



Special Educational Needs Policy

Date the policy came into effect	September 2013
Date of next policy review	September 2019
Name of person responsible for this policy	Jill Minnis SENCo/Mr C. Fulton (Principal)/BOG
Other related policies	Behaviour and Citizenship, Pastoral Care, T&L,
Issued to	Staff, governors, parents
Date of issue	Oct 2017

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPECIAL NEEDS' POLICY

This policy has been written to comply with the requirements of the
“Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs”
Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 Operative date: 1 September 1998

And

ESAGS ‘The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and inclusion’ (2009)

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

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) may include those with learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems, medical conditions, speech and language difficulties, visual and aural impairments and physical disabilities. In this context a learning difficulty is apparent when a child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or when a child’s disability limits or denies the child’s use of educational facilities. An emotional or behavioural difficulty is apparent when a child:

- is unusually withdrawn, lacks confidence and/or is unable to form purposeful and lasting relationships with peers or adults;
- displays unpredictable, bizarre, obsessive, violent or severely disruptive behaviour;
- clearly demonstrates obsessional eating habits or the misuse of any substance;
- has participated or been subjected to bullying, neglect or abuse or has faced a major emotional event;
- may have significant mental or physical health problems.

EA is the abbreviation for Education Authority

SENco is the term used when referring to the special educational needs co-ordinator.

IEP is sometimes used as an abbreviation for individual education plan.

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 principal has responsibility for the day-to day management of SEN provision, keeping the

Governors informed and working closely with the SEN coordinator (SENco).

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

The SENco is named as:

Miss Jill Minnis.

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 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.

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.

Parents of all new P1 pupils are invited to an induction meeting prior to the end of the summer term in the year before the pupil's entry to school. Parents are requested to complete and return a form detailing any needs their child may have which can then be discussed at length during the individual parent/teacher meetings in August/September before each pupil starts Victoria in P1.

Parents who wish pupils to transfer into Victoria Primary School to any other year group will also complete this form and discuss any specific needs their child may have with the school Principal. Within Victoria Primary School all P1 children are assessed early in their first and during another parent/teacher interview information gathered during this assessment is shared with the parents.

Progress of each pupil (P1-P7) is carefully monitored and all relevant information both academic and pastoral is recorded and passed on to the next teacher. Principally, this information will be gathered through the class teacher's everyday work, observing and teaching pupils and monitoring and assessing results. Examples of work and the current levels of achievement at the end of each school year are assessed and stored in each child's individual folder along with any reports from external agencies e.g. MAST's, Speech and Language, OT, Educational Psychology.

Expression of parental concerns will be welcomed at any time, as will those of external agencies.

The older children may be aware of their own difficulties and this source of potential information must not be excluded.

More formal identification and assessment will involve screening of whole year groups:

- In P1 all children are assessed in Receptive Language Skills, using a diagnostic ICT based assessment in their first term (and any pupils joining Victoria in other year groups can also be assessed if teachers/parents feel it would be beneficial)
- PTE (Progress Tests In English), PTM (Progress Tests In Maths) and CATs (Cognitive Ability Test) are used as standardised instruments.
- In P4 all children are assessed in Receptive Language Skills, using a diagnostic ICT based assessment in their first term (and any pupils joining Victoria in other year groups can also be assessed if teachers/parents feel it would be beneficial)
- Further analysis of pupils when deemed necessary on an individual basis through diagnostic procedures can be requested by class teachers/parents.

There will be ongoing liaison with the parents and other members of staff. The extra expertise of outside agencies may be required.

In recognizing that there is a continuum of needs the SENco, Assessment co-ordinator and Principal prioritise school provision. The Code of Practice sets out a five-stage approach to the identification of children, the assessment of their special needs and making use of whatever special education provision is necessary to meet those needs. These findings will be recorded in the special needs' file. All records maintained by the school on a pupil with SEN can be inspected by the parents of that pupil.

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

Stage 1

Class teachers identify and register a child's SEN and, consulting with the school's SENco, take initial action by monitoring, assessing, discussing with parents and reviewing any concerns using the Stage 1 Observation form.

The SENco will register that pupil on the SEN register at Stage 1 and record this on SIMS.

Reviews are completed in December, March and June (or more frequently if necessary with a SEBD)

Parents are consulted and informed by the class teacher.

Stage 2

SENco takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the child's SEN provision (arranging withdrawal support for that pupil **where possible**)

The class teacher remains responsible on a day to day basis.

SENco provides advice, support and training as appropriate and available~ Class teachers are encouraged to access The Resource File: www.deni.gov.uk or look at the hard copies in school.

Class teacher draws up IEP (in consultation with SENco and withdrawal support teachers), implements it and monitors it.

Reviews are completed December, March and June (or more frequently if necessary with a SEBD)

Parents are consulted and kept informed by the class teacher.

Stage 3

Class teachers and the SENco are supported by specialists from outside the school e.g. MASTS, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, any relevant personnel, CAMHs etc. These specialists assist in assessment and provision and their advice should help form the basis of any subsequent IEPs.

Class teacher draws up the IEP in consultation with the SENco, and outside agency (if appropriate) implements it and monitors progress.

Children with any diagnosed medical or behavioural need will also be given a medical or behavioural IEP. This will list the strategies provided by outside agencies as a support method in school. These IEPs will be reviewed, however, the actions will remain mostly the same so as to not go against outside agency recommendations.

Reviews are completed December, March and June (or more frequently if necessary with a SEBD)

Parents are consulted and kept informed by the class teacher.

Stage 4

Where a child fails to make progress at Stage 3 a request for statutory assessment is made to the Board (viz. Special Education Department of the NEELB)

Advice and evidence are submitted to the board by the SENco with the assistance of the class teacher.

The Special Education department of NEELB carry out an assessment in liaison with the parents, school (principal, SENco and Class teacher) and other agencies.

The school continues to be responsible during this process

The class teacher maintains an IEP in consultation with the SENco, withdrawal support teacher and other agencies (if appropriate) implements and monitors progress.

Stage 5

Board considers the need for a statement of SEN; if appropriate, it makes a statement containing,

- the background details of the child;
- an outline of the child's SEN (abilities and difficulties);
- educational and developmental objectives (timescale, provision required, arrangements for setting short term targets etc);
- details of any provision to enable the school to address educational needs (e.g classroom assistant hours);
- type and name of recommended school (after consultation with parents);
- details of non-educational needs;
- details of any provision to allow school to address non-educational needs.

Class teacher draws up IEP in consultation with the SENco (and any other relevant agencies) implements it and monitors it.

Reviews are completed December, March and June (or more frequently if necessary with a SEBD)

Annual reviews are also completed by the SENco and Principal in conjunction with the parents

Parents are informed about the outcomes of the annual review by the SENco.

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.

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 and Language Links which is a Receptive Language Assessment.
- 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 (This information can be obtained by the SENco or class teacher at parent teacher meetings or during any pastoral discussions with parents)
 - 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. 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)
 - Word discrimination

- PTE and PTM English and Maths tests
- any other maths tests or assessments used by staff
- Diagnostic tests available include:
 - Language Links ~ Infant (P1-3) and Junior (P4- P7)
 - 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 SENCo. The Register is maintained by the SENCo in the 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.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- 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, as will class-based teaching in liaison with the Literacy Support Assistant (Mrs Brown)) and Numeracy Support Assistant (Mrs Clarke) who will 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 IEPs (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)

IEPs

From stage 2 IEPs will be compiled. They will be drawn up by the class teacher with input from the SENCo where appropriate, and should build on the curriculum the child is following alongside his peers and make use of readily available materials. Clear realistic targets should be set which are timebound and indicate the special educational provision required to address the pupil's needs. The child's progress will be monitored and assessed, recorded and reviewed. If progress is not evident then new targets will be set. It may be necessary to arrange for alternative teaching strategies, extra resources and/or additional classroom support for children on Stage 2 or above.

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.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The relationship between the parents of a child and this school 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 IEP, as there is now a box where parents state how they wish to assist their child in meeting the IEP targets. As partners, parents are invited to school regularly, but they are free also to come to school at any

time. In fact much help is obtained from parents on an informal basis. Notes and letters are sent and parents are welcome to view special features of their child's work. 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 in the May or June 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 IEPs are discussed and parental and pupil contributions are sought.
- Annual reviews are held for all pupils at Stage 5 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 IEP 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 IEPs and the IEP 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 at stage 1, consultation with the parents, plans of action taken to address those concerns and the outcome of those arrangements.

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

The SENco 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 SENco, Literacy and Numeracy co-ordinators take time each term/half term to review the progress of selected pupils in every class. Information is gathered, recorded and shared with the class teacher and the SMT including the quality of differentiation. Each pupil will have their progress monitored and evaluated by Literacy co-ordinator, Numeracy co-ordinator and SENco at least twice in each academic year.

SENco and Assessment co-ordinator meet half termly.

SENco and Literacy and Numeracy co-ordinators meet half termly.

Data is collated, reviewed and analysed on a yearly basis on all pupils in Victoria. SEN pupil information is compared with information on pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Data comparing SEN pupils performance and attendance is also collated, reviewed and analysed annually.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCES

Members of staff have attended a range of Special Needs courses including information and training on ASD/ Spina Bifida, dyslexia and a range of other conditions. In school Training has also been provided on behaviour management for individual pupils. Classroom assistants are given information about special needs relevant to the pupils they are working with. Additional resources have been acquired each year which include a range of tests, reading and literacy materials. All staff are aware of how to access The Resource File and have been asked to use it, as and when necessary, to inform teaching and learning and IEP writing.

LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL SERVICES

Effective action on behalf of children with SEN has taken place in close co-operation with the Board's educational officers. In recent years, strong links have been forged with personnel from Health and Social Services agencies. The school has developed close links with the Board's Educational Psychology 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 SENco on behalf of individual children also liaises and supports the contribution of the Board's Support Services - The Peripatetic Audiology Teaching and Technical service, the Literary Teacher's Support Service (LTSS), the Behavioural Support Service, Janet McCann (ASD support officer), the Education Welfare Officer, the Educational Psychologist (Miss Lorna Tweedie) and the English Support Officer for English as a Second Language (ESL). Any child who is in receipt of external support is on Stage 3 of the SEN register.

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 5 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.

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 SENco
- To liaise with outside agencies

Role of the SENco:

- 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 IEPs 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 SENco 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 SENco and the teacher to discuss the concerns and inform the parents of the school action
To write the pupils IEP, in consultation with the SENco 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 SENco, 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 SENco 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.