



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

2026/27

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Last reviewed	By who	Next review
July 2025	A Purvis	July 2026
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Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Vision and Values

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

Objectives of SEND Policy

The School aims to provide a supportive environment in which all pupils have access to the widest possible educational and social opportunities. Entitlement to the National Curriculum is viewed as an integral feature of this premise.

Children with SEND are therefore the responsibility of all teachers who work towards enhancing the learning experience of these children in line with school aims.

In line with the expectations of Teacher Standard 5, teachers should adapt their teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils (Quality First Teaching):

- knowing when and how to scaffold appropriately;
- having a secure understanding of barriers to learning and how to overcome them;
- demonstrating an awareness of the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children;
- having a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), those of high ability, those with English as an additional language (EAL), those with disabilities and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

Any additional support will be flexible in order to respond to the needs of pupils and faculties and withdrawal of children with additional educational needs from some mainstream classes may be one facet of this support.

However, the basic philosophy of a broad-based, flexible support system across the curriculum for all pupils with special educational needs is recognised as a fundamental principle in the school's response to such pupils. Wherever possible, integration of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream classes is encouraged and supported.

Coordination of provision for pupils with SEND

SEND Team Structure

- Assistant Headteacher Inclusion - Kate Spoor
- SENDCo - Claire Hornsby
- Associate SENDCo - Aaron Bourne
- Senior Teaching Assistant (SEMH) Charlotte Waldram
- Senior Teaching Assistant (Literacy) - Kristy Martin
- Senior Teaching Assistant (Numeracy) - Suk Sarkar
- Senior Teaching Assistant (Communication & Interaction-ARMS) Anna Safrankova
- Teaching Assistant - Jill Hammerton
- Teaching Assistant - Helen Mason
- Teaching Assistant - Danielle Elliott
- Teaching Assistant - Mabel Gregory

- Teaching Assistant - Henry Lawrence
- Teaching Assistant - Kate Gordon
- Teaching Assistant - Stuart Milburn
- Teaching Assistant - Suzy Howard
- Teaching Assistant - Lanre Sonde
- SEND Administrator - Nataliya Wilkinson
- Specialist Dyslexia Assessor- Caroline Ford

Senior Teaching Assistants

There are three strands to their role:

- Lead a SEND Specialism, aligned to support a specific area of the Code of Practice, and its associated programmes;
- Be linked to a Faculty to support SEND intervention and teaching strategies, developing expertise in specific subjects;
- Be a Key Worker for a number of SEND pupils, maintaining regular contact with parents / carers.

Senior Teaching Assistants / Teaching Assistants - Faculty Support

- Be linked to support a faculty with SEND intervention and teaching strategies, developing expertise in specific subject areas;
- Work closely with Faculty Leaders to ensure teaching staff have the skills, knowledge, training and resources to differentiate appropriately to meet the needs of SEND pupils within their subjects;
- Work with class teachers to ensure SEND pupils engage in learning and make good progress;
- Promote SEND pupils' independent learning skills, self-esteem and social inclusion;
- Give support to SEND pupils through structured interventions, so they can access the curriculum, take part in learning and experience a sense of achievement.
- Develop subject expertise within faculties to help with support and intervention;
- Work predominantly, (but not exclusively) with SEND pupils and subject teachers within the faculty (this will be determined through the SENDCO's initial and ongoing provision mapping)
- Be a Key Worker for a selection of pupils with SEND and work in collaboration with pupils and families to create an Individual Support Plan.
- Be the first point of contact within a faculty for SEND support, to:
- Offer guidance to teachers on how they can adapt the planning and delivery of lessons to meet the needs of SEND pupils – suggesting specific strategies and tailored resources (this could be through faculty CPDL or on a one-to-one basis);
- Help teachers within the faculty to use and interpret information from Individual Support Plans
- Help Programme Leaders to track the progress and achievement of SEND pupils within subject areas;
- Be a link between the Faculty Team and the SENDCO / SEND Team.

The Governing Body monitors the effectiveness of SEND. The link governor for is Sasha Ban. Governors are aware of the Code of Practice and the arrangements in school for responding to this.

Use of Teaching Assistants: Addendum to Teaching and Learning Policy

TAs can expect teachers to:

- Be aware of the school's expectations of how to deploy and prepare TAs and ensure their contribution to teaching and learning is consistent with our whole school aims.
- Know the respective roles and skills of TAs they work with most frequently and deploy them appropriately.
- Communicate adequate information and instructions about lessons ahead of time, and clearly specify TAs role in, and contribution to, each lesson.
- Provide opportunities for TAs to feed back after lessons and provide clear guidance on what information should be fed back.
- Respond in a positive and timely fashion to requests from TAs for information about lessons, pupils, curriculum content, instructional techniques or any other information essential to ensuring their effective deployment in lessons and contribution to learning.
- Work collaboratively to produce a Teacher/TA Support Agreement.
- Discharge responsibilities to TAs that, as the lead professional in the classroom, belong to them.
- Recognise and reinforce TAs professional identity and their status within the school.
- Contribute to induction and training, supervision, and feedback to performance reviews for TAs.
- Request training and guidance in order to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to meet their professional duties and responsibilities as a teacher, in relation to deploying TAs appropriately.

The Senior Leadership Team and Teachers can expect TAs to

- Act in a manner that upholds the professional identity of TAs at Whickham School.
- Participate in the school's induction programme and performance review processes.
- Make the most of training and professional development opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills.
- Prompt teachers for pre-lesson information and to ask for clarification when required.
- Perform and interact with pupils in ways that are consistent with what the school expects

from TAs in terms of their contribution to Teaching and Learning.
- Contribute to lesson planning and feedback at teacher's request.

Learning Liaison Time

On a regular basis there is an expectation that teaching staff and teaching assistants meet to jointly plan, discuss and reflect on how to best support individual classes. The Teacher/TA agreement template can be used to guide these discussions and document agreed support priorities. To make best use of the teaching assistant, they should be provided with a lesson plan, learning resources and an overview of the topics to be taught ahead of time. It would also be beneficial to provide them with any key concepts or key vocabulary to be learnt.

Access for Pupils with a Disability

The school is committed to providing full disabled access. Ramps have been provided for demountable classrooms and for appropriate areas in the main block. Disabled toilet facilities are available in the main block and the new Sixth Form block. Full disabled access is available throughout the new building which opened in January 2020.

Allocation of Resources

Resources are allocated to pupils with SEND through additional staffing in the core subjects, providing a favourable student/teacher ratio. The SEND Team receives a budget for the provision of resources and operating costs.

Enhanced provision (Additional Resources Mainstream Provision (ARMS) is in place for pupils with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Placement in this provision is through the SEND Placement Panel through the Local Authority. Support is usually in mainstream lessons but some small group work is carried out with these pupils.

A specially designated suite of rooms in the Gibside site has been furnished and set up as a place where ASD pupils can come before school, at break-times, at lunch-times and after school. It is supervised at these times. Pupils may also access these rooms at other times during the day as necessary. This is overseen by SENDCO, Claire Hornsby.

Some pupils have access to additional literacy support. Some pupils attend withdrawal sessions when reading is taught using a multi-sensory approach. Reading and Literacy support is coordinated by the Senior TA Kristy Martin, in conjunction with the Literacy lead for the school Dan Crosland.

Some pupils receive additional numeracy support and attend some withdrawal sessions co-ordinated by the senior TA Suk Sarkar.

Some pupils receive additional support to understand and regulate their emotions and also attend some withdrawal sessions co-ordinated by the senior TA Charlotte Waldron.

All faculties have a responsibility to be aware of pupils with SEND when allocating budgets.

Identification, Assessment and Review procedures

As a school, we identify the needs of pupils by considering the holistic needs of the child, not just the special educational needs.

The **SEND Code of Practice** (DfE 2014) describes four main categories of need. These are:

Communication and Interaction (e.g. speech / language delay, HI, features of ASD);

Cognition and Learning (e.g. moderate, severe, profound or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia)

Social, Mental and Emotional Health (e.g. children who may be withdrawn or isolated, disruptive or disturbing, hyperactive or lacking concentration)

Sensory and / or Physical Needs (e.g. sensory, multisensory and physical difficulties)

All pupils are screened using Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) to ascertain if additional interventions are required in year 7. Pupils who score in the below average range (Standard Age Score of 85 or less) have their reading tested by further in depth testing using a range of diagnostic assessments.

Reading progress is reviewed for those undergoing intervention by retesting with age appropriate reading tests on a termly basis. We also have additional baseline testing in the form of Accelerated Reading STAR tests which are conducted at three different intervals during the academic year in years 7, 8 and 9. Further reading testing is carried out annually in key stage 4.

A list of pupils with SEND, along with a brief description of their level of functioning, is circulated to all faculties and pastoral leaders. This is in the form of a register which is updated throughout the year. All staff have access to the current register which is held on the staff shared area.

More detailed information on pupils with SEND is provided on Class Charts in the form of Individual Support Plans. These are created when a young person is identified as having a barrier to learning. They are co-produced with pupils and their families and reviewed on a termly basis.

Where a young person has made sufficient progress, and no longer requires anything additional or different to the universal offer for all pupils, they are moved from the SEND register to the monitoring register- an overview passport is created and is accessible via classcharts. The monitoring of the progress of SEND pupils is carried out by the relevant faculty Programme Leader, in conjunction with the SENDCo and overseen by the AHT / Strategic Lead.

Any child whose academic performance is giving cause for concern can be referred to SEND, for in-depth assessment. This assessment is carried out by SEND staff using a variety of techniques including:

- Norm-referenced tests
- Feedback from teachers
- Diagnostic tests
- Observation
- Analysis of written work
- Reference to other available data

Information and advice will then be circulated to the child's teachers, faculty and pastoral leaders.

Pupils whose development is giving cause for concern will be referred, in the first instance, to the appropriate pastoral leader who will then liaise with the SENDCo and external agencies as appropriate in order to establish suitable provision.

A staged procedure of identification and assessment in line with the Code of Practice is followed.

The School has adopted the Gateshead Thresholds approach to identifying pupils with additional needs: <https://gateshead-localoffer.org/send-thresholds/>. This allows a common framework to identify special educational needs across Gateshead Schools.

Access to the curriculum for SEND pupils

All pupils follow a balanced and broadly-based curriculum, including the National Curriculum.

Each faculty has developed an approach to Adaptive Teaching to facilitate pupils' access to their subjects, regardless of barriers to learning. This is part of the *All Teachers are Teachers of SEND agenda*.

Appropriate materials or suggested resources may be produced by the SEND Team at the request of faculties.

Existing materials may be adapted by the SEND Team.

Each faculty has a designated SEND link teacher who will liaise with the SENDCo when issues arise within faculties. The SEND link teachers will also be responsible for cascading important SEND information to their teams when necessary.

There is SEND representation at every pastoral team meeting for each year group.

SEND training for the whole staff has been built into the school's CPDL Programme and bespoke CPDL can be provided for faculties as requested.

Integration of pupils with SEND in the school

Wherever possible, pupils are integrated into mainstream classes. Pupils with SEND are integrated into all school activities and have access to all those areas available to pupils without additional needs.

Criteria for evaluating success of SEND pupils

- Are pupils' needs identified and are all teachers made aware of those needs?
- Is expected progress made by SEND pupils?
- Is this recorded and monitored by faculties and the SEND team?
- Does assessment of SEND pupils inform teaching practice?
- Do pupils improve basic skills in literacy and numeracy?
- Are faculties aware of SEND pupils and their needs? Is this knowledge reflected in faculty policy, schemes of learning and teaching styles?
- Are pupils offered an appropriately-adapted curriculum?
- Are outside agencies used to enhance and support the school's response to SEND as appropriate?

Use of Facilities and Teachers from outside school

Support and advice are obtained from the Educational Psychological Service and there is close liaison between the school and this service. The service is consulted where concerns are expressed about a pupil's academic progress and/or behaviour (SEN support). Advice is taken and individual programmes are set up for pupils as necessary. The psychologist's assessments of pupils give valuable in-depth information about the level of a child's functioning and this is circulated to staff as necessary.

Behavioural support is obtained in accordance with the school's policy where a pupil's behaviour is affecting their progress or that of their peers. This is accessed after consultation with pastoral leaders.

The school has links with the Low and High Instance Needs Teams which offer support within school where necessary. This support is accessed through the SENDCo in conjunction with pastoral leaders.

The school also has links with the support service for pupils who have specific learning difficulties which offers in-school support as necessary. This support is accessed through the SENDCo.

Caroline Ford holds a postgraduate certificate in specific learning difficulties-dyslexia and is able to assess pupils who are referred for dyslexia.

In addition, the school has links with the charities, Daisy Chain and Toby Henderson Trust to offer support for pupils with autism. This operates on an individual basis and is accessed through the SENDCo.

The school has links with the service for physically disabled pupils. Advice and resources are made available as appropriate. This support is accessed via the SENDCo.

INSET may be provided by all these services as required.

SEND attendance

The SEND department works closely with the attendance team and year leaders to support pupils to attend school. Where a student with SEND falls into the persistent or severely absent categories, a meeting is held in school with the young person and their parents. Following this meeting an attendance contract is created and support offered to improve attendance. This is then reviewed on a regular basis. This aspect of SEND provision is managed by Allison Hall, Senior Pastoral Leader.

Partnership with young people and their families

Parents of pupils who have been identified in Year 7 are informed of the nature of the difficulties experienced by the pupils and the provision for supporting them in school. Pupils on SEND Support (K) in the primary school are monitored and formal review meetings are held in the Summer term.

All parents of pupils who receive additional support and/or intervention (Years 8-13) are informed of the support arrangements for their child. This is communicated to them during the Autumn term and throughout the year.

Parents are encouraged to support the Team by ensuring that pupils read regularly and for pleasure at home.

Parents are welcome to come to school to meet with the SEND team to discuss their child's progress and any concerns they may have. Emphasis is placed on joint responsibility leading to a cohesive, coherent approach, along with the recognition that parents have an important part to play in their children's education.

Members of the SEND team make regular contact with parents and carers to discuss the progress of their student and plan out provision for the term ahead, this involves making adjustments to the Person Centred Plan.

This is offered by a face to face and a virtual meeting per year. There are also regular termly coffee mornings and afterschool events for those parents who have pupils with additional needs.

There is a SEND Council with representatives from the school SEND community. Meetings are held on a termly basis to discuss SEND provision.

An annual survey is sent out to all families to gather feedback on the work of the school in relation to supporting pupils with SEND.

The appropriate SEND staff aim to attend all parents' evenings and contribute to meetings for prospective parents.

Links with other schools, including arrangements when pupils change schools or leave school

Links are fostered with other mainstream schools.

The SEND Team is invited to Year 6 Annual Reviews of pupils transferring to Whickham School.

Links with primary schools are also fostered through transition projects and through meetings.

When pupils with SEND change school, records are passed on to the new school in the same way as for any pupil.

When a pupil with SEND enters this school, records are passed to the relevant pastoral leaders and the SENDCo who circulate advice to staff as appropriate.

When pupils with SEND come to leave school, they will have experienced the careers programme which is available to all pupils. Advice from the Careers Service (Single Point of Access) for pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) is also available. There is the opportunity for two-way communication with the local colleges should this be required.

Links with Health and Social Services, Educational Welfare Services and Voluntary organisations

Contact with these agencies is accessed through pastoral leaders. They will be contacted where concerns are expressed about a child's welfare, attendance at school and where other factors necessitate outside involvement.