



WHICKHAM SCHOOL

SEND information Report
2025-26

1.1 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 resourced 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.

1.2 SEND Vision

We value and celebrate diversity in all its forms. We recognize the unique strengths, experiences, and challenges of every individual, and we are committed to creating an environment where all young people can thrive.

Our Person-Centred Approach ensures that every learner is supported to achieve their full potential and to succeed in the modern world.

We have high aspirations for every member of our school community. We believe that all learners can be the very best version of themselves by:

- Developing curiosity and a love of learning
- Building resilience and reflecting on their growth
- Cultivating empathy, understanding themselves and others
- Gaining the skills needed for a confident transition to adulthood
- Strengthening self-regulation, both in learning and in managing emotions

It is our responsibility to provide equitable opportunities, and a safe, inclusive, and well-equipped learning environment that responds to the needs of every learner as an individual.

We are committed to inclusion in both the curriculum and all aspects of school life. Our approach is guided by the principles of inclusive education:

- Setting meaningful and appropriately challenging goals for all learners
- Embracing and responding to diverse learning needs
- Addressing and reducing barriers to participation and progress
- Building awareness and understanding of additional needs
- Nurturing a culture of inclusion across Whickham School

1.3 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 Coordinator (SENDCo) is Mr Andy Purvis.

1.4 Responsibilities:

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

The Head Teacher 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 Person Centred 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 provisions 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 adaptive teaching).
- Checking on the progress of your child and identifying, planning and providing any additional help your child may need and letting the SEND Team know if necessary. This could be things like targeted work, reasonable adjustments and additional support.
- Following the information and Advice provided on a Person Centred SEND plan. These will be reviewed and shared with parents.
- 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.
- Raising concerns regarding students that may have additional needs.

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 the implementation of adaptive teaching methods and specialist support strategies in the classroom
- Keep students focused on learning activities during lesson
- Attend all training opportunities related to SEND and broader teaching and learning strategies.
- Are mainly classroom based, however every staff member delivers interventions in their specialist area, such as literacy, numeracy, communication or mental health.
- 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 coordinators, specific subject Faculty link personnel and Child Protection Officers.

1.5 Training

Our staff receive ongoing training in key areas of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Headteacher identifies training needs through appraisals and staff discussions, and arranges appropriate professional input, either for the whole staff team or for individual colleagues. Where a student joins the school with a type of SEND that we have not previously supported, targeted training is provided to ensure that staff are fully equipped to meet their needs.

Staff develop different levels of expertise to best support students with SEND:

- **Awareness** – All staff who work with a student receive an introduction to their specific needs. This training, delivered by the SENCo, Educational Psychologists, or other specialist services, provides a foundational understanding to ensure inclusive practice across the school.
- **Enhanced** – Staff who work closely with a student, such as class and subject teachers, receive more in-depth training on adapting teaching and learning to meet individual needs. This training may be delivered by local authority services, Educational Psychologists, colleagues from specialist schools, or other expert professionals.

1.6 Supporting transitions for students with SEND.

We understand that transitions can sometimes feel challenging for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and we work closely with families and professionals to make each transition as smooth and positive as possible.

Moving to Secondary School

- For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a review meeting is held in the autumn term of Year 6 to plan the move to secondary school. You will be informed of your child's allocated school by 15 February of that year.
- Before joining Whickham School, our staff visit your child in their primary school, and wherever possible, we arrange opportunities for your child to visit us and meet teachers and classmates.
- Parents/carers are invited to an open evening once placements have been confirmed, and we also meet individually with families of students with an EHCP to ensure your child's needs are fully understood.
- A personal transition plan is developed in partnership with your child's primary school, and our staff receive training so they are confident in supporting your child from day one.

Moving Between Schools

If your child is transferring to another school, we contact the SENDCo at the new setting, share all relevant records promptly, and discuss any support or adjustments your child may need. Where possible, we arrange for your child to visit their new school, and staff from the new school may also come to meet them here.

Moving Beyond School

When students prepare for college, apprenticeships, or employment after Year 11 or Year 13, they receive independent guidance from a careers adviser starting in Year 8. Where appropriate, we work with the Disabled Social Work Team to support a smooth transition into adult services.

Please note: students with an EHCP will always have an annual review before moving to a new school, to ensure their needs continue to be met.

1.7 A Person-Centred Approach to SEND Support

In today's ever-changing world, we know that students can face increasing pressures, both in school and in their daily lives. Sometimes these difficulties are hidden, as young people mask or suppress their worries. That's why at Whickham we believe the key to effective SEND support is a truly **Person-Centred Approach**.

We follow the principles of *Assess, Plan, Do, Review*, but at Whickham this is brought to life through our **Person-Centred Approach**:

Assessing Needs

- **The Golden Thread:** We work closely with students and their families to understand barriers to learning. This ongoing conversation — which we call the Golden Thread — helps us identify concerns and agree on the best way forward together. We regularly revisit the Golden Thread to review progress and adapt support.
- Where needed, further assessments may be carried out. These can include observations, specialist testing, or referrals to external professionals, to give us a clearer picture of the challenges a young person faces.
- We also use the [Gateshead Thresholds Approach](#) to help identify additional needs.

Planning Provision

- **The Person-Centred Plan:** Together with students and their families, we create a clear, practical plan. This sets out essential information for staff, along with the *Top 10 strategies* that will best support the young person.
- Each student with a plan is supported by a dedicated key worker from our SEND team, who monitors progress and ensures strategies are consistently in place.



Staff Advice

Person Centred Plan 2024-25 for Andy Purvis

Stage: **K**

Date of birth 13/01/2014

Gender: Male

Tutor group: 7GHU

Year group: 7

Teacher: Mr Andy Purvis

Start date: 25/6/2024

Review date: 23/9/2024

Plan number: 1



Essential Information

I struggle with direct eye contact.

I struggle to manage my emotions.

I am waiting to be tested for ADHD.

I find it difficult to concentrate for longer periods of time.

I do tests in a smaller room.

I need extra time to complete work.

Top 10 ways to help me

Don't put me on the spot to answer questions.

Don't ask me to read in front of other people.

Please check in with me occasionally privately.

Consider giving me additional time in assessments.

Reassure me when I'm overwhelmed. Allow me to stand outside when I need to.

Sit me closer to the front so I can see the board.

Be clear about what you need me to do.

Break work down in to chunks.

Give me time out to compose myself.

Don't make me stand out.

Hopes and Aspirations

Golden Thread

Focus	Needs	Long Term Aspiration
Emotional Regulation	- Andy can struggle with his emotions and can find it difficult to let others know when he is struggling. - Andy can find it difficult to regulate himself when he is struggling and can benefit from adult support.	For Andy to be able to spot when his emotions are changing and adopt strategies to manage his emotions.
Social Interaction	- Andy can find it difficult to interact with new or unfamiliar people. - Andy finds it hard to talk to adults.	We would like Andy to be able to make and maintain friendships. We would like him to be able to approach a trusted adult if he is struggling.

My Golden Thread: Outcome Setting

Aspiration Focus	Short Term Outcome	Success will look like	Teaching Adaptations	Key staff
ASD	Use of a timeout card: - I will be able to identify when I need to use my timeout card and use it appropriately to ask for a break 85% of the time.	Andy will be able to correctly use a timeout card to manage their needs 85% of the time.	- Timeout card. - Adult support.	• Mr Andy Purvis (Classroom Teacher) • Head of year
ADHD	Executive Functioning: - I will be able to complete the executive functioning radar graph to plot my strengths and areas of difficulty. - I will be able to discuss the areas I find more difficult and how I can manage them.	-Andy will be able to discuss their areas of challenge and strength. - Andy will be able to ask for support when struggling with a challenge area.	- Executive functioning radar intervention and resources. - Additional support interventions. - point of contact support.	

1.8 Person-Centred Graduated Provision

At Whickham, we work in partnership with parents and carers to identify the most appropriate provision — in or out of class — to meet each young person's needs. Interventions are time-limited, reviewed on a half-termly or termly basis, and feedback is always provided by the staff leading the provision.

Our **five key areas of Person-Centred Provision** are:

- **Literacy**
- **Numeracy**
- **Communication and Interaction**
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)**
- **Life Skills**

The overall aim of these provisions is to help young people build independence and self-regulation — not only as learners, but as confident individuals, equipped to thrive in school, society, and their future lives.

Key Skills: Literacy

We use a *Stage not Age* approach, meeting students at their current level and designing interventions to move them forward. Phonological and morphological strategies, alongside precision teaching, help close gaps and strengthen core literacy skills.

Key Skills: Numeracy

Difficulties with numeracy are often linked to gaps in early foundations and low confidence. Using a *Stage not Age* approach, we ensure learners receive the right level of foundational support to rebuild skills, boost self-esteem, and achieve their next milestone.

Key Skills: Communication and Interaction

Some students require support to develop language and social interaction skills. We use a nurturing approach to help them build confidence, improve day-to-day communication, and manage social situations more effectively.

Key Skills: Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

We have seen an increase in students struggling with mental health, especially since the pandemic. Our SEMH provision uses a nurturing approach, helping young people understand their emotions, build resilience, and develop strategies for self-regulation.

Key Skills: Life Skills

Preparing young people for adulthood is central to our work. Our Life Skills sessions support independence by focusing on areas such as food preparation, managing money, independent travel, and other essential skills for everyday life.

A Graduated Approach

If a young person does not make expected progress in an intervention, we reassess their needs and adapt provision accordingly. This may include additional support or, where appropriate, input from external agencies to ensure the right help is in place.

1.9 The Person-Centred Review

At Whickham, young people and their families are at the heart of everything we do. Each student with SEND has a key worker, and there are several opportunities throughout the year to meet and review progress:

- One face-to-face meeting and one virtual meeting each year with your child's key worker
- Termly feedback if your child is accessing our Key Skills provision
- Termly coffee mornings to seek advice, have questions answered or receive further training.
- Additional opportunities for feedback through parents' evenings and tutor reviews

We place a high value on both parent and student voice. To help shape reviews, we invite families to complete a short questionnaire, giving you the chance to share your views and priorities.

We also recognise that some families may need more frequent communication and support, and we are always open to arranging additional meetings where needed.

2.0 Person-Centred Annual Reviews

For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), we hold an **Annual Review** each year. These meetings place the young person and their family at the centre, focusing on:

- celebrating achievements
- identifying any continuing barriers to learning
- planning for future outcomes

Where appropriate, we also gather input from external professionals, such as NHS services, to ensure support is joined up and effective.

From Year 10 onwards, a careers adviser works directly with young people who have an EHCP to help plan their next steps. In Year 11, the adviser attends the review meeting to support decision-making and ensure clear pathways into further education, training, or employment.

2.1 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 website 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.

2.2 Information and Complaints

Parent/carers should contact the Head Teacher (Mr F Turnbull), SENDCO (Mr A Purvis) or Deputy Headteacher (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.

2.3 Working with families and young people:

SEND Council: We have a SEND council which is composed of students from a range of year groups. We meet on a termly basis to discuss the school offer and to explore ways we can adapt and make changes.

SEND Parent/Carer termly coffee morning and after school events: We invite parents to attend regular coffee mornings and events after school to discuss questions, discuss ideas or access training.

Annual Family Survey: We appreciate feedback from our families and send out an annual survey to all families that have a student on the SEND register.

Annual Young Person Survey: We gather student voice annually to help make adjustments to our school offer.

Termly Provision Feedback: As a provision cycle comes to an end, we gather feedback from students about what they liked and how to make the provision better.

Person Centred Plan Review: On a bi annual basis Key Workers make contact with their assigned families and a survey is sent out to update the person centred plan.

2.3 What our families and young people 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".
- We appreciate all of the help and support over XXXX's years with you!
- "You do a brilliant job and it's been both touching and reassuring to see how you care for XXXXX and always have his best interests at heart".
- "I feel that XXXXX has been supported really well this year and has had an amazing first year in secondary. Thank you for supporting his learning and as a person".
- "Whickham school have been tremendous, had it not been for their support and understanding I dread to think where we would be now!"
- "The support we have from school is amazing and my husband and I thank everyone involved in any work with our son".
- "We are very happy with all the support given so far by the SEND Department and we hope he will continue to get some extra support in Maths".
- "I haven't always shown it, but I appreciate the ways you have supported me and allowed for me to understand myself better"
- "Thank you so much for everything you have done for XXXXX since you have known her. We do know that you have pushed hard to have her needs recognised, working around barriers that others may not have tried to work around".
- "My daughter, XXXXXX (Year 9) has blossomed since joining you in year 7. I have nothing but appreciation for the staff at Whickham for their supportive and nurturing approach. The staff understand XXXXX, her quirks and all. They adapt to meet her needs and ensure she is well supported in school".