



***St. Mark's C of E Primary
Special Educational Needs
Handbook for Parents and Carers***

Written by: Claire Cooper SENCO.

Who has produced this booklet?

Claire Cooper has been a teacher at St Mark's since 1997 and took over the role as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in January 2002. Her role is to co-ordinate the provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) across the school and liaise with teachers, parents and outside agencies. We also have a Governor with responsibility for SEN, Barbara Lyon, who supports the SENCOs in school and works with groups of SEN children.

Why have we decided to write this booklet?

Finding out that your child has been identified as having a Special Educational Need can be a worrying time. There may be terms used that are unfamiliar to you and there will certainly be lots of questions you will want answers to. What support will your child receive? How have they been identified?

The best way to help our children to succeed is to work as a team. We hope that this handbook will explain how our school will support you and your child and give advice on how you can support and contribute towards their success. It should answer any questions you have about the new Code of Practice 2014 and give an insight into what to expect from the time your child's name is placed on the register.

Our policy for SEN explains the different stages of need and the legal aspect of SEN in more detail. This handbook is designed to be read in addition to our policy.

What are Special Educational Needs?

As many as 1 in 5 children are identified as having a Special Educational Need at some point during their school life and often make good progress with the help that they receive.

A child has a Special Educational Need if:

- They find it more difficult to learn than most other children of the same age.
- They have a disability or medical condition which affects their learning experience.
- There is a gap between their level of behaviour or achievement and what is expected at school.

Under the code of practice the types of SEN identified are :

Cognition and learning (Includes children with difficulties with learning ranging from mild to severe)

Communication and Interaction (Includes children with Speech and Language difficulties, Hearing Impairments and those on the Austistic Spectrum

Social, Emotonal and Mental Health

Sensory, Physical and Medical (Includes children with profound and permanent deafness or visual impairments, children whose physical or neurological condition leads to more complex learning and social needs, and children whose medical conditions have a significant impact on the way they function in an educational environment.

What is the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs?

All schools have to follow the Code of Practice which sets out the framework for identifying, assessing and providing for Special Educational Needs.

It was revised in September 2014 and the government made changes to the way that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families would be supported. These changes are known as the 'SEN reforms' and they are taking place right across the country. The main changes are detailed below:

- Statements of special educational needs and learning difficulties assessments (LDA) will be replaced by [Education, Health and Care Plans \(EHCP\)](#). A transition programme is in place to achieve this for those who currently have statements
- EHCPs are available for children and young people between the ages of 0 to 25 years. There is a set process to apply for an EHCP.
- All local authorities have to publish their Local Offer of services. This is on Salford's website.
- The terms School Action and School Action Plus will no longer be used. All children will be recorded as Special Educational Need Support (SENS)
- Children, young people and their parents now have the option of a personal budget to deliver the plan
- There are now new requirements for local authorities, health and care services to commission services jointly for SEN and disability
- Health commissioners have a new duty on them to deliver the agreed health elements of EHC plans.

- A reduced timeframe for issuing an EHCP of 20 weeks, where the EHCP must:
 - Specify the child's SEN
 - The outcomes sought for him/her
 - The SEN provision required

- Any health or social care provision required by the learning difficulties
- The local authority must have regard to the age of children and young people in creating the EHCP and make it fit for their needs aspirations and expected outcomes
- A commitment that when issuing a draft plan, the child's parents or the young person have the right to make representations for a school or institution to be named. This includes further education provision for young people who are over the age of 16

Different levels of intervention were also introduced. Now children are only recorded as having **Special Educational Needs Support** and when they have profound or complex SEN they will be given an **Education and Health Care plan**. The **ECHP** replaces the old Statements of SEN. **School Action** and **School Action Plus** are no longer required to be used for school based intervention. We use the term **SENS** for all children who have an Intervention plan. The Local Authority is only involved when a child is formally assessed for an **Education and Health Care Plan**. Once children are recorded at one of these levels they are entered on our Special Educational Needs Register. In our school we also record children when we first have concerns about them but might not yet need to put in place lots of intervention. We call this initial stage **Recorded Concern**.

What is the Special Educational Needs Register?

The confidential register is a constantly changing list of children, who we feel need additional support to learn. Keeping a central record of these children means that their progress can be

monitored easily and all teachers are aware of children's needs. Your child's name will be added onto this register whilst they are experiencing their particular difficulty.

What will happen now my child is recorded on the register?

This will depend on the stage your child has been recorded at.

If your child is a **recorded concern** then their teacher will have discussed with you what the concern is and ways that they are going to try to address it. Notes will be kept of what strategies have been tried at home and at school and we will keep a record of your views and concerns. The class teacher and SENCO will monitor your child's progress and if there has been good progress made and there is no longer a concern, then your child will be taken off the SEN register. If your child needs further help though, we will move them to **Special Educational Needs Support (SENS)**

Special Educational Needs Support (SENS) means there will be further involvement of the SENCO and an Intervention Plan (IP) will be written. An IP will set clear targets for your child that will help them to make progress. It will explain what extra support they will receive and what our concerns are. You will be able to discuss the IP with us and it will be reviewed at least every term to see if the targets are being reached. The SENCO will also attend these review meetings if needed and a record will be kept of what was discussed. If good progress is made your child may no longer need an IP so they will be monitored as a recorded concern. If your child still needs more support we may involve more outside agencies and will write a new Intervention Plan.

These agencies could include, for example, the Educational Psychologist, Speech Therapist or an Occupational Therapist. They will help us to write a new IP and may give your child additional support. There will still be regular review meetings for you to attend.

Very often children who receive help at one stage do not then need to move onto the next. In the very rare event of your child still having significant difficulties at SENS we would ask the Local Education Authority to consider him/her for a formal assessment and an ECHP.

What will happen at a review meeting?

This is your opportunity to discuss with the SENCO and your child's class teacher the progress your child is making and look at their IP. Notes will be made and kept with your child's file. It may help you to jot down questions you have for us. Below are some of the questions we may ask you to help us learn more about your child and how we can best support them.

- What are the strengths of your child?
- What areas do you feel that your child has a particular need to improve in?
- How do you think your child learns best?
- What are your child's favourite activities?
- What are your main hopes for your child this year?

What extra support will my child receive?

Support will be given depending on your child's need. It may be through extra support during lessons from another adult,

specialised reading books or computer software. Unfortunately we are limited by our budget but we will do as much as we can.

Will my child stay on the register?

As soon as we feel that your child is making progress we will review the stage they are at. If they no longer need extra support then we will take them off the register completely.

What is an Education and Health Care plan?

An Education and Health Care Plan replaced the previous statement of SEN in the new Code of Practice 2014. It is a legal document, which sets out the details of a child's need and the provision that should be made to meet those needs. It is provided by the Local Authority (LA) following a formal assessment, which takes 26 weeks. The formal Assessment takes advice from parents, teachers, an Educational Psychologist and any other outside agencies that work with the child. Under the revised Code of Practice it is recommended that only 1% of the school age population should have a statement and less children will be formally assessed. The aim is that the intervention and extra support given to a child at SENS and SENS+ should be enough.

The ECHP will recommend if a child's needs would be better suited at a different school but parents are allowed to state a preference. Again, under the revised Code of Practice it is more likely that a child would stay in their mainstream school and extra support would come in for them.

How could I get my child an ECHP?

If your child was already receiving extra help at School Action Plus and was still not making progress, we would ask our Educational Psychologist for advice. If you agreed you wanted a formal assessment carrying out by Salford LA, we would fill in a request form and the LA would decide whether or not to carry one out. Parents can make a referral on their own but the LA would expect that a child has been through the school based stages first and would look at what effect this has had. Review meetings with your child's teacher and SENCO are ideal times to discuss this. We will always consult you first if we are considering applying for a formal assessment in the future.

If your child is refused a formal assessment, or following an assessment is refused an ECHP, you do have the right to appeal to an independent tribunal.

How can I help my child if he or she has been identified as having an individual need?

Your child will make better progress if we work together. You know your child best and the more information you can give us at review meetings the better. Feel free to contact your child's teacher or the SENCO at any time if you have any worries or questions, you don't have to wait for a review meeting. Following up school activities at home and particularly making sure homework is completed on time is very helpful. At the back of the booklet there are tips on how to help your child with homework and reading and spelling. Most of all give your child plenty of praise and encouragement.

If behaviour is the main concern then it is very important that you are kept informed of your child's behaviour every day. Good

behaviour and success in school can then be celebrated and rewarded at home. There are some tips on behaviour management at the back of this booklet too.

Where can I go for more help?

At school we will give you as much help and advice as we can and we are able to contact other professionals for further advice.

Feel free to ask us to find things out for you.

There are some useful helplines and agencies too and we have included a list at the back of the booklet which may be of help to you.

Any more questions?

We hope you have found this booklet useful. If you have any questions about how we can support you and your child further, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Ways to help at home.

Reading.

Listening to your child read as often as possible is important. As they get older, reading difficulties can often be with understanding the story and answering questions on it, rather than on just decoding words. You can help by asking your child questions about the text. Start with easier questions such as "Where is the story set?", "What is the character's name?" and

then extend their skills by asking "How do the characters feel in situations and why?" "What do they think will happen next?" "What is their favourite part of the story and why?"

If the main problem is reading words quickly then speed testing can help.

Make a list of ten words that your child has found difficult from their book. Arrange them in a grid on paper repeated randomly at least five times each like below:

Girl	there	because	girl
Like	because	there	like

Every night point to the words and ask them to read them as quickly as they can. Time this and then each night, try to beat the time. If they get a word wrong then this can be looked at when the test has finished. Practice looking at it, saying it together and repeating. By the end of the week, your child should know these words instantly.

Reading with your child isn't always easy. This next technique, recommended by Dorothy, may help you.

Paired Reading - A Parent's Experience

Does this sound familiar? When you hear your child read at home, he or she seems unable to grasp very simple phonetic words, even when they can recognise the letters (eg. they can say the sounds for "s", "a" and "t", but not comprehend that the word says "sat"). After a short time of this, do you get tense? To my shame I admit that I did. As the weeks go by, do you see that your child positively hates even trying to read to you and all too often the session ends in tears (yours sometimes)? Try paired reading like this. What have you got to lose?

1. Tell your child that you're going to read together in a different way and that he/she cannot get it wrong. If possible get comfortable in a quiet place without the television on.
2. Explain that you are going to place your finger under each word (or use a piece of card) and that together you will say the words as you move your finger along. Reassure the child that they may just copy you as you say the words, but this is allowed.
3. After a few sentences, tell your child that he or she can signal to you that they want to take over and say the words they know themselves by tapping on the page, but that as soon as they get tired or come to a word that defeats them, they tap on the page again and you continue together.

Do this for as long as it takes to break the cycle of anxiety your child has built up at the very mention of the word "reading".

You may find, as I did, that at first the child thinks "this is great" and shows no inclination to tap the page. Don't be put off. As the anxiety associated with reading sessions diminishes, the child will not be able to resist showing you the words they do know.

This method may not show noticeable results for several weeks, but during those weeks the sessions will be easier for both of you. Paired reading done this way won't overcome your child's reading difficulties completely but it will give them a sense of control and satisfaction. It takes the fear out of it. Try it, I'm glad I did.

Spelling.

There are two main ways in which children learn spellings, by breaking the words up into sounds, or by remembering them as a whole, like a picture. Try these methods and see which works best for your child.

Look, Say, Cover, Write Method.

1. Look at each new word together and break it up into its sounds.
Eg. again = a-gain
Discuss how the ai sound is made in the middle of the word.
2. Cover the word up and say it out loud.
3. Spell the word without looking.
4. Check the word. Tick the correct letters and give the word a mark.
Eg. agayn = 4/5
Discuss the mistake and then repeat the process.

Speed Spelling Method.

This is very similar to the method to improve sight reading of words.

1. Look at the weeks spelling words first using the above method.
Identify difficult parts of words.
2. Test each word at least three times each but mix them up.
Eg. again because there again here so
because there here again because.
Time how long it takes your child to finish the test. Then mark the words. Practise every day and try to beat the time and the score.

Homework.

Getting children to work at home can be hard, but these tips might help.

All homework is best done in small amounts over a few days rather than in one sitting.

Try to make sure the room is quiet and they can work on a table.

Check they know what they have to do when they begin the task and then leave them to have a go on their own first. Set

them a short time limit (10 minutes) to complete part of the work and say what you want them to do in that time.

When the time is up check how they are doing and give lots of praise. Go over any misunderstandings and then allow them to finish the rest of the task.

Learning Tables.

This is one aspect of mental maths that is very hard for some children to learn. The best way is to use the speed spelling approach. Practise one table for a week.

Write out the table to 5x at first.

Eg. $1 \times 2 = 2$

$2 \times 2 = 4$

$3 \times 2 = 6$

$4 \times 2 = 8$

$5 \times 2 = 10$

Go over any mistakes and discuss. Write these tables out on a grid several times and time how long it takes your child to complete the grid. The next day they can try to beat their score and time. Once they have got full marks several times, they can practise up to 10x and then, finally, the whole table from 1-10x.

$1 \times 2 =$	$2 \times 2 =$	$4 \times 2 =$	$1 \times 2 =$	$2 \times 2 =$	$3 \times 2 =$	$2 \times 2 =$
$5 \times 2 =$	$3 \times 2 =$	$4 \times 2 =$	$5 \times 2 =$	$1 \times 2 =$	$4 \times 2 =$	$3 \times 2 =$

Behaviour Management Techniques.

If behaviour is an issue for your child you will have been given an extra booklet on specific behaviour management at home.

However, here are a few tips that may help to make behaviour more manageable.

- Praise your child as soon as they do anything that pleases you. Children who only gain attention after misbehaving are more likely to carry on misbehaving just to get attention.

- Give them responsibilities to show them that they are capable and trustworthy.
- Ask your child's views and opinions on issues that are on the news or on a television programme.
- Play games with them and invite their friends round. Children who are happy at home are less likely to misbehave.
- Treat your child to a special day as reward for good behaviour at school or at home.
- Let us know in school about your child's achievements outside of school so that we can praise them more.
- If your child does misbehave, make sure you criticise the behaviour and not the child.
- Be careful not to reward your child's misbehaviour with attention.
- Establish family ground rules together.

Useful numbers and sources of help and advice

British Dyslexia Association

Dyslexia Institute, Bolton
01204 395500

Hyperactive Children's Support Group
01903 725182

DDAT (Dyslexia Dyspraxia Attention Deficit)
An information pack can be obtained by ringing 0870 7370011.
Or visit www.ddat.org

[Salford Information Advice and Support Services \(SIASS\)](#)
on **0161 778 0349**

Salford Families Project
0161 707 0222

Salford and Greater Manchester ADD and Related Syndromes
Family Support Centre
0161 790 1422/1455

Salford Dyslexia Association
0161 775 3071

Salford Dyspraxic Self Help Groups
0161 736 3423

National Autistic Society
0161 247 0891
Contact a Family
(support and information for families/parents of children with
disabilities)
0161 743 0700

Rathbone CI's Learning Difficulties Helpline
(advice and information on all aspects of special needs education)

0800 917 6790

For further information see Salford LA website.

