



15. Special Education Needs

Applies to: *All Staff*

Our Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENco) is: Clare Fentiman
Deputy Designated SENco is: Louise Coll

St John's Pre-School values the abilities and achievements of all its children and is committed to providing the best possible learning environment for each child. Taking care to provide for the progress and other changes throughout a child's time at Pre-School.

Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children have special educational needs if they have an identified learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child may be identified as having an additional need if he:

- Has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of his peer group.
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him from accessing learning opportunities of a kind provided for children of a similar age.
- Has a need for education which is different from the provision made generally for children of the same age e.g. a 'gifted and talented' child.

Children are not regarded as having additional learning needs solely because they have English as an additional language.

A child can also be identified as having an emerging additional educational need following observations carried out by staff which bring to light particular struggles for a child. An emerging additional educational need can be a temporary need or the beginning of an ongoing need identified in a child.

These can include a child's ability to:

- make sense of the simple routines at pre-school
- interact successfully at a developmentally age appropriate level with peers and adults
- communicate his needs and wishes effectively with those around him
- make satisfactory progress across the 7 areas of learning as defined within the Early Years Foundation Stage over a period of time

Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs

The SEND Code of Practice (July 2014) assumes that a child's special educational needs fall within a number of broad areas, including communication and interaction, cognition and learning, behavioural, emotional and social development, and sensory and/or physical difficulties. The SEND Code recognises that a child's difficulties could be in two or more of these areas.

Responsibility for monitoring all areas of a child's development rests with his Key Person. The main signs that suggest a child is having difficulties are that he:

- makes little or no progress, even when approaches have been used that have targeted his specific difficulties
- continues to work at a level well below that expected of a child of his age
- displays persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties despite using the behaviour management strategies described earlier in these procedures
- has sensory or physical problems and makes little or no progress despite having personal aids or equipment to support him
- has difficulty communicating or interacting and needs specific support in order to learn.

If the child's Key Person observes these signs, she must report them to the SENCO who will assess his needs and if necessary discuss them privately with the Carer. This discussion will activate the procedures for a graduated response of action and intervention as set out in the SEND Code. Carers are to be fully involved at every stage.

SEN support within the pre-school

When the child's Key Person, or the SENCO, identifies a child with one or more developmental areas of concern, interventions will be devised that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the usual Curriculum.

At this stage a child's Carers, his Key Person and the SENCO will work together to compile as much information as possible about the child, such as baseline assessments or behaviour observation records. Carers will be consulted about any health or physical problems.

An Individual Education Plan, (IEP), will be devised and put into practice. We will actively involve the child at age appropriate levels, and their Carers, in discussions about his IEP, encouraging them to share in the recording and monitoring of their progress. The IEP will focus on a maximum of 3 or 4 targets and will record only strategies that are additional to or different from the pre-school's normal curriculum.

The SENCO will liaise with Carers, any outside agencies, such as Social Services, Portage or Educational Psychologists and the child's Key Person, to ensure that everyone is kept informed of the agreed support and advice strategies. The IEP will be continually kept 'under review' and quarterly review meetings will be held with everybody who has been working with the child.

SEN support by pre-school and specialist services

If despite receiving an individualised programme and concentrated support the child continues to:

- make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period of time
- work at an early years curriculum well below that of his peers
- experience emotional or behavioural difficulties that impede his learning or that of the group
- have sensory or physical needs, require specialist equipment or regular support from specialist practitioners
- have communication and interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause problems with learning

then we will escalate the graduated response. At this stage we would involve outside agencies who can support and help with advice on new IEPs, provide more specialist assessment, suggest new strategies and possibly offer specialist support or activities.

An IEP Review Meeting will be arranged by the SENCO with the child's Carers. This Review Meeting will bring together all relevant information, such as assessment results, the IEPs, appropriate targets and teaching strategies whilst taking into account the above signs that suggest we may need to seek more specialised help from outside agents who can support and help with advice.

The SEND Code of Practice suggests a number of possible strategies, all of which we will consider:

- extra adult time to plan and monitor the programmes of intervention
- provision of different learning materials and equipment
- individual or group support, or staff development and training to introduce more effective teaching strategies
- creating small groups within the mainstream setting, which receive extra attention from a practitioner (for instance I Can Problem Solve)
- creating small groups which work outside the teaching classroom for short periods of time, with a professional or other adult
- giving the child flexible access within the pre-school to a base where SEN resources and teaching expertise are available

Statutory Assessment

For a very few children the help given by the pre-school through *the graduated response* will not be sufficiently effective to enable them to progress satisfactorily. It will then be necessary for us, in consultation with their Carers and any external agencies already involved, to consider whether an Education, Health and Care assessment (EHC) may be appropriate. If this is the case, then we would request a statutory assessment through the Local Education Authority (LEA).

The LEA will need to know what difficulties we have identified, whether individualised teaching strategies were put in place through the graduated response, whether outside advice was obtained regarding a child's: physical health and function, communication skills, perceptual and motor skills, self-help skills, social skills, emotional & behavioural development, responses to learning experiences and whether Carer's views have been considered.

From this evidence, they will decide whether a child should be made the subject of a Statement of Special Educational needs. The whole process should take no longer than six months. A statement will be reviewed every six months whilst a child is attending the pre-school and remains under five years of age.

Legislation

We aim to follow the SEN code of practice September 2014, DfE Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and also the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010, the Children Act 2004; The Human Rights Act 1998.

Admissions

We ensure our admissions criteria does not discriminate against children with identified special educational needs.

Assessment

Early identification of children with SEN is a priority. We achieve this by:

- Asking for relevant details from parents/carers to be included on their child's registration form, or highlighted during their Home Visit Consultation.

- Through written information and discussion with parents at the child's 2 year check.
- Making regular observations of the children in order to enable us to monitor their needs and progress on an individual basis

Provision

If, as a result of this monitoring, we become concerned that a child may have Special Educational Needs:

- The SENCo in consultation with the Key Person, parents/carers and any other professionals already involved will draw up an individual plan of action.
- We will follow the guidance from the SEN Code of Practice and place the child at the stage of 'Early Action' and complete an Independent Education Plan (IEP).
- The SENCo will ensure that an IEP is drawn up and regularly reviewed with parents/carers and the child's Key Person and that records and information on the child concerned are collected, recorded and updated.
- If we feel the child needs further additional support we will, with parental permission contact specialist outside agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Portage Worker, Early Years Inclusion Consultant.

Training

We will endeavour to appoint staff with experience and knowledge of SEN and provide further training opportunities for all staff. When a child joins pre-school with a specific diagnosed difficulty which requires special management we will arrange in-house training for all staff to enable us to support the child.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We will:

- Respect parents/carers as their child's first educator
- Discuss the child's needs with the parents/carers and the child where possible, about how they could be supported within the pre-school
- Analyse our ability as a staff team to offer positive care in the setting.
- Work together with parents/carers to give day to day care and education for the child and support for the parents/carers.
- Provide parents/carers, as and when required, with information on outside agencies, further support etc.

Records

All records will be kept confidential and passed on to other settings only after permission has been given by parents/carers.

Funding

Funding for children with identified additional support needs is provided by the Government for 3 and 4 year olds.

Funding for children identified as having additional support needs and those with Statements may be available from Dorset Council.

Roles and Responsibilities

The SENCO is responsible to the Manager of Pre-School for:

- Coordinating SEN provision for children through a graduated response.
- Providing support for the child's Key Person
- Updating staff on SEN issues within the setting at Staff Meetings.
- Attending relevant training and reporting back to the staff team.

All staff work as a team to provide the best support possible for children with SEN.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 23

'Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.'