

St. Mary's Primary School Draperstown



Special Needs Policy

Reviewed March 2014

St. Mary's P.S. Draperstown

Special Educational Needs Policy

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"All children and young people are entitled to education of the highest quality which enables them to develop as individuals and gain skills, knowledge and understanding."

Vulnerable Children and Young Adults Survey 2008 (ETI)

Mission Statement

The governors and staff of St. Mary's Primary School work hard to ensure that each child has the opportunity to grow in self-confidence in a friendly and secure environment. We have a caring community of pupils, parents, governors, teachers and support staff. Each child is helped to reach their full potential in all aspects of development; intellectual, social, moral and religious. We work in close partnership with pre-school providers, parents and a variety of outside agencies to ensure that all children who have been identified as having special educational needs achieve in a supportive environment.

Special Needs at St. Mary's P.S.

We recognise that some children have a wide range of difficulties which may require additional support. Our overarching aim is to build the school's capacity to develop appropriate and effective interventions to meet individual needs as early as possible. Early intervention is vital. We have worked with Carol Strahan, and now Ruth Conroy, Educational Psychologists and the local pre-school providers from Ballinascreen Early Years, Little Wombles Playgroup and Slievegallion Playgroup to ensure that individual needs are identified at pre-school stage and most importantly that prompt and relevant referrals are made. We are constantly striving to effectively meet the needs of children with SEN within the existing requirements and responsibilities placed on schools by the current legislative framework, mainly, the Education (NI) Order 1996, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005, the Code of Practice (DE 2005) on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs may include those with learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems, medical conditions, speech and language difficulties, visual and aural impairments and physical disabilities. In this context a learning difficulty is apparent when a child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or when a child's disability limits or denies the child's use of educational facilities. It is anticipated that about 20% of children will be considered to have special educational needs. On occasions children will be enrolled with information in existence about their needs. More often these needs will become apparent as a child progresses through the school.

Whenever possible, provision for these children will be made by class teachers to ensure that those with special educational needs have access to the whole curriculum. Where learning difficulties are most serious additional teaching support will be provided.

Aims of SEN provision in St Mary's Primary School

In providing for children with special educational needs, a number of whole school aims will be addressed. These will be to:

- Identify individual needs at the earliest possible stage.
- Ensure the children have high self-esteem and are fully integrated in school life.
- Ensure the children have an active voice in terms of planning their work.
- Nurture clear lines of communication with parents and ensure they understand how they can best support their child's learning.
- Ensure the whole staff takes responsibility for meeting the needs of all pupils in the school, regardless of the child's ability, SEN, disability, social background or home language.
- Use data effectively to identify pupils in need of support and monitor progress.
- Make sure a balance is maintained between supporting children through withdrawal and in-class support.

- Provide appropriate, stimulating experiences to challenge and support learning in line with the Northern Ireland Curriculum
- Prepare children for known and unknown situations by developing a range of general skills, including physical and manual skills, social skills, communication, expression, Literacy, Numeracy, observation, classification, research and investigation, recording, reasoning and the ability to evaluate evidence and offer opinions.
- Develop in children a sense of responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.
- Consult with support services to ensure a unified approach is in place to support individual needs.

Identification and Assessment

We believe that the identification and assessment of children with special needs is a whole staff responsibility. We value early identification and intervention. Therefore we seek information regarding children's needs from the following:

- Observing the children in their pre-school environment
- Parents
- Application form
- Induction meeting
- Enrolment forms
- Referral from other agencies e.g. Health Visitors, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Services, Educational Psychologist.
- Settling-in records, observations, monitoring well-being and involvement levels, professional judgement of staff.
- Assessment results

The on-going task of providing learning experiences for a class involves monitoring the achievements, abilities and difficulties of each child. We recognise that teachers may have a variety of learning needs to address within a class and these needs can be complex. Teachers can be faced with challenging circumstances where it is difficult to provide an approach that motivates and engages a child to access the curriculum, learn and make progress. Teachers will employ both formal and informal methods of evaluating individuals to ensure suitable differentiation of provision. All children will be monitored and concerns registered.

Standardised testing takes place each May using Reading, Spelling, English and Maths assessments. We use NRIT and CAT scores to gauge children's performance. These tests can identify specific needs. As a result, individual and whole school targets can be set for the in-coming year. The results are used to screen and assess all the children at the 'End of Year Data Analysis' meeting. The Special Needs Register is reviewed at this stage each year.

Relevant testing is also carried out during the year, when necessary. In identifying children with special educational needs, information is gathered from various sources and these may include:

- Responses to general class work and homework
- Class tests, exams etc.
- Overview of reports and comments from previous years
- Observation of class behaviour - informally or using a checklist
- Talking to parents about health, routines, perceptions of the child etc.
- Standardised tests
- Outside agency reports

Teachers who have concerns about a child's learning or who identify a child as having special educational needs, will inform the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), Mrs Anne Barton. If a difficulty is confirmed there is usually a period of monitoring during which observations are recorded. If the individual need persists the child may enter the Code of Practice at Stage One. At this point the class teacher or the SENCo will notify the parents.

The SENCo, or the Special Needs teacher work with the class teacher and the child to prepare an Individual Education Plan, outlining specific short-term targets and the planned action to address these. A copy of the plan is communicated to parents. A copy is also added to the Rainbow Book. This book keeps the parents closely involved with the child's daily learning and targets. Copies of all I.E.P.s are kept in the Special Needs Files.

Addressing Individual Requirements

A range of teaching strategies, classroom management styles and resources may be required to meet the needs of each child.

These will be noted in the action plans or group education programmes and their effectiveness considered at times of review.

In general, teachers will ensure that:

- Activities are provided to encourage children to work at an instructional level in groups or as individuals; skills and knowledge are introduced in small amounts and in a logical order; concepts are established slowly through the varied revisiting and practice of knowledge and skills.
- Sensitivity is shown towards children whose limitation in talking and listening, reading, writing and number work influence their learning in other areas of the curriculum; appropriate help is given to overcome such weaknesses.
- Tasks are as stimulating as possible and a variety of resources will be used to provide for different learning styles and to motivate.
- Children with specific hearing or sights problems will be carefully positioned in the room.
- Whenever possible, children will be made aware of expectations in terms of time, behaviour, work etc. and be encouraged to share the responsibility for their progress.
- Whenever possible progress will be rewarded; one to one tuition will be given when possible.
- Children with behavioural problems will be carefully positioned in the room to enable all members of the class to progress; if this requires isolation, it will be short term and with the clear goal of integration as reward for acceptable behaviour.
- Children with behavioural problems, including disciplinary and motivational, may be given a daily progress chart tailored to their difficulties and providing opportunities to record progress, to offer praise and to inform parents.

Monitoring and Evaluating Special Educational Needs Provision

- The SENCo and Special needs teacher are in regular contact with class teachers as necessary. Teachers record observations and make informal notes on the children in their class who are on the Special Needs Register. Education Plans and reviews are kept up-to-date by the class teacher and copies filed in the Special Needs File for each class
- Formal meetings for staff are held during each term to monitor SEN provision and discuss issues arising.
- Parent interviews are held in October. It is emphasized that clear lines of communication with parents is essential. Therefore parents are welcome to phone the Principal or call at the school at any time during the year to discuss their child's progress. The Principal often has regular meeting with parents of children with SEN.
- The Senior Management Team and Board of Governors are kept informed of the SEN provision throughout the year.
- Liaison with outside agencies is maintained.

Record Keeping

- Copies of current reviews and education plans are in the Special Needs file for each class
- The Special Needs Register is kept detailing, in year group order, those children who have special educational needs and their stage of progression within the Code of Practice. Teachers keep the original education plans and reviews and send a copy of each to the parents.
- Each Class Teacher has a copy of the register in the Special Needs File
- Class teachers, the Special needs teacher and the SENCo keep records of their own testing through informal assessments, standardised or diagnostic tests.
- The SENCo keeps copies of all letters, referrals, reports and correspondence.

Gifted and Talented

At St. Mary's Primary School we are committed to an ethos of high expectation for all and we aim to develop the full potential of each child. As with other special needs, we will identify individual strengths as well as weaknesses through ongoing observation, testing, professional judgement, collation of evidence and discussion with parents and child.

We aim to provide quality learning experiences for our more able pupils to encourage them to develop as confident, independent thinkers and learners. The main provider of opportunities for able pupils will be the class teacher through differentiation of task or outcome. Opportunities to challenge the more able pupil will also be provided through additional extension activities in a variety of curricular areas. Gifted and talented children may also be included as one of the targeted children within the class whose progress is closely monitored and specific targets are outlined in each planner.

Organisation and Management

Currently the Special Needs teacher is able to make provision for the pupils at Stage 2. Depending on priorities and the time available, the KS1 teachers and classroom assistants work to support individuals or groups of children within their own classes or withdraw individuals or small groups to concentrate on particular difficulties.

Resources and Additional Support

A variety of outside agencies offer additional support in terms of individual programmes, strategies and resources. These include; the Educational Psychologist, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Literacy Support Service, Audiology Support Service etc. A variety of resource materials are used to supplement the differentiated class work provided by the teacher. For example

- Reading Recovery tests and strategies
- The 'Special Needs Resource File'
- PAT resources
- Magnetic boards and letters
- White boards and markers
- Sand trays, rice trays and a variety of multi-sensory resources

- Writing books with practice pages
- Hampshire high frequency spelling lists and booklets
- Levelled Reading Materials
- Easylearn resources
- ICT

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal

Ms Coyle is passionate about ensuring that all children have their needs identified and met and values the following:

- A close working relationship with Mrs Barton, SENCo
- Clear lines of communication and strong links with parents and outside agencies.
- That continuous professional development is given a high priority for all staff.
- That support staff are an integral part of the team and are included in planning, monitoring and evaluating.
- That data is used effectively to identify pupils in need of support.
- That governors are kept fully informed.

The Co-ordinator (SENCo)

Mrs Barton has worked hard to develop a knowledge, understanding and a range of skills to effectively co-ordinate Special Needs in St. Mary's P.S. She is responsible for the following:

- The day to day operation of the Special Needs Policy.
- Responding to requests for advice from other teachers.
- Co-ordinating SEN provision, ensuring appropriate liaison with the various teachers who will teach any given child with SEN.
- Maintaining the Special Needs Register.
- Liaising with parents of children with SEN.
- Establishing the in-service training requirements of the staff and contribute as appropriate to their training.
- Liaising with external agencies.

The Special Needs Teacher

Mrs Mc Cartney is currently working as the Special Needs teacher - 3days/week. She has a sound understanding and knowledge of the specific work she does. She is responsible for the following:

- Assessing the children using Reading Recovery tests, Dyslexia assessments etc.
- Liaising with the Principal and the SENCo to draw up the timetable for withdrawal.
- Liaising with the children, class teacher, LTSS and parents to agree each IEP and review.
- Working with the children individually or in small groups.
- Drawing up a Special Needs Update to be included with the Pupil Profile at the end of the year.

The Class Teacher

Individual needs are prioritised within each class. Each teacher is responsible for the following:

- To play an active part in reviewing the Special Needs Policy and implement it on a day to day basis.
- Maintain the special needs file for their class, containing end of year assessment results and previous education plans and reviews where appropriate.
- Gather information on individual pupils and differentiate their classroom teaching to suit the child's requirements.
- Keep parents informed.
- Consult with SENCo and special needs teacher and discuss individual education plans with parents and include them in the Rainbow Book.

Partnership with Parents

At all stages of the Code of Practice parents will be kept informed and encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning. Parents will be notified when their child's name is added to the Special Needs Register and thereafter kept informed of their child's progress and any movement to a different stage on the register. The class teacher, Special Needs teacher or SENCo will inform the parents about the concerns, targets and action

taken, and discuss ways in which they might co-operate in partnership for the child's benefit. Parents will be encouraged to contact the school at any time to clarify or follow-up any SEN queries. Parents will have the opportunity to speak with teachers at parent interviews regarding their child's progress and may be invited to additional interviews to discuss specific SEN issues with the class teacher or the principal.

Code Of Practice

In the Code of Practice relating to special educational needs, the procedure for assessment, planning and provision is set out in five stages. While individual children's needs vary greatly and the provision may range from temporary and minor to permanent and major, it is hoped that many children will have their needs addressed in the short term.

Stage 1

- The class teacher informs the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) about concerns.
- The SENCo adds the child's name to the Special Needs Register.
- The class teacher gathers information and either monitors the child or provides special help within the classroom keeping a record of targets and strategies set.
- Parents are consulted and informed by the class teacher.
- A review may see child's name removed from register, remain at Stage 1 or move on to Stage 2.

Stage 2

- Initial concerns may indicate need for Stage 2 support or it may be as a follow on from a Stage 1 review.
- The class teacher liaises with SENCo to prioritise provision.
- The SENCo provides advice and support as available.
- An Individual Education Plan is drawn up in conjunction with the child, class teacher, special needs teacher and parents.
- The child will be offered withdrawal support with the Special Needs teacher.
- A review may see child revert to Stage 1, remain at Stage 2 or move on to Stage 3.

Stage 3

- Where a child's learning difficulties persist, the school seeks the advice and help of outside agencies in assessment and provision. These may include the Psychology Department of NEELB, the doctor, the Occupational Therapist, the Physiotherapist or the Speech Therapist.
- The SENCo, class teacher, child, parents and support services draw up an Education Plan.
- Parents are kept informed by the SENCo.
- A review may see child revert to Stage 2 or 1, remain at Stage 3 or the Principal may request statutory assessment if child fails to make progress.

Stage 4

- A request for statutory assessment is made to the NEELB's Special Educational Branch.
- Evidence will be submitted relating to the assessment and provision in stages 1, 2 and 3 and at review meetings.
- The Special Educational Branch carries out an assessment in liaison with parents and then with the school (the Principal/SENCo and class teacher) and other agencies.
- The school continues to be responsible during this process.

Stage 5

A statement is written by NEELB containing:

- Details of the child
- An outline of special educational needs (including abilities and difficulties)
- Educational and development objectives (timescale, provision required, arrangements for setting of short term targets etc.)
- Details of non-educational needs
- Details of provision to address non-educational needs.

Special Needs Audit and Review April 2010 – September 2011

Baseline

- After general classroom observations and focus on reading and writing in P.3 the Principal raised concerns about results and general Literacy achievement in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- InCAS were analysed in P.4 October 2010 and this same class were tested in key words again. Concerns were confirmed. See action plan for Literacy and Foundation Stage in SDP.

Analysis of Problem

- We needed to define the strategies and lines of progression presently in place for the teaching and learning of Literacy at **Foundation Stage**. Focus was placed on reading, letter formation, writing, marking, monitoring and evaluating and assessing work.
- We questioned if a number of children in the **P.4 class** had specific learning difficulties?

Action

- Employed part time Special Needs teacher at end of November 2010.
- Foundation Stage review was added to SDP.

Foundation Stage Review Included:

- Introduction of Reading Recovery levels to P.1, P.2 and P.3.
- CASS involvement for in-service for Jolly Phonics including;

Parents information evening.

Whole staff in-service.

P.1 and P.4 teachers in-service.

- SENCO and Principal led review of progression in handwriting in Foundation Stage.

- **SENCO and Principal led review of progression in writing in Foundation Stage.**
- **Principal led review of Monitoring and Evaluating in Foundation Stage and the introduction of Ferre Laevers approach to Monitoring and Evaluating play, based on Well-being and Involvement levels. This will highlight children in need of support at an early stage.**
- Dyslexia Screener was purchased and targeted children were tested. (P.4 - P.7 December 2010)
- P.4 class targeted for the year to monitor progress. (2010/11)
- Special Needs Teacher employed full time. (January 2011)
- All children exhibiting dyslexic tendencies were added to Special Needs Register at Stage 2 and withdrawn for extra support.
- Ms Coyle and Miss Mc Williams (Special Needs Teacher) met with all parents of the above children.
- All reading books were graded using Reading recovery levels for Foundation and Key Stage One. New books were ordered to supplement current schemes. (2009 - 2011).
- Principal and SENCO were helped by Classroom Assistants and Building Supervisor to level, label and systematically organize the books in the Reading Room. (November 2010 - September 2011)
- SENCO trained teachers and classroom assistants on how to complete Running Records. (Term 3, 2010)
- On-going review of the format, content and effectiveness of IEP's, with an emphasis on targets. (January 2011 - September 2011)
- SENCO lead in-service on writing IEP's. (February 2011)
- SENCO reviewed and updated the Special Needs class files. (May 2011)
- SENCO added Dyslexia information to public folder for reference.
- Parents of children on IEP's were given a written Special Needs Update along with their Pupil profile at the end of the year. This highlighted progress during the year, standardized results and provision for the following year.

IEP Review

- October 2011 IEP review concluded that the targets were too vague.
- New template 1 - (November, 2011) with standardized test results including InCAS results. Specific areas for development were highlighted using Reading Recovery tests.
- On reviewing November template in May 2011, it was decided that the short term targets needed to be reduced, more specific and reviewed every six weeks.
- It was agreed that there needed to be more definite pupil input.
- New template was agreed for September 2011. It will to be added to each child's "Rainbow Book", which will be used by parents, class teachers and Special Needs teacher.
- Additional information with each IEP (for school use only) will include standardised results, long term skills based targets and record of the outcome of the Reading recovery tests.

