

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Christian Vision of St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

Growing together through faith in Jesus Christ '*Let all you do be done in love*' (1 Corinthians 16. 14).

Knowing God through Jesus in our lives let us share, experience and live happiness, laughter and joy in a welcoming, inclusive and loving Christian place.

In the eyes of God and with all your heart let us embrace opportunities to learn, achieve and celebrate success and difference.

By sharing the fruits of the spirit let us shine out for others to see that we are tolerant, respectful, wise and hopeful in this community and God's world.

In journey and love, remember '*I am with you always*' (Matthew 28.20)

We feel that this statement sums up succinctly what we wish to achieve at St Thomas' for our school community.

Our Inclusive Church School Statement

We believe in an inclusive school – a school which does not discriminate on any level, including economic power, mental health, mental ability, physical ability, gender, age, race or sexuality. We believe in a school which welcomes, accepts and seeks the flourishing and growth of all people, both pupils and staff. We acknowledge that all people are made in the image of God and are unique and precious to him. Our school is a place where we seek to respect all people and to love one another as Jesus taught us, in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Everyone is welcome here.**

Please note that this policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Management Policy, the Bullying Policy and Access Policy.

St. Thomas' C.E. Primary School values the abilities and achievements of all its children and is committed to providing, for each child, the best possible environment for learning. Throughout our school we have a clear focus upon inclusion within a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum which we deliver in a climate of warmth and support, encouraging the growth of an individual's self-esteem and where all children are valued and regarded as unique individuals.

OFSTED reported in October 2018 that "pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their varied starting points. The SENCO makes timely interventions to support their needs. Pupils receive individual support which promotes their good progress."

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the whole staff, with any extra provision or expertise being organised by Mrs Parker, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator, with support, where appropriate from external agencies and professionals. It is intended that this policy statement will be used as a working document by all our staff, governors, parents and visitors so that all our pupils are fully supported to make the best possible progress.

The aims of our school

- To create an ethos and educational environment that is person centred and has the views and needs of the pupils at its heart along with their families/carers.
- To encourage a strong focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for pupils with SEND which will enable them to succeed in their education and make a successful transition between classes, Key Stages and into adulthood.
- To reflect the Code of Practice (2015) in stating 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.
- To fully adopt the graduated approach to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early, assessed and catered for within St. Thomas' with high expectations for the best possible progress and outcomes.
- To work within a 'person centred approach' fostering and promoting effective collaboration with pupils, their parents/carers and outside agencies.
- To encourage and engage the participation of pupils and their parents/carers in the decision making process including the planning and review of outcomes with regard to their provision.
- To clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of school staff and the SEND Governor in providing an appropriate education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- To be proactive in enabling full access for pupils with SEND to all manageable aspects of the school curriculum and the wider school life and activities thus developing positive self-esteem with a long term goal of independence and preparation for adulthood.

Objectives to meet our identified aims:

- To identify and provide for children and young people who have special educational needs, disability and additional needs.
- To work within the guidance provided by the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015).
- To operate a "whole pupil, whole school" approach to the management and provision of support for special educational needs.
- To provide a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Mrs Parker who will work with teachers, support staff and other key individuals or services. As well as an identified SEND Governor, Mrs Girdharry to act as a critical friend, challenging our thinking in order to further improve our practice.
- To provide support and advice for all staff working with special educational needs.

Definition of Special Educational Needs or Disability

At St. Thomas' we recognise that at different times within a child's school career, they may have a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND). The SEND Code of Practice states that:

"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 them. A child of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others the same age.
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools."

If a child is identified as having a Special Educational Need or Disability, we will strive to offer provision that is 'additional to or different from' the normal differentiated curriculum which is intended to support the child to overcome any barriers to learning.'

Identifying Special Educational Needs or Disability

At St. Thomas', we recognise the importance of the early identification of children who may be facing challenges or difficulties in accessing the curriculum and/or in their personal and social development. Before the SENCO becomes involved we expect our teachers to use regular assessments, monitoring and observations to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

This can be characterised by progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- widens the attainment gap by the plateauing of progress

We also recognise that slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEND and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having a SEND. However, the school may use this as an indicator of a range of learning difficulties or disabilities. Equally, we do not assume that attainment in line with chronological age means that there is no learning difficulty or disability for that individual child. Some learning difficulties and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and, if left unaddressed, may lead to frustration and the child becoming disaffected from education, or resulting in emotional or behavioural difficulties both within school and at home. We will continually work with parents/carers to listen and hear their concerns that they may have in regards to their child's development and progress towards outcomes.

The SEND Code of Practice (January 2015) specifies 4 Broad Areas of Need here and this includes more specific needs;

- **Communication and Interaction**
Pupils with speech, language and communication needs have difficulty communicating with others, often because they have difficulty saying what they want, they can't understand what is being said to them or they don't understand or use social rules of communication.
- **Cognition and Learning**
Pupils with difficulties in this area can cover a wide range of needs from Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Specific Learning Difficulties, which can affect one or more specific aspects of learning and can encompass a range of conditions including Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health**
Pupils may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties that manifest themselves in many ways, including becoming withdrawn or isolated or displaying challenging and disruptive behaviour. These can include ADHD, ADD, Attachment Disorder or an underlying mental health need such as anxiety, depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms not medically explained.
- **Sensory and/or Physical Needs**
Pupils may suffer from a range of impairments including hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment and any physical impairments. Such impairments could

prevent or hinder pupils from using the school facilities. Certain conditions can be age related or could fluctuate over time.

Once a child has been identified as having SEND, the SENCO will ensure joint working with staff and parents to informally begin gathering evidence and start what is known as the GRADUATED APPROACH. At this point a child will be placed on the SEND register at SEN Support. This process will lead to the identification of the child's primary and, if required, a secondary need. The school will not delay in putting in place extra teaching or other rigorous interventions designed to secure better progress, where required.

Sometimes a child may be struggling but other factors may be causing a disruption to their learning. These could be caused by the following:

- Disability (The Code of Practice outlines the "reasonable adjustment" duty for all settings and schools provided under current Disability Equality legislation – these alone do not constitute SEN)
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Health and Welfare
- English as an Additional Language
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant
- Being a Looked After Child
- Being a child of a Serviceman/woman

A Graduated Approach to SEND Support

The Code of Practice outlines a graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. It recognises that children learn in different ways, have different kinds or levels of SEND and require different levels of support. So increasingly, step by step, St. Thomas' will tailor its support to help an individual child.

Quality First Teaching

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where children access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. High quality teaching, differentiated for all children's needs, is the first step in responding to all pupils who have or may have SEND. All children at our school experience lessons that:

- Take into account different learning styles.
- Focus on specific objectives.
- Have high expectations of pupil achievement.
- Include regular use of praise and encouragement to engage and motivate children.
- Have differentiated activities that enable all children to engage and achieve.
- Include opportunities for children to talk, both individually and in groups.
- Include a variety of resources and media to support learning.

A performance review cycle is in place to monitor the quality of teaching, which enables staff to be supported in their delivery of quality first lessons and keep updated with new developments in SEND.

SEND Support

SEND support is characterised by interventions that are additional to and different from the normal differentiated curriculum. This intervention can be triggered through concern, supplemented by evidence that, despite receiving differentiated teaching a child's progress has dipped. The class teacher will remain responsible for planning and delivering individualised programmes and parents will be kept closely informed about the action and their effects. Children may only need this type of additional support for a short time within their school career, allowing them to make accelerated progress which places them within age related expectations. The effectiveness of these interventions on a child's progress will be closely monitored. If the SENCO, in discussion with the class teacher, teaching assistants and the child's parents, feels that the child is still making limited progress, despite a wide range of interventions, then the support of outside agencies would be sought. These could include:

- Educational Psychologists
- Medical Officers
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Hearing impairment services
- Visual impairment services
- EWO (Education Welfare Officer)
- The local Child Development Centre
- Local High Schools & Pre-school settings
- School Nurse
- Behaviour Support practitioners
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Social Services

Individual Learning Plans (ILP)

Small stepped targets for children requiring SEND support will be recorded within an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), with the children and parents involved within discussions regarding specific targets, which will include:

- A child's strengths and areas for development
- Short term targets
- Teaching strategies and identified provision
- The success criteria
- Date for review
- The outcomes recorded at review

The ILP will record only that which is 'additional to and different from' the normal differentiated curriculum, and will concentrate on two or three individual targets that closely match the child's individual needs.

Disability

Not all pupils with a disability will experience difficulties with their learning but they will have additional needs and therefore these pupils are included within our documentation.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.” With regard to this at St Thomas’ we carry out the following:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled pupils.
- Eliminate any discrimination of disabled pupils within our school community.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled pupils.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled pupils.
- Encourage their full participation in school life.

The SEND policy should be read in conjunction with the Disability Equality Duty Statement.

Access for pupils and visitors with a disability

At St. Thomas’ we are committed to long term continuous improvement of facilities to ensure safe access for all pupils. We regularly seek outside professional advice on such matters. See also the school Accessibility Policy Statement.

Behavioural Difficulties

At St. Thomas’ all staff have the highest expectations of pupils with regard to behaviour. (See Behaviour Management Policy) Sometimes however poor behaviour becomes a barrier to learning. When this happens, the teacher will work together with the child and their parents to create an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP). The child’s behaviour will be closely monitored and a system of rewards to encourage good behaviour will be utilised. If however there is little or no improvement in the child’s behaviour then school will request the help of outside agencies to offer further advice and support.

Request for Statutory Assessment

The school will request a Statutory Assessment from the LA when, despite an individualised programme of sustained intervention within SEND support, the child remains a significant cause for concern. A Statutory Assessment could also be requested by a parent.

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can be provided where, after a Statutory Assessment, the LA considers the child requires provision beyond what the school can currently offer. However, the school recognises that a request for a Statutory Assessment does not inevitably lead to the creation of an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Education, Health and Care plans must be reviewed annually. The school, in discussions with parents and outside agencies, sets the date for the review of a child’s EHCP. It is the SEND co-ordinators duty to organise these reviews and invite:

- The child's parents/carers
- The child, if appropriate
- The relevant teacher(s) and teaching assistants

- A representative of the LA
- Any other professionals involved with the child

The aim of the review will be to:

- Assess the child's progress in relation to the ILP targets.
- Review the provision made for the child in the context of the curriculum, their levels of attainment in English and Maths and key life skills.
- Consider the appropriateness of the existing Education, Health and Care plan in relation to the child's performance during the year, and whether to cease, continue, or amend it.
- Set new targets for the coming year.

Year 5 reviews will indicate the provision required in Secondary school. At Year 6 reviews the SEND co-ordinator of the Secondary school will be invited to attend. This enables the receiving school to plan appropriately for the new school year. It also gives parents the opportunity to liaise with the Secondary SEND co-ordinator to discuss any issues or concerns regarding transition.

Partnership with Parents

At St. Thomas' we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents and that this will enable children and young people with SEND to achieve their full potential. The school recognises that parents have a unique overview of their child's needs and how best to support them, and that this gives them a key role in the partnership.

"Parents hold key information and have a critical role to play in their children's education. They have unique strengths, knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best way of supporting them."

Supporting successful preparation for adulthood

St. Thomas' will carefully plan to ensure that children make a smooth transition to the next phase of their education, liaising with primary and secondary schools, as necessary, to help plan for any transitions. We will ensure that all relevant information about pupils is transferred in a timely manner, ensuring staff within the new setting have time to plan for the arrival of the pupil. St. Thomas' is committed to taking an active role in preparing children with SEND for their transition into adulthood, preparing them to achieve their ambitions, taking responsibility for their health, social integration and independence.

Criteria for removing children from the SEND register

Following careful observations and in discussion with all parties, including the child and their parents if it is thought that a child is making progress which is sustainable then they may be removed from the SEND register. The child will continue to be carefully monitored through the schools monitoring procedures to ensure that progress continues to be made. If this were to change and progress slows, then the procedures set out within this policy would begin to be followed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is a matter for the school as a whole, with all our teachers being teachers of children with Special Educational Needs and

Disabilities. All teachers are responsible for identifying pupils with SEND and, in collaboration with the SEND co-ordinator, Mrs Parker, will ensure that those children requiring different or additional support are identified as early as possible.

The Role of the Class Teacher

The Code of Practice clearly acknowledges the importance allocated to the class teacher, whose responsibilities include:

- Being aware of the school's procedures for the identification and assessment of, and subsequent provision for children with SEND.
- Setting high expectations for every child and aim to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every child achieving.
- Ensuring that every child with SEND is able to study the full national curriculum.
- Collaborating with the SEND co-ordinator to decide what action is required to assist an individual child in making accelerated progress towards their age related expectations.
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the children in their class.
- Work closely with all parties to develop ILP's and one page profiles for children with SEND.
- Developing constructive relationships with parents.
- Working with SEND pupils on a daily basis to plan and monitor the individual programme set out in the ILP (Individual Learning plan).

The Role of SEND co-ordinator

The SEND co-ordinator plays a crucial role in the school's SEND provision and is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the Head teacher and Governing Body, as part of the Senior Leadership Team, to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school.
- Working with the relevant governors and the head teacher to ensure that the school meets its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.
- Overseeing the day-to-day operation and implementations of the SEND policy.
- Coordinating the specific provision to support children with SEND, including those with EHC plans.
- Advising on the graduated approach to providing SEND support, providing professional guidance to colleagues and working closely with staff members, parents and other agencies, including charities.
- Advising on the deployment of the schools delegated budget and other resources to effectively meet the needs of children with SEND.
- Liaising with the relevant professionals where a Looked After Children has SEND.
- Liaising with parents of pupils with SEND and informing parents of children with SEND, who do not have an EHC plan, that SEND provision is being made for their child.
- Liaising with early years providers, other schools, outside agencies and independent or voluntary bodies, as required. For children nearing transition, liaise with future providers of education to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about the options and that a smooth transition is planned for.
- Being a key point of contact for external agencies including Warrington Local Authority.

- Being familiar with the provision in the Local Offer and being able to work with professionals who are providing a supporting role to the family.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that pupils with SEND take part in activities run by the school, together with those who don't have SEND.
- Ensuring that the school keeps up to date records of all children with SEND.
- Organising and participating in training and CPD opportunities to staff, some of which emphasise mental health to a greater extent.
- Supporting staff in the further assessment of a pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses and advising on effective implementation of support.

The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body's responsibilities to children with SEND include:

- Being fully involved in developing and subsequently reviewing the SEND policy and School Offer.
- Having a regard to the Code of Practice when carrying out responsibilities.
- Designating an appropriate member of staff to be the SEND co-ordinator and having responsibility for co-ordinating provision for SEND pupils.
- Appointing an individual governor to oversee the school's arrangements for SEND.
- Taking necessary steps to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised in any way.
- Making reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities to help alleviate any substantial disadvantage they experience because of their disability.
- Preparing the arrangements for admission of children with SEND and that the facilities provided enable access to the school for pupils with disabilities.
- Identifying, assessing and making provision for each child's SEND, whether or not they have an EHC plan.
- Developing complaints procedures which, along with details about appealing to the SEND tribunal, will be made known to parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to support pupils at school with any medical conditions.
- Co-operating with the local authority in drawing up and reviewing the Local Offer.

The Governor responsible for SEND is: Mrs Melanie Girdharry

The Role of the Head teacher

The Head teacher's responsibilities include:

- Establishing and maintaining a culture of high expectations and including all pupils with SEND in the opportunities available to other pupils.
- Ensuring that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school don't directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with SEND.
- Keeping the Governing Body well informed about SEND, including the impact upon children's mental health and wellbeing within the school.
- Working closely with the SEND co-ordinator.
- Ensuring that teachers regularly monitor and review pupil progress during the academic year.
- Regularly reviewing the quality of teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement, as a core part of the school's performance management arrangements.
- Ensuring that teachers have an established understanding of different types of SEND.

- Ensuring that pupils with SEND and their parents are actively supported in contributing to needs assessments including the developing and reviewing of EHC plans, as appropriate.

Training and Resources

In order to maintain and develop the quality of teaching and provision to respond to the strengths and needs of all our pupils, our staff regularly undertake training and development across all aspects of SEND. The SENCO arranges a training programme for staff throughout the course of a year and also offers all members of staff the opportunity to identify any training needs they may require on a regular basis. The SENCO also attends the Warrington Inclusion Network Meetings, is a member of Chester Diocese SEND cluster group and has set up a cluster group of local schools in order to keep up to date with local and national updates in SEND and to share good practise between schools for the benefit of all our children.

Complaints Procedure

The SEND Code of Practice outlines measures the LA must set up for preventing and resolving disagreements. These will be explained to parents if required.

SEN Policy Monitoring and Review

The school considers the SEND Policy document to be important and, in conjunction with the Governing Body, undertakes a review of both policy and practice each year. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff will familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy will be October 2020.

COVID 19

The majority of children with SEN, who receive SEN Support at school but do not have an EHC plan, have been expected to stay home unless they have a social worker or a parent/carer who is a key worker and alternative childcare is not possible. Throughout this time, class teachers at St Thomas' have provided online learning through Seesaw to all children, making allowances for children with SEN where necessary.

We have also been committed to maintaining contact with those families whose children have an EHC plan with regular phone calls and offers of support. Where possible and practical, school has provided children with additional resources including manipulatives and ICT equipment such as iPads.

St Thomas' are committed to supporting children with SEN throughout this difficult period.