

# MERE SCHOOL

## Special Needs Policy

“A special needs policy is the foundation for strategies to help pupils with special needs to achieve their educational potential”. “Getting the Act Together”.

### **Definition of Special Education Needs**

“Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of the same age, or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in school.

### **Special educational provision means:**

“For children of 2 or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of this age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools in the area.”

(See Section 312, Education Act 1998 in Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, P6)

### **Aims**

Mere School is an inclusive establishment. We believe in providing every possible opportunity to develop the full potential of all children. All children will have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum including extra-curricular activities where appropriate and full access to the National Curriculum. All children are valued and their self-esteem promoted. We work in close partnership with parents/carers who play an active and valued role in their child’s education. Our aim is that all children with special educational needs participate in activities compatible with the efficient education of other children and the efficient use of resources.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the policy are:

- to identify and monitor children’s individual needs at the earliest possible stage so that appropriate provision can be made and their attainment is raised;
- to plan an effective curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and ensure that the targets set on Individual Education Plans are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time related;
- to work in close partnership with, and involve, parents/carers of children who have special educational needs;
- to involve children and parents in the identification and review of the targets identified in their Individual Education Plans;
- to ensure that all who are involved with children are aware of the procedures for identifying their needs, supporting and teaching them; and
- to work in close partnership, where appropriate, with outside agencies to support the needs and provision for children who have special educational needs.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governors' role**

The Governor with responsibility for monitoring SEN and the Specialist Learning Centre is Julia Cole.

The governing body must:

- do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any child who has special educational needs.
- ensure that where the 'responsible person' – the Headteacher or the appropriate governor – has been informed by the LA that a child has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them.
- ensure that teachers in the school are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for those children who have special educational needs.
- consult the LA and the governing bodies of other schools when it seems to be necessary or desirable in the interests of co-ordinated special educational provision in the area as a whole.
- ensure that a child with special educational needs joins in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical.
- report to parents on the implementation of the school's policy for children with special educational needs.

(See Section 317, Education Act 1996)

- have due regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001) when carrying out its duties toward all children with special educational needs.
- ensure that parents are notified of a decision by the school that SEN is being made for their child.

(See Section 317A, Education Act 1996)

The governors play an important role in ensuring that:

- they are fully involved in developing and monitoring the school's SEN policy.
- they are up-to-date and knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision, including how funding, equipment and personnel resources are deployed.
- SEN provision is an integral part of the School Development Plan.
- the quality of SEN provision is continually monitored.
- an annual report is provided to parents.

In addition, as part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) new duties came into effect in September 2002. These state that the responsible body must take all steps not to discriminate against disabled children in their admission arrangements, in the education and associated service provided by the school for its pupils or in relation to exclusions from the school. The Act says that a responsible body for the school discriminates against a child if:

- for a reason relating to the child's disability, it treats him or her less favourable than it treats, or would treat, others whom that reason does not apply, or would not apply;
- it cannot show that the particular treatment is justified.

## **SENCo**

Currently the SENCo is Mrs. Yvonne Bundy. She is responsible for co-ordinating the provision of special educational needs throughout the school (including the Specialist Learning Centre). All decisions regarding SEN are made jointly with Mark Perry, teacher of the SLC.

The role of SENCo involves:

- day to day operation of the special educational needs policy;
- maintaining the special educational needs register;
- providing advice to staff and liaising with them on the writing of individual education plans.
- working alongside staff in assessing pupils' needs and ensuring that pupils make progress;
- overseeing and maintaining specific resources for special educational needs;
- liaising with outside agencies;
- liaising with parents of children with special educational needs;
- contributing to the in-service training of staff;
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting on provision to the governing body in conjunction with the designated responsible person;
- managing teaching assistants.

## **Identification and assessment arrangements and review procedures**

The school follows the guidance contained in the Code of Practice. As a school we have adopted a register of need and concern sheet in addition to School Action and School Action Plus.

### **CONCERN**

The class teacher or the parent identifies a concern that a pupil may have a special education need. This may be a temporary concern. Records of such concerns should be maintained using the school 'concern sheet' (Appendix A). At this point the teacher will collect all relevant information about the child, consult with parents and SENCo and monitor the child's progress. Within a pre determined timescale the teacher will review progress with the parent and pupils where possible, and decide whether to proceed to the next stage.

The school follows the guidance contained in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2002). This recommends a graduated approach.

The Code does not assume that there are hard and fast categories of special educational need, but recognises that children's needs and requirements fall into 4 broad areas. These are:

- Communication and Interaction,
- Cognition and Learning,
- Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development,
- Sensory and/or Physical.

Where possible we will try to meet every child's needs within the classroom through ensuring that our planning, teaching and approaches meet the needs of the majority of the children in our school. However, where through careful identification and assessment we and/or the parents determine that a child is not making satisfactory progress, the class teacher will consult the SENCo. They, in conjunction with the child and parents, will review the strategies and approaches that are currently being used and the way these might be developed. Where this review leads to the conclusion that the child

needs help over and above that which is normally available within the class or school we will help the child through School Action.

## SCHOOL ACTION

Following a review of the strategies it may be necessary to make provision which is additional to, or different from, that which is already provided. It may be that the child:

- makes little or no progress when teaching approaches are targeted to their particular needs.
- shows signs of difficulty in developing skills in literacy or numeracy.
- shows persistent signs of emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not addressed through the behaviour and discipline approaches used in school.
- has physical or sensory problems and despite specialist equipment still makes little or no progress.
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties which lead to them making little or no progress.

We will seek additional information from the parents, and in some cases, outside agencies, who may be involved with the child. When we have all the available information we will consider with the parents and the child the next strategy for action. This will involve negotiating and discussing an Individual Education Plan with the child, parents, teacher and SENCo. An Individual Education Plan will provide for:

- short term targets.
- the teaching strategies.
- what provision we will make.
- when we will review the plan.
- how we will judge the progress (success criteria).
- any outcomes after a review.

All IEPs are reviewed termly but monitored closely. The targets are discussed at Parents' Evenings as well as when parents are invited into school.

Where, despite all our best efforts, the child still continues to make little or no progress in relation to the targets set in any of the 5 areas, or is working at National Curriculum levels significantly below those of his/her peers we will move to School Action Plus.

## SCHOOL ACTION PLUS

This is similar to School Action, but may involve us in contacting external support services provided by the LEA and other external agencies such as the Health Authority. We will seek advice on fresh targets and strategies, or more specialist assessments, that can help us with our planning. Another IEP will be written to reflect these new targets after consultation with these agencies, parents, the child and the SENCo and class teacher. We will ensure that parental consent is sought before any outside agencies are involved.

Where, despite all our best endeavours, the child still makes little or no progress in the areas targeted, we will discuss with the parents and the child the need for us to approach the LEA to request a statutory assessment. This may or may not result in the LEA issuing a statement of special educational need. Where a child has a statement of special educational need we will carry out an annual review which parents, child, outside agencies, SENCo and the class teacher, will be invited to attend.

## **Policy into Practice**

In this school our policy is to keep parents fully involved and informed at all stages of The Code of Practice. This will be done informally and formally. Liaison with the named Governor for Special Needs will be maintained through informal discussion, attendance at Special Needs staff meetings and access to outside agencies and records.

## **Partnership with parents/carers**

Parental responsibility is defined under Section 2 of the Children Act 1989 (Appendix F). Parents or carers are seen as partners in the effective working relationship with the school in raising their child's attainment. They are fully involved in the identification, assessment and decision making process in the school. Parents' contribution to their child's education is highly valued by the staff of the school. Parents are encouraged to involve their child in the decision making processes, including determining the level of participation, recording pupils views and in implementing and reviewing the individual education plan.

We show sensitivity, honesty and mutual respect in encouraging children to share concerns, discuss strategies and see themselves as equal partners in the school. All children are involved in making decisions, where possible, as soon as they start at the school. The way in which we encourage them to participate reflects their emerging maturity. Confident young children, who know that their opinions will be valued and who can practise making choices, will be more secure and effective children during their school years. In this school, we encourage children to participate in their learning by being voted onto the school council. We encourage them to have a voice in deciding the priorities for our School Development Plan. We encourage them to take ownership of their learning targets by discussing their targets and what they can do to improve. For children with SEN this includes discussing the strategies for success in the Individual Education Plans. We encourage them to take part in reviewing their progress and in setting new goals and challenges.

## **Transition of Children from Playgroup and from school to school:-**

Close links are maintained with the pre-school SENCo and records are passed onto this school.

This will be maintained by accurate and updated files and records.

At present the liaison by our Foundation Stage teacher and the playgroup leader is on an informal basis with visits to playgroup by the above teacher.

Children who transfer to this school from another school - their information will be requested from the previous school.

When necessary the SENCo will carry out observations and liaise with the pre-school leader. The SENCo/SLC Manager contacts the main feeder school, Gillingham, to confirm that SEN children settle well into secondary education. Prior to this the SENCo/SLC Manager discusses the SEN children with the Gillingham School SENCo and hands over the relevant records and documentation.

## **The Curriculum**

Classroom organization will take into account the time required for the assessment and identification procedure of Pupils with Special Educational Needs, and also the differentiated work required for individual children within the class. The I.E.P. outlines additional and different targeted areas to take

place. Responsibility for this must lie with the class teacher initially, in liaison with the Special Needs co-ordinators and where appropriate LA or other outside agencies.

It was agreed that various non-contact times could be utilized e.g. assembly times, for the purpose of liaison, monitoring and assessment.

Realistic targets and deadlines should be set by the class teacher based on expertise available and knowledge of individuals in the class. This is to be achieved by careful planning and revisiting areas of the curriculum in different forms ensuring that the children remain motivated and self-esteem is maintained. On occasions it may be necessary to withdraw children from the classroom for specialist support. We would normally prefer Special Needs children to remain in the classroom especially when whole class topics are being discussed.

### **Arrangements for co-ordinating provision for pupils with special education need.**

The needs of the majority of pupils will be met in the classroom. Teachers are expected to make every effort to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and included in the life of the class, such as participating in assemblies and the thematic based curriculum. For some pupils it will be necessary for them to spend time in small group work or being withdrawn from the classroom for specific timed activities related to the needs identified in their individual education plans. This may be delivered by the teacher, teaching assistant, or outside agency and will complement ordinary classroom work so that the skills, knowledge and understanding will be transferred to the classroom.

The SENCo will oversee this provision to ensure it meets the objectives of this policy.

### **Finance**

Teaching Assistants may be targeted to work with identified children under the guidance of the teacher in consultation with the SENCo. Occasionally children may be allocated by the LA a special educational needs allowance to enable them to receive individual support. A statement of special educational needs normally determines this.

### **Complaints Procedure**

If a parent has a complaint they must discuss the matter with the class teacher. If it is not resolved they need to see the SENCo. If it is not resolved it needs to go to the Headteacher and to the SEN Governor. After following this procedure parents may wish to contact the LEA. If the complaint remains unresolved the Chair of Governors should be involved and finally the complaint should be taken to the LA and/or Secretary of State. Complaints will be dealt with in an understanding and professional manner.

### **Admissions**

Normal admission arrangements apply. The admissions policy is based on the agreed Wiltshire policy. All pupils will be treated according to their needs in line with the schools' policy for equality of opportunity. No pupil will be denied admission because of his or her creed, race, physical or academic attainment. Where a pupil has a particular need, e.g. wheelchair access, the governors will make every effort to ensure the pupil's needs are fully met. If a pupil is transferring into the school with a statement or has been receiving extra support in their previous school the continuation of this support will be negotiated through the LEA to ensure their needs can be met. We strive to be a fully inclusive school.

Any variation to the above will need to be agreed by the full governing body.

## **Specialist Facilities**

Mere School has a Specialist Learning Centre attached. The Centre currently has one full-time teacher, Mark Perry and 2 full-time TAs, Doreen Howell and Mandy Green. The Centre opened in January 2005 and accommodates up to 12 children, some of whom will receive part of their education at the Centre through Inreach and others through Outreach into their local schools. The aim of the Centre is to support the learning of children with special educational needs through a flexible approach. It is envisaged that most children will continue to be on their mainstream roll wherever possible. The Centre provides an important role in offering advice and expertise to teachers at Mere School and across the 2 clusters.

## **Criteria for evaluating the success of the policy.**

The policy will be evaluated against the objectives stated on page 1 and measured by:

- an analysis of teachers' short term planning by Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators, to identify learning objectives for children with special educational needs.
- teachers' planning reflecting the learning objectives for children with special educational needs.
- parents being aware of individual targets set for children by discussing and receiving copies of Individual Education Plans for their child.
- children being involved in discussing, constructing and reviewing their own Individual Education Plans.
- child attainment or progress, as measured by objective testing and teachers' professional judgement, being raised.
- external evaluation by the responsible person and the LEA adviser for special educational needs based on the objectives of the policy.
- termly monitoring of procedures and practice by the SEN governor.
- the Governors' Annual Report to Parents.
- the School Development Plan priorities which include the provision for SEN.
- value for money review of our Special Educational Needs funding.
- any external evaluation or inspection.

## **In service training**

This will involve the SENCo, teachers and support staff in order to help them work effectively with pupils having special educational needs. These particular training needs will be closely related to the school's development plan. Staff attending further courses will feedback to staff meetings on courses attended using the agreed proforma. The effectiveness of such training will be monitored and evaluated by the SENCo and through the annual evaluation this policy.

## **Links and Use of outside agencies**

Close links are maintained with the LA in order to ensure that the school makes appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs. Where it is necessary to contact outside agencies the SENCo will make the necessary arrangement and inform parents accordingly. These agencies normally include the learning support team, PASISS team, Speech therapist, behaviour support team, social services, health, LA personnel and Educational Psychologist. Any or all of these agencies may be involved in assessment in the construction, deliver or review of targets set in pupils' individual education plans in order to ensure pupils attainment is raised. There is regular monitoring of the use and effectiveness of all outside agencies. Mrs Bundy and Mr Perry hold termly support meetings for parents of children on the SEN Register. These meetings may also include SEN professionals and support staff.

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