

The Oaks Secondary School



Information about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

For Parents & Carers



Confident Schools - Confident Parents
The Lamb Inquiry
Meeting Special Educational Needs in Durham





Our Special Educational Needs Coordinator
(SENCO)

Mrs Rebecca Farrow
Tel 01388 827380
E mail theoaks@durhamlearning.net



Our Special Educational Needs Governor

Mrs Margaret Farrow
Tel 01388 827380
E mail theoaks@durhamlearning.net



Our Head Teacher

Mrs Fiona Tweddle
Tel School 01388 827380
E mail theoaks@durhamlearning.net



Our Executive Head Teacher

Mr Martyn Tweddle
Tel School 01388 827380
E mail theoaks@durhamlearning.net

If you would like any independent support or advice about any aspect of your child's Special Educational Needs please contact the **Parent Partnership Service (SENDIASS) / Independent Supporters**
Tel 0191 5873541
E sendiass@durham.gov.uk

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What are Special Educational Needs?

A special educational need can be a number of different things. For example, your child may have difficulties with learning, socialising or behaviour, which a mainstream school would address by putting in extra support and by working in partnership with yourself.

Difficulties may also be due to a disability which makes it harder for a child to use the same educational facilities that a mainstream school provides. For some children their difficulties may be temporary, while others may have a long term need for special help.

Types of special educational needs can include:

- General Learning Difficulties – children whose learning progresses at a slower pace or who have difficulties generalising or retaining information
- Speech and Language Difficulties
- Behavioural Difficulties
- Dyslexia (difficulties with reading, writing and spelling)
- Dyspraxia (problems with motor skills, organisation)
- Dyscalculia (difficulties with number work)
- ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition, Aspergers Syndrome)
- ADD/ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- Down's, Rett, William's or other Syndromes
- Cerebral Palsy
- Other Physical/Medical Needs

Did you know?

At one point in their lives up to 20% of children/young people (1 in 5) need support for a Special Educational Need.



How do schools help children with Special Educational Needs?

Children learn and develop in different ways. Teachers recognise this and use different teaching styles, resources and plan different levels of work in the classroom to cater for the various ways pupils learn.

This is called **Quality First Teaching** and is something schools must provide for all children. However, many children, at some time in their school life, need extra help.

Because of this, ALL schools must:

- Talk to parents/carers if they think the child has a special educational need and let families know what special help the school is giving
- Appoint a member of staff as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Have a written Special Educational Needs policy – a copy should be made available for parents
- Take account of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice. This is advice given to schools by the government which outlines what schools should do to support pupils with SEN and gives recommendations for good practice

The school recognises that you, as your child's parent/carer, are the expert on them and will involve you every step of the way.



What does the SENCO do?

SENCO = Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

If your child has Special Educational Needs, the SENCO should:

- Ensure the right support is put in place for your child
- Advise teachers and support staff on how to help your child
- Arrange training for staff so they understand your child's needs
- Work closely with you on a regular basis to talk with you about your child's needs and listen to any ideas or concerns you might have
- Work with other professionals who may be able to help your child, e.g. speech and language therapist /medical professional/ educational psychologist



How are Special Educational Needs identified?

The first person to identify that a child has special educational needs may be:

- Yourself, as parent or carer
- A teacher
- A health visitor
- Another medical professional

Children thought to have special educational needs will be placed on a mainstream school's special educational needs register and receive one of three levels of support in mainstream education:

- Quality First Teaching
- SEN Support Plan
- Education Health and Care Plan

You may be familiar with these programmes and processes if your child has attended a mainstream school





What happens in a Special School?

All pupils in a school for children with Special Educational Needs, such as The Oaks, will have an Education, Health and Care plan.

This means that your child will have been through the statutory assessment process. You can find out more about this process on the next page.

Following statutory assessment your child will have a written document that describes their difficulties, highlights their needs and outlines the most suitable provision to meet their needs in the areas of Cognition and Learning, Sensory and Physical, Social Emotional Mental Health, Communication and Interaction. The document may also indicate what type of school your child should attend. Targets and outcomes will be written which will help your child to reach their potential

Pupils at The Oaks School may have particular needs over and above general learning difficulties which require specialist intervention for all or part of their time in school. These can include:

- Significant social, emotional or mental health difficulties
- An Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Profound and complex learning difficulties
- Sensory impairment
- High medical needs
- Behavioural difficulties
- Physical difficulties
- Areas of learning in which they are considered gifted or talented

The level of support received may change throughout a child's time at school. School staff will speak to you if they think this should happen and will ask you for your opinion about changes in provision.

What is a Statutory Assessment?

If your child's needs are complex and/or severe the Local Authority will carry out a Statutory Assessment:

This is a very detailed assessment of your child's needs. Parents or carers, the school and a range of professionals will all be asked to provide written reports.

At the end of the assessment phase the Local Authority will consider these reports to help decide whether or not to produce an Education Health and Care Plan or SEN Support plan for your child.

As a parent/carer you also have the right to ask the Local Authority to carry out this assessment although it is usually best if you can do this with the support of the school.

Statutory Assessment is only appropriate for a small number of children. Your mainstream school SENCO or the Parent Partnership Service (SENDIASS) will be able to advise you about this.

What is an Education Health and Care Plan?

If the Statutory Assessment shows that your child needs an SEN support plan or an EHC plan, a detailed individual plan will be produced advising schools about what they must do to support your child.

If your child has an Education Health and Care Plan, the school must:

- Hold an Annual Review Meeting to which you and other professionals must be invited.
- Provide your child with the full range of educational support specified in their document



What is an Individual Education Plan?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) / Provision Map describes what the school, the staff and the SENCO plan to do to help your child learn. At the Oaks these are called 'My Plans'. All teachers should be aware that children learn in different ways.

An Individual Education Plan will be written especially for your child.

- It will include short term targets for Maths and English
- It will be written and sent to you by post every term
- It will be reviewed and updated regularly by subject or form staff

Targets

- Targets are set in all subject areas and these are reviewed with your child on a termly basis
- The targets for each subject are shown in your child's annual review
- You will have the opportunity to discuss targets formally at termly parents' evenings
- Every pupils progress' is recorded and monitored against national curriculum and pre national curriculum levels using a programme called Progression. The percentage achievement is reported in the annual review and analysed over time

It is good practice for schools to share copies of Individual Education Plans / My Plans with parents / carers.



**What does Quality
First teaching mean
at The Oaks?**

All pupils at The Oaks School have access to Quality First Teaching. This includes:

- Teaching from staff who have knowledge skills and experience in special education
- A fully accessible and safe building
- High quality specialist facilities
- A cohesive and inclusive school community
- A small steps approach to teaching and learning
- All pupils having Individual Education Plans / My Plans
- Staff trained in behaviour management and positive handling
- Staff trained in working with children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions
- Small class sizes
- Trained support staff distributed according to pupil need
- A Curriculum adapted to meet individual needs
- Vocational courses and accreditation suitable for students with SEND
- Access to accredited enrichment activities
- All lessons differentiated to meet individual learning needs



What additional help could my child receive at The Oaks?

If your child has additional needs here are some of the things you can expect from our school:

- Pupils with additional medical needs will have a medical care plan
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties may have a behaviour management plan, a personal handling plan and a risk assessment
- Pupils with mobility difficulties have a Personal Evacuation Plan and a Moving and Handling Plan
- Some pupils may have a visual timetable, PECS (picture exchange communication system) or electronic communication aid
- Additional Information Communication Technology that may take the form of Dynovox communication aids, individual lap top computers, ipads, switching, additional access to interactive spaces
- Pupils with complex physical needs may have access to rebound or hydrotherapy
- Special sensory enrichment sessions for those with PMLD
- A fully staffed Behaviour Support unit and access to trained counsellors
- Staff trained in first aid, administration of medicines and a full time clinical support assistant
- Higher level teaching assistants with responsibility for Behaviour, Moving and Handling, Attendance, Extended Services, Transition, Interventions and Sensory Support
- Gifted and Talented supplementary programmes, Intervention Strategies



Who else may be involved with my child?

The Oaks works in partnership with a range of other professionals and agencies who can support your child's learning, advise school staff or help with family matters.

These include:

- School Nurse
- Physiotherapist
- Educational Psychologist
- Sensory Support Service
- CAMHS / LD CAMHS
- Community Nurses
- Children and Young Peoples Services
- Specific Learning Difficulties service
- Crisis Response
- Youth Engagement Service
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Attendance Improvement Team
- Occupational Therapists
- Service for pupils with High Medical needs
- Access Service
- ASD Support and Development Team





We hope this information has helped you to understand how schools support children with Special Educational Needs.

If you would like to visit the school or talk to someone about your child's needs, please telephone the Head Teacher.

If you are concerned that your child's Special Educational Needs are not being met or your child is not making progress, please talk to Mrs. Tweddle, Head of School or Mrs. Farrow, Special Educational Needs Coordinator about support for your child.

Thank you for working with us to help your child enjoy school and enjoy learning.

