Ropery Walk Primary School

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Reviewed: September 2026
Next Review: September 2027
SENCO: Gillian Thompson
Designated Governor: Karen Field

Introduction

The staff and governors at Ropery Walk Primary aim to address special needs provision through a whole school approach. Our ethos is one of collaboration and inclusion between senior management, teachers, support staff, parents, agencies and, most importantly, the child.

Through a flexible approach to learning, valuing all the child's achievements whilst allowing for individual differences, we hope to develop children's strengths, address their needs and make school an enjoyable, happy and productive time for each child.

Our overall aim is to help all children reach their full potential in a caring and co-operative atmosphere where each child feels respected and valued.

Special educational provision means: provision which is additional to or different from that of other pupils.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:
a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age;
or
b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them (Clause 20 Children and Families Act).

Definition of disability

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is '…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

Pupils with Impairments (Disabilities):

The school monitors the progress of pupils with impairments carefully and ensures support is targeted well to support their needs. The accessibility plan details what the school will do to adapt provision for disabled pupils.

Aims:

Early identification of children who may be experiencing difficulties in learning is essential. These may be temporary and addressed within the classroom by strategies adopted by the class teacher in partnership with the parents, or may be more complex and long term.
We will:

- identify the child's individual needs as soon as possible
- clearly define the identification arrangements
- make appropriate provision
- liaise closely with parents and carers
- liaise with other agencies as appropriate
- ensure that support is directed effectively
- outline procedures for monitoring, recording and reviewing progress
- build up a bank of resources
- ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly identified
- ensure that the statutory obligation relating to the special educational needs Code of Practice are carried out

Objectives:

- to assist the development of the whole child
- to ensure that pupils are met with positive attitudes from all school staff
- to provide a climate of warmth and support, where a child can feel valued and make mistakes without fear of criticism
- to encourage partnership between pupil, parent and teacher so that all views and opinions are considered in the best interests of the child
- to allow pupils to take ownership of their own learning by allowing them to participate in the planning and evaluation of their own learning programme wherever possible
- to help the pupil become more independent and confident
- to obtain the necessary support and resources (human and material) to meet the pupil's needs

Admission Arrangements:

Children are admitted to full time primary education at the beginning of the school year in which they will be five years old. The school follows the LA admissions policy. All admissions are dealt with by the Authority.

The Durham County Council website has information regarding the school admission process and primary school admissions.

Ropery Walk Primary School recognises that a successful transition is extremely important to our pupils with Additional Needs. Ropery Walk work in partnership both with feeder nursery schools for transition to primary school and with local secondary schools: the aim is to provide an enhanced level of transition for those who would benefit from this. This may take the form of additional visits for pupils and meetings with parents, children and staff. The period of transition depends on the individual needs of the pupil.

Our SENCO attends Annual Reviews for pupils coming into school from nursery and secondary school colleagues will attend Annual Reviews for Year 6 pupils.

Parents/carers should be involved as much as possible in their child's transition from nursery school and to secondary school. Visits from nursery school parents and children are warmly welcomed. School staff will take opportunities to work alongside parents/carers to visit secondary schools in advance of secondary placement applications being submitted to the Local Authority. This ensures parents/carers can make the most informed placement decision for their child.

When a secondary school has been allocated, parents are fully involved and consulted at all stages of the transition process

Safeguarding Statement:

At Ropery Walk Primary School we are committed to safeguarding all members of our school community. Safeguarding is a key focus throughout the school, which is reflected in both policy and practice. Our aim is to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment in which all members of our school community will achieve their full potential. We strive to achieve our aim through modelling behaviour, educating all on Safeguarding and dedicating time to learning about keeping safe.
Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will always ensure that our concerns about our pupils are discussed with their parents/carers first, unless we have reason to believe that this is not in the child's best interests.

Identification of Individual Needs:

There are a number of ways in which a child's needs may be identified:

- Nursery Schools or other agencies may inform the school about a forthcoming admission of a child with SEN.
- During a child's school career parents or a class teacher may raise a concern.
- The child's class teacher may assess their needs and, in consultation with parents and SENCO, identify the level of support they are likely to require.
- More formal assessments may be completed by any of the following: SENCO, teacher, Teaching Assistant or other outside agencies.

Information is always shared with families concerned.

The identification of SEN is part of the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils at Ropery Walk. Each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment are assessed on entry. All pupils are regularly assessed. Where pupils are falling behind or making inadequate progress given their age and starting point, they are given extra support. This is a whole school responsibility involving the class teacher and supported by the senior leadership team.

Where pupils continue to make inadequate progress despite high-quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness, the class teacher, working with the SENCO, should assess whether the child has a significant learning difficulty. Where this is the case, then there should be agreement about the SEN support that is required to support the child.
Where a special educational need is identified, an appropriate intervention will be put in place. SEN Support Plans have a clear set of expected outcomes, which include stretching and relevant academic and developmental targets. Progress towards these outcomes is tracked and reviewed regularly, at least termly. Support is planned and reviewed by the class teacher, in collaboration with parents, the SENCO, and, where appropriate, the pupil themselves.

Educational Inclusion:
We respect the fact that pupils:
- have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations
- require different strategies for learning
- acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates

Teachers respond to pupil's needs by:
- providing support where necessary
- planning to develop pupil's understanding through the use of a multi-sensory approach
- ensuring pupil's full participation in all learning activities
- helping pupils to manage their behaviour and so take part in learning safely and effectively
- helping pupils to manage their emotions, particularly stress, in order that they will be ready to learn

The allocation of resources to and amongst pupils with SEN
All schools in Durham receive an allocation of money in their annual budget, which is towards their SEND provision. This is known as the Notional SEN Budget.
The Notional SEN Budget allocation is agreed between our school and the Local Authority at the beginning of each financial year. Our budget allocation for 2025-26 is being used towards the costs of our Teaching Assistants and to provide any necessary resources required by the children they are supporting.

When deciding how to spend SEND funding Ropery Walk School:
- **ensures pupils with EHC Plans receive the provision detailed in their plan;**
- **ensures recommended programmes are delivered;**

- **looks at any health and safety issues;**
- **prioritises subject areas e.g. literacy and numeracy.**

Details of how this money is utilised is provided in our school's budget statement and monitored each term by the Governing Body.

Role and Responsibilities of the SENCO:

The member of staff who has the responsibility as Special Needs Co-ordinator is Mrs G Thompson. The SENCO will work closely with the head teacher, other senior leadership team members and fellow teachers in the development of policy and provision.

The SENCO will have responsibility for:

- the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
- maintaining the SEN register and ensuring that all records are kept up to date
- assuming a supportive role to colleagues, helping with identification and, target setting and programme planning
- over-seeing the appropriate allocation of LSA and other staff
- acting as a focal point for enquiries and referrals
- ensuring that colleagues are aware of available resources
- undertaking relevant in service training and providing feedback to colleagues as well as arranging appropriate training for colleagues
- working closely with parents
- ensuring that the formal review process is carried out appropriately
- submitting educational advice for pupils undergoing an Educational Health Care (EHC) assessment of their needs
- undertaking a regular self-review role
- initiating Early Help Assessments where necessary and participating in Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings
- acting as a focal point for liaison with multi- agency colleagues

These will include:
Educational Psychology Service
Speech & Language Service
Occupational Therapy
Education Welfare Service
School Nurse / Health Visitor
Clinical Medical Officer & other physicians as appropriate
Learning Support Service
Autism Support Service
EMTAS

CAMHS
Behaviour Support Service
Crisis Response Service
Sensory Support Service
Place 2 Be
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The local authority is required to publish a SEND Local Offer, which sets out a range of additional services and provision across education, health, social care and across the public, voluntary and independent sectors. This details information about what is available to support families both with and without an EHC Plan. The SENCO will help parents of pupils with SEN to identify appropriate provision that may be available through the Local Offer.
Parents who may feel they need support can contact the Parent Partnership Service who may offer specific advice and guidance.

Responsibilities of the class teacher:

In our school, we recognise that ALL teachers are teachers of pupils with Special Educational Needs.
It is the responsibility of all teachers to identify pupils whom they consider might need intervention and, in conjunction with the SENCO, provide a curriculum to meet their needs. Teachers will work with the SENCO to produce and review Support Plans for pupils, which will clearly state their strengths, areas for development and the actions and strategies taken by the school to support the pupil.
There will be pupils whose needs are significant and complex and may require an EHC Assessment by the Local Authority. This may result in them being given an EHC Plan.

The role of the Governing Body:

The Governing body does its best to secure the necessary provision for any pupils whose special educational needs have been identified. They consult with the LA and other schools, when appropriate, and report annually to parents on the successful implementation of the policy.
The designated Special Needs Governor is Mrs Karen Field. She will meet with the SENCO to discuss provision for Special Educational Needs and the progress being made by pupils with SEN.
The Head teacher informs the governing body of how the SEN funding has been allocated.

Record Keeping:

Records will include information from previous schools, all Short Notes/ Provision Maps/ Support Plans and relevant information from parents or outside agencies that might be involved, as well as professional notes made by the class teacher, which might highlight concerns or issues. These records will be housed with the SENCO. Each teacher has a Special Needs file, which includes pupils' Short Notes, Provision Maps, Support Plans, EHC Plans and copies of relevant documents.

Access to the curriculum:

All pupils have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is differentiated to enable pupils to:

- understand the relevance and purpose of learning
- experience levels of understanding and rates of progress which bring success and raise self esteem

Teachers use a range of strategies to meet pupils' needs. Lessons have clear learning objectives, which are shared with each pupil. Pupils know what their targets are and what they need to do to improve. Teachers use assessment to inform the next stage of learning. Support Plans employ a small steps approach, which enable pupils to achieve and be successful. We support pupils in a manner appropriate to their needs. Wherever possible, pupils with SEN share the learning experiences within the classroom with their peers. They may be supported by, Learning Support Assistants, Behaviour Improvement Staff or Place 2 Be counsellors. To maximise learning, pupils may work in small groups or in a 1: 1 situation.

Intervention Programmes:

Some pupils with SEN may be involved in Intervention Programmes to boost or assist their learning. These may be in the areas of:

- cognition and learning (e.g. Lexia, Read, Write, Inc., Maths interventions)
- communication and interaction (e.g. Speech and Language Development, Time to Talk, Identiplay)
- social emotional and mental health (e.g. Place 2 Be, Place 2 Talk, Getting Along, Lego Therapy)

- physical or sensory (e.g. Occupational Therapy, Movement Programme, Sensory circuit)

Information from our tracking system or information from a pupil's EHC Plan may be used to identify pupils who may benefit from intervention programmes. Alternatively, outside agencies may suggest an intervention to help an individual pupil. The impact of interventions is evaluated in terms of quantitative data (improved assessment results) and qualitative impact (perceived improvement in confidence, attitude, self-esteem). Provision Mapping tracks which pupils are accessing interventions.

Monitoring and provision:

Pupil's targets will be monitored on a termly basis. Intervention strategies will be monitored each term or at the end of the intervention. Annual reviews are held for pupils with EHC Plans.
Support staff will work, for the majority of time, within the classroom to support pupils.

Partnership with parents:

Parents will be informed as soon as a pupil has been identified as requiring help that is "different from" or "additional to" that of other pupils. Input from parents will be actively sought and ways in which parents might help their child will be shared.
For pupils who are identified as needing intervention from outside agencies or who may require an EHC assessment, parents will be notified for permission for this to take place. Parents will be informed of the nature and purpose of the involvement and notified of subsequent progress.

Working in partnership with pupils:

We strive at all times to involve pupils in their targets, and seek their opinions at review meetings either in writing or in person.

The policy will be reviewed annually and should be read in conjunction with our equalities statement.