



DOWNHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL AND MONTESSORI NURSERY

Mrs E J Laffeaty-Sharpe
Principal

SEN Local Offer 2022 – 2023

Why you should read this document

The Local Offer was first introduced in the Green Paper (March 2011) as a local offer of all services available to support disabled children and children with SEN and their families. This easy to understand information will set out what is normally available in schools to help children with lower-level SEN as well as the options available to support families who need additional help to care for their child.”

Listed in the Green Paper are 14 questions, devised in consultation with parents/carers and other agencies, which reflect their concerns and interests. In this document we have answered these questions to help you to make decisions about how to best support your child’s needs.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL KNOW IF CHILDREN NEED EXTRA HELP AND WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY CHILD HAS SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?

At Downham Preparatory School and Montessori Nursery (DPSMN) children are identified as having SEN through a variety of ways, including the following:-

- Liaison with other nursery/previous schools
- Child performing below age-expected levels
- Observations by SENCO and/or Key person or class teachers
- Concerns raised by parent
- Concerns raised by teacher, for example behaviour or self-esteem is affecting performance
- Liaison with external agencies i.e. behaviour support, CAMHS etc.
- Health diagnosis through paediatrician or other outside clinician

HOW WILL I RAISE CONCERNS IF I NEED TO?

- Talk to us – firstly contact your child’s class teacher or SENCO or Head teacher
- We pride ourselves on building positive relationships with parents. We are open and honest with parents and hope that they are able to be the same with us.

HOW WILL SCHOOL SUPPORT MY CHILD?

WHO WILL OVERSEE, PLAN, WORK WITH MY CHILD AND HOW OFTEN?

- Our SENCOs, Miss Tighe (Early Years and KS1), Mrs Lafferty- Sharpe/Mrs Covell oversee all support and progress of any child requiring additional support across the school.
- The subject teacher will oversee, plan and work with each child with SEND within their subject to ensure that progress in every area is made.
- 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 Principal, SENCOs or subject teacher. The regularity of these sessions will be explained to parents when the support starts.

WHO WILL EXPLAIN THIS TO ME?

- The form teacher will meet with parents on a regular basis (this could be as part of Parent’s Evening once a year or more informal meetings during pick up or drop off at school) to discuss your child’s needs, support and progress. The school has an open door policy where parents are encouraged to come into school to discuss issues or share in their child’s success.
- For further information, both SENCOs are available to discuss support in more detail. Please make an appointment through the office staff.

HOW ARE THE DIRECTORS AND PROPRIETOR INVOLVED AND WHAT ARE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

- The SENCOs report to the Principal every term to inform them about the progress of children with SEND; this report does not refer to individual children and confidentiality is maintained at all times. The Principal, herself a trained SEN specialist in Dyslexia and Irlen Syndrome, is responsible for SEN and meets regularly with both SENCOs. The proprietor then reports to the directors.
- The Directors agree priorities for spending within the SEN budget with the overall aim that all children receive the support they need in order to make progress.

HOW WILL THE CURRICULUM BE MATCHED TO MY CHILD'S NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S APPROACHES TO DIFFERENTIATION AND HOW WILL THAT HELP MY CHILD?

- We are an independent school and are therefore not obliged to teach from the National Curriculum but we view the new curriculum as a strength and aim to deliver this and more. Our children therefore work at an accelerated rate and, in most cases, achieve higher than the national expectation. Given this, we ensure that 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.
- The benefit of this type of differentiation is that all children can access a lesson and learn at their level.

HOW WILL I KNOW HOW MY CHILD IS DOING AND HOW WILL YOU HELP ME TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL THERE BE FOR ME TO DISCUSS MY CHILD'S PROGRESS?

- We offer an open door policy where you are welcome any time to make an appointment to meet with either the form teacher, subject teacher or either SENCO and discuss how your child is getting on. We can offer advice and practical ways that you can 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.
- If you wish, we can operate a home / school link book which your child will bring home regularly so that comments from parents and teacher can be shared and responded to when needed.
- If your child is on the SEN register, they will have a Support Plan which will have individual / group targets. This is discussed on a termly basis and parents are given a copy of the Support Plan. The targets set are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time scaled targets) with the expectation that the child will achieve the target by the time it is reviewed. A valuable part of the Support Plan is the contribution from parents, which forms an integral part of the child's progress.
- If your child has complex SEND they may have an EHCP, which means that a formal meeting will take place to discuss your child's progress and a report will be written.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL KNOW HOW WELL MY CHILD IS DOING?

- As a school we measure children's progress in learning against National expectations and age related expectations. These include various nationally recognised tests such as Salford and Holborn Reading Tests, Headstart English and Maths and various more specialised testing for special needs such as Lucid Rapid Dyslexia and Dyscalculia.
- The subject teachers continually assess each child and note areas where they are improving and where further support is needed. As a school, we track children's progress from entry in Early Years, (Reception) with the Early Years Goals, through to Year 8, using a variety of different methods including National Curriculum levels and Reading and Spelling ages.
- Children who are not making expected progress are picked up through weekly review meetings with the subject teachers, Heads of Key Stages and Principal. In this meeting a discussion takes place concerning 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 you will be informed.
- When the child's Support Plan is reviewed, comments are made against each target to show what progress the child has made. If the child has not met the target, the reasons for this will be discussed, then the target may be adapted into smaller steps or a different approach may be tried to ensure the child does make progress.

WHAT SUPPORT WILL THERE BE FOR MY CHILD'S OVERALL WELL BEING?

WHAT IS THE PASTORAL, MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL?

- We are an inclusive school; we welcome and celebrate diversity. All staff believe that children having high self-esteem is crucial to a child's wellbeing. We have a caring, understanding team looking after our children.
- The form teacher has overall responsibility for the pastoral, medical and social care of every child in their class, therefore this would be the parents' first point of contact. If further support is required, the class teacher liaises with the subject teacher and SENCO for further advice and support. The SENCO may decide to work alongside outside agencies such as Health and Social Services, and/or the Behaviour Support Team.
- The school also has a dedicated LSA (Learning Support Assistant) who works under the direction of the SENCOs and Proprietor. She works with vulnerable children during the school day.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL MANAGE THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES?

- The school has a policy regarding the administration and managing of medicines on the school site. (Attached to this document)
- Parents need to contact the school office if medication is recommended if health professionals have prescribed medication for their child which needs to be taken during the day.
- Medicines such as antibiotics are kept in the fridge in the staff room and inhalers are kept in class wallets so that they are carried around with class. The Admin Staff or Form Teachers generally oversee the administration of any medicines.

- As a staff we have regular training and updates of conditions and medication affecting individual children so that all staff are able to manage medical situations.

WHAT SUPPORT IS THERE FOR BEHAVIOUR, AVOIDING EXCLUSION AND INCREASING ATTENDANCE?

- As a school we have a very positive approach to all types of behaviour with a clear reward system that is followed by all staff and pupils.
- Whilst we are proud that our exclusion rate is 0% and has been since the school started we recognise that some children can display challenging behaviour, which can affect their own learning and the learning of those around them. If a child has behavioural difficulties a Support Plan for Behaviour is written alongside the child and parents to identify the specific issues, put relevant support in place and set targets. These can be in the form of a simple sticker or reward chart, to a more complex, home/school On Report book with a dedicated Support Plan for behaviour.
- After any behaviour incident we expect the child to reflect on their behaviour with an adult, often in a meeting with parents present. This helps to identify why the incident happened and what the child needs to do differently next time to change and improve their behaviour.
- Attendance of every child is monitored on a daily basis by the office staff. Lateness and absence are recorded and reported upon to the Principal and Safeguarding Leads.

HOW WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR VIEWS?

- We respect the rights of every child in the school and we value and celebrate each child being able to express their views on all aspects of school life. This is carried out through pupil voice questionnaires via either the subject or form tutors, pupil interview, a worry box where concerns can be raised confidentially or informal school council meetings.
- Children who have Support Plans discuss and set their targets with their subject teachers.
- There is an annual pupil questionnaire where we actively seek the viewpoints of children especially concerning being able to speak to an adult if they have a worry.
- The worry box is regularly checked and acted upon.
- If your child has an EHCP their views will be sought before any review meetings.

WHAT SPECIALIST SERVICES AND EXPERTISE ARE AVAILABLE AT OR 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: - Behaviour Support, Health including – GPs, school nurse, clinical psychologist, paediatricians, speech & language therapists, occupational therapists, social services including - Locality Teams, social workers and Educational Psychologists.

WHAT TRAINING HAVE THE STAFF SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SEND HAD OR ARE CURRENTLY HAVING?

- Our proprietor is a nationally accredited Irlen and Dyslexic Screener.
- Another member of staff has had training in delivering support for ADHD children within a school setting from ADHD nurses.
- A number of teachers and LSAs are trained to support children with behavioural difficulties.
- A number of LSAs are also trained in working with children with Autism.
- Miss Tighe has attended the 3 day SENCO for Early Years course.
- All of our teachers and LSAs have had training in delivering reading and spelling / phonics programmes.

HOW WILL MY CHILD BE INCLUDED IN ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM INCLUDING SCHOOL TRIPS?

- As we are a Montessori school, 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 ensure 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.

HOW ACCESSIBLE IS THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT?

- The school site is wheelchair accessible with a disabled toilet large enough to accommodate changing on ground level. Whilst the school is housed in two buildings and on two floors the curriculum can be accessed via simple timetable changes. The ground floor is easily accessible with ramps at specified fire exits.
- A member of staff has experience as an EAL specialist teacher and can assist us in supporting our families with English as an additional language.

HOW WILL THE SCHOOL PREPARE AND SUPPORT MY CHILD WHEN JOINING THE SCHOOL AND TRANSFERRING TO A NEW SCHOOL?

- We encourage all new children to visit the school prior to starting, when they will meet their new class and be shown around the school. Furthermore, we encourage new pupils to come and spend the day with us before deciding to join us. For children with SEND we would encourage further visits to assist with the acclimatisation of the new surroundings. We can also visit them in their current school.
- We write social stories with children if transition is potentially going to be difficult.
- When children are preparing to leave us for a new school we encourage them to visit and spend time at their new school. For children with particular needs, a member of staff will often visit the school with them and their parents in the first instance. One of our teachers has run transfer projects for children with particular needs and can tailor make programs for your child if needs be.

- We liaise closely with staff when receiving and transferring children to different schools, ensuring all relevant paperwork is passed on and all needs are discussed and understood.
- If your child has complex needs, then an Support Plan or Statement Review will be used as a transition meeting during which we will invite staff from both schools to attend.

HOW ARE THE SCHOOL'S RESOURCES ALLOCATED AND MATCHED TO CHILDREN'S SEN NEEDS?

- We ensure that the needs of all SEN children are met to the best of the school's ability with the funds available. As a fee paying school some of this support is provided as an on-cost to you.
- We have a team of LSAs working with year groups who are funded from the SEN budget and deliver programmes designed to meet groups of children's needs. Some of our LSA work on a one-to-one basis with children with more complex needs. These can be funded in two ways – either by the parents or from county after a successful EHC assessment.
- The allocation of LSAs to year groups is allocated on a needs basis where the most complex needs are given the most support.

HOW IS THE DECISION MADE ABOUT WHAT TYPE AND HOW MUCH SUPPORT MY CHILD WILL RECEIVE?

- The Principal will discuss the child's needs alongside the SENCOs, subject teachers and form tutors and decide what support would be appropriate.
- Different children will require different levels of support in order to bridge the gap to achieve age expected levels.
- This will be through on-going discussions with parents.

HOW DO WE KNOW IF IT HAS HAD AN IMPACT?

- By reviewing children's targets on Support Plans and ensuring they are being met
- The child is making progress academically against national/age expected levels and the gap is narrowing – they are catching up to their peers or expected age levels.
- Verbal feedback from the teacher, parent and pupil.
- Children may move off the SEN register when they have 'caught up' or made sufficient progress.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

- First point of contact would be your child's form teacher to share your concerns.
- You could also arrange to meet Miss Tighe, Early Years and KS1) Mrs Sharpe or Mrs Covell (KS2) SENCOs.
- Look at the SEN policy on our website

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I AM CONSIDERING WHETHER MY CHILD SHOULD JOIN THE SCHOOL?

- Contact the school office to arrange to meet the Principal, Mrs Laffeaty-Sharpe, who would willingly discuss how the school could meet your child's needs.