

SEND and Inclusion Policy



Aims

Riverside Primary School is proud to be recognised as a 'Flagship' school under the Inclusion Quality Mark scheme. We are committed to ensuring that all children, regardless of their level of need, can access the curriculum with a suitable level of challenge, make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. We aim to promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference within all children, ensuring that everyone in the Riverside community feels included, safe, valued and respected. We expect that all children and adults are treated as individuals and are not discriminated against on the basis of academic ability, culture, race, religion, disability, social background, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other characteristic. We acknowledge the school's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and in respect of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (see also Equality policy).

Identification of Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

According to the 2015 SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH 2015), "A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age." (Para 6.15.) Children will be placed on the school SEND Register if they require this sort of provision due to a diagnosed condition (eg. ASD), because they are accessing additional support services such as Speech and Language Therapy, or because they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age. Criteria for identification of a pupil's difficulties could include lack of progress in the curriculum, continued emotional or behavioural difficulties including mental health needs, or medical and physical problems which require support.

The Code categorises four broad areas of need:

- ~ Communication and Interaction
- ~ Cognition and Learning
- ~ Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- ~ Physical and Sensory

It is recognised that many children will have needs which fall into more than one of these areas.

The Code of Practice states that "Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff." (Para 6.36.) However, teachers will liaise with the Inclusion Manager regarding suitable intervention programmes for supporting children with additional needs. If it is felt that a child's needs are such that s/he should be identified as having SEND, the Inclusion Manager will consult with staff, parents/carers and the child themselves if appropriate, to identify the child's strengths and areas for development, and make decisions about extra support that can be offered. This support will take the form of the 'graduated approach', whereby teachers work with the child and their parents to assess what the needs of the child are, plan the

interventions that will be put into place, carry these out and then review the impact of these on the child before adapting them as necessary.

Children on the SEND register will fall into one of two categories: those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those receiving school SEN Support. Children in the first category will have EHCPs setting out their needs, the support required and the outcomes that should be a focus for all staff working with the child, both short and long term. These may include targets which are set and assessed by external professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists. Children in the second category may also have plans and/or targets from external professionals, or may be working on targets set by us in school. In some cases, these children may have a School SEN Support Agreement in place, setting out their targets and the means by which pupils may achieve them. If such an agreement is deemed necessary, parents/carers will be involved in deciding and reviewing the relevant targets. If a child requires substantial support at a higher level, a School-Based Plan may be drawn up, which looks in more detail at a child's needs and draws together advice from the different professionals involved. A provision map may be used to detail and cost the support being received, particularly if the support is at a high enough level to require an application for additional 'top-up' funding from the Local Authority.

The impact of any interventions used at all levels of SEND will be analysed by assessing the child's starting points, tracking their progress against the targets and evaluating outcomes to establish the effectiveness of the intervention. Should an intervention prove ineffective, it will be revised or replaced.

If a child receiving school SEN Support continues to make limited progress for an extended period, or demonstrates significant needs that cannot be reasonably provided for from the resources available to the school, we may apply for him/her to be formally assessed with a view to providing him/her with an EHCP. Parents also have the right to apply to the local authority for this assessment. The decision to carry out Statutory Assessment and/or issue an EHCP rests with the Medway SEN Panel.

Each class has its own SEND file which contains information about children's needs and their current plans/targets, which all adults working in the class should have access to.

Provision for pupils with SEND

We aim to identify and remove barriers in every aspect of school life. Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate teaching strategies are in place to meet the needs of all learners, including the gifted and talented, and for reviewing these strategies on a regular basis. Good practice will include:

- carefully adapted learning tasks
- flexible grouping of children
- access to special resources/modified equipment where needed
- use of alternative means of recording eg. laptops or use of scribe
- additional adult support for specific activities and/or to deliver interventions, both in and out of class.

A Teaching Assistant's primary role is to support learning, encouraging and enabling children to make progress and facilitating independence. It is not ideal for children to be supported on a 1:1

basis for prolonged periods, and it is not our policy to provide such support, but we do consider using this as a possible strategy in extenuating circumstances where the child's level of need requires it. The aim is always to equip children with the skills and confidence to be able to work without 1:1 support and be more independent in the long run.

Class teachers are responsible for directing Teaching Assistants to support learning. They should ensure that TAs are aware of what children will be expected to learn in each lesson and liaise with them to consider how the needs of individuals can be met. TAs should be involved in assessing the learning outcomes to help evaluate pupil progress, and their observations should feed into future planning. They may support individuals or groups, both in class during normal lessons and out of class in the delivery of specific intervention programmes. The impact of any interventions will be carefully tracked and evaluated by the adults involved.

Children with SEND will often receive support in addition to that which is provided through quality first teaching, curriculum differentiation and classroom based support.

Examples of this might include:

- Speech and Language programmes
- Occupational Therapy, physiotherapy or motor skills programmes
- Social Skills groups
- Emotional wellbeing support or therapeutic work.

The majority of this support will be provided 'in-house' by school staff, but where required the school may seek advice or buy in services from outside agencies, including:

- Medway Educational Psychology Service
- Health Services
- Physical and Sensory Service
- Children's therapy services (Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy)
- Medway Young People's Wellbeing Service (NELFT, formerly CAMHS)
- Outreach from other schools eg. Marlborough Centre, Bradfields
- Kent Association for the Blind
- Attendance (ASSAA)
- EAL – English as an Additional Language – team
- Traveller Education

Further information regarding support services can be found in the school's SEN Information Report and the Medway Local Offer, which is available at: <https://www.medway.gov.uk/localoffer>

All staff undertake regular training with regard to SEND, which may be delivered by the Inclusion Manager or by external professionals. All staff have particular expertise in working with children who have ASD and there are specialists within the TA team who have additional qualifications in specific areas of SEND, such as supporting Visual Impairment or Speech and Language. We liaise with the other services listed above to procure specialist training for other specific needs that may arise.

Children with additional needs are able to access the 'Rainbow Room' environment, which is designed to offer opportunities for sensory stimulation and regulation whilst also providing a safe space where children can cool down at times when their anxieties are impacting on learning, or

creating a risk to themselves or their peers. Children can use the Rainbow Room facility while they return to the calm, alert state required to take part in lessons with their class. Rainbow Room and its attached outside space can also be accessed at play and lunch times by any children who find the busy nature of the main playground overwhelming or distressing. When appropriate, children are allowed to choose a suitable buddy to accompany them while in these environments. We also offer 'Sunshine Room' – a small, nurture-style environment which provides the opportunity for children who are not coping in their mainstream classroom to complete learning activities in a smaller, less busy space. It is important to note that the use of Sunshine Room is always intended to be a short-term strategy, with the aim of enabling the child to return to learning in their mainstream class for the majority of the time. We are also in the process of developing 'Starlight Room', which will provide an immersive sensory space connected to an outdoor sensory garden.

Special Provisions

Riverside has a provision for children with EHCPs where their primary need has been identified as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (see Riverside ASD Provision Admissions Criteria). These children are educated in mainstream classes, alongside their peers, and have access to a wide range of resources and support from members of staff who are trained to work with autistic learners. (See Appendix 1 for policy regarding transition into the provision.)

Riverside also has a provision for children who have EHCPs where their primary need has been identified as Visual Impairment (see Riverside VI Provision Admissions Criteria.) These children are educated in mainstream classes, alongside their peers, and have access to support from staff who are trained to work with visually impaired learners, including the use of Braille. Additionally, the children are provided with specialist equipment and assistive technology as appropriate, to enable them to access the curriculum. This provision is supported by the VI Advisory Teachers from the Physical and Sensory Service.

Transition

Children joining the school in Year R: The Inclusion Manager and/or FS Lead will liaise with parents/carers, pre-school settings and external services where applicable, to ensure that all relevant information is shared prior to the child starting school. This may include visits to pre-school settings to observe children and discuss the support they will require on entry. Enhanced transition packages are put in place where necessary.

Children transferring to secondary school: We will complete the Medway transition forms and the Inclusion Manager will liaise with parents/carers and colleagues in secondary schools to share relevant information. Where children have EHCPs, secondary SENCOs are invited to attend their Year 6 annual review meeting. Enhanced transition packages are put in place where necessary.

Children transferring to or from other schools at other times: The Inclusion Manager will liaise with her counterpart in the transferring or receiving school to share the relevant initial information. Office staff will ensure that all hard copy information, including the child's SEND records, is passed on.

Gifted and Talented

A child who is capable of functioning at a level significantly beyond that expected for their age group may be defined as gifted or talented. The term 'gifted' is generally used to refer to ability in academic subjects, whilst 'talented' is applied to children who excel at creative or physical activities. If a child is so advanced in their learning that they require challenges significantly over and above those of their peers, class teachers will provide these opportunities through carefully adapted tasks. Through our Multi-Academy Trust we have links with Rainham Mark Grammar School, who are able to provide support regarding working with gifted learners. In addition, the school regularly identifies opportunities to provide curricular and extra-curricular challenges for those with particular skills, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) challenges like the Young Eco-Engineers project.

Exclusions

The decision to exclude a child from school will only be taken (and authorised) by the Headteacher, and will always take into account the effect of a child's additional needs on their behaviour. Exclusion is a rare event and is only applied on the grounds of behaviour which is of an extremely serious nature. Following exclusion, parents are required to attend a re-integration meeting, where future steps are discussed prior to their child returning to school (see Exclusions Policy).

Roles and responsibilities

The Governors are responsible for maintaining the appropriate staffing and funding for SEND provision and monitoring the implementation of the school's inclusion policy.

The Inclusion Manager is Mrs Zoe Huggett. She attained the National Award for SEN Co-ordination in November 2016.

The Head of School, in conjunction with the Inclusion Manager, is responsible for the day to day management of all aspects of the school's work including provision for children with SEND. This is overseen by the Executive Headteacher.

The Local Authority is responsible for maintaining the EHCPs of children in Medway and should be involved in annual reviews of plans, updating them as necessary.

Concerns and Complaints

If any concerns arise regarding SEND support in school, these should initially be brought to the attention of the class teacher and/or Inclusion Manager. Should these remain unresolved the Complaints Procedure of the Trust details the next steps that should be taken.

Appendix 1 – Transition into the Riverside Special Provisions.

Some children join the Riverside Provisions in September of Year R, in which case their transition is supported alongside that of the mainstream children who are also starting school for the first time. Children entering our ASD Provision other than at the normal entry point in Year R have often struggled to cope in previous mainstream schools, and on some occasions they may have been home educated for a period of time while their EHCP was being finalised.

At whatever point the child joins us, we will carefully plan a transition programme tailored to the individual child and his/her needs, to support them as they join our school and ensure their wellbeing. The programmes are likely to include some/all of the following:

- ~ Inclusion Manager to give a school tour and discuss key needs with child and parents; when placement is confirmed create initial Pupil Profile and brief staff. Information will also be sought from any previous school or nursery.
- ~ Child to visit new classroom; Inclusion Manager to liaise with class teacher to organise specific resources needed (eg. visual timetable, move 'n' sit cushion, First/Then card) and set up individual workstation if required.
- ~ Child to meet key people eg. CT, TAs and be provided with a Social Story regarding these to take home.
- ~ Child to attend on a reduced timetable to begin with if required, gradually building up to being in school for the whole day as appropriate.
- ~ Child to spend time in Rainbow Room if needed to settle each morning, before going to class when ready.
- ~ Child to be added to any required intervention groups, such as Social Skills, OT etc.
- ~ Review of transition at the end of each week to assess how s/he is coping. Inclusion Manager to discuss with parents/carers any concerns and changes needed.

We would hope that after a short induction period (possibly up to a term), the child would be ready to come into school and join their class like everyone else. S/he should be able to work in the mainstream classroom for the vast majority of the time, with the support of resources/equipment and TAs when required. Should we feel that s/he is still requiring a great deal of additional support, we will draw up a personalised plan. If more than 3 terms should pass and the child is still highly unsettled and not coping, then in consultation with parents/carers we would consider holding an early Annual Review meeting to look at whether the placement is appropriate.

Appendix 2 – Covid-19 Pandemic: Contingency Planning

From September 2021, most of the previous Covid-19 measures that had applied to schools were removed. However the measures outlined below will remain part of our contingency plan in the event of any further outbreak or school closures.

The school will be adhering to any current government guidance regarding the pandemic. We recognise that children with SEND may have more difficulty than other children in following this guidance, for example with regard to social distancing. Their needs may also mean that close contact is required, for example to provide intimate care. Children with a significant level of need will have an individual risk assessment completed with their parents, which details the measures to be taken and any particular strategies to be used to support safe practice.

All endeavours will be made to ensure that the interventions required to meet children's individual needs and targets are provided, with reasonable adjustments made where necessary. However, we recognise that some interventions or support programmes may need to be adapted or, as a last resort, suspended depending on the school's ability to provide adequate staffing. There may also be restrictions on the equipment and resources available, in line with the government guidance (for example, use of certain soft play equipment used for OT may be prohibited). Where children need to work with different adults outside of their main class, including external visitors or therapists, this will be carried out in line with government guidance as far as is reasonably practicable.

In the event of a school closure, children will be provided with home learning appropriate to their level of attainment. Children with EHCPs will have additional risk assessments carried out in line with Local Authority guidance, to assess whether their needs can be safely met at home. The school will maintain contact with parents/carers throughout and offer additional support as needed. We will endeavour to still carry out Annual Reviews within the statutory timescales, using remote communication where possible.

SEN Transport is provided by Medway Council and the contracted taxi company has responsibility for ensuring Covid-safe practices on the vehicles used.