

## **Rationale**

This policy is drawn up with reference to the “Code of Practice” (2001) on the identification and assessment of special education needs, The Education Act (1996), The SEN and Disability Act (2002) and the Every Child Matters initiative (2004).

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all children receive a broad and well balanced education, including full access to the National Curriculum and benefit as fully as possible from the education provided at the Firs. It is understood that some 20% of children have special needs at some point during their school career and in the most part these needs are met within mainstream education. A small number of children will however have a need of such severity that the LA will be required to determine and arrange the special education provision for that child by means of a statutory statement of Special Education needs.

A pupil has special educational needs (SEN) if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A pupil has a learning difficulty if he/she has:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children the same age.
- A disability which prevents or hinders him/her from accessing education facilities provided for children of the same age in schools within the LA.

Children should not be regarded as having learning difficulties solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which they will be taught. (Education Act 1996 Section 312)

A person has a disability if she/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. (Section 1 (1) Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

This policy is based on the key principles that underpin the Code of Practice (CoP):

- All pupils have the right to a broad, balanced and relevant education.
- The recognition of a continuum of need.
- Early intervention
- Responsibility for SEN lies collectively with all staff
- The use of best practice can minimise the impact of SEN
- That pupils should have a voice in commenting on their progress
- Parents as partners in education
- Integration of all agencies involved with the pupil

It is also underpinned by the principles embodied in Every Child Matters (ECM). Every pupil with SEN and/or a disability in this inclusive school has an entitlement to fulfil his/her potential. This is achieved by ensuring the well being of all pupils in relation to:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving social / economic well being

The policy will assist the whole school to work together, consistently and coherently with the identification, resource provision, implementation, monitoring and reviewing

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of the education of those who are perceived to have a special educational need or needs. The policy will be available to parents in school to inform them of the practices and provision within the Firs Lower School regarding children with special educational needs.

It is also acknowledged that some pupils will be 'more able pupils' and will because of their particular ability, also have special educational needs. This issue is addressed in the school's 'Gifted and Talented' Policy.

**Section 1 - The Firs special education provision.**

Arrangements for co-ordinating education provision for pupils with SEN

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The strategic leadership of the SEN provision including funding.
- Completion of paperwork linked with statutory assessments.
- Ensuring the IEP review plan is created annually.

The SEN Manager will be responsible for:

- The day to day operation of the School's SEN policy.
- Liaising with and advising teachers and other members of staff.
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special education needs.
- Maintaining the school's SEN register and overseeing the records of all pupils with special needs.
- Liaising with parents of children with special educational needs.
- Liaising with SEN-cos from other local schools
- Liaising with external agencies including the education psychology service and other support agencies, the health and social services and voluntary bodies.
- Maintain and enhance SEN resources held by the school

The SEN Manager and Headteacher will be jointly responsible for:

- Liaising with the governor with a responsibility for SEN.
- Meeting together regularly to keep each other informed.
- Organising and attending the annual internal and external planning meetings

Admission arrangements

The school's general admissions policy will apply.

No child will be refused admission because of their special education needs.

Equal Access Arrangements

The school will ensure that children are helped to access the curriculum where physical or other barriers, connected with their learning needs and/or disability, are identified.

## **SECTION 2 - Identification, Assessment and provision for all pupils with SEN**

### Allocation of resources:

The school is allocated a specific sum each year for children with learning difficulties as part of the school's budget allocation.

The funds allocated are used to fund teaching staff, teaching assistants and resources used for learning. (Statemented pupils receive an extra allowance in addition to the school's allocation.) Some funding will be used to purchase testing materials to aid identification of children's difficulties and also to purchase relevant resources to support the children with their perceived learning needs. Funding will also be made available for staff to attend relevant training.

The effectiveness of the allocation of funding will be monitored and evaluated over the year as part of the review of the School Development Plan.

### Identification and assessment arrangements and review procedures

Initially the identification of a pupil with special educational needs will be by the class teacher, parent, health or social services professionals.

As well as ongoing teacher assessments in the classroom, progress recorded as part of a child's Foundation Stage Profile (year R), Teacher Assessments / SATs (year 2) and teacher assessment in Y3 and Y4 provide information towards the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Any child about whom concern is expressed will be brought to the attention of the Special Needs Manager / Head teacher with evidence as to how the teacher has already differentiated the learning environment and resources.

The school will have regard to the principles embodied in the Code of Practice / The County Guidance and has adopted the graduated approach to SEN intervention. The SEN provision is seen as a continuous and systematic cycle of planning, action and review within the school to enable a child with SEN to learn and progress. They are a natural extension of the work generally undertaken in the school.

At '**School Action**' and above, each child will follow an individual educational plan which will indicate targets to be met and the relevant timescale, will outline the provision that is in addition to or different from that required by the majority of children.

Regular termly reviews of the child's progress, through meetings between the teacher, parents and other professionals with reference to the IEP (individual educational plan) will be the general methods for monitoring progress and evaluating the success of individual children and thus the school's policy.

At '**School Action Plus**' the SEN Manager / headteacher will involve outside agencies who will support the school by providing additional advice through the IEP and sometimes additional specialist assessment. The school will provide the external agencies with evidence of what the school has already done prior to a meeting, so that progress can be made. Dependent on progress, a few children may require statutory assessment where needs are assessed in order to identify whether the child needs a '**Statement of Educational Needs.**'

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Access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National curriculum

This will be achieved by a variety of approaches.

- Differentiation - it is recognised that children within a class are at different stages of development and as such the work should take this into account and each child should be given work at his/her own level.
- Teaching and learning styles - it is recognised that children learn in different ways and that what may be appropriate for one child is not for another. Teachers will therefore adopt a variety of approaches.
- Whole school organisation - a variety of strategies will be employed e.g. small classes, TA allocation, groupings, withdrawal groups and when appropriate, parent helpers.
- Individual classroom organisation - weekly planning documents should reflect how individual teachers address the specific needs of individual children or groups of children.
- Collaboration - there will be collaboration between staff for the effective use of human resources and materials.
- Children will be withdrawn where appropriate, to support them in developing their learning. A decision will be made as to which activities are best to withdraw the child from, according to need.

Integration

All pupils of the school, including children with special educational needs, are expected to join in all activities unless there are exceptional circumstances, which to do so would be dangerous or would unduly highlight the child's difficulty or disability. Children who receive specific help from an adult other than the class teacher will normally receive that help in their own classroom. However there are occasions when some pupils receive specialist help outside of their own classroom, e.g. for speech therapy, when a period of specific quiet concentration is required, or when help is given to a group of children from more than one class.

Criteria for success

Targets: The target for every child will be that the child reaches his/her potential and is progressing at a rate commensurate with his/her ability.

The process is a continual cycle of provision and review.

The SENCo Manager / headteacher monitors the pupil's progress in collaboration with staff and parents through lesson observations, scrutiny of IEPs, scrutiny of teacher's planning and discussions at review meetings.

The named SEN Governor will visit the school in line with the Governor Visits Plan to review the SEN policy and practice. The provision for pupils with SEN will be reported on as part of the annual School Profile.

Staff Training

SEN training will be addressed as part of the school's annual Professional Development Plan. The school will also ensure that staff are up to date on current policy and practice concerning special needs. This will usually be by attendance at in-service courses provided by the LA or external agencies, and the dissemination of information by in-house meetings. Teachers and/or TAs (Teaching assistants) requiring specific training to enable them to support particular children would receive priority within the limitations of the budget. All school staff and school helpers will be made aware of appropriate approaches, resources, materials etc., to enable a whole school consistent and collaborative approach.

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Complaints

In line with the school's complaints procedure, if a parent / carer, responsible for a child with special educational needs is not satisfied with the provision made for his/her child, then the first point of contact should be the class teacher. If discussion does not resolve the problem then the SEN Manager / Head teacher should become involved. If again after consultations, complaints cannot be dealt with by the school, then parents should contact the Local Authority for further advice and support. Should agreement still not be reached, then the matter can be taken to a tribunal. The school aims to respond to complaints as quickly as possible. However as parents will have been informed and involved at a very early stage, with the development and implementation of their child's provision, it is expected that cases of complaints would in fact be minimal.

**SECTION 3 - Working in Partnership**

Links with Education Support Services

In the spirit of the ECM agenda, the school will work closely and positively with other agencies to meet children's needs and ensure their happiness and well being. These could include:

- Psychology and Advisory Support Team
- Service for Sensory Impairment and Communication Difficulties (SSICD)
- Assessment and Monitoring Service
- School Nurse
- Speech and Language Therapists (SALT)
- Child Development Centre (CDC)
- Parent Partnership
- Educational Welfare Service
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Support Service (SEBSS)
- Early Years Support Service (EYSS)
- Minorities Achievement Support Service (MASS)
- Traveller Education Service (TES)

If the school suspects a child has a medical problem, it will first obtain the agreement of the parent before a referral to the relevant person is made. This is often done through the school nurse, although direct contact is made with medical professionals if necessary, The SEN Manager is responsible for drawing together all information from other agencies e.g. health visitors etc., and keeping the medical and other reports on any children with special educational needs.

Partnership with parents

Parents play a vital role in the education of their child. The school endeavours to foster close working relationships with parents of all children. This is achieved by informal meetings/chats and more formal individual meetings over and above the usual termly parent consultation evenings.

Parents are encouraged to request a meeting with their child's class teacher or the SEN Manager / Headteacher if they have concerns about their child, whether or not that child has been identified by the school as having special needs. The school will endeavour to engage sensitively and effectively with parents, to resolve any concerns or complaints in the best interests of the child.

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Parents are informed when their child might require additional provision through School Action and thereafter parents are regularly informed of their child's progress and any area of concern can be discussed. Parents are involved at all levels/stages of assessment and in decision-making and their help and support invited, so that school and home work together to achieve the best education for that child.

The progress of children with an IEP (individual educational plan) is discussed with the parent each time a new IEP is issued. (In accordance with the annual IEP Review Plan). The old IEP will be reviewed with the parent (who will sign the review sheet). Areas where the parent can assist their child with the new IEP are discussed. Parents will be given the appropriate help and guidance in order to support their child.

The school (with appropriate advice from the LA) will provide parents with appropriate information about other LA services, national / voluntary organisations etc., which might be able to provide information, advice or counselling.

Links with the wider community

The school will maintain close contact with local schools (particularly Alameda Middle) in order to foster smooth transfer of pupils across the various phases of education. In the Summer term, meetings are arranged between the class teachers and special needs co-ordinators/managers of both The Firs and Alameda middle school, regarding the transfer of pupils in September. Discussion will cover the children's needs, progress, continuity of approach and any other relevant information. A follow up meeting is also held during the Autumn term. (See Transfer and Liaison Policy)

Children enter the 4+ unit from a large number of early years providers, however good links are maintained, especially with local Jack and Jill playgroup, Ladybirds Playgroup and Fordfield House.