

## **Frequently asked questions about Special Educational Needs**

### **How will I know if my child is having difficulties at school?**

The school has a very robust system for tracking the progress of pupils and the outcome of this tracking is constantly scrutinised by the Staff and Senior Leadership. When it becomes obvious that a child is making less than expected progress, given their age and individual circumstances, in one or more areas the school intervenes as early as possible. Your child's class teacher will speak to you in the first instance and then a meeting will be arranged for you to speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (Mrs Edmunds) about the schools concerns.

We will also contact you if we feel that your child is experiencing difficulties with social, behavioural or emotional aspects within school.

### **What do I do if I feel my child has Special Educational Needs?**

The school takes seriously any concerns raised by parents as we appreciate that you are the people who know your child best of all. Your concerns will be recorded and compared to the school's own assessments and information on how the child is progressing.

To express your concerns please speak to your child's class teacher or make an appointment, through the school office, to speak to Mrs Edmunds (the SENCO). Mrs Edmunds works on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and will be happy to discuss your concerns.

### **How will Early Years (FS1/2) support my child?**

Early years also have systems in place to monitor your child's progress. They will follow the same procedures as the rest of the school to inform you of any concerns they may have. The school will usually try a series of light touch interventions themselves and advise you about relevant home support before any further action is taken.

The school does, however, believe that "early intervention" is very beneficial and making effective provision at this stage improves long term outcomes for your child.

### **How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?**

Differentiation is an integral part of our teaching. Because we assess children's progress regularly we know the level that your child is working at and can pitch the learning appropriately. Some children will need more support than others and this is often given in the form of an additional adult working alongside groups or individuals.

For some areas of the curriculum, and in some year groups, children are moved to different ability groups so that the learning can be tailored more specifically to their needs. We find this can help build confidence as well as hasten progress.

### **How will I know how my child is doing and how will you help me support my child's learning?**

The teachers complete half-termly mini reports which are sent home to parents to keep you informed about your child's progress. The school also arranges Termly Learning Conferences for you to talk to your child's Class Teacher. Your child will be present at this conference and be able to show you his/her work. Apart from this, if your child is on the school's register for Special Educational Needs (SEN), additional termly meetings will be arranged to discuss your child's Individual programme and progress towards targets. These meetings will be with your child's Class Teacher and often the SENCO. Occasionally these meetings will be more frequent and sometimes also involve other staff.

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

At Sacred Heart we are as concerned about your child's overall emotional well-being as we are about their academic progress. If we have any concerns you will be the first to know. We can usually sort out any behavioural problems in-house but we also have access to Brentwood Children's Society who support us with a variety of counselling services. Other available provision is listed on the School offer.

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

The services currently available to the school are also outlined in the School Offer but this is not exclusive. We provide a bespoke provision and will contact any specialist service that we feel will benefit your child and help us to fully understand their needs.

### **What training do the staff supporting children with Special Educational Needs have, had or are having?**

Every teacher is a teacher of every pupil. All trained teachers have been trained to differentiate and teach in a variety of styles.

Our Learning Support Assistants are continually updated with any changes to the curriculum and new interventions. When LSAs are supporting children with specific difficulties they attend relevant training so that they can provide the best possible expertise.

Additionally we have a number of learning support assistants who are trained to lead a specialist fine and gross motor skill programme and one who is currently learning Makaton.

Four of our Learning Support Assistants have the Higher Level Teaching Assistant qualification.

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

We are a fully inclusive school. Every possible effort will be made for your child to be involved in all areas of school life.

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

The school acknowledges that the two-storey KS2 block may be incompatible with the efficient education of children with certain special needs. However there are sufficient classrooms on the ground floor to accommodate access for all learners. The rest of the school is fully wheelchair accessible and there are three disabled toilets.

### **How will the school prepare and support my child to join the next stage of their education?**

As a primary school the transition between key stages is less of an issue. We have transition days as a matter of course and additional interventions are put into place to familiarise the SEN pupil with their new class and staff.

When an SEN pupil is transferring to Secondary school the staff arrange additional meetings with relevant secondary school staff and make a transition plan. This plan frequently involves additional visits to the receiving school, the opportunity to meet staff and pupils, take photographs, spend time in the Support room and practise the journey.

### **How are the school's resources allocated and matched to the child's special educational needs?**

Where a child has an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan the allocation of support is defined in the plan. The school fulfils their statutory duties towards that child and, where appropriate, a Learning Support assistant is employed to additionally support the child.

All other human resources are allocated on a priority basis with those children with the greatest need receiving the greater percentage of support.

Resources, other than human resources, are purchased as needs arise although the school is generally well resourced.

### **How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?**

In deciding whether to make special educational provision, the teacher, HT and SENCO consider all the information gathered from within the school about the child's progress, alongside national data, the Southend guidelines and expectations of progress.

Once it has been decided that your child has SEN further assessments will be undertaken to further understand the child's areas of strength and difficulty. The school has a wide variety of assessments to use for this purpose but can also call upon more specialist assessments if necessary.

The amount of support may vary within the year with the child sometimes receiving 1x1 support (usually for 10 weeks) and sometimes small or larger group interventions. The support allocation will be discussed with parents at the review meetings and will be noted on the Individual Support Plan (ISP).

The school will refer to the Southend guidelines when deciding whether a request needs to be made for a more formal assessment by the authority. If this is deemed necessary by the school the parents will have the whole process carefully explained to them.

### **How are parents involved in the school. How can I get involved?**

At Sacred Heart parents are continually invited and welcomed to join the school in special school events and lunches. There are endless opportunities to be part of the school community throughout the year.

The new code of Practice particularly highlights the importance of the involvement of parents in the decision making for children with SEN.

At Sacred Heart, as a parent of a child with SEN, you will be involved and informed from the initial meeting and throughout the whole process. Your views, wishes and feelings will be considered at all times. The school will involve you in your child's programme and advise you how best to support your child. We will ask for your agreement before calling upon the advice and support of outside agencies and you will be sent copies of any paperwork that the school receives from them.

We want the best for your child and have high expectations for all children. Together we can achieve this.