



Special Educational Needs And Inclusion Policy

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our school regards all children for whom it has responsibility as individuals and we aim to encourage self-esteem and confidence and to promote effective learning so that each pupil can succeed. We recognise that children have differing abilities. Whilst some show academic prowess, most will fall in the average 'band' of achievement and some will have difficulties, these being major or minor and permanent or temporary. We recognise each pupil's right to maximum possible access to the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) and will attempt to secure such access within our resources.

DEFINITION

The Code of Practice 1998 was issued by the Department of Education under Article 4 of the Education (NI) Order 1996 and became operative in September 1998.

The term "Special Educational Needs" is defined in the legislation as "a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made". "Learning difficulty" means that a child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of comparable age, or has a disability which hinders his or her use of the kind of facilities generally provided in ordinary schools. "Special educational provision" means educational provision which is different from and additional to provision made generally for children of comparable age.

We recognise that the definition of SEN embraces a breadth of learning difficulties varying in type, duration and severity. We recognise that special educational needs can arise as a result of:

- Cognitive and Learning – dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, mild learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties.
- Communication and Interaction- Speech and language difficulties, Autism
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural- SEBD, ADD/ADHD
- Sensory – hearing, visual, multi-sensory impairment
- Medical- Epilepsy, Asthma, Diabetes, Anaphylaxis, Down Syndrome, complex medical needs, mental health issues
- Prolonged absence from school
- Fragmented education e.g. children of army personnel
- General learning difficulty
- Physical difficulties- Cerebral Palsy, Spina bifida, Muscular dystrophy, significant accidental injury, other.
- Adverse social and cultural circumstances

EA is the abbreviation for Education Authority

LSC is the term used when referring to the Learning Support Co-ordinator.

PLP is sometimes used as an abbreviation for personal learning plan (formally known as IEP).

PIP is sometimes used as an abbreviation for pupil improvement plan.

COP is sometimes used as an abbreviation for Code of Practice.

CAT is the term used when referring to a cognitive ability test.

The Board of Governors (BOG) has in cooperation with the principal, determined the school's general policy and approach and maintained general oversight of the school's work.

The Special Education Provision is a whole school responsibility. The Principal and the Learning Support Co-ordinator will manage the SEN provision and keep the Governors informed.

The LSC working closely with other teachers, has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this SEN policy and for coordinating SEN provision.

In Victoria Primary School pupils who exhibit learning difficulties will be mainly those who are experiencing problems with Literacy and/or Numeracy. This may embrace some pupils with physical difficulties and possibly some who exhibit emotional or behavioural problems which inhibit their ability to learn.

AIMS for SEN provision in Victoria Primary School

- To ensure the SEN and Disability Act and relevant Codes of Practice and guidance are implemented effectively across the school.
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated education including the Northern Ireland Curriculum, as a right for all.
- To identify children with special educational needs as early as possible in consultation with the appropriate personnel, particularly the class teacher.
- To ensure that all children with special needs feel valued and have a positive self-image in line with the pastoral ethos of the school.
- To encourage parental involvement and cooperation between various professional agencies in the diagnosis, treatment and meeting the special needs of our pupils.
- To offer experiences and opportunities which allow pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills which ensure progress, promote success and develop self-confidence.
- To maintain records of assessment that enable each pupil's performance to be monitored.
- To include as far as is possible all pupils with SEN into the life and work of the school.
- To encourage the use of teaching strategies which are responsive to different learning styles and which ensure effective learning.
- To create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their learning needs.
- To develop and utilize all available resources in support of pupils with special needs.
- To ensure equality of opportunity for children with special educational needs and to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against them.
- To ensure that Special Educational Provision is a whole school responsibility and that individual needs are focused on and supported in the classroom.

PURPOSE

To provide a consistent whole school approach with provision appropriate to the needs of all pupils.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PROVISION WITHIN THE CODE OF PRACTICE.

The identification and assessment of SEN will involve the gathering of information. This process begins in Primary 1 or Nursery if the pupil attends Victoria Nursery Unit.

In Victoria Primary we believe that children with special educational needs should be identified and supported as early as possible. Effective assessment will include a combination of testing, teacher observation and parent interviews. The nature of the pupil's SEN will be described using the information currently available in school. This information will include:

- Pre-School assessment: the use of Pre-school reports, e.g. Nursery or Playgroup. Reports from any outside agencies involved with the child, e.g. Speech and Language, health visitors, etc. Information supplied by parents: formally and informally.
- Baseline P1 Assessments.
- General Assessment: the role of the class teacher is crucial to the early identification of children with special educational needs. If it becomes apparent, through normal classroom work and activity that a child is performing at a much lower level than the rest of the class, the teacher will begin to gather information to establish whether a child has a special educational need. Information collected may include:

- Notes based on teacher observation of that child within the normal classroom context;
- Information relating to the child's level of concentration and communication;
- Information relating to emotional, social, behavioural and physical development;
- Information regarding the child's progress in class;
- Analysis of the child's written or oral work;
- Relevant records from all teachers who have taught the child, including any teachers from previous schools;
- Information from the parents- views on the child's health and development, perceptions of the child's performance, progress and behaviour at school and at home; and factors contributing to any difficulty
- Information from the child (where appropriate).
- We recognize that the positive aspects of a child's performance should always be included. This is essential if reliable starting points are to be identified and used as the firm foundation on which future learning targets may be based.
- General Screening and diagnostic tests may be used to help identify pupils who are having difficulties in aspects of Literacy or Numeracy or Social/Emotional/Behavioural competences. These results are always referenced against the additional background information available from the class teacher, parents and any outside agencies involved.
- General screening may include:
 - The child's phonic knowledge;
 - Sight vocabulary (Jolly Phonics- tricky words)
 - PTE and PTM English and Maths tests
 - any other maths tests or assessments used by staff
- Diagnostic tests available include:
 - Other tests are available in consultation with the educational psychologist.

When a learning difficulty has been confirmed the child's placement on the SEN register will be discussed by the Principal and LSC. The Register is maintained by the LSC in the Vice Principal's office and in the SEN folder in the school's computer network.

The register is updated after each review, or as needed, by recording the stage each child is currently on and any relevant notes.

Arrangements for the child will follow the staged procedures of the Code of Practice (COP):

Stage 1

Class Provision

Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs will in the first instance receive special help within the classroom setting. The agreement of parents is needed to place a child on the register at Stage 1. The children who are normally on the register for learning difficulties are those who are identified as falling below the provision for the lowest group and require individualised differentiation within the class. The differentiation may involve modifying learning objectives, teaching styles and strategies. Under these circumstances, a child's needs will be provided for within the whole class planning frameworks and individual target setting. Differentiation will be recorded in the planning by the class teacher.

Monitoring of progress will be carried out by the class teacher and used to inform future differentiation within whole class planning.

The child's progress will be reviewed at the same intervals as for the rest of the class and a decision made about whether the child is making satisfactory progress at this level of intervention.

The school uses the definitions of adequate progress as suggested in the revised Code of Practice, that is, progress which:

closes the attainment gap between the child and his/her peers

prevents the attainment gap from growing wider

is similar to that of peers starting at the same attainment baseline, but less than the majority of peers

ensures full access to the curriculum

demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills

demonstrates an improvement in the child's behaviour

In school Provision

If review of this provision indicates that the child continues to have difficulties, a Personal Learning Plan at Stage 1 may be drawn up by the Learning Support team in co-operation with the child's

teacher and implemented for a pre-determined period. In school provision would be required where there is evidence that:

there has been little or no progress made with existing interventions

additional support is required to develop literacy and/or numeracy skills

additional support is required for emotional, behavioural or social development

additional support is required for sensory or physical impairments

additional support is required for communication or interaction needs

There are likely to be two groups of children recorded at this level.

Children who have needs similar to other children with SEN within the class

Children who we consider to have more severe or longer term needs which are likely to require further professional advice

Where needs are similar, it is appropriate to support these children within a group, focusing on the common needs. However, there should be scope within the in school provision to plan for each child to have individual targets where necessary. Provision will run concurrently with differentiated class work.

The responsibility for planning for these children remains with the class teacher in consultation with the LSC and learning support team. Every child receiving in school provision will have a Personal Learning Plan.

Monitoring will be carried out by all those involved using the school's standard pro forma. Significant achievements and difficulties will be recorded. The LSC will look at the monitoring information and adjustments will be made to the provision for the child if and when appropriate.

Personal Learning Plans will be reviewed twice a year, although some pupils may need more frequent reviews which will be carried out as and when necessary. Parents/carers will be invited to contribute and will be consulted about further action.

As part of the review process, the LSC, learning support team and staff may conclude that, despite receiving a PLP and/or concentrated support for a considerable period, the child continues to have significant needs which are not being met by current interventions. Where this is the case, a decision may be made for the school, by agreement with parents, to ask for help and assessment from services outside the school, such as the Education Psychology Service or other support agency eg RISE N I or behavioural centres.

Stage 2

Involve Outside Agencies

Provision at this level always includes the involvement of specialist services. A variety of support can be offered by these services, such as advice to the school about targets and strategies, specialised assessment or some direct work with the child. The specialist services will contribute to the planning, monitoring and reviewing of the child's progress. A child may have access to a specialist unit which provides help for specific learning difficulties.

The school uses the definitions below to help formulate decisions at this level:

continues to make little or no progress in the areas of concern

continues working at curriculum levels significantly below that expected of pupils of a similar age

continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills

has emotional, physical, behavioural or social needs which regularly and significantly interfere with the child's or other children's learning

has sensory or physical needs which require additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits from a specialist service

continues to have communication needs that interfere with the development of social relationships and act as a barrier to learning.

It is very likely that an assessment of the child will be carried out by an Educational Psychologist or a Health Professional at Stage 3.

Stage 2

Statutory Assessment

If strategies employed have not been sufficient to meet the child's needs, the school, by agreement with parents, may ask the EA to initiate a statutory assessment in order to determine whether it is necessary to make a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Victoria Primary School will submit evidence to the EA which will then make a judgement about whether or not the child's needs can continue to be met from the resources normally available to the

school or whether additional services and support are required. This judgement will be made using the EA's current criteria for making a statutory assessment.

Stage 3

Statement of Special Educational Needs

A statement is written by EA containing:

details of the child

an outline of special educational needs (including abilities and difficulties)

educational and development objectives (timescale, provision required, information for setting of short term targets etc.)

details of non educational needs

details of provision to address non educational needs

There will be an annual review, chaired by the Principal, to review the appropriateness of the provision and to recommend to the EA whether any changes should be made, either to the statement or to the physical resources required by the child. This review is in consultation with parents, EA, teachers and other agencies. The school will support the needs and objectives outlined in the Statement of Special Educational Needs.

The 3 stages can be summarised as follows:-

Stage 1

School delivered SEN programme

PLP required

Applies to the majority of children on SEN Register

Stage 2

School delivered SEN programme plus external provision eg Primary Behaviour Support

PLP Required

A small number of children will access this provision

Stage 3

Statement of SEN

Both school and SEN delivered SEN provision, and as appropriate any treatment or relevant service delivered by Health

PLP Required

A small number of children will need this provision

Consent from parents is required in order for a child to be placed on the school's Special Needs Register. As a school, we also request consent from parents in order for pupils to be withdrawn from class for small group support.

VPS STRATEGIES

In class

- Teaching and learning strategies should allow access to the curriculum for each child. This may involve different classroom organisation as the prime provision will be class-based.
- Team teaching may take place.
- LSC may withdraw small groups or individuals in liaison with the class teacher. The main teaching methodology, however, will be differentiation in the class setting according to the child's ability so that each pupil experiences some measure of success. Differentiation may include:
 - Setting clear and realistic goals through SMART targets in PLPs (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Time bound)
 - Small steps with skills broken down to make success at each step more certain, whilst allowing concepts to develop gradually
 - Over learning: allowing adequate repetition and practice to ensure that concepts have been grasped and embedded
 - Increased time being spent with a child/or small group of children: maximizing the use of time to allow one to one tuition on a regular basis

- Aiming to increase self-esteem through appropriate rewards and praise, building self-confidence and willingness to tackle new challenges in learning
- Providing positive feedback: celebrating and praising any improvements (links with Marking for Improvement)

INTEGRATION ARRANGEMENTS

There is equality of entitlement for all children within the school and all pupils will be included as far as is compatible and practically possible into all activities. The needs of other children must also be addressed, that is, if there are 30 pupils in the class, then it is unreasonable to expect a class teacher to spend a disproportionate amount of time with a pupil who has special needs. There must at all times be an efficient use of resources within the school.

The main aim is that all children at Victoria Primary School progress in their education to the best of their ability feeling safe and secure in their learning environment.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The relationship between the parents/carers and school is paramount. This relationship has a crucial bearing on the child's educational progress and the effectiveness of any school-based action.

Therefore the school will take account of the wishes, feelings and knowledge of parents at all stages, by endeavouring to establish effective two way communication in written and oral form so involving a child's parents in all aspects of provision for their child. Parents can formally have contributions recorded on their child's PLP. As partners, parents are invited to school regularly and can communicate with school via the class SeeSaw app. Already established in Victoria Primary School are the following events to ensure parents are included in many aspects of their child's education:

- Parental information evening prior to all P1 pupils starting in September.
- Parent/teacher meeting for P1 parents in August/September to discuss any specific SEN
- All parents of pupils P1-P7 are invited to attend parent/teacher meetings in October and February PLPs are discussed and parental and pupil contributions are sought.
- Annual reviews are held for all pupils at Stage 3 in the COP
- All parents receive a written school progress report towards the end of the final term.

RECORD-KEEPING AND REVIEW

As already mentioned a register of SEN pupils will be maintained and updated after each PLP review. At the commencement of each school year a child's new class teacher will be provided with up to date information relevant only to those children in his/her class. This will include his/her stage on the COP, a brief outline of the child's difficulties, their previous PLPs and the PLP reviews. They will also be given some background on children who have or have had some difficulties, but who are not at that time on the SEN register. Class teachers will maintain their own 'register' of concerns about a child, consultation with the parents, plans of action taken to address those concerns and the outcome of those arrangements. All PLPs will be saved on SIMS as too will changes to COP.

The LSC will collate written communication from parents and outside agencies, including the EA's Psychology and Special Education Departments.

The LSC will liaise with teachers within the school to impart information received and to update teachers on current innovations. He/She will also report annually to the BOG and the principal. Any written information and records maintained by the school will be communicated only to the parents of a particular child and to those teachers directly concerned.

Relevant information will be provided upon request to a child's new school upon transfer.

Parents will be invited to contribute to a child's review, as will the child, the child's class teacher and classroom assistant where appropriate. Other necessary contributions may be in written form. All parents have the opportunity to consult with the teacher during parent/teacher consultations, but other meetings are often arranged.

As part of the ongoing Monitoring and Evaluating of teaching and learning in Victoria Primary the Assessment Co-ordinator, LSC, Literacy and Numeracy co-ordinators and Head of Key Stage and class teachers take time in Term 2 and 3 to review the progress of all pupils. Data is collated, reviewed and analysed on these occasions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCES

Members of staff will attend a range of Special Needs courses and be provided with information and training through members of Staff or external agencies. LSC will provide guidance on PLPs to include writing targets, checking completed PLPs, uploading to SIMS etc.

LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL SERVICES

Effective action on behalf of children with SEN has taken place in close co-operation with the EA's educational officers. The school has developed close links with the Special Education Department Service and has benefitted from the expertise proffered. Their assessments and recommendations are very valuable to the school in making provision for individual children. The Clinical Medical Officer associated with the school has overseen the medical assessments of individual children and given the school specialised information relevant to the medical needs of some children. The School Nurse also makes valuable contributions to the school. The increasing input of Speech and Language Therapists from within the local Health Centre settings is both recognized and appreciated by staff. An increasing number of children also regularly attend sessions at the local Occupational Therapy Unit, having been referred by class teachers or parents.

Parents can request referral for assessment to Educational Psychology and appointments with other agencies - Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, the Clinical Medical Officer (CMO), Social Services and other external bodies. Parental permission is required by the school before a child can be referred by the school to any external agency.

The LSC on behalf of individual children also liaises and supports the contribution of the EA's Support Services - The Peripatetic Audiology Teaching and Technical service, the Literary Teacher's Support Service (LTSS), the Primary Behavioural Support Service, the ASD Service, the Education Welfare Officer, the Educational Psychologist and the English Support Officer for English as a Second Language (ESL).

In-service training in SEN takes place in both a formal and informal capacity. This will be extended as the school seeks to include children with extremely specialized and demanding special needs who enter the school already at Stage 3 of the COP.

It is also important to note that external agencies also include: feeder Nursery schools and Playgroups including Victoria Nursery Unit, post Primary schools and any other school to which an SEN pupil may change during their Primary education including Hospital schools and/or Homeschooling provision.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEN AND INCLUSION IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The LSC/learning support team attend meetings to update and revise developments in special educational needs and inclusion.

Meeting special needs and inclusion issues are targeted through the School Development Plan. Special Needs and Inclusion training is provided where necessary, by the LSC, through staff meetings and INSET days.

All members of staff have access to professional development opportunities and may apply for special needs or inclusion training where a need is identified

Support staff are encouraged to extend their own professional development and attend relevant training provided in school.

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

Role of the BOG:

To determine and keep under review the SEN policy

To publish information about the school's SEN policy, including admission and funding arrangements e.g in the School Prospectus and The School Website

To report annually to parents on SEN provision available within the school and the steps taken to implement the SEN policy

To have regard for the school's SEN policy in carrying out its functions

Role of the Principal:

- To manage the SEN provision in the school
- To keep the BOG fully informed
- To work closely with the LSC
- To liaise with outside agencies

Role of the LSC:

- To develop a whole-school policy for SEN
- The day to day operation of the SEN policy
- To provide in-service training and advice for the teaching staff with respect to SEN
- To maintain the SEN register and to liaise with those who have parental responsibility of such pupils
- To establish and maintain contact with other professionals involved with children requiring additional attention
- To report regularly to the principal regarding the special needs programme within the school
- To oversee the formulation, development, implementation and reviewing of PLPs in conjunction with the class teachers
- The compilation of appropriate resources
- Keeping abreast of current trends in SEN
- To attend annual review meetings and advise parents
- Maintain an on-going monitoring role of the pupils' progress by making occasional class visits and examining records/samples of work
- To make the decision, after a reasonable period of time, and in agreement with the class teacher and parent, that the pupil either no longer needs support or that they need to proceed further in the COP.

Role of the Class Teacher:

- To be responsible for the initial identification of a pupil's special needs through observation of classroom practice and on-going assessment
- To inform the LSC of their concern and to provide them with all the relevant information to help establish whether the pupil's needs are in fact different from/additional to those met through the regular classroom setting and differentiated curriculum delivery
- To inform parents of the school's concerns and invite them to meet with the LSC and the teacher to discuss the concerns and inform the parents of the school action
- To write the pupils IEP, in consultation with the LSC as necessary and in discussion with the child (where appropriate) and the parents
- To discuss with the parents how they might contribute to the child achieving targets on the IEP
- To arrange and attend any subsequent review meetings with the LSC, parent and child, until such times as the school decides that the pupil no longer requires support or that they need a greater level of support
- To inform the LSC of any problems that may arise between reviews
- To maintain responsibility for the planning and delivery of a suitably differentiated curriculum to address the pupil's IEP targets
- To organize the timetable, class grouping and all available resources so that the pupil receives all possible support to reach the targets set
- To evaluate the impact of intervention at school level and ensure the SENco is aware of any concerns
- To maintain on-going liaison with the pupil and the parents regarding progress.

Role of Classroom Assistant

- Where a classroom assistant is employed in a general support role (such as in a mainstream class) he/she has a responsibility to:
- provide in-class pupil support under the direction of the class teacher
 - undertake supervision of pupils, for example in the playground and on class visits
 - assist with classwork preparation and classroom organisation, for example photocopying, record keeping and wall displays

- Where a classroom assistant is employed to support an individual pupil who has a statement of special educational needs or has been given support by the board he/she has a responsibility to:
- put this child and their needs first
 - provide support as outlined in individual statement of special educational needs
 - provide in-class pupil support under the direction of the class teacher
 - oversee the safety and well-being of the pupil

assist the pupil in organising his/her materials and equipment and in moving about the school
liaise closely with parents/carers, LSC and class teacher
attend in-service training courses which will better equip the assistant to fulfil his/her role
to act in accordance with the Code of Practice
Have a written schedule/timetable to follow
Keep records and attend meetings as appropriate.