

# The Bicester School



## **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy**

Date for Review: January 2020

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The Bicester School is an inclusive organisation. We take safeguarding very seriously and all of our policies are developed with a high priority on children's safety and in the light of our safeguarding policy. All of our school policies are interlinked and should be read and informed by all other policies.

We are part of Bicester Learning in Partnership (BLiP) which encompasses a group of 17 local primary and 2 secondary schools, working together to improve provision for children with SEND. SEN Information about each school is available from their websites and explains how the Partnership of schools supports children and parents. The website also includes a link to Oxfordshire's Local Offer for parents and children with SEN and disabilities.

This SEND policy is written to comply with the 2014 Children and Families Act and its SEN Code of Practice together with the Equality Act 2010.

#### **Headlines from the 2014 Code of Practice.**

From September 2014:

- No more statements will be issued by the Local Authority. Statements have been replaced by Education, Health and Care plans (EHC Plans) which can be used to support children from birth-25 years.
- School Action and School Action Plus have been replaced by one school based category of need known as 'Special Education Needs Support' (SENS).

All children are closely monitored, and their progress tracked each term. Those at SENS are additionally tracked by each school's SENCO.

- There are four broad categories of SEN:
  - communication and interaction
  - cognition and learning
  - social, emotional and mental health
  - physical and sensory
- We are working more closely with parents and children to ensure we take into account the child's own views and aspirations and the parents' experience of, and hopes for, their child. Parents are invited to be involved at every stage of planning and reviewing SEN provision for their child.
- All children benefit from 'Quality First Teaching': this means that teachers expect to assess, plan and teach all children at the level which allows them to make progress with their learning. In addition, we implement some focused interventions to target particular skills.

#### **Defining SEN**

The 2014 Code of Practice says that:

“A person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. At compulsory school age this means he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age, or, has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.”

*2014 SEN Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years – Introduction xiii and xiv*

### **Provision for SEN at The Bicester School**

Our objectives are:

- To identify and overcome at the earliest possible opportunity, barriers to learning and participation for pupils/students with SEND;
- To ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and achieves their full potential;
- To enable all children to participate in an accessible, broad balanced curriculum which is appropriately differentiated;
- To value and encourage the contribution of all children to the broader life of the school;
- To work in partnership with parents/carers, acknowledging their importance and depth of knowledge about their child;
- To work with the Governing Body to enable them to fulfil their statutory monitoring role with regard to the Policy Statement for SEND;
- To work closely with external support agencies, where appropriate, to support the need of individual pupils/students;
- To ensure that all staff have access to training linked to identified needs and advice to support quality teaching and learning for all pupils/students.

### **Identifying children at SENS (SEN Support)**

Children with SEN are identified by one of three assessment routes, all of which are part of the overall approach to monitoring progress of all pupils/students:

- The progress of every child is monitored at termly pupil/student progress meetings. Where children are identified as not making progress despite Quality First Teaching they are discussed with the SENCO and a plan of action is agreed;
- Class teachers are continually aware of children’s learning. If they observe that a child, as recommended by the 2014 Code of Practice, is making less than expected

progress, given their age and individual circumstances, they will seek to identify a cause. This can be characterised by progress which

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress;
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers;
- Parents sometimes ask us to look more closely at their child's learning. We take all parental requests seriously and have a measured approach to addressing them.

Frequently, the concern can be addressed by Quality First Teaching in partnership with parental support. The school will put in place appropriate strategies, personalised differentiation and/or interventions. If concerns still exist the child is placed at SEN on the SEN register. All decisions will be made in consultation with parents/carers.

The partnership of SENCOs have a bank of assessment tools to enable schools to undertake a range of standardised tests with children. We can use these assessments to add to and inform teachers' own understanding and assessments of a child's strengths and needs.

Although the school can identify special educational needs, and make provision to meet those needs, we do not offer diagnoses. Parents are advised to discuss with their SENCO or GP if they think their child may have ASD or ADHD or some other disability.

### **Issues which are not SEN:**

It is important to point out the circumstances which are **not** classed as SEN, but which may hinder progress and attainment:

- Disability
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Health and Welfare
- English as an additional language (EAL)
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium (or Pupil Premium Plus) Grant
- Being a Looked After Child
- Being a child of service personnel
- Having behavioural difficulties where an underlying cause has not been identified

### **Working with Parents and Children**

We aim to have good and informative relationships with all of our parents. If a child is experiencing difficulties, parents will be informed either at Parent's Evening or during informal meetings to discuss the child's progress. It should not come as a surprise to a parent to learn that their child is being identified as having SEN.

Once a child has been identified as having SEN, the class teacher or SENCO will invite the parents/carers to a meeting to:

- formally let them know that their child is being placed at SEN Support
- discuss assessments that have been completed
- agree a plan and provision for the next term

This is part of the graduated approach cycle of 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' required in the Code of Practice.

Depending on the appropriateness, the child may be invited to attend all or part of the meeting. Records are kept of these meetings and copies are available to parents.

Thereafter, parents - and children - are invited to a meeting three times a year to review progress made, set targets and agree provision for the next term.

### **Paperwork for children at SEN Support (SENS)**

Once a child has been identified as needing SEN support the following paperwork is completed:

- Termly, at progress meetings, progress is reviewed and stakeholder views recorded. The plan records progress made and actions to be completed.
- Also at this meeting, the student profile is updated;
- The student is enrolled onto the SEN register.

### **Moving to an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)**

If children fail to make progress, in spite of high quality, targeted support at SENS, we may apply for the child to be assessed for an EHC Plan. Generally, we apply for an EHC Plan if:

- The child is Looked After and therefore additionally vulnerable;
- The child has a disability which is lifelong and which means that they will always need support to learn effectively;
- The child's achievements are so far below their peers that we think it likely that the child may at some point benefit from special school provision;
- There are a number of professionals involved with the child and it is important to formalise a shared vision for the child.

Children, who we think will manage in mainstream schools, albeit with support, are less often assessed for EHC Plans. Having a diagnosis (e.g. of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), ADHD or dyslexia) does not mean that a child needs an EHC Plan.

If the application for an EHC Plan is successful, a member of the Local Authority (LA) will call a meeting for parents, the child and the school together with any health or social care professionals who are involved with the family. The meeting will record the child's strengths, their wishes and aspirations as well as the barriers they face. Following the meeting, the LA will produce the EHC Plan which will record the decisions made at the meeting and state the desired outcomes.

## **Teaching and Learning**

We believe that all children learn best with the rest of their class. Our aim is for all children to be working independently, in class, at the cusp of their potential engaging in 'hard work' they can do. Children with SEN and disabilities are entitled to be taught by their teacher, not always by a Teaching Assistant. Teachers aim to spend time each day working with all children with SEN, individually or as part of a group. When allocating additional Teaching Assistant support to children, our focus is on outcomes, not hours: we aim to put in sufficient support to enable the child to reach their challenging targets, but without developing a learned dependence on an adult. Both schools have a range of interventions available. When considering an intervention, we look first at the child's profile of learning in order that we can select the intervention which is best matched to the child.

Targets for children at SENS are deliberately challenging in the attempt to close the attainment gap between the children and their peers. Interventions are often crucial in closing these gaps, so are monitored closely by both the class teacher - who monitors progress towards the targets during the intervention - and by the SENCO who monitors overall progress after the intervention.

- Interventions are planned, usually for a time specific period;
- At the end of each block, children's progress towards their targets is assessed and recorded;
- A decision is then made as to whether to continue the intervention, to swap to a new intervention, or to allow the child to demonstrate their transferral of skills in whole class environment.

The SENCO monitors interventions to evaluate their effectiveness.

## **Adaptations to the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Environment**

The Bicester School is disability friendly. Please refer to our Access Plan.

Adaptations to the physical environment in both schools are made, as appropriate, to accommodate children with other needs.

Our classrooms are inclusion friendly; we aim to teach in a way that will support children with tendencies towards dyslexia, dyspraxia or ASD. This is good practice to support all children but is vital for those who particularly need it where possible. Most of our children access the full National Curriculum, and we recognise achievement and expertise in all curricular areas. As part of normal class differentiation, curriculum content and ideas can be simplified and made more accessible by using visual, tactile and concrete resources.

## **Access to extra-curricular activities**

Our children have equal access to before school, lunchtime and after school clubs which develop engagement with the wider curriculum. Where necessary, we make accommodation and adaptation to meet the physical and learning needs of our children. Class trips are part of our curriculum and we aim for all children to benefit

from them. No child is excluded from a trip because of SEN, disability or medical needs.

## **Staff Expertise**

All of our teachers are trained to work with children with SEN. Some are very experienced, and all teachers have access to advice, information, resources and training to enable them to teach all children effectively. We offer training opportunities through access to in-house or Local Authority training, provision of books or guidance towards useful websites and other materials. We have good links with a range of outside agencies with specific areas of expertise and utilise these services where appropriate. The Bicester Partnership of schools buy into the service of an Educational Psychologist.

The school is able to access or buy-in additional expertise where appropriate.

## **Children with social, emotional and mental health needs**

Behaviour is not classified as a SEN. If a child shows consistent unwanted behaviours, the class teacher or relevant member of Student Support will assess the child's needs, taking into account family circumstances and the child's known history of experiences. If the child's behaviour is felt to be a response to trauma or to homebased experiences (e.g. bereavement, parental separation) we may complete a Common Assessment Form (CAF) with the family and support the child through the process of regular meetings which identify desired outcomes and how these outcomes can best be achieved.

If parents and school are concerned that the child may have mental health needs, parents can ask their GP or school for a referral to the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS) or other specialist.

Schools are unable to refer to a Community Paediatrician, but can support parents with this process, for example, by providing a report from school.

If the child is felt to have long-term social, emotional or mental health needs, for example with anger management, we offer a range of social skills or therapeutic interventions. These are delivered by trained staff who develop good, trusting relationships with the children. Outside agencies may be contacted if this is appropriate.

All children's behaviour is responded to consistently in line with our Behaviour Policy and reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate individual needs. The schools have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. We will actively investigate any allegations and, if there is cause, work with both the bully and the victim to improve their social interactions and skills.

## **Transition Arrangements**

### *Transition into and within school*

We understand how difficult it can be for children and parents as they move into a new class or a new school. We make an action plan according to the individual

needs of the child, to make transitions between classes/settings as smooth as possible. This may include, for example:

- Additional meetings for the parents and child with the new teacher/keyworker
- HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant);
- Additional visits to the classroom environment/school;
- Where appropriate opportunities to take photographs of key people and places in order to make a transition book;
- Provide additional time for children in small groups/individually to express their concerns and to address them.
- Enhanced transition arrangements are tailored to meet individual needs. We have strong links with our partnership schools within Bicester.

### **Directors/Local Governing Body members**

It is the statutory duty of the governors to ensure that the school follows its responsibilities to meet the needs of children with SEND following the requirements of the Code of Practice 2014.

The Local Governing Body member with particular responsibility for SEND meets with the SENCO at least termly to discuss actions taken by the school.

### **Complaints**

The school works, wherever possible, in partnership with parents to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting pupils'/students' needs. Any complaints are taken seriously and are heard through the school's complaints policy and procedure.