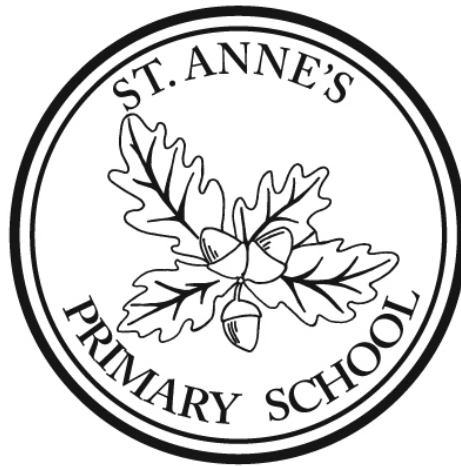


St. Anne's Primary School
50 Kingsway, Finaghy,
Belfast BT10 0NE



Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

ST ANNE'S SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

1. PHILOSOPHY

At St Anne's, we believe in inclusion. Children come to school with a variety of needs. Each child has a right to have those needs identified and met as far as possible within our school. By recognising those needs and differentiating our resources and practices, we aim to make a broad and balanced curriculum and our extra-curricular activities accessible to all our pupils.

Our admission process is the same for all children, whether or not they have Special Educational Needs or disabilities. It is our objective that all our pupils be involved to the greatest possible extent in the life of the school. St Anne's does everything within its power and budgetary resources to ensure suitable access to its buildings and facilities and to its educational services.

We are aware of the importance of parental involvement in support of our pupils and, whenever possible, seek fully to involve parents / guardians in the provision of a rich educational experience for all our children, including those with Special Educational Needs and / or disabilities.

2. THE CODES OF PRACTICE

2.1 The Northern Ireland Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998) and the Supplement to the Code of Practice (2005) guide all our policies and practices in providing for children with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.

The term "Special Educational Needs" is defined in the Code as "a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made." "Learning difficulty" means that the child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age, and/or has a disability, which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities (or, where the child is below school age, would hinder such use if the child were of school age.) "Special educational provision" means educational provision, which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age. (Code of Practice, 1.4)

Under the provisions of the Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA), a person has a disability if "he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. (Supplement to the Code of Practice, 3.3)

2.2 TYPES OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Code recognises eight categories of Special Educational Needs:

1. A Learning Difficulty
2. A Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)
3. Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
4. Physical Disabilities
5. Sensory Impairment: Hearing
6. Sensory Impairment: Visual
7. Speech and Language Difficulties.
8. Medical Condition(s)

Children's difficulties in all these categories may vary in degree and some children will have more than one difficulty.

3. THE SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTER

In order to ensure that children's Special Educational Needs are recorded and met, St Anne's is statutorily obliged to keep a "Register of Children with Special Educational Needs," (The Special Needs Register.)

The Register records the nature of the child's difficulty, which Stage they are at under the Code of Practice, what action has been taken and what progress has been made. The Register is kept under constant review and is regularly up-dated.

4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

4.1 It is the objective of the St Anne's Special Needs policy and practice that children with Special Educational needs are identified as early as possible and that their needs are catered for, in line with the 5-stage approach outlined in the Code of Practice (see Section 5 below).

4.2 The class teacher identifies and registers a child's special educational needs and consults the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), who collects and records information, including the results of teacher observations and assessments. (Standardised tests are carried out in Maths once per year and in Reading twice per year, from P3 onwards.) Where appropriate, further standardised and / or diagnostic assessments will be carried out.

4.3 Where appropriate, and with parental permission, a child can be referred to the designated school nurse, if medical or sensory difficulties are suspected.

4.4 The child's special educational need is determined and the required support is provided by the class teacher, with the help of the SENCo. This will normally take the form of differentiated work and additional teacher-pupil support, either in a group or on a one-to-one basis. In some cases additional provision is also made by the Special Needs Support Teachers and sometimes also by outside agencies (see Section 8).

4.5 For children at Stage 2 and above, Education Plans are drawn up and implemented by the class teacher. The Education Plans identify the child's difficulty and focus on some specific targets to address the child's needs. Parents are invited to discuss these targets and their support is sought. Where a parent cannot attend such a meeting, a copy of the plan is sent to them. Education Plans are normally drawn up and reviewed by the teacher three times per year (though usually more often in the case of behavioural difficulties). Parents are invited, where possible, to the review meetings.

4.6 Outside agencies involved in a child's education (Stages 3 to 5) also review the child's progress and inform parents of progress and any concerns.

5. THE FIVE-STAGE APPROACH

In line with the Code of Practice, St Anne's recognises that there is a continuum of Special Educational Needs – from the very mild to the severe. The school therefore adopts the five-stage approach to address the child's needs at the appropriate level.

- **Stage 1**

Teacher(s) identify and record the child's special educational needs and, consulting parents/guardians and the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), take initial action. This is normally in the form of differentiated work and additional support. Progress is reviewed and a decision made as to the appropriate stage at which the child should continue.

- Stage 2

Where the initial intervention has not proved sufficient, or where a child's needs are more severe, a more targeted action is required. The teacher draws up and implements a specific and targeted programme of support, known as an Education Plan. Progress is reviewed at the pre-determined date and a decision made as to the appropriate stage at which the child should continue.

- Stage 3

Where Stage 1 or 2 action is not thought sufficient, or where specialist expertise is required, the school will call on the services of external support agencies. Initially this involves referral to an Educational Psychologist for an assessment to be made of the child's Special Educational Needs. Specialists from outside agencies may be consulted (see Section 8) and this may result in additional external support.

External support may include:

- Peripatetic Literacy lessons
- Outreach Literacy or Mathematics lessons
- Emotional and Behavioural advice and/or support sessions
- Social skills advice and/or support sessions
- Advice or support for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Advice and support with visual or auditory impairments
- Speech and Language advice or referral to a Speech Therapist
- Occupational Therapy advice or support
- Intervention by the Children's Inter-Disciplinary Support (CIDS) Team
- Provision of a classroom assistant to support the child, on a full- or part-time basis.
- Special educational provision, where medical conditions do not permit attendance at school
- Advice or support from the Educational Welfare Officer
- Advice or support from Social Services

Progress is reviewed at the pre-determined date and a decision made as to the appropriate stage at which the child should continue.

- Stage 4

Where a child's difficulties are seen to be more severe and/or complex, it may be considered necessary for a more comprehensive assessment to be made of his / her Special Educational Needs. This is undertaken by the relevant Education and Library Board, with a view to deciding whether the Board should issue a "Statement of Special Educational Needs" for the child. Information and views are sought from all relevant parties.

- Stage 5

Following full consultation with all interested parties, the Education Board issues a "Statement of Special Educational Needs," with recommendations for the educational provision for the child – in St Anne's or in a Special School or in a school with a Special Unit. The Board monitors and reviews the provision annually, in consultation with the child's parents, the school and any other agencies involved with the child.

Children may move up and down the stages, depending on their progress, as determined through the review process.

6. Roles and Responsibilities within St Anne's

6.1 The Board of Governors determine, in co-operation with the Principal, the school's general policy and approach, establish appropriate staffing and funding arrangements, and maintain general oversight of the school's work.

6.2 The Principal, Mr Keenan, has responsibility for the day-to-day running of all the school's work, including its SEND provision. He keeps the Governors informed and works closely with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

6.3 The SENCo, Miss Irwin, working closely with other teachers, has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of St Anne's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy. She liaises with parents / guardians of children with SEN and/or disabilities; co-ordinates SEND provision; responds to requests for advice from

other teachers; maintains the SEND Register; establishes the SEND in-service training needs of staff; contributes as appropriate to their training; liaises with external agencies in regard to SEND issues. Miss Irwin has completed the 'SENCo Induction' course. Mrs Elliott, the Vice Principal, holds a Diploma in Professional Development, with a specialism in Special Educational Needs.

6.4 The class teachers have responsibility for providing for the needs of their pupils. They help identify, assess and provide for the needs of pupils in their class who have SEN and/or disabilities, including differentiating work, and drawing up, implementing and reviewing Education Plans for children at Stage 2 and above. They consult with and inform the SENCo and the parents of their pupils.

6.5 The Special Needs Literacy and Numeracy Support Teachers, Miss Irwin, Miss Donnelly and Mr O'Dowda assist in the identification, assessment and provision for children who are experiencing difficulties in Literacy and Numeracy. They provide specialised withdrawal support classes for a number of pupils.

7. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES FOR SEN

St Anne's dedicates £41,500 to provide for the additional requirements of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. This provides for specialist support teaching, special equipment and special teaching resources.

8. EXTERNAL SPECIALIST SUPPORT AGENCIES

St Anne's can call on the expertise and support of specialist outside agencies in the process of assessing and providing for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. These are:

- An Educational Psychologist from the Psychology Department of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB)
- The Peripatetic Literacy Service
- The Outreach Service of Harberton Reading Unit
- The advice and resource services of St Gerard's Reading Unit
- The Outreach Service for Autistic Spectrum Disorders of Oakwood School and Assessment Centre
- The Outreach Service of Harberton Behavioural Unit

- The Outreach Service of Clarawood Behavioural Unit
- The designated School Nurse
- The Children's Interdisciplinary Support (CIDS) Team
- Speech Therapy services
- The Peripatetic Support Service for pupils with a hearing impairment
- The Peripatetic Support Service for pupils with a visual impairment
- Occupational Therapy services
- The Educational Welfare Officer
- The Family Service
- Social Services

9. ARRANGEMENTS FOR INVOLVING PARENTS

9.1 St Anne's regards parents as co-educators with the school. We keep parents informed, listen to their concerns, discuss their child's difficulties, consult them on their child's needs, invite them to support any Education Plans and keep them abreast of progress and developments through reviews and the normal parent/teacher meetings.

9.2 Parents may make an appointment to meet their child's teacher(s) and the SENCo, if they are concerned or require information.

9.3 The Education and Library boards have the duty to provide a Special Educational Needs Advice and Information Service (SENAIS), to ensure that parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities know where and how to access information and advice in relation to the needs of their children. This service in the main is offered on-line. It can be accessed at www.education-support.org.uk. The website has links to the five Education and Library Board sites which also provide information on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

9.4 If parents are unable to attend the meetings for the launch or review of Education Plans, a copy of these documents will be sent to them. Parents may consult in school a copy of the St Anne's Special Educational Needs Policy, the Northern Ireland Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998) and the Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (2005).

9.5 Should parents have a concern about the special educational provision for their child, they should contact the class teacher in the first instance. Thereafter they may contact the SENCo, the Principal, the Board of Governors, the Belfast Education and Library Board.

10. RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

10.1 For cases where there is an unresolved disagreement between parents and the school and/or between parents and the Board about special education provision, the five Education and Library Boards provide an independent Dispute Avoidance and Resolutions Service (DARS), which provides an informal forum to find a way forward that all parties can accept.

10.2 The Equality Commission provides a Conciliation Service, aimed at promoting the settlement of disputes relating to disability discrimination.

10.3 In the case of an unresolved dispute in relation to Statements of Special Educational Needs (Stages 4 or 5), parents may refer the matter to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).