



SEND INFORMATION REPORT FEBRUARY 2024

Introduction

St Mary's Catholic School is an outstanding coeducational comprehensive secondary school (Ofsted 2012, Section 48 2018), with expanding sixth form. There are currently over 1150 students on roll and 8.4 % of these students have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

Staff at SMCS strongly believe in individuality, uniqueness and needs of every student. We are also aware that high quality teaching (HQT) is a crucial foundation for outstanding education of all our students and is our first response in supporting students with SEND.

It is recognised, however, that some students may require more support than others and that we must recognise the needs and adjust the teaching so that these students achieve their full potential.

We also acknowledge that many students will have special education needs at some time in their school career or specific disabilities which may affect their learning. Depending on their needs, they may be provided with help throughout their time in school, or benefit from additional support for a short period of time, during which they will be equipped with the understanding and strategies of overcoming the barriers to learning caused by their SEND.

At SMCS we have high expectations of our students and aim to educate independent learners; therefore, we focus on providing all students with strategies for dealing with their needs in a supportive environment, at the same time giving them meaningful access to the National Curriculum.

Consequently, we aim to:

- enable all pupils to realise their true potential and flourish;
- ensure pupils become confident individuals and live fulfilling, loving and respectful lives making a successful transition into adulthood, whether this is employment, further or higher education or training;
- use our best endeavours to make sure pupils with SEND get the support they need;
- ensure all pupils with SEND engage in activities alongside other pupils who do not have SEND;
- have a designated person responsible for coordinating SEND throughout the school;
- involve and include parents in all the decisions being made about their child special educational needs provisions;
- prepare and display on our website this SEND Information Report;
- ensure all arrangements for the admission of disabled pupils (including accessibility plan) are in place.

The St Mary's Catholic School SEND Information Report provides information about the implementation of the SMCS SEND Policy. The report is reviewed and updated annually. Should any changes arise during the year, the report will be updated as soon as possible.

How does the school know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?



The school will assess a student's need through:

- assessment data, such as Key Stage 2, 3 or 4 data, additional diagnostic tests and reports, e.g. regular reading age reports, assessment point data, EHCP reviews, Pupil Profile reviews,
- transition information, such as visits to primary schools prior to entry, in-school visits, induction and taster sessions,
- teacher observations,
- parental meetings,
- regular assessments of progress by subject teachers (4 assessment points per academic year) for all students and identification of those whose progress (this may also include progress in areas other than attainment; for example, social needs).

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a student is recorded as having SEND. When deciding whether a child has special educational need or disability and if additional support is required, the desired outcomes are initially explored, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the student and their parents are considered. This is used to determine the support that is needed and whether it can be provided by adapting the core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

If a parent/carer believes that their child has SEND or should parents/carers have any concerns about their child, they are advised to contact the form tutor and/or head of year to discuss these in the first instance, via the school email: info@stmarys.net The form tutor or head of year would then seek SENDCO's advice.

How will school staff support my child?

At SMCS, we consider all teachers to be teachers of students with SEND, and we currently provide HQT incorporating the needs within all four broad areas of need:

- communication and interaction (speech, language and communication need),
- cognition and learning,
- specific learning difficulty (dyslexia, dyspraxia, learning difficulties),
- social, emotional and mental health (ASD, ADHD).

All students with SEND have access to and benefit from:

- form tutor and pastoral team,
- HQT providing relevant differentiation and adaptation in lessons,
- reviews of students' progress to assess, evaluate and plan future provisions by their subject teachers in cooperation with the Learning Support Department.
- Interventions depending on the individuals and their needs.

At SMCS there are nine part-time Learning Support Assistants who are trained to deliver interventions such as: reciprocal reading, literacy and numeracy intervention, EAL support, emotional support, wellbeing support. Learning Support Assistants may also support students on an individual basis (when a student is in receipt of Local High Need Funding or as a requirement in the student's EHCP). In some cases, small-group short-term interventions are provided if the need is identified,

All teachers and support staff who work with a student with SEND are made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support suggested, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required - Pupil Profiles are



created and reviewed with students and parents at least once a year. The effectiveness of the support and impact of interventions on a student's progress is regularly reviewed at AP as the whole school approach.

How will I know how my child is doing?

Information about students' progress is shared with parents/carers four times a year through assessment point (AP) report. There is also a parents evening once a year, where parents are able to book appointments with all teachers and the SENDCO. Parents can always email the form tutor or head of year (info@stmarys.net), or the SENDCO, Helen Johnston (h.johnston@stmarys.net) if they require information at any time during the school year.

How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

To meet the individual needs of a student with SEND the school provides the following:

- Wave 1 – ALL STUDENTS High Quality Teaching (HQT) involving careful planning and adaptation by subject teachers and leaders. Adapted resources are designed to enable all students with SEND to access a full curriculum. These may include recommended aids such as; laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc. or alternative ways of working, such as small group work, one to one work, or tailored content of the lesson.
- Wave 2 – STUDENTS IDENTIFIED THROUGH GA AND AP – short term targeted interventions.
- Wave 3 – Students with EHCP or those for whom Wave 2 did not bring the expected outcomes – LSA support, curriculum adjustments.
- Students with SEND also have access to pastoral mentoring.
- All students with SEND at KS3 benefit from reasonable adjustments in assessments and/or end of year exams (additional time, coloured paper, bigger font, readers or reader pens, scribe or laptop) as much as it is physically possible.
- All students identified by teaching staff as requiring exam concessions at the end of KS3 (HT6 of y9) undergo testing for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) by a JCQ approved assessor. Based on the results, the SENDCO applies for the concessions and once they are approved the student and the parents/carers will receive a letter with confirmation what those EAA concessions are.
- The Accessibility Plan is on the school website. The Key Aims in this document is to increase and eventually ensure for pupils with a disability that they have: - total access to St Mary's Catholic School environment, curriculum and information and - full participation in the school community.

As well as reasonable adjustments in lessons, the school ensures the school site, and the school facilities allow all students to access their schooling and navigate around the site where it is possible and safe to do so. This is done through an audit of the site and risk assessments – based on individual needs – maintenance of the lifts, re-rooming of classes and staff training etc. in line with the Equality Act.

How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its provision for students with SEND?

- WAVE 1 - Learning walks and book looks are scheduled in the school calendar to review the quality of teaching, assessment and the engagement of all learners – including capturing their views. The Pupil Profiles are sent home three times a year for parents to review the provisions
- WAVE 2 and 3 – hard and soft data on entry and exit is used to measure progress and questionnaires provide an opportunity to capture student voice



What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

SMCS is committed to promoting good mental health and emotional well-being and provides support through the following: form tutor and pastoral team support; PSHCE and Citizenship programmes included in the curriculum; peer-mentoring; positive relationships between parents, children and school; ELSA – emotional literacy support assistant; school counselling service as well as support from external agencies such as: CAMHS, Safe Space, Herts Children's Services etc.

Should a concern arise with regard to changes in behaviour of a child, views of the child and their family are always sought. Further details can be found in the SMCS Behaviour Policy, published on the school website. The Mental Health Lead is Natasha Hayden.

What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

See Hertfordshire Local Offer for services. These can be found at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer

The SENDCO at SMCS also works with the following agencies to provide support for students with SEND: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Visual Impairment Team, Hearing Impairment Team, Social Communication Needs team (Autism Outreach), SafeSpace Counselling Service, Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy Service, Targeted Youth Support, Family Solutions/Family First. The governing body delegates operational matters to the school. These are fulfilled by the SENDCo (and other key pastoral staff and SLT) liaising with all external agencies as necessary to effectively support the students and fulfil our legal duties.

SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service): 01992 555847 / www.kids.org.uk/sendias / info@hertssendiass.org.uk

First-Tier Tribunal Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: 01325 289350 / www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/send/appeals / 1st Floor, Darlington Magistrates Court, Parkgate, Darlington, DL1 1RU

Contact details for all enquiries please contact info@stmarys.net with the details of your enquiry in the subject line.

What training have the staff, supporting children and young people with SEND, had or are having?

The SENDCO has completed the NASENDCO qualification and Level 7 Exams Access Training and participates in termly meetings with the area SEND Lead as well as SEND Briefings organised by the LA. All teachers are teachers of children and young people with SEND and receive appropriate and regular training organised by the SENDCO during INSETs – this year staff received training on graduated approach and HQT, dyslexia support, ASD and ADHD. The Learning Support Assistants have received Precise Monitoring Training. Two members of Staff (including the SENDCO) have completed STEPS training in May 2021 and January 2023, all teachers have received STEPS training in September 2021 and again in February 2023.

How will you help me to support my child's learning?

- Parental consultation - EHCP reviews, Pupil Profile reviews, signposting additional and external support.
- Contact with the pastoral team - form tutor, head of year.
- Virtual Learning Environment –MS Teams, Virtual Parents' Evening and other subject specific platforms.

How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's education?



Early discussions (pre-transition, concerns raised by staff, careers meetings in Y9 and Y11) take place with the student and their parents/carers when identifying whether they need special educational provision. These conversations aim to ensure that:

- everyone develops a good understanding of the student's areas of strength and difficulty;
- parents' concerns are accounted for;
- the agreed outcomes sought for the child are fully understood by all parties;
- an action plan of reasonable adjustments is agreed as part of the graduated response*;
- students with SEND and their parents understand where additional help and guidance can be found (local offer).

Notes of these early discussions are added to the student's record and given to their parents. Parents are formally notified when a student is placed on the SEND register and out of lesson support is provided.

***Graduated response**

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 2015 identified the need for a graduated approach towards the identification of children who may have SEND. This is a circular model using **assess, plan, do, review**. We adopt a graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review.

How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

All extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all students, including our before-school and after-school clubs and appropriate adjustment or additional support is provided to ensure all students have equal opportunities to access these. All students are encouraged to take part in activities such as school sports day and inter-house events, as well as charity events and special workshops etc. Medical support is in place where necessary. No student is ever excluded from taking part in any activity because of their SEND needs. Where students with SEND have specific requirements, parents are consulted and invited to contribute to planning for trips or activities.

How accessible is the school environment?

St Mary's is built on a large, physically challenging site and currently some areas and buildings are not fully accessible. The school will make every effort to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and encourages parents and pupils to discuss any requirements they may have with the member of SLT Coordinating SEND (email info@stmarys.net). Individual risk assessments connected with the student's disability are conducted when required.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils with a disability to access the school site and the curriculum. Auxiliary aids can be provided and, if necessary, will be discussed with Hertfordshire's Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) team since all Hertfordshire schools comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Who can I contact for further information?

Should students or parents/carers be unhappy with any aspect of provision they should discuss the problem with a class teacher or form tutor in the first instance. Anyone who feels unable to talk to the teacher, or is not satisfied with the teacher's comments, should contact the SENDCO, at info@stmarys.net .

In the event of a formal complaint, parents are advised to contact the Head teacher or a governor if they prefer. The SENDIASS (sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk) is available to offer advice at



<https://www.hertssendiass.org.uk/home.aspx> . The parents of students with disabilities have the right to make disability discrimination claims to the first tier SEND tribunal if they believe that our school has discriminated against their children.

They can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding: exclusions; provision of education and associated services; making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services. Complaints about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the local authority as per section 9.2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-an-academies-complaints-procedure/best-practice-guidance-for-academies-complaints-procedures>

How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

We believe that smooth transition relies on effective communication between educational settings, parents and other professionals. Moreover, students and their parents are integral in this process and their views should be considered at any stage. Information is shared in the following ways:

- sharing information between primary and secondary school, or between secondary and post-16 educational settings
- career advice from the school career advisor and Y9 and Y11 consultations for students with EHCP provided by YC Hertfordshire Services for Young People, Children's Services Hertfordshire County Council
- information evenings
- Where required, we will arrange for students to come and visit us in school, so that they become more familiar with the school and key members of staff who will be supporting them.

Year 6 into 7 transition

- We provide a transition booklet, which includes a map of the school, photographs of key areas and people in the school, information about timetables, rules and uniform and answers to commonly asked questions.
- Additional induction sessions (and individual visits). These opportunities provide a chance for the new students to meet other young people in a smaller setting and to start to make connections.
- Information coffee morning for parents in order to explain how we will support their child and what is included in the local offer: [The Hertfordshire Local Offer](#)

Year 11/12 transition

- Careers meetings for all students
- Additional careers meetings for students with an EHCP with the Preparation for Adulthood Advisor
- Additional guidance on Open Days and support with visits if this is felt necessary
- CV preparation in PSHE lessons and access given to UniFrog for all students

In Year submissions

- If a child has an EHCP, the SENDCO responds to the naming consultations and works with the local authority, parents and student – and with the previous school – to help with the transition
- The Head of Year, Subject teachers and SENDCO share information and contact the previous school to ensure we have all the necessary paperwork needed to meet the needs of the learner

How are the school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?



- National Budget
- HNF funding distributed accordingly to needs
- Local High Needs Funding provided by application to County in exceptional circumstances
- Where a student with SEND qualifies for the Pupil Premium Grant, additional funding is also allocated to support the student.

How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

Decisions for supporting a student with SEND are made in consultation with students, parents/carers, teaching and support staff, and relevant external agencies.

How can I find information about the local authority's Local Offer of services and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disability?

Details of the local offer can be accessed at:

<http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer>