



Leamington Federation

Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath Primary School

Inclusion and SEND Policy

1. Introduction and inclusive ethos

Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath Primary School are committed to providing a high-quality, ambitious and inclusive education for every pupil. Inclusion is not a separate provision or pathway: it is a whole-school responsibility. We aim to identify needs accurately, including emerging or changing needs, remove barriers to learning and/or wellbeing, maintain high expectations and enable pupils to achieve and thrive across all areas of school life.

This policy replaces the former Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Policy and reflects our broader commitment to inclusion while retaining the statutory duties that apply specifically to children and young people with SEND.

We recognise that pupils may face barriers for many reasons, including SEND, disability, disadvantage, social care involvement, English as an additional language, medical or mental-health needs, emotionally based school avoidance, mobility, family circumstances or other temporary or long-term factors. Support is based on need and is reviewed in response to evidence of impact.



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Our approach reflects the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. Children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected, protected and promoted across both schools.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy is informed by, and should be read alongside, current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Children and Families Act 2014, particularly Part 3 and the duties relating to special educational provision;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (as amended);
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE/DHSC, current statutory guidance);
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty not to discriminate and the anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002, where relevant to the education, welfare and safeguarding of pupils;
- School Admissions Code and statutory requirements relating to the admission of pupils with SEND and Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans;
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (statutory guidance);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- The school Accessibility Plan, Equality Information and Objectives, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy and SEND Information Report.

Where statutory guidance changes during the life of this policy, the schools will follow the most up-to-date legal and statutory requirements.

3. Ofsted inspection toolkit: inclusion principles

The September 2026 Ofsted state-funded school inspection toolkit places inclusion at the centre of school evaluation. Our practice is therefore designed to reflect the following principles:

- pupils' needs are identified and assessed accurately, including emerging or changing needs;
- leaders and staff maintain high expectations for pupils who face barriers to learning and/or wellbeing;
- pupils and families are engaged proactively and in a timely manner to help reduce barriers;
- a graduated approach is used so that support is assessed, planned, implemented and reviewed;
- staff receive suitable training and support to implement inclusive practice effectively;
- leaders understand pupils' needs and progress, use appropriate quantitative and qualitative evidence and adjust strategies when needed;
- adaptations and reasonable adjustments improve access without unnecessarily separating pupils from the curriculum, classroom, peers or wider school life;
- the impact of provision is evaluated by how well pupils achieve, participate, feel that they belong and thrive.

4. Aims and objectives

- To ensure that every pupil has access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum and is enabled to participate fully in school life.
- To identify barriers and additional needs as early and accurately as possible and respond promptly.
- To maintain high expectations for pupils with SEND while making the reasonable adjustments and adaptations needed for success.
- To ensure that teachers remain responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their classes, including pupils supported by teaching assistants or specialist staff.
- To work in genuine partnership with pupils, parents and carers and to take their views, strengths, aspirations and experiences into account.
- To use the graduated approach - assess, plan, do, review - and evaluate the impact of provision over time.
- To promote independence, communication, emotional regulation, participation, belonging and preparation for the next stage of education.
- To deploy resources, interventions and specialist advice according to need and evidence of impact.

5. Definition of SEND and broad areas of need

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 of the same age, or a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for others of the same age.

The SEND Code of Practice identifies four broad areas of need. These are used to help schools plan provision but do not define the whole child:

- Communication and interaction;
- Cognition and learning;
- Social, emotional and mental health;
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

A pupil must not be identified as having SEND solely because the language used at home is different from the language in which they are taught. Similarly, slower progress or challenging behaviour does not automatically mean that a pupil has SEND. Staff consider the underlying factors and the full context.

6. Identifying needs and barriers

Identification is a continuous process. Teachers use day-to-day assessment, observation, pupil voice, discussion with parents/carers, progress information and knowledge of the pupil to identify possible barriers. The SENDCo and senior leaders review evidence and, where appropriate, seek specialist advice.

When progress is less than expected, the first response is high-quality teaching and appropriate classroom adaptation. Staff consider whether factors such as attendance, language acquisition, medical needs, emotional wellbeing, trauma, sensory needs, hearing or vision, family circumstances or gaps in prior learning may be contributing.

Where, despite appropriate teaching and targeted support, a pupil continues to experience significant difficulty, the school will consider whether special educational provision is required and whether the pupil should be recorded as receiving SEN Support.

7. The graduated approach: Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Assess

We gather a clear picture of the pupil's strengths, needs, interests, barriers, starting points and progress. This includes the views of the pupil and parents/carers and, where appropriate, advice from external professionals.

Plan

The teacher, SENDCo, pupil and family agree intended outcomes, provision, adaptations, responsibilities and review arrangements. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or equivalent planning documents are used where appropriate and should contain clear, meaningful and reviewable targets.

Do

The class teacher remains responsible for the pupil's learning. Teaching assistants and specialist staff implement agreed support under the direction of the teacher. Interventions supplement rather than replace access to high-quality classroom teaching unless a pupil's assessed needs require a different arrangement.

Review

Provision is reviewed in relation to impact, not simply whether an intervention took place. Staff consider attainment, progress, participation, communication, independence, regulation, attendance, wellbeing and pupil/family views. Provision is continued, adapted, intensified or withdrawn according to evidence.

8. High-quality inclusive teaching and reasonable adjustments

High-quality inclusive teaching is the foundation of our provision. Teachers anticipate barriers and plan adaptations so that pupils can access the same ambitious curriculum wherever possible. The Equality Act duty to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory: staff should plan ahead rather than wait for a pupil to fail before removing an avoidable barrier.

Examples of adaptations and reasonable adjustments used across the federation include, according to individual need:

- whole-class and personalised visual timetables, including clear visual cues for transitions;
- personalised "Now and Next" boards and, where helpful, objects/items of reference to signal routines or upcoming activities;
- Makaton signs and symbols to support understanding, expressive communication, vocabulary and participation where appropriate;
- reduced, simplified and chunked spoken language, supported by visuals, modelling and additional processing time;
- pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts and opportunities for overlearning and retrieval practice;
- explicit modelling using worked examples, visualisers, concrete resources and scaffolded steps;
- adapted recording methods, writing frames, word banks, sentence stems, assistive technology and alternatives to extended written recording where appropriate;
- careful seating and adult positioning, including teaching assistants sitting alongside or close enough to the pupil to provide timely support while promoting independence;
- individual copies of shared texts, enlarged or simplified resources, picture cards, story props or finger puppets where these improve access;

- sensory and regulation supports, planned movement breaks, Regulation Stations and access to quieter workspaces when needed;
- predictable routines, advance warning of change, timers and graded participation where anxiety or regulation affects engagement;
- adaptations to PE, educational visits, assemblies, clubs, story time and other wider-curriculum experiences so that pupils are enabled to participate with peers;
- planned peer support and structured collaborative learning, including opportunities for a trusted peer to work alongside a pupil where beneficial;
- careful use of adult prompting, with support gradually reduced to develop independence and avoid unnecessary adult dependency.

The purpose of adaptation is to increase access, participation and success. Adaptation should not become routine separation from the class, curriculum or peer group when reasonable adjustments could enable meaningful inclusion.

9. Communication and interaction, including Makaton

The federation recognises communication as fundamental to learning, regulation, relationships and safeguarding. Staff use a range of communication-support strategies, including visual supports, modelling, structured language and Makaton signs and symbols where appropriate to pupils' assessed needs.

Makaton is used as an augmentative communication approach rather than as a replacement for speech. Staff aim for consistency between adults and settings and, where appropriate, work with parents/carers and speech and language professionals to use agreed signs, symbols and communication strategies.

10. Targeted and specialist provision

Targeted and specialist provision is selected according to assessed need. It is time-limited or regularly reviewed, linked to intended outcomes and monitored for impact. Provision may include:

- LEXIA reading intervention to provide structured, adaptive practice in reading and literacy skills for identified pupils;
- reading interventions such as additional phonics, precision teaching, supported reading or other evidence-informed programmes;
- NELI or other speech, language and communication interventions where appropriate;
- Therapeutic LEGO® / Brick-by-Brick® clubs, using structured collaborative play to develop communication, interaction, problem-solving, teamwork and social understanding;
- nurture provision, including small-group support focused on readiness to learn, relationships, regulation and social-emotional development;
- Lego-based, social communication, friendship or emotional-literacy groups;
- counselling, play-based therapeutic support, Forest School, yoga or other SEMH provision where these form part of a planned support package;
- Makaton-informed communication support and targeted language work;
- mathematics, handwriting, fine-motor, sensory, attention, memory or organisational interventions according to need;
- individual programmes advised by Educational Psychology, Specialist Teaching Service, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, CAMHS or other relevant professionals.

Interventions do not automatically constitute SEN Support. The school considers the nature, intensity and duration of provision and whether it is additional to or different from provision ordinarily available to pupils of the same age.

11. Internal inclusion and nurture provision

Where pupils benefit from a smaller-group environment for part of the week or day, the school may use internal inclusion or nurture provision. These arrangements are intended to reduce barriers and strengthen successful participation in mainstream class learning, not to create a parallel curriculum.

Pupils accessing internal provision continue to receive teaching of core knowledge and skills appropriate to their stage and needs. Staff plan carefully for transition between the provision and the pupil's class, maintain peer relationships and seek opportunities for pupils to participate in whole-class learning, playtimes, assemblies, story time, PE and the wider curriculum.

12. Role of teaching assistants and additional adults

Teaching assistants are an important part of inclusive provision but do not replace the teacher. Teachers plan for and direct their deployment so that support has a positive impact on learning, participation and independence.

- TAs should understand the intended learning, relevant IEP/EHC plan outcomes and agreed adaptations for the pupils they support.
- Where allocated to an identified pupil, TAs should position themselves sufficiently close to notice misunderstanding, dysregulation or disengagement and provide timely prompts, clarification or scaffolding.
- Support applies across the curriculum, including PE, foundation subjects, educational visits and less structured parts of the day where required.
- Adults should avoid over-prompting or completing tasks for pupils and should step back when appropriate to promote independence and peer interaction.
- TAs contribute observations to the assess-plan-do-review cycle and share relevant information with teachers and the SENDCo.

13. Education, Health and Care plans

Where a pupil's needs are significant and cannot reasonably be met from the resources ordinarily available to the school, the school and/or parents may consider requesting an EHC needs assessment from the local authority. The statutory test is determined by the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations; a fixed period of SEN Support is not a legal prerequisite for making a request.

Where an EHC plan is in place, the school will use its best endeavours to secure the special educational provision specified in the plan and will contribute to statutory annual reviews. Provision, outcomes and progress will be reviewed with the pupil, parents/carers, local authority and relevant professionals.

The school will notify and liaise with the local authority where there are significant concerns about the suitability or sufficiency of provision, placement, attendance or emerging needs.

14. Partnership with pupils and families

Pupils and families are central partners in inclusive practice. Staff seek to understand what is important to the pupil, what helps, what creates stress or barriers, and what successful support looks like from the pupil's perspective. Children are supported to understand their own targets and strategies in an age-appropriate way.

Parents/carers are encouraged to share information about diagnoses, assessments, medication, hearing or vision, successful strategies used outside school and any changes that may affect learning or wellbeing. The school will communicate clearly about provision and review arrangements and will make reasonable adjustments to enable families to participate.

15. Staff training and professional learning

The federation invests in professional learning so that staff have the knowledge and confidence to identify barriers, make appropriate adaptations and implement the graduated approach consistently. Training is selected in response to the profile of pupil need and school improvement priorities.

Professional development may include:

- whole-school and role-specific training through The National College;
- training, consultation and supervision from Warwickshire Educational Psychology Service and other local authority specialist services;
- training from nationally recognised organisations specialising in inclusion, SEND, neurodiversity, nurture, communication, mental health and trauma-informed practice;

- Makaton training and supported development of consistent sign-and-symbol use;
- training in Brick-by-Brick® / LEGO®-based therapeutic or social-communication approaches;
- training relating to autism, ADHD, PDA-informed approaches, FASD, speech/language/communication, sensory needs, dyslexia, attachment and SEMH;
- coaching, modelling, staff meetings and professional dialogue led by the SENDCo, senior leaders and external specialists.

Training is evaluated by its impact on staff practice and pupils' access, participation and outcomes rather than attendance alone.

16. External agencies and multi-agency working

Where appropriate, and usually with parental knowledge and consent, the school works with external professionals. These may include Educational Psychology, Specialist Teaching Service, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, health services, CAMHS, Mental Health Support Teams, social care, the Virtual School, SENDAR and voluntary or commissioned specialist organisations.

Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where this is necessary and lawful to protect a child. The school follows current safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

17. Roles and responsibilities

Executive Head Teacher and senior leaders

- Provide strategic leadership for inclusion and ensure statutory duties are understood and met.
- Promote a culture of high expectations, belonging and shared responsibility for pupils who face barriers.
- Ensure resources, staffing and professional learning are deployed according to need and impact.
- Monitor the quality and consistency of inclusive practice and the outcomes and experiences of pupils.

SENDCo

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of this policy and coordinate SEND provision across the federation.
- Support accurate identification, the graduated approach and high-quality classroom adaptation.
- Liaise with pupils, families, staff, governors, local authority services, health and other external agencies.
- Support staff training and development and contribute to strategic evaluation of provision.
- Maintain appropriate records and support statutory processes, including EHC needs assessments and annual reviews.
- Work with leaders to evaluate the effectiveness and value of interventions and provision.

Class teachers

- Remain responsible and accountable for the progress, development and inclusion of every pupil in their class.
- Identify barriers, use high-quality assessment and implement agreed adaptations and interventions.
- Direct teaching assistants effectively and ensure they are briefed about learning, outcomes and strategies.
- Engage pupils and parents/carers in planning and reviewing support.
- Maintain high expectations while making reasonable adjustments and adapting teaching in response to need.

Governing Body

The Governing Body has strategic oversight of SEND and inclusion, ensures that statutory duties are met, holds leaders to account for the quality and impact of provision and considers the experiences and outcomes of pupils with SEND and other barriers. The named SEND governors are Dr Sam Craven and Mrs Nikki Ajibade, subject to any subsequent changes approved by the Governing Body.

18. Monitoring impact and evaluating inclusion

Leaders evaluate whether provision is making a sustained difference. Evidence may include pupil progress and attainment, closing gaps in foundational knowledge and skills, attendance, behaviour, participation,

independence, emotional regulation, pupil and family voice, IEP/EHC outcomes, engagement in the wider curriculum and successful transition to the next stage.

Quantitative and qualitative information is used together. Where an approach is not reducing barriers or improving outcomes, it is adjusted rather than continued solely because it has historically been provided.

19. Accessibility, equality and admissions

The federation is committed to equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Disabled pupils are entitled to reasonable adjustments and the schools will take an anticipatory approach to accessibility. The Accessibility Plan sets out wider arrangements for improving access to the curriculum, physical environment and information.

Children with SEND are admitted in accordance with the statutory admissions framework. A child must not be refused admission simply because they have SEND. Where an EHC plan names a school, the statutory process and duties relating to admission apply.

20. Concerns and complaints

Concerns about SEND provision should normally be discussed first with the class teacher and/or SENDCo so that they can be addressed promptly. If concerns remain unresolved, parents/carers may use the federation Complaints Policy. Complaints relating to disability discrimination may also fall within the jurisdiction of the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

21. Review of the policy

The Executive Head Teacher, SENDCo, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body will monitor the implementation of this policy and review it at least annually, or sooner if statutory guidance or the needs of the schools change.

This policy was ratified:

September 2026

This policy will be reviewed:

September 2027

Signed by the Head teacher:



Chair of Governors:

Richard Butler