



**St James & Emmanuel
Academy Trust**

**Special Educational Needs (SEND)
A Guide for Families**



Introduction

As educational professionals we are driven by the desire to provide every child within our schools with the best chance to succeed in life. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) have the greatest need for excellent teaching and are entitled to provision that supports achievement at, and enjoyment of, school. The best provision for pupils with SEND requires coordination across multiple organisations and most importantly a close partnership between parents and educators.

As a Trust, we believe that strong evidence-based research should guide our provision for children with SEND within our schools. We recognise that information available to parents can at times be contradictory or unclear. We hope that this guide provides answers to some of the common questions we face as educators and provides clarity as to what high quality support for children with SEND looks like within our schools.

What is SEND?

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. These are additional needs that may require support in addition to mainstream classroom teaching. Where a child has high needs, this could make them eligible for an EHCP.

Supporting Pupils with SEND

The level of need and therefore support, differs for each child. School leaders will use their expertise and knowledge to ensure that the needs of children are being met. In our Trust, we look to schools to use high quality evidence-based research when planning provision. This evidence tells us that teachers should prioritise familiar but powerful strategies, like scaffolding and explicit instruction, to support their pupils with SEND. This means understanding the needs of individual pupils and weaving specific approaches into every day, high quality classroom teaching. It also means using carefully implemented interventions and working effectively with teaching assistants to offer additional support where the school feels this is needed.






Pupils' development is not linear. As pupils age, the complexity of their needs will change. Some pupils might not have SEND to begin with but will develop SEND as they mature. Others who are considered to have SEND at the beginning of their lives may no longer have these needs later in life.

Every pupil's development is driven by the progressively more complex everyday activities and interactions with the people, objects, and symbols they experience in their immediate environment ('processes'). At school, teachers routinely plan and organise these 'processes' to enhance development for their classes. This happens, for example, through direct teaching, group or individual learning, peer-to-peer activities, reading, learning a new skill, and so on.

The quality of teachers' planning and their delivery of teaching and learning therefore has a major impact on every child's development. However, individual pupils' development is also influenced by the interaction of 'what happens in class every day' with their personal characteristics and wider environmental influences. It is important to recognise that if a child has special educational needs, this is not something they need to change about themselves; rather, the school needs to consider how to change the quality of what happens in the immediate environment to best support their learning.

5 Strategies to support pupils with SEND




In our Trust, we look for our schools to promote the following strategies:

-  Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception.
-  Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of their pupils and their needs.
-  Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching.
-  Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions.
-  Deploy teaching assistants effectively and ensure a positive impact for pupils.

How are Trust schools funded to provide support for children with SEND?

As part of their overall funding allocation, each school is notified of a 'notional' amount of their budget that has been allocated for them to fulfil their duty (as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice) and use their 'best endeavours'¹ to secure the best provision for their children with SEND. For children with complex SEND needs, an application may be made for additional funding through an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). If successful, the local authority would provide additional funding to help meet the more complex needs of a child.

Funding arrangements can be complex to understand, but it is useful to remember these key details:

-  The amount of money that the school receives in its budget which is described as 'notional' is not actually based on the number of children in the school with SEND. Instead, the government use a formula to establish what they believe a school is likely to need. This is based around factors of deprivation, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals (FSM), low prior attainment and mobility.
-  That the funding the school receives does not equate to £6000 for each child with SEND. Most support that a child requires should cost less than this, whilst in some cases the school will have to spend more. This figure is neither a target nor a constraint.²
-  It is for the school to decide how best to use all of the funding streams available to provide a high-quality education for all and to meet the additional needs of children with SEND.

So where does the figure of £6000 come from?

The figure of £6000 is used by local authorities to help determine the level of extra funding a school would receive for a child with an EHCP. Schools receive, on average, £4000 for every child who comes into school (basic entitlement). They also receive a notional SEN figure based on the factors shown previously. If a child is successfully assessed as requiring an EHCP and it is determined that they would require 1-2-1 support, the cost of this might be over £25,000, but the local authority would only provide a fraction of this cost as school would be expected to use the basic entitlement (approximately £4000) and a proportion of its notional funding (£6000). Therefore, as notional funding amounts are not linked to the number of children with SEND, the funding rarely covers what is required. As a result, resources have to be used wisely and evidence-based approaches used to maximise the impact of interventions.

If my child requires SEND Support or has an EHCP, does this mean they should have 1-2-1 support?

The simple answer is no. As explained in the previous paragraph, funding does not provide this level of support for every child with SEND or an EHCP. The school determines how best to allocate the funding available to them. This may involve the use of specialist equipment, counselling, learning mentor support, group input,

¹ 'The Notional SEN Budget for Mainstream Schools: Operational Guidance.' Feb 2023

² 'The Notional SEN Budget for Mainstream Schools: Operational Guidance.' Feb 2023

etc... Headteachers and SEND Leads will use the five principles (shown earlier) when determining the support required. It can mean that a child works 1:1 with an adult or there may be one or two other children with them too. The aim is to foster independence at the right moment, and put simply, having an adult alongside them all day every day does not allow a child to develop the independence skills which they will need as they get older.

How do schools monitor the impact of support plans and the allocation of funds

Schools use a provision tool to help allocate resources and monitor the effectiveness of any support put into place. Regular reviews will take place within school and with parents to ensure that support continues to meet the additional needs of learners with SEND.

The starting point is always to monitor the quality of 'first teaching' and to ensure that planning and resources are skilfully adapted to meet the needs of pupils.

The views of the children and their parents.

When supporting children with SEND, clear lines of communication between home and school is key to the success of either an individual learning/provision plan or an ECHP. Reviews will take place at least three times per year, but parents are encouraged to keep in regular dialogue with their child's class teacher throughout the year.

It is equally important that children have a voice in the IEP's or EHCPs, as they often have a clear idea of what does and does not work for them. By working together, we have a better chance of finding strategies that will have the most positive impact on outcomes and will allow a child to enjoy and flourish within school.

What should I do if I am worried about my child?

The starting point is a conversation with your child's class teacher. If concerns remain, we encourage parents to arrange a meeting with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or the Headteacher. In most cases, behaviours witnessed at home are also seen in school or visa-versa. However, there are times when behaviours at home are not seen in school. In these instances, schools will offer as much support as possible but will be working in the constraints of the resources available to them. At times, parents wish schools to make referrals to agencies based around behaviours at home. However, it is less likely that such applications for additional support would be approved if schools were currently managing the needs of the child effectively in school.

Summary

We hope that you have found this guide useful. The needs of all children differ, so it is important that resources are used effectively and that a range of strategies are considered to support children in their learning. For many families, support at school is associated with time spent with an additional adult. We hope that this guide has shown that evidence-based research and the specific needs of each child, will determine the provision made available. We also hope that parents can see how important it is for schools to balance the collective needs of all pupils and use its funding wisely and effectively to ensure that children reach their full potential.