

SEN & Disability Policy & SEN Information Report

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School



*Excellence for All
Service to Others
Inspired by Christ*

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| Date of last review: | July 2025 | Date of next review: | July 2026 |
| Owner: | SENCO | Quality Assures: | Headteacher |
| Approval: | Full Governing Body Panel | | |

First point of contact regarding SEN the daily operation of SEN in St John's:

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

St. John's firmly believes that children and young people have the capacity to make progress academically, socially, and spiritually. As a consequence, the school seeks to remove all barriers to learning and facilitate full participation in the community of the school. We believe that all students and young adults are entitled to be given equality of opportunities, so they reach their full potential – in all aspects of school life. We recognise the uniqueness of each individual and seek to provide a rich and varied learning experience for all students. We believe that everybody is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to their current and future needs.

St John's is committed to providing the best possible learning environment and to offer a curriculum that offers all individuals a sense of achievement and thereby helps them to develop confidence and self-esteem. St. John's will have due regard for the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014 (CoP) when carrying out its duties towards pupils experiencing SEND or disability.

St John's values the opinions of students and recognises the contributions that parents can make to the success of students experiencing difficulties accessing aspects of school. As a consequence, St John's aims to keep parents informed when special needs are identified and when interventions are being initiated. All parents should be routinely informed of their child's progress towards personal targets – including all students on the SEN register.

Aims and Objectives:

The school seeks to ensure that all students are included, regardless of academic ability, race, disability, gender, or social origins. We seek to make every child and young person valued and respected; permitting them to make the best possible contribution to society throughout their lives.

St John's will seek to:

- give children and young people with SEN the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- provide an adapted curriculum appropriate to individual needs and ability.
- ensure the identification of all children and young people requiring SEN provision is made as early as possible in their school career.
- make an accessible provision for all identified children and young people experiencing SEN to ensure appropriate and challenging progress is made.
- work with the wider community (students, families, school staff, professionals and agencies) to ensure that the identification used, and interventions offered are as comprehensive and effective as possible.
- meet the training needs of teachers and teaching assistants involved with students experiencing SEN.

- foster an atmosphere in which SEN children and young people feel valued and can develop a sense of self-worth and achievement.
- Focus on individual's needs rather than labels.

Definition of SEN

A child or young person experiences 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 if he or she:

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- (b) 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 in mainstream post-16 institutions.

SEN Code of Practice (2014, p 4)

Definition of Disability

Many children and young people who experience SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is defined as 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’ SEN Code of Practice (2014, p5)

1 The kinds of special educational need for which provision is made at the school.

At St John's we can make provision for a wide range of frequently occurring special educational needs without the need for a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan. For example, students on the SEN register currently experience a variety of needs including dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, speech and language delays, autistic spectrum condition, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical disabilities, general learning difficulties, mild sensory impairments and behaviour difficulties rising out of learning or social, emotional, and mental health needs. There are other, less frequent, special needs that the school has less experience of. When applications to join the school are made, the school will do all that is practically possible to accommodate those needs, working with parents, outside agencies and students as appropriate. The school will also work with parents to ensure that honest discussions occur regarding the school's suitability to accommodate any needs are made from an informed point of view.

The school also currently meets the needs of pupils with more severe and complex barriers that warrant enhanced intervention under Statements of Special Educational Needs / Education, Health and Care Plans. The decision regarding the admission of any pupil with a statement of special educational need / Education, Health and Care plan is made by the Local Authority. The school will not advise against such admission unless inclusion is incompatible with the efficient education of others and therefore requires unreasonable steps to be made, affecting the learning of others or the effective use of school and LEA resources.

The admission arrangements for pupils without a Statement of Special Educational Needs / Education, Health and Care Plan are laid out in the school's admissions policy that can be read on the school's website or in school. The policy purposefully seeks not to discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children or those with special educational needs in the admissions process.

Parents and guardians of students experiencing SEN or disability are encouraged to share concerns and information regarding their child's individual needs. They are welcome to visit the school to view the environment and make an appointment to discuss individual needs and provision with the Learning Support Co-ordinator or school's pastoral team via the school reception.

2 Information about the policy for identification and assessment of pupils with SEN

St John's school seeks to gain awareness of students' needs at the earliest possible opportunity. Primary schools are routinely contacted in the preparation for transition into Year 7. For casual admissions, the school will seek to contact the most recent school attended to gain a case history. Parents are given the opportunity to share history, concerns and to highlight prior provision that has or has not worked as soon as a place has been offered. Parents are encouraged to share relevant third-party reports and contacts.

Once at St John's, we continuously monitor the progress of all pupils. We use a range of assessments, including:

- The regular marking of assessments and assignments by subject teachers
- Collecting data three times a year from all subject areas; permitting a comparative review of academic progress to be made by the school. This data is analysed by subject teachers and subject leaders who will alert the Year leader, Key Stage leader and SENCO of concerns.
- End of Year exams at KS3
- Mock exams during Term 2 and Term 4 for both KS4 and KS5
- Key Stage 2 data informs the baseline from which continuous progress is measured and minimum target grades are set.
- Students entering the school are assessed using the NFER Cognitive Abilities Tests.
- Students' spelling levels are established routinely for students in Key Stage 3 using the standardised Reading Assessments.
- Access Arrangements testing in KS4 and KS5.

Where progress is not sufficient, even if a special educational need has not been identified, the teachers will put in place extra support to enable the pupil to catch up. This will typically include extra support; often through differentiated materials to acknowledge different learning styles or weakness in basic literacy or numeracy skills. Teachers may offer additional explanation, including out of lesson support or offer access to alternative recording methods. Additionally, adaptations may be made to seating arrangements.

Some pupils may continue to make inadequate progress, despite high-quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness. For these pupils, and in consultation with parents, we will use a range of assessment tools to determine the cause of the learning difficulty. As appropriate, we have access to external advisors who can administer more specialist assessments.

The purpose of this more detailed assessment is to understand what additional resources and different approaches are required to enable the pupil to make better progress. These will be shared with parents, put into a SEN support plan, and reviewed regularly, and refined / revised if necessary. At this point we will have identified that the pupil has a special educational need because the school is making special educational provision for the pupil which is additional and different to what is normally available.

If the pupil is able to make good progress using this additional and different resource (but would not be able to maintain this good progress without it) we will continue to identify the pupil as having a special educational need. If the pupil is able to maintain good progress without the additional and different resources, he or she will not be identified with special educational needs. When any change in identification of SEN is changed, parents will be notified via the term progress reports.

We aim to ensure that all teachers and support staff who work with the pupil are aware of the support to be provided and the teaching approaches to be used. It is essential that attention is given to the development of independence. Consequently, support will always be at the minimum level required to make a difference.

3 Information about the school's policies for making provision for pupils with special educational needs, whether or not they have EHC Plans, including.

3a How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its provision for such pupils.

All students are set achievement targets that are challenging but realistic. Progress towards those targets is monitored – initially by subject teachers and subject leaders. The Learning Support Department uses data capture, teacher reports and observations of students and their work to track progress towards the various goals.

Each review of the SEN support plan will be informed by the views of the pupil, parents and class/subject teachers and the assessment information from teachers which will show whether adequate progress is being made.

The *SEN Code of Practice (2014, 6.17)* describes inadequate progress thus:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.
- Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress.
- Fails to close the attainment gap between child and peers.
- Widening the attainment gap

For pupils with or without an EHC Plan, there will be an annual review of the provision made for the child, which will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the special provision. The collation of all annual review evaluations of effectiveness will be reported to the governing body.

3b the school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

Every pupil in the school has their progress tracked three times per year as the Milestone data is collected and analysed. The school regularly screens reading in KS3 using standardised reading assessments to check progress. In addition to this, pupils with special educational needs may have more frequent assessments of reading age, spelling age etc. The assessments we use at St. John's School are as referred to in section 2. Using these assessments, it will be possible to see if pupils are increasing their level of skills in key areas. The Learning Support Department monitors the progress of students on the SEN register in each of their core subjects.

If these assessments do not show adequate progress is being made, the SEN support plan will be reviewed and adjusted.

3c the school's approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered. *SEN Code of Practice (2014, 6.37)*

In St John's School the quality of teaching continues to be good as detailed in our last Ofsted inspection (January 2025). To underpin this, we are encouraging staff to utilise 15 Quality First Teaching strategies in their practice which we have adapted from the Mainstream Core Standards (see Section 13 for the link), advice developed by Kent County Council to ensure that our teaching conforms to best practice within the local context.

In meeting the Mainstream Core Standards, the school employs some additional teaching approaches, as advised by internal and external assessments e.g., one to one tutoring / Language Link / mentoring, small group teaching, use of ICT software learning packages. These are delivered by additional staff employed through the funding provided to the school as 'notional SEN funding'.

3d How the school adapts the curriculum and learning environment for pupils with special educational needs.

At St John's School we show regard to the advice in the Mainstream Core Standards on how to adapt the curriculum and the learning environment for pupils with special educational needs. We also incorporate the advice provided because of assessments, both internal and external, and the strategies described in Statements of Special Educational Needs / Education, Health and Care Plans. We work with a range of advisory staff and adhere to the recommendations they make. We currently have regular visits for the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service – Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment and Social Emotional and Mental Health.

3e additional support for learning that is available to pupils with special educational needs.

As part of our budget, we receive 'notional SEN funding'. This funding is used to ensure that the quality of teaching is good in the school and that there are sufficient resources to deploy additional and different teaching for pupils requiring SEN support. The amount of support required for each pupil to make good progress will be different in each case and a full list of the interventions we can offer is on our provision map. The provision we make is constantly reviewed and developed to match identified needs.

A team of Learning Support Assistants work with students in lessons – focusing on up to four students in any one lesson. Some students are extracted from registration, lessons or invited to after school sessions for specific programmes targeting obstacles to their learning. Care is taken to ensure that the impact on the student of such withdrawal from lesson is a positive one; seeking to avoid missing important activities for example.

In very few cases a very high level of resourcing is required. The funding arrangements require schools to provide up to £6000 per year of resource for pupils with high needs, and above that amount the Local Authority should provide top up funding to the school. This sum may include the staff costs for individual and small group intervention, specialist equipment and resourcing. The school has been allocated the Gravesend Central and our new Community of School, in which the SENCO can bid for additional funding from a centralised budget. The LEA controls and monitors the process: setting eligibility criteria and setting staffing costs based on averages across the county.

3f How the school enables pupils with special educational needs to engage in activities of the school (including physical activities) together with children who do not have special educational needs

All clubs, trips and activities offered to pupils at St John's School are available to pupils with special educational needs either with or without a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health, and Care Plan. Where it is necessary, the school will use the resources available to it to provide additional adult support or materials to enable the safe participation of the pupil in the activity.

3g support that is available for improving the emotional and social development of pupils with special educational needs.

At St John's School we understand that an important feature of the school is to enable all pupils to develop spiritual, emotional resilience and social skills, both through direct teaching, for instance, whole school assemblies, personal development lessons, sixth form mentoring and indirectly with all conversations adults have with pupils throughout the day.

For some pupils, with the most need for help in this area, we also can provide additional support from the chaplaincy team, access to the pastoral team and the welfare support officer, enhanced mentoring (in addition to that offered by form tutors) and individual meetings with a life coach.

Pupils in the early stages of emotional and social development, because of their special educational needs, will be supported to enable them to develop and mature appropriately. This will usually require additional and different resources, beyond that required by pupils who do not need this support.

4 The name and contact details of the SEN Co-ordinator

The Learning Support Co-ordinator at St John's School is Mrs Rebecca Giles, who is a qualified teacher and has completed her M.Ed. in SEN and Inclusion – incorporating a module entitled Professional Development for SENCOS.

5 Information about the expertise and training of staff in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and how specialist expertise will be secured.

- STJ Supporting in Class Strategy
- Child Protection Training
- Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Supporting Teaching and Learning
- Whole staff Safeguarding INSET (All LSAs)
- Behaviour Management
- ASC Awareness
- Brain Injury Trust Training
- Visual Impairment Specialist Support
- Visual Impairment Mobility Training
- Hearing Impairment Specialist Support
- Dyscalculia Awareness
- AET Training
- Selective Mutism Training
- PDA Surgery

In addition, the same staff have received the following enhanced and specialist training.

- Facilitating Transition from KS2 to KS3
- Young People and Autism
- In-house training to develop in-class support.
- Trouble Teens
- VI/ HI Training
- Autistic Champions

- Food Hygiene
- Drawing and Talking
- Positive Handling Training

One of the team has successfully completed HTLA qualifications. The school also offers apprenticeship opportunities and has successfully trained 2 full apprentices, one of which is now employed fully by the school.

Currently, 3 members of the school are completing the NPQ SEND to become qualified SENCO. These are the SEND Manager, two members of the Teaching and Learning team, one of which is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Sharing of good practice and developing strategies to support is on-going. Whenever possible, we draw upon our own resources to make training as effective and bespoke as possible. The team meets weekly where good practice is regularly shared. Should training needs be identified that we do not hold experience of, we will endeavour find a provider who is able to deliver it. Training providers we could approach include: the SMILE CENTRE (Ifield School), Educational Psychologist, occupational therapists, physiotherapist, dyslexia specialists and the STLS. This will change under the structure of the Communities of Schools which St John's is a part of. The cost of training is covered by the notional SEN funding.

6 Information about how equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs will be secured.

Where external advisors recommend the use of equipment or facilities which the school does not have, we will seek to purchase it using the notional SEN funding or seek it by loan. For highly specialist communication equipment the school will seek the advice of the KCC Communication and Assistive Technology team.

7 The arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education.

All parents and carers of pupils at St John's are routinely invited to discuss the progress of their children formally with teaching staff, and also their form tutor, on at least one occasion in an academic year. Additionally, every student receives three progress reports each academic year. Furthermore, we are happy to arrange meetings outside of these times and welcome the contributions of the students themselves.

As part of our normal teaching arrangements, all pupils will be offered access to some additional teaching to help them catch-up if progress monitoring indicates that it is necessary; this will not imply that the pupil has a special educational need.

If, following this normal provision, improvements in progress are not seen, we will contact parents to discuss the use of internal or external assessments which will help us to address these needs better. The purpose of the assessment is to identify the most appropriate outcome for students and the methods to achieve it. From this point onwards the pupil may be identified as having special educational needs because special educational provision is being made for them. Parents will be consulted on the planning and reviews of this provision. The views of students are recognised as essential and are sought, listened to, and considered. Both parental cooperation and support are key to securing appropriate provision.

In addition to this, parents of pupils with a statement of SEN within an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to contribute to and attend an annual review, which, wherever possible, will also include other agencies involved with the pupil. Information will be made accessible for parents. Again, the views of the student are treated seriously and considered when decisions are made.

8 The arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education.

No intervention put in place by the school will be effective without the cooperation of the student. During the period of identification of needs, students are interviewed using a standard form to generate a Pupil Passport, which is designed to obtain the student's perspective on their needs.

When a pupil has been identified to have special educational needs because special educational provision is being made for him or her, the pupil will be consulted about and involved in the arrangements made for them as part of person-centred planning. This will begin with an informal discussion with one of our trained LSAs to create the pupil's 'Passport' in which the pupil is encouraged to explain what helps them to learn and what barriers they experience within school. It will also contain specific SEN information such as diagnoses, progress, behaviours, attendance and planned interventions. Once complete, this is then ratified by the SENCO and subsequently circulated to the student's teachers. These are also attached to the student's SIMS data and are held centrally in the SEN HUB. These are reviewed biennially as standard, however if there is a change in diagnosis, behaviour or presentation, the Pupil Passport will be reviewed and updated on an individual basis.

Please note that parents are likely to play a more significant role in their child's first few years at St John's, however, the young person will be encouraged to take more responsibility and act with greater independence as they move through to the upper end of the school.

9 The arrangements made by the governing body relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of pupils with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school.

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints at St John's School are used for complaints about provision made for special educational needs. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the Learning Support Co-ordinator (SENCO) to resolve the issue in the first instance. In the rare occasions when matters cannot be resolved, a complaint can be formally made to the school's complaints coordinator as detailed in the school's Formal Complaints Policy.

If the complaint is still not resolved after it has been considered by the governing body in line with the school's Formal Complaints Policy, there is a right to appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman if a parent is unhappy with the way the school has dealt with a complaint. To complain to the Ombudsman, telephone the Advice Team on 0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983 (8.30am to 5.00pm, Mondays to Fridays). Alternatively, a disagreement resolution service or mediation service can be contracted by the school.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have a Statement of SEN or EHCPs where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

10 How the governing body involves other bodies, including health and social services bodies, local authority support services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and in supporting the families of such pupils.

Through Governor SEN visits, and scrutinisation of the SEN reports compiled by the SENCO for the Governing Body, the Governing Body quality assures that the school engages with the following bodies.

- Ability to make ‘ad hoc’ requests for advice from Communication and Assistive Technology Team, etc.
- Specialist Teachers for HI, VI, and PD.
- Liaison with Social Services and health bodies as required.
- Membership of professional networks for learning support, including the local SENCO forum

11 The contact details of support services for the parents of pupils with special educational needs, including those for arrangements made in accordance with clause 32 (Parent Partnership Services)

Information, Advise and Support Kent (IASK) provides free, impartial, confidential, advice, support, and options around educational issues for parents who have children with special educational needs or disabilities (0-19). They empower parents to play an active and informed role in their child’s education. They can be contacted on:

Helpline: 03000 41 3000

E-mail: iask@kent.gov.uk

Website: www.iask.org.uk

12 The school’s arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education or in preparing for adulthood and independent living

At St John’s School we work closely with the educational settings used by the pupils before they transfer to us to seek the information that will make the transfer is a seamless as possible.

When offers of placement have been accepted, St John’s will routinely contact primary schools for all students. When a student has been highlighted as experiencing a special need, the Learning Support Co-ordinator, or their representative will make additional contact with the school to discuss the needs and tried provision with the school’s SENCO or their representative.

Parents are invited to provide information to the Learning Support Department using a form provided as part of the admissions pack.

For the most vulnerable at transfer, the Learning Support Department will offer an additional visit to smooth transition. In addition to letting the student see the school and hence reduce anxiety over the summer break, it permits observation of them in the school environment. Where there are more complex needs or impairments, students will be permitted to gain enhanced experience of the school with more visits. Specialist advice is sought as deemed appropriate.

We also contribute information to a pupils’ onward destination by providing information to the next setting. We respond promptly to requests for information about prior special arrangements and interventions to the local FE colleges for example.

13 Information on where the local authority’s local offer is published.

The local authority’s local offer is published on www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/about-the-local-offer and parents without internet access should make an appointment with the LEARNING SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR for support to gain the information they require. Local libraries may be able to facilitate internet access too.

This policy was written in line with the requirements of:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEN Code of Practice 2014
- SI 2014 1530 Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Part 3 Duties on Schools – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
- Schedule 1 regulation 51– Information to be included in the SEN information report
- Schedule 2 regulation 53 – Information to be published by a local authority in its local offer
- Mainstream Core Standards: <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-educational-needs/the-mainstream-core-standards>
- Equality Act 2010
- Schools Admissions Code, DfE 1 Feb 2012
- SI 2012 1124 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- SI 2013 758 The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies
- Behaviour/Discipline Policy,
- Equalities Policy,
- Safeguarding Policy,
- Homework Policy,
- Complaints Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Examinations Policy
- Access Arrangements Policy

This policy was developed using the county template and customised for St. John's Catholic Comprehensive.