

Whitstone School SEN Information Report

1. How we identify Special Educational Needs

At Whitstone School students are identified as having SEN through a variety of ways, including liaison with primary schools through visits in Year 6 and conversations between SENCOs, Year 6 teachers and Headteachers. SEN are also identified by the SENCO (Miss Duncan) through concerns raised by parents and by students, through a reported lack of progress in lessons despite quality first teaching, and through liaison with external agencies e.g. paediatrician, Speech and Language Therapist.

2. How parents/carers can raise concerns about their child

A phone call to the school office is the best way to contact us as teachers do not have free time during the day unless it is planned in advance. Talk to us – firstly contact your child's tutor or subject teacher. Should your child be giving cause for concern, then the teacher will refer to the SENCO.

3. How we will support your child

Students' progress is continually assessed by subject teachers, who oversee, plan and work with each child with SEN in their class to ensure that progress in every area is made. Progress for all students is reported and reviewed termly. Students not making expected progress are identified and may require additional support. There may be a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) working with your child, either individually or as part of a group, if this is seen as necessary by the Faculty Leader. If a student still shows slow progress, then he/she will be referred to the SENCO. At this stage the student may be placed on the SEN Register and parents informed.

4. How this is explained to Parents and Carers

The subject teachers meet with you at Parents' Evening - an annual event. If your child is receiving support additional to, or different from, that which is normally available to their peers, then that will be discussed with you, the teacher and the SENCO when that support is decided upon.

5. Governors involvement and responsibilities

The Governor with responsibility for SEN is Anita Johnson. The SEN Governor reports to the Teaching and Learning sub-committee which meets three times a year. The SEN Policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body and can be seen on the school website.

6. How we adapt the curriculum so that we lower barriers to learning

Our curriculum is reviewed and adapted annually to meet the needs of each cohort. All our staff are trained to make materials and 'work' easier or more challenging so that every student is able to learn at the appropriate level. We also use additional schemes for individuals and small groups of students which include phonics programmes, reading/writing groups, social skills groups, as well as specific programmes to cater for the needs of our more challenging students.

7. How we modify teaching approaches

All our staff are trained in a variety of approaches which means we are able to adapt to a range of SEN. All work within class is pitched at an appropriate level so that all children are able to access according to their specific needs. Typically this might mean that in a lesson there would be three different levels of work set for the class, however on occasions this can be individually differentiated.

8. How the school supports your child's learning, how we can help you to support your child at home, and what opportunities there are for you to discuss your child's progress.

We offer an open door policy where you are welcome any time to make an appointment to meet with either the teacher or SENCO and discuss how your child is getting on. We can offer advice and practical strategies that you can use to help your child at home. We believe that your child's education should be a partnership between parents and teachers, therefore we aim to keep communication channels open and communicate regularly, especially if your child has complex needs.

9. How the school knows how each student is doing

As a school we measure children's progress in learning against national expectations and age related expectations. Teachers continually assess each child and notes areas where they are improving and where further support is needed. As a school, we track children's progress from entry at Year 7 through to Year 11, through three formal reporting points using a broad spread of data including National Curriculum levels and Reading and Spelling ages. Students who are not making expected progress are picked up through progress review meetings attended by House Leaders and/or SENCO. In this meeting a discussion takes place about why individual children are experiencing difficulty and what further support can be given to aid their progression. If your child is discussed at one of these meetings and we have concerns you will be informed.

10. What support we offer for your child's overall well-being, including pastoral, medical and social support.

We are an inclusive school; we welcome and celebrate diversity. All staff realise that student's self-esteem is crucial to that student's well-being. We have a caring, understanding team looking after all of our students. The tutor has overall responsibility for the pastoral, medical, behaviour and social care of every student in their class, therefore this would be your first point of contact. If further support is required the tutor liaises their House Leader in the first instance. This may involve working alongside outside agencies such as Health and Social Services, CAMHS, Hearing specialists, etc. The school has three trained ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), who work with vulnerable students during the school day.

11. Support for behaviour, avoiding exclusions and increasing attendance

If a child has behavioural difficulties a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) is written alongside the child and parents to identify the specific issues, put relevant support in place and set targets. This will pull together all of the support that we can offer, including the services of an Educational Psychologist, in order to avoid exclusion. Attendance of every child is monitored on a daily basis by the Tutor.

12. The views of the child

If your child is accessing SEN support, then their views, together with yours, will be used to shape the interventions that are needed. Any student on an EHCP (Education & Health Care Plan) will have regular meetings where their views will be recorded.

13. Specialist services and expertise accessed by the school.

As a school we work closely with any external agencies that we feel are relevant to individual children's needs within our school including: Educational Psychologist Service, clinical psychologists, GPs, paediatricians, speech & language therapists and social services.

14. Training for the staff supporting children with SEN.

All teachers are teachers of students with SEN. Teaching staff have regular training around the more common Educational Needs such as Autism, Dyslexia and Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties. The SENCO is a qualified and experienced teacher and holds the National SENCO coordinator qualification. All of our LSAs have had training in delivering reading and spelling/phonics programmes, social skills, literacy and numeracy skills, and are adept at supporting students at GCSE level.

15. Inclusion of students in activities outside the classroom, including school trips.

All children are included in all parts of the school curriculum and we aim for all children to be included on school trips. We will provide the necessary support to ensure that this is successful. A risk assessment is carried out prior to any off site activity to make sure everyone's health & safety will not be compromised. In the unlikely event that it is considered unsafe for a child to take part in an activity, then alternative activities which will cover the same curriculum areas will be provided in school.

16. Accessibility of the school environment

It is school policy to continue to improve all aspects of the physical environment of the school site and other resources so that all disabled students can take full advantage of the education and associated opportunities provided by the school.

17. Preparing and supporting students when joining and transferring to a new school

We encourage all new students to visit the School prior to starting when they will be given a tour. For students with SEN we encourage further visits to help with acclimatising to the new surroundings. We visit all our local primaries several times before transition and enjoy close and supportive relationships with all of our feeder schools. For more vulnerable students we arrange transition programmes to help and support their move. We liaise closely with Staff when receiving and transferring children to different settings ensuring all relevant paperwork is passed on and all needs are discussed and understood.

18. Allocation of School resources

We ensure that the needs of all children who have SEN are met to the best of our ability with the funds available. The SENCO, Miss Duncan, is directly responsible for the provision that students with SEN receive. We have a team of LSAs who are funded from the SEN budget and deliver programmes designed to meet groups of children's needs. The budget is allocated on a needs basis. The Children who have the most complex needs are given the most support, often involving an LSA.

19. The type and quantity of support your child might receive.

Subject teachers, alongside the SENCO, will discuss the child's needs and what support would be appropriate. Different children will require different levels of support in order to bridge the gap to achieve age expected levels. Support varies from advice and information to teachers, to specific, targeted interventions outside the classroom. The level and type of support will be through on-going discussions with parents, the student and outside professionals should we consider their expertise useful.

20. Conveying the impact of support to parents

We regularly review students' progress and convey this to parents three times per year. In addition, students that are receiving specific interventions will be invited to discuss the impact of these interventions.

21. Who you can contact for further information

The first point of contact would be your child's tutor to share your concerns. You could also arrange to meet Miss Duncan our SENCO.

22. Who you should contact if you are considering whether your child should join

Whitstone Contact the school office to arrange to meet Giles Atkins (Deputy Headteacher) and Miss Duncan (SENCO) to discuss how the school could meet your child's needs.