



Inclusion Newsletter

9th December 2022

Welcome to this term's Inclusion newsletter. A number of parents have approached me recently with queries about Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), so I thought it might be helpful to use this newsletter to clarify some points regarding these.

An EHCP is a legal document which is provided by the Local Authority for children with a significant level of additional need, who require support over and above that which a mainstream school would usually be expected to provide. Children with EHCPs can access specialist education placements if needed, or if they stay in a mainstream school, the school may receive additional funding to provide them with extra support – although this is not always the case and is not guaranteed.

There is a very high threshold for issuing an EHCP – only 4% of pupils in the country have one. Medway Local Authority expect the vast majority of support to be provided through what is "ordinarily available" in mainstream schools, and will only consider assessing a child for an EHCP if the school, parents and health professionals can provide evidence over time that this is not enough to meet their needs. In most cases, unless a child's needs are such that they need to attend a specialist setting, having an EHCP will not change anything about the support they receive in school.

As a member of the Medway SEND panel, which makes the decisions about whether to agree to proceed with EHCP assessments or issuing plans, I have a very thorough understanding of the necessary levels of need and evidence required to be successful with an application. If I believe that your child would benefit from an EHCP I will of course discuss this with you and work together with you throughout the process. Equally, if I believe that an EHCP would not be appropriate and an application is unlikely to be successful, I will be honest with you about this and will work with you to consider other ways in which your child can access the support they need.

I hope this explanation helps clarify what an EHCP is and why they will only be appropriate for a small number of children with a very significant level of need. You can find more information about EHCPs on the Medway local offer website here: <https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200311/ehcps>

I also wanted to let you know that Faye Harbard, the previous SEND Administrative Assistant for the RMET Primary Schools, has now moved on to a different role. Our new SEND Admin, Charlotte White, will be starting with us next week. If your child has SEND, you will more than likely be hearing from Charlotte in the near future.

As always, if you have any queries related to SEND or Inclusion, or wish to discuss your child's needs further, please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

Mrs Z Huggett
Assistant Headteacher/Inclusion Manager



Speech and Language

Many children experience difficulties with their Speech and Language development. These may come under one or more of the following areas of need:

- ~ Difficulties with producing clear speech sounds
- ~ Difficulties with talking in grammatically correct language (expressive skills)
- ~ Difficulties with understanding the language they hear (receptive skills)
- ~ Difficulties with using language appropriately in context (social communication skills)

At Riverside, we are fortunate to have a specialist Speech and Language TA, Mrs Allen, who works alongside our bought-in therapist, Laura Blackman, to assess needs, develop programmes for the children to follow (many of which are delivered by our other TAs in class) and deliver therapy. Speech and Language Therapists from the Medway Children's Therapy Team also visit us from time to time, to work with children with more significant needs who qualify for NHS support.



By the age of seven, most children typically use a vocabulary of around 5,000 words! The number of words they can understand is usually significantly higher.

~ Children are constantly developing their speech and language skills and learn a huge amount from all of the interactions they have each day. Try to model good use of language and good listening skills around your child. Engage them in conversations about what they have been doing and make sure you actively listen, putting gadgets aside for a while so that they can have your full attention. Ask open-ended questions to encourage them to explain things in more detail. You can also do this while you are reading with your child - talk about what's happening in the story, how the characters are feeling or similar situations from your child's own experiences.

~ Comment on what you are doing during activities with your child. Use alternative words to expand their vocabulary - for example, if your child says "that's a big castle," you could reply, "yes, it's gigantic!"

~ Play games that require children to use their vocabulary in different ways, such as "Don't Say It", "What's In The Cat's Hat?" and "Guess Who?"

Helpful
Tips

Useful websites:

ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point

speechandlanguage.org.uk/information-and-support

elmslt.com/resources