provide from their SEND budget. This is a legal process, which is carried out by the LA, which sets out the amount of support that will be provided for your child. School will discuss with you if they think that this is required.

### **Emotional and Social Support**

As well as providing academic support, school can also provide emotional and social support for students. This can include:

- Peer mentoring systems involving older, normally Sixth Form students
- Social skills/nurture group interventions - provided by both internal staff and external agencies
- School counsellor
- Self-esteem interventions - ranging for the use of sport/music/drama to speech and language interventions
- A Pastoral system which allocates support from Head of Year and Progress Officers, as well as the Inclusion Manager
- Anti-bullying policies and taught within Citizenship curriculum
- Provision before and after school for vulnerable students
- Administration of medicines

### **Accessibility in School**

The new main school building is fully accessible to students with physical difficulties.

The following facilities are available for students and their parents/carers with physical difficulties:

- Disabled parking bays

- Ramped access to buildings
- Lifts to all floors in 6th form block and main school building
- Accessible toilets
- Induction loop for hearing aid users in sixth form block and some classrooms.
- Accessible break areas
- Accessible dining area
- A private room for administration of medication

A risk assessment carried out and personal evacuation plan will be drawn up for all pupils with physical difficulties. All staff working with the student will be made aware of the plan. We have an Accessibility Policy which is available on request. This refers to the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014, section 69.

The school has a number of after school clubs, including drama, music, sports etc. (see school web site for details as these are constantly being updated). All of the clubs are accessible to students with special educational needs. Students take part in school visits throughout the year. A risk assessment is completed for all school visits. The Senior Leadership Team, overseen by the Headteacher, makes decisions based on whether it is safe for a student to leave the premises, taking into account the emotional needs of the students.

### **Complaints**

Parent/carers should contact the Head Teacher (Mr F Turnbull), SENDCO (Mr A Purvis) or Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) (Mrs S Maher) with any complaints about the provision that the student is receiving at school. If the complaint is not resolved, the school has a complaints policy on request.

Parents/carers can contact the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Advice Service which is run by SENDIAS/Barnardos in Gateshead (Tel: 0191 4784667). This is a free, confidential service for young people who have SEND and their parent/carers. The service is available whether or not the young person has an Education Health Care Plan.

Gateshead Council has developed a Local Offer which provides information about education, health and social care support for children and young people with SEND in Gateshead. The Local Offer can be found at [www.gateshead.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/localoffer). (Link to translate document into any language)

### **What our students say about us:**

- I appreciate the support that I receive in the Base. I enjoy spending time there at break and lunch- Year 7 student.
- I enjoy coming to school, my teachers understand what to do to help me- Year 8 student.
- I think the SEND department cares about me and I know I can go to them when I need help.
- I like the help I get with my maths, I feel more confident in lessons now- Year 10 student

### **What families say about us:**

- "Thank you very much for your sessions with him. He speaks so highly of you, and I think you're really making a positive impact on his time there".
- "I'd like to thank you for all the time and effort you are putting into helping XXXXX return to education. XXXXX really feels that you are on his side and I am really grateful for this".
- I know I can speak to the team when I need to!
- We appreciate all of the help and support over XXXX's years with you!