



**WHICKHAM
SCHOOL**

SEND information Report
2026-27

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Dear parents and carers,

The aim of this information report is to explain how we implement our SEND policy. In other words, we want to show you how special educational needs support works in our school.

If you want to know more about our arrangements for SEND, read our SEND policy which can be found on the school website.

Note: If there are any terms we've used in this information report that you're unsure of, you can look them up in the Glossary at the end of the report.

1. What types of SEND does the school provide for?

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 additionally resourced mainstream provision (ARMS) for learners on the Autistic Spectrum.

2. Which staff will support my child, and what training have they had?

Our special educational needs co-ordinator, or SENDCo

Our SENDCo is Claire Hornsby. Claire works full time to lead our SEND provision.

chornsby@whickhamschool.org

Associate SENDCo

Our associate SENDCo is Aaron Bourne. He works three days a week and takes a lead on supporting our Year 7 SEND pupils.

abourne@whickhamschool.org

Teachers

All of our teachers receive in-house SEND training, and are supported by the SENDCo to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND.

Our teachers are responsible for ensuring that all pupils have access to excellent classroom teaching and that the curriculum is adjusted to meet your child's individual needs, as outlined in their individual support plan.

When a student joins the school with a type of SEND we have not previously supported, targeted training is provided to ensure that staff are fully equipped to meet their needs.

Teaching assistants (TAs)

We have a large team of TAs, including 4 senior teaching assistants (STAs) who are trained internally to deliver SEN provision.

A number of our teaching assistants are trained to deliver specific interventions to support a specific area of need.

Each child on the SEND register is linked with a teaching assistant as their keyworker. The keyworker will write individual support plans for their key pupils and meet with these pupils to review the impact of our provision. This is your main point of contact to discuss the SEND needs of your child.

Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion

Our assistant headteacher with a focus on inclusion is Kate Spoor. She works 9 days in 10 and has overall responsibility for the leadership of SEND, alongside other aspects of inclusion including pupil premium funding and looked after children. Kate is a member of the school Leadership Team.

kspoor@whickhamschool.org

Training

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 SENDCo, 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, other expert professionals or internal expertise.

External agencies and experts

Sometimes we need extra help to offer our pupils the support they need. Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our pupils with SEND and to support their families. These include:

- Speech and language therapists
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists
- GPs or paediatricians
- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services and other local authority (LA)-provided support services

3. What should I do if I think my child has SEND?

Tell us about your concerns

We will invite you to a meeting to discuss them

We will decide whether your child needs SEN support

If you think your child might have SEND, the first person you should discuss this with is the SENDCo, Claire Hornsby.

We will meet with you to discuss your concerns and try to get a better understanding of what your child's strengths and difficulties are.

Together we will decide what outcomes to seek for your child and agree on next steps. Where appropriate, your child will be involved in this process.

We will make a note of what's been discussed and add this to your child's record. You will also be given a copy of this.

If we decide that your child needs SEND support, we will formally notify you in writing and your child will be added to the school's SEND register.

4. How will the school know if my child needs SEND support?

All our class teachers are aware of SEND and are on the lookout for any pupils who aren't making the expected level of progress in their schoolwork or socially, or need additional support with an element of their learning.

If the teacher notices that a pupil is falling behind, they try to find out if the pupil has any gaps in their learning. If they can find a gap, they will use a variety of strategies to close this gap. Pupils who don't have SEND usually make progress quickly once the gap in their learning has been filled.

If the pupil is still struggling to make the expected progress, the teacher will refer this to our fortnightly inclusion meetings where pupils of concern are discussed. The SENDCo attends these meetings alongside pastoral leaders, mental health support workers, attendance staff and the Deputy Headteacher.

The SENDCo or other colleagues may observe the pupil in the classroom and/or during break time to see what their strengths and difficulties are. They will have discussions with your child's teacher/s, to see if there have been any issues with, or changes in, their progress, attainment or behaviour. They will also compare your child's progress and development with their peers and available national data.

The SENDCo will ask for your opinion and speak to your child to get their input as well. They may also, where appropriate, ask for the opinion of external experts such as a speech and language therapist, an educational psychologist, or a paediatrician.

We use the [Gateshead Thresholds Approach](#) to help identify additional needs. All children who are placed on our SEND register will be placed within these thresholds, and this will be communicated with you.

Based on all of this information, the SENDCo will decide whether your child needs SEND support. You will be told the outcome of the decision in writing.

If your child does need SEND support, their name will be added to the school's SEND register, and the SENDCo will work with you to create an individual support plan for them.

5. How will the school measure my child's progress?

We will follow the 'graduated approach' to meeting your child's SEND needs. The graduated approach is a 4-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review**.



As a part of the planning stage of the graduated approach, we will set outcomes that we want to see your child achieve. Together with pupils and their families, we create a clear, practical plan called the individual support plan (ISP). This sets out essential information for staff, along with clear strategies that will best support the young person. Each pupil with a plan is supported by a dedicated key worker from our SEND team, who monitors progress and ensures strategies are consistently in place. This is overseen by the SENDCo and associate SENDCo.

Class teachers are expected to make adaptations to their teaching methods to meet the needs of your child within the classroom within the limits of our resources.

Whenever we run an intervention with your child, we will assess them before the intervention begins. This is known as a 'baseline assessment'. We do this so we can see how much impact the intervention has on your child's progress. 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 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.

Provisions are led by our experienced senior teaching assistants, our foundational skills teacher (primary qualified teacher) or other teaching colleagues.

We will track your child's progress towards the outcomes we set over time and improve our offer as we learn what your child responds to best.

This process will be continual. If the review shows a pupil has made progress, they may no longer need the additional provision made through SEND support. For others, the cycle will continue and the school's targets, strategies and provisions will be revisited and refined.

6. How will I be involved in decisions made about my child's education?

Your child's key worker teaching assistant will contact or meet with you 3 times a year to:

- Set clear outcomes for your child's progress
- Review progress towards those outcomes
- Discuss the support we will put in place to help your child make that progress
- Identify what we will do, what we will ask you to do, and what we will ask your child to do

The SENDCo may also attend these discussions to provide extra support.

We know that you're the expert when it comes to your child's needs and aspirations. So we want to make sure you have a full understanding of how we're trying to meet your child's needs, so that you can provide insight into what you think would work best for your child.

We also want to hear from you as much as possible so that we can build a better picture of how the SEND support we are providing is impacting your child outside of school.

If your child's needs or aspirations change at any time, please let us know right away so we can keep our provision as relevant as possible.

After any discussion we will make a record of any outcomes, actions and support that have been agreed. This record will be shared with all relevant staff, and you will have access to these notes.

If you have SEND specific concerns that arise between these meetings, please contact your child's key worker via email. They will make contact within 2 working days. For other concerns, please contact your child's head of year.

7. How will my child be involved in decisions made about their education?

The level of involvement will depend on your child's age and level of development. We recognise that no two children are the same, so we will decide on a case-by-case basis, with your input.

We may seek your child's views by asking them to:

- Attend meetings to discuss their progress and outcomes
- Discuss their views with a member of staff who can act as a representative during the meeting
- Complete a survey at home with your support

8. How will the school adapt its teaching for my child?

Your child's teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class.

High-quality teaching is our first step in responding to your child's needs. We will make sure that your child has access to a broad and balanced curriculum in every year they are at our school.

We will adapt how we teach to suit the way the pupil works best. There is no '1 size fits all' approach to adapting the curriculum, we work on a case-by case basis to make sure the adaptations we make are meaningful to your child.

These adaptations may include:

- Adaptations to our curriculum to make sure all pupils are able to access it, for example through scaffolding
- Adaptations to our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, scaffolding and use of chunked tasks
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.
- Teaching assistants will support in some lessons to provide additional capacity

We may also provide interventions within the five areas of provision:

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

These interventions are part of our contribution to Gateshead's local offer.

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/32439/Gateshead-SEND-Local-Offer>

9. How will the school evaluate whether the support in place is helping my child?

We will evaluate the effectiveness of provision for your child by:

- Reviewing their progress towards their goals each term
- Reviewing the impact of interventions at the end of each cycle
- Using pupil questionnaires
- Parent voice
- Monitoring by the SENDCo
- Data analysis by the Assistant Headteacher Inclusion
- Using provision maps to measure progress
- Holding an annual review (if they have an education, health and care (EHC) plan)

10. How will the school resources be secured for my child?

It may be that your child's needs mean we need to secure:

- Extra equipment or facilities
- More teaching assistant hours
- Further training for our staff
- External specialist expertise

If that's the case, we will consult with external agencies to get recommendations on what will best help your child access their learning.

The school will cover a proportion of any necessary additional costs from the basic entitlement that is allocated to each child with a place at the school. If funding is needed beyond this, we will seek it from our local authority.

11. How will the school make sure my child is included in activities alongside pupils who don't have SEND?

All of our extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all our pupils, including our after-school clubs. Where necessary, your child can be supported to attend these clubs by a teaching assistant. Our after school homework support club has two teaching assistants available to support SEND pupils Tuesday-Friday evening.

All pupils are encouraged to go on our school trips, including our residential trips. No pupil is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability and we will make whatever reasonable adjustments are needed to make sure they can be included.

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 pupil to leave the premises, taking into account the needs of the pupils.

12. How does the school make sure the admissions process is fair for pupils with SEN or a disability?

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 SEND 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. Once 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.

Further information about school admissions, including arrangements for pupils with SEND can be found in our admissions policy.

<https://www.whickhamschool.org/about-us/admissions/>

13. How does the school support pupils with disabilities?

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

The following facilities are available for pupils 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 is carried out and a personal evacuation plan will be drawn up for all pupils with physical difficulties. All staff working with the pupil will be made aware of the plan. We have an Accessibility Policy which is available on our website. This refers to the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014, section 69.

[Accessibility Plan](#)

14. How will the school support my child's mental health, and emotional and social development?

We provide support for pupils to progress in their emotional and social development in the following ways:

- Pupils with SEND are encouraged to take part in extra curricular activities, including some SEND specific groups
- Pupils with SEND are integrated into our mixed ability lessons delivered in tutor groups in year 7-9, providing opportunities to build new friendships
- We provide extra pastoral support for listening to the views of pupils with SEND by having a space available at lunch time for pupils to access
- Mental health support is offered on a case by case basis - utilising our school counsellor and our senior TA with responsibility for SEMH.
- Short term interventions may be offered to focus on a particular area of emotional or social development
- We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying. Our anti-bullying policy can be accessed on our website.

<https://cdn.realsmart.co.uk/whickhamschool.org/uploads/2022/08/25073201/Anti-Bullying-Policy.pdf>

15. What support will be available for my child as they transition between classes or settings, or in preparing for adulthood?

Moving to Secondary school

For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a review meeting is typically 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 make contact individually with families of pupils 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

When your child is moving on from our school, we will ask you and your child what information you want us to share with the new setting. We contact the SENDCo at the new setting, share all relevant records promptly and discuss any support or adjustments your child may need. We will also support you to arrange a visit to their new school, should you wish to do so. This will allow them to meet key staff to allow for as smooth a transition as possible.

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

Moving to adulthood

We provide all our pupils with appropriate advice on paths into work or further education.

We work with the pupil to help them achieve their ambitions, which can include goals in higher education, employment, independent living and participation in society.

Whether pupils are preparing for college, apprenticeships, or employment after Year 11 or Year 13, they receive independent guidance from a careers adviser starting in Year 10.

A local authority specialist SEND careers adviser works directly with young people who have an EHCP to help plan their next steps. In Year 11, the adviser attends the EHCP review meeting to support decision-making and ensure clear pathways into further education, training, or employment. This support supplements the universal offer of a career's appointment in school, with our qualified careers advisor in Year 10, and a one to one meeting in Year 11 with a member of the senior leadership team to discuss their next steps after Year 11. During these meetings the pupil's key worker can be invited to attend to offer additional support.

Where appropriate, we work with the Disabled Social Work Team to support a smooth transition into adult services.

16. What support is in place for looked-after and previously looked-after children with SEND?

Michelle James (mjames@whickhamschool.org) is the designated member of staff for looked-after children and previously looked after children.

Michelle will work with Claire, our SENDCo, to make sure that all teachers understand how a looked-after or previously looked-after pupil's circumstances and their SEND might interact, and what the implications are for teaching and learning.

Children who are looked-after or previously looked-after will be supported much in the same way as any other child who has SEND. However, looked-after pupils will also have a personal education plan (PEP). We will make sure that the PEP and any individual support plans or EHC plans are consistent and complement one another.

17. What should I do if I have a complaint about my child's SEN support?

Complaints about SEND provision in our school should be made to the SENDCo (Claire Hornsby) in the first instance. They will then be referred to the school's complaints policy. Alternatively, you can also contact the Assistant Headteacher for inclusion (Kate Spoor). It is hoped that complaints will be able to be responded to informally, but if your complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, the schools complaints policy is available on our website.

[Complaints Policy](#)

If you are not satisfied with the school's response, you can escalate the complaint. In some circumstances, this right also applies to the pupil themselves.

To see a full explanation of suitable avenues for complaint, see pages 246 and 247 of the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

If you feel that our school has discriminated against your child because of their SEND, you have the right to make a discrimination claim to the first-tier SEND tribunal. To find out how to make such a claim, you should visit: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/disability-discrimination>

You can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding:

- Admission
- Exclusion
- Provision of education and associated services
- Making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services

Before going to a SEND tribunal, you can go through processes called disagreement resolution or mediation, where you try to resolve your disagreement before it reaches the tribunal. Further information can be found on the Gateshead website.

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/3887/Independent-disagreement-resolution>

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.

18. What support is available for me and my family?

If you have questions about SEND, or are struggling to cope, please get in touch to let us know. We want to support you, your child and your family.

To see what support is available to you locally, have a look at Gateshead's local offer. Gateshead publishes information about the local offer on their website:

www.gateshead.gov.uk/localoffer.

Our local special educational needs and disabilities information, advice and support (SENDIAS) services are:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do-0/networks/iassn/find-your-local-ias-service/north-east>

National charities that offer information and support to families of children with SEND are:

- [IPSEA](#)
- [SEND family support](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Family Action](#)
- [Special Needs Jungle](#)

19. Glossary

- **Access arrangements** – special arrangements to allow pupils with SEND to access assessments or exams
- **Annual review** – an annual meeting to review the provision in a pupil's EHC plan
- **Area of need** – the 4 areas of need describe different types of needs a pupil with SEND can have. The 4 areas are communication and interaction; cognition and learning; physical and/or sensory; and social, emotional and mental health needs
- **CAMHS** – child and adolescent mental health services
- **EHC needs assessment** – the needs assessment is the first step on the way to securing an EHC plan. The local authority will do an assessment to decide whether a child needs an EHC plan
- **EHC plan** – an education, health and care (EHC) plan is a legally-binding document that sets out a child's needs and the provision that will be put in place to meet their needs
- **First-tier tribunal / SEND tribunal** – a court where you can appeal against the local authority's decisions about EHC needs assessments or plans and against discrimination by a school or local authority due to SEN
- **Graduated approach** – an approach to providing SEND support in which the school provides support in successive cycles of assessing the pupil's needs, planning the provision, implementing the plan, and reviewing the impact of the action on the pupil
- **Individual Support Plan (ISP)** - Part of our graduated approach. A clear practical plan for staff that highlights key challenges the pupil faces and practical strategies to put in place to support their needs.
- **Intervention** – a short-term, targeted approach to teaching a pupil with a specific outcome in mind
- **Local offer** – information provided by the local authority that explains what services and support are on offer for pupils with SEND in the local area
- **Outcome** – target for improvement for pupils with SEND. These targets don't necessarily have to be related to academic attainment
- **Reasonable adjustments** – changes that the school must make to remove or reduce any disadvantages caused by a child's disability
- **SENDCo** – the special educational needs co-ordinator
- **SEN** – special educational needs
- **SEND** – special educational needs and disabilities
- **SEND Code of Practice** – the statutory guidance that schools must follow to support children with SEND
- **SEND information report** – a report that schools must publish on their website, that explains how the school supports pupils with SEND
- **SEND support** – special educational provision that meets the needs of pupils with SEND
- **Transition** – when a pupil moves between years, phases, schools or institutions or life stages