



SEN Policy

Approved by:	Children's Committee	Date: 13 th December 2023
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Signed by:	(Chair)
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Last reviewed on:	October 2023
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Next review due by:	Autumn 2024
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INTRODUCTION

This policy document clarifies Special Educational Needs provision made at The Oaks Secondary School and those policies, partnerships and procedures that aid the Governing body, Executive Head Teacher, Head of School and staff team in making effective decisions about that provision. It has been informed by guidance from the DfE, QCA and other agencies.

It should be read in conjunction with all policy documents of the school, but particularly those relating to:

- Individual subject areas
- Curriculum
- Assessment
- Equal Opportunities
- Behaviour Management
- SEN Information report

The Oaks Secondary School is maintained by Durham LEA and in Sept 2022 we had 353 students aged between 11 and 19 years. The school is a generic community special school for students with difficulties in the area of Cognition and Learning. As such our facilities and teaching and learning approaches meet the needs of pupils with SEND as part of our First Quality Teaching offer. Many students also have additional difficulties such as emotional, mental health and behavioural difficulties, sensory difficulties, physical difficulties or high medical needs. All students have an Education Health and Care Plan.

Students attend the school on a day basis.

The school aims to meet the needs of students with a very wide range of learning difficulties. The majority of students are functioning at levels which are significantly below average for their chronological age. Pupils have a very wide range of learning need, from Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) to Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and autistic spectrum conditions (ASC).

There is discrete provision for some students who have a severe Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). Students with more moderate learning difficulties usually leave The Oaks at the end of year 11. Those with severe, profound and multiple needs or those with severe and complex Autism can be offered a place in The Oaks 6th form.

RATIONALE

This policy statement informs on the type of SEN provision the school provides, and the manner of its implementation.

SCOPE

This policy statement provides information about:

- the school's SEN provision and resourcing,
- the school's curricular intentions,
- school practice on the identification, assessment and provision for its students,

- school staffing roles and responsibilities,
- the school's partnerships with stakeholders including parents/carers.

AIMS

At The Oaks Secondary School we aim to meet all the requirements outlined in the SEN code of practise documentation

SEN Code of Practice (April 2020)

All children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:

- achieve their best
- become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
- make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training

The school's provision in relation to curriculum, environment, resources, staffing structure, policies and staff development are focused on meeting the individual needs of the children as identified through their Education Health and Care Plan and aims to meet the outcomes as outlined above.

With high aspirations, and the right support, the vast majority of children and young people can go on to achieve successful long-term outcomes in adult life. Local authorities, education providers and their partners should work together to help children and young people to realise their ambitions in relation to:

- higher education and/or employment – including exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies
- independent living – enabling people to have choice and control over their lives and the support they receive, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living
- participating in society – including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community
- being as healthy as possible in adult life

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN CODE OF PRACTICE April 2020)

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age

has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same

age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition

IMPLEMENTATION

Accommodation

The Oaks Secondary School is a purpose built single storey building which has had a recent extension (Sept 2021).

The school corridors are colour coded to help students find their way around.

On the Navy Blue corridor are the Main Entrance, Multi-Purpose Hall, Main Office, Staff Room, Senior Leadership Offices, School Business Manager’s Office, Therapy Room, Hydrotherapy pool and Gym. There are also some specialist teaching rooms: A specialist class for ASC d, Music, Computing, Art, and the Resource Centre/Library.

The Green corridor houses specialist classes for pupils with SLD and PMLD, Textiles Technology, and the Behaviour Support Room.

The Red corridor houses the Science Labs; Food Technology; Resistant Materials workshop; a vocational educational classroom (with facilities for Hair and Beauty, Interventions and Therapies), mini-interactive space and a kitchen area which is used for the breakfast club and to teach students skills they would need in their life beyond school.

The Royal Blue corridor has an Interactive Room, Active Zone and classrooms for English; Maths; History; Geography and PSHCE. There is also a mini gym and a specialist class for pupils with PMLD.

The Grey corridor comprises six classrooms, toilets (including specialist toilet) and two small group rooms. This is a lower stimulus area of school used primarily for pupils in discrete provision for autism

Every other corridor also has a small group room designed as a low stimulus and meeting space, accessible toilets and specialist hygiene areas.

The school is fortunate to be set in large grounds, with sports fields at the front and back. There are two playgrounds, the larger one being used for more active play and a smaller quiet yard. There is also a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), an outdoor gym and two sensory garden areas.

The 6th form has a separate building comprising four classrooms, independent living area, ‘chill out’ room and specialist changing and toileting areas.

Access for those with physical disabilities or who are wheelchair users is excellent throughout the school.

Staffing

The professional staff working directly with pupils consists of Teachers, Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Supervisory Assistants(SAs) There is one Lunchtime Supervisory Assistant.

The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for co-ordinating strategic provision within the school and across the North and South West Durham Learning Federation. There is a Head of School, two Deputy Head Teachers and three Assistant Head Teachers. All of the Senior Leadership Team are trained safeguarding leads. Both Deputy Head teachers are the school special educational needs coordinators (SENCo), one assistant head teacher is responsible for pupils in KS4, one for the Sixth Form and the other is responsible for pupils in KS3 as well as having other whole school areas of responsibility e.g. Data. They all liaise with supporting agencies and professionals to procure additional support for students and advise staff on appropriate teaching and learning strategies. Deputy and Assistant head teachers are responsible for chairing EHCP Annual Review meetings which consider student progress, set learning outcomes and review each student's EHC plan. ECHP reviews are also chaired by teachers with TLRs due to the volume of meeting time needed.

Teacher form tutors support students in their class group, liaise with parents and write annual reports. Curriculum leads are in place to advise and provide training to all staff, to keep up to date with changes to their subject area and lead on any adaptations needed to facilitate access for our pupils

All teaching staff have responsibility for providing suitably differentiated tasks and activities within their subject area to appropriately challenge students and facilitate progression. They have cognisance of students' special educational needs, their current targets and any additional planning information.

LSAs work in conjunction with classroom teachers to support students' learning. LSAs spend most of their time supporting students in lessons and have an agreed role with the class teacher. Some LSAs or HLTAs have specific responsibility for withdrawing and supporting students engaged on specific intensive programmes such as literacy, numeracy, sensory activities, social communication or certain therapy programmes.

Other Professionals

Links with professionals from outside The Oaks Secondary School form an essential part of planning and implementing activities to identify and meet the needs of students.

Meetings are held between the Educational Psychologist and senior leaders to discuss student progress, concerns and strategies. The Educational Psychologist also provides links with some other LA support services and professionals from the Health Service.

The school itself has links with local colleges, the Improving Progression Team, the Education Welfare Service, Attendance Improvement Team, Social Care and Health and some areas of the Health Service including Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational therapy and CAMHS. The school aims to work as closely as possible with all relevant agencies in providing the best overall package of education and support for each student.

Identifying the needs of the students

The school has three main mechanisms for understanding specific individual needs. Staff can also identify any additional or new needs at any point during a pupil's time in school. Concerns may be educational, medical, social, personal, behavioural or a combination of some or all.

Baseline Assessment

All students are baseline assessed on entry to The Oaks Secondary School. This is done as soon as is expedient. This allows students' My Plan to be formulated, written and distributed to relevant personnel within the mandatory eight week time scale of the Code of Practice.

The following "tools" are utilised:

- consulting previous school records, assessment reports, SAT results, Progression data and EHC Plan, Primary schools are asked to provide a "pen picture" of the student including any 'My Plan' documentation
- Reading and Spelling ages
- Maths levels

A summary of all information is prepared by the Assistant Head Teacher responsible for KS3 in a 'My Plan' format and made available to all staff.

Incident Reports - Behaviour

The school's system of recording and monitoring student behaviour (Sleuth) allows staff to identify incidence of behaviours and any patterns of behaviour that emerge for individual students. These may highlight areas where students require additional support or guidance and inform risk assessments. All incidents of inappropriate or negative behaviour and the use of RPI are added to a database which can highlight areas in which there may be heightened anxiety or triggers.

Annual School Reports

The school based Annual Educational Report provides a basis for discussing a student's progress and planning for the future. The Review Report includes information on:

- academic functioning
- curriculum skills
- personal qualities
- behavioural characteristics which impact on learning
- health issues which impact on learning
- preferred learning style
- learning outcomes

Educational advice is written under the headings of: Sensory and/or Physical, Social, Mental and Emotional Health, Cognition and Learning and Communication and Interaction

Meeting the needs of the students

The school fully supports the principle of curriculum entitlement which includes access to the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. This involves the need for differentiation and modification for individual or groups of students.

The degree and complexity of students' learning difficulties interface with and impact upon curriculum entitlement. The range of experiences, both within and outside the classroom, during the teaching day, are important to student progress. This often involves a balance between statutory curriculum entitlement and the specific personal needs of individual students.

Overall, the school attempts to raise student achievement through the curriculum by:

- creating a supportive environment
- identifying challenging, but realistic learning outcomes
- assessing progress
- celebrating individual success
- providing a wide range of courses and opportunities for external accreditation
- monitoring student progress through Progression, Sleuth, Evidence for Learning, My Plans, Knowledge assessment sheets and putting intervention strategies into effect

Pupils are taught in age related class groups. Pupils working at the earliest development levels are usually class based and work with the same staff for the majority of the week, this is also the case for pupils who need discrete provision for young people with severe ASC. Pupils with more moderate learning needs move around the school to have lessons with specialist teachers. Some pupils with severe needs are class based, whilst others move around to subject specialists supervised by consistent support staff.

In Key Stage 3 students have lessons based on National Curriculum subjects, RE, PSHE, Enrichment Activities and Rights Respecting School lessons.

At Key Stage 4 students follow the National Curriculum within the permitted modifications that allow students to study fewer subjects so that they can consolidate their learning across the curriculum and access opportunities for work related and vocational learning. The majority of courses at Key Stage 4 lead to external accreditation. In Key Stage 4 students spend time engaged in work related learning including careers education and work experience.

Small class groups, additional support staff and appropriate differentiation assist teachers in providing relevant and suitably challenging work for individual students.

We have retained some break and lunch time separation of year groups this year as we have noted a positive impact on pupil behaviour during less structured times.

Review Meetings

All students admitted to the school, have their progress reviewed at a minimum of termly intervals. The Annual Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Review meeting establishes a plan for the future and specifies learning (PFA) outcomes to achieve the plan.

The review is informed by school based reports and those from other involved professionals.

A comprehensive summary of the review is produced and includes:

- recommendations to the LEA in respect of changes to the EHC plan
- a summary of professional views,
- a summary of parent/carer views,
- a summary of student views and information from their 'all about me' document
- a summary of learning outcomes,
- provision required to meet the learning outcomes.

Individual Education, My Plans

All students at The Oaks Secondary School have an EHC plan.

Objectives identified in the plans are updated at the Annual Review where learning outcomes for the following year are also set. Although most objectives and learning outcomes will be met through

normal working practices, those which are specific to a particular student are identified in My Plan document. Students are encouraged to be part of the learning outcomes setting process in all subjects each term, in consultation with their subject teachers.

Additionally, some may have an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP). This may be created because a pupil's behaviour is particularly challenging and is severely impacting upon their achievement and progress. Staff are made aware of any particular de-escalation and preferred handling strategies to use with the student via a Personal Handling Plan document.

The IBP is designed to be short term and frequently reviewed. Updates to pupil risk assessments relating to behaviour are shared with staff through briefing meetings and are placed on the school's shared drive.

Some pupils have individual Moving and Handling and/or Intimate Care plans, which are updated regularly by the HLTA with responsibility for multi professional working and over seen by the SENCo. Staff also liaise with therapists to ensure that school has access to up to date programmes of therapy for those who need it.

The school nurses and visiting paediatricians support Medical Management Plans for those young people who have additional medical needs such as epilepsy, asthma, eczema or severe allergies.

Staff Training

In order to meet individual needs safely, relevant staff undertake a rolling programme of training in the following:

- Moving and Handling
- Child Protection
- Feeding (including gastrostomies)
- Emergency Medication
- Team Teach (Behaviour Management)
- First Aid at Work
- Prevent
- Educational visits
- Online safety
- Understanding Autism/ ADHD/ ODD etc
- Phonics (RWI)
- Supporting learning (MITA)

Resources

The school staff are the most important resource the school has. All staff contribute to the social, emotional and academic progress of the students. An increasing number of staff have been specially trained to provide students with intensive support in specific areas e.g. Braille, Mindfulness, Connecting with Children, Rebound Therapy

Material resources and any changes needed to the environment relating to Special Educational Needs provision are based upon needs identified through the following:

- School Development Planning
- Reviews
- Staff Meetings
- Governors Meetings
- New Legislation

The school is well resourced to cater for the needs of students with a wide range of physical disabilities. For example, overhead hoists are available in each of the specialist changing areas, the hydrotherapy pool, the interactive room and the active zone. There are also a number of mobile hoists around school as well as other aids to mobility such as sliding sheets, standing frames etc. We have access to a shared school nurse. Classrooms contain a range of specialist equipment to support ICT, reading, handwriting and access to all areas of the curriculum

Importance of Parents/Carers

Parents and carers play a vitally important role in supporting the school in the education of their children. They have easy access to staff and are encouraged to have regular contact with school to attend review meetings, parents' evenings and organised school events.

Also, as part of the ongoing work of the school, parents/carers are encouraged to keep in telephone, text, Seesaw or Zoom contact with school staff as necessary. Staff similarly, try to maintain regular contact with parents/carers through a range of media. Parents/carers comments are requested and reported at each review of their child on the Parent/Carer Review Questionnaire. Some young people have home school diaries. Parents can receive information from school via text, email, Teams and the school website.

The school urges parents/carers to bring any concerns directly and swiftly to the Head Teacher or other senior leader who will involve any relevant staff. In the event of any issue not being resolved satisfactorily the school has a Complaints Policy and Procedure document available from school and via the website.

Evaluation of the school's SEN policy and strategy

The school has a SENCo and SEN Governor who are responsible for ensuring the needs of all pupils are met. Every pupil attending The Oaks has been identified as having a special educational need. However, within the school we acknowledge groups who may need additional support. These groups are pupils with: high medical needs, those who present with consistent challenging behaviour, pupils with physical difficulties, those with severe ASC and high academic achievers (Gifted and Talented).

A variety of means are available to both the SEN Governor and the Governing Body as a whole to evaluate the success of the school in implementing its SEN Policy. The following are examples:

- Assessment results
- Improved performance in literacy and mathematics
- Annual review meetings
- Evidence of improved student performance on specific targets through My Plan documentation
- OFSTED Inspection Reports
- Reports and comments from Durham LEA Inspectors/Advisors/Officers
- School Improvement Plan Outcomes
- Information presented in the Head teacher's termly report to Governors
- Governor Link visits
- Communication from parents/carers
- Personal observation
- Student comments and views

REVIEW

This policy and practice will be reviewed by the Children's Committee on an annual basis