



Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Date: November 2025

Review Date: November 2026

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo): Amanda Reid

Mission statement

Jesus said, "Come, follow me and live your life the way God wants you to."

At St Thomas', whilst we believe that **every child** should achieve their full potential in the image of God, we are committed to ensuring we develop the whole child, linked to the Church of England's vision July 2016 of "**life in all its fullness**".

We know that children with special educational needs should be educated in the closest association with their peers wherever possible and appropriate, and provided with the support wherever necessary to achieve full access to the whole-school curriculum through quality first teaching. Programmes for such children should be planned, and teaching adapted, in order to meet pupils' individual needs, enabling them to become independent learners who reach their full academic, physical, emotional and spiritual potential.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

The 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (p15) states:

"A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her."

"A child of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, **or**
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions."

A child may have needs in one or more of the following categories:

- Communication & Interaction
- Cognition & Learning
- Social, Mental & Emotional Health
- Sensory and/or Physical

Aims and Objectives:

The aims of this policy are to:

- Create an environment which has the needs and views of each child at its centre so that it meets their special education needs, ensuring they reach their potential.
- Encourage and set high aspirations to improve outcomes for SEN pupils in order for them to achieve potential and experience life in all its fullness.
- Enable all pupils to have full access to all elements of the school curriculum through reasonable adjustments.
- Make clear the expectations to all of those involved in the plan, do, review process including pupils and parents/carers.

- Ensure pupils with medical conditions are fully supported in all school activities by consultation with health and social care professionals, e.g.: Occupational Therapists/Complex needs team.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for children's special educational needs and ensure high levels of staff expertise through well targeted continuing professional development.
- Work in cooperation and productive partnerships with the Local Education Authority and other outside agencies, to ensure there is a multi-professional approach to meeting the needs of all vulnerable learners

Inclusion

At St Thomas', we aim to promote inclusion by celebrating diversity, raising achievement, improving access, removing barriers to learning in order to develop independence and valuing and respecting others. Every pupil with SEN or a disability at St Thomas', has an equal entitlement to fulfil their optimum potential. In order to cater for our SEN pupils, we ensure we create an environment which has the needs and views of each child at its centre so pupils feel heard and valued. We identify needs early and value pupil voice in this process to ensure our pupils are happy and feel their needs are met. We set high, yet realistic expectations for our SEN pupils and make the necessary adaptations to our environment and curriculum, in order to improve outcomes and enable them to achieve their potential, experiencing life in all its fullness.

Admission for children with special educational needs

St Thomas' will do its very best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special educational needs and/or disabilities and that those needs are made known to all those who are likely to work with them in order for them to have full access to all elements of our Lighthouse curriculum.

St Thomas' will endeavour to ensure that adaptive teaching methods and interventions are used for those pupils who have special educational needs, to allow them to join in activities with those who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and adjustable as long as it remains in the best interest of the child. These adaptations may include additional support to be provided within the classroom, interventions to take place to narrow gaps in learning and/or the use of ICT. Pupils are encouraged to share their views and opinions about their special educational needs and the support they require to ensure they are at the centre of their learning and have high aspirations for themselves so a shared vision is set.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

The definition of disability is not the same as the definition of special educational needs. The DDA Act (1995) defines disability as 'a person with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. At St Thomas', we will take such steps it is reasonable to take, to ensure that disabled pupils and prospective disabled pupils are not placed at substantial disadvantage

in comparison with those that are not disabled in our practices, procedures and policies.

Sefton's Local Offer

The Local Offer is a resource which is designed to support children and young people who are identified as having additional needs, and what teachers in Sefton are expected to reasonably implement to cater for these children.

This policy outlines what personalised provision will be made for children with Special Educational Needs at St Thomas'.

Identification of SEN

Each member of staff at St Thomas' has their own role to play in order for successful learning support provision to be put into place for pupils who require it. High quality teaching and planning, also referred to as quality first teaching, takes account of the varying needs, abilities, aptitudes and interests of our pupils so as to ensure they have full access to our Lighthouse Curriculum. Most pupils will make progress through this adaptive teaching; however, there may be some who do not make the expected progress and may have special educational needs.

We believe that early identification is vital in meeting the needs of our pupils and when initial concerns are raised by staff, pupils and/or parents, upon agreement, next steps in provision e.g. adaptive teaching techniques and closer observation and monitoring of the pupil, will take place. The class teacher and SENDCo may also discuss ways in which support can be provided at home.

When identifying those who have SEN, we follow the graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do, Review. Our school assessment procedures along with discussions with class teachers and teaching assistants, help us identify those who require support over and above what is normally available. When these concerns are identified, a meeting with parents/carers is held and with permission, the pupil is added to the SEN register and provided with a SEN support plan. Within the plan, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART) targets are set and specific intervention is identified which will support the pupil in achieving them. This could mean adaptations to the curriculum and/or learning environment are necessary in order to reduce barriers to learning and ensure pupils have full access to it. Some examples of this may be the use of ICT in lessons such as dictation or providing pupils with writing/planning frames or access to a reading intervention. The SEN plan becomes a working document and the targets, provision and progress is reviewed three times a year, or more often if required, with the parents and pupil. When progress is reviewed, new targets are set and next steps of support are discussed. These next steps could mean consulting with outside professionals to help gain a better understanding of the pupil's profile if progress is limited, despite considerable support and intervention.

These other professionals could include:

- Inclusion Consultant (ICON)
- Autism Consultant

- School Nurse
- Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and/or Physiotherapist
- Social Services
- Complex Needs Team

High Needs Funding and Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP)

A small number of pupils may require additional funding in order for us to provide a high level of support in addition to their current provision, as their needs may be preventing them from making timely progress. These pupils will have had significant involvement from Sefton's Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Service (SENSIS) and this provision would usually be made ahead of a request for an Education, Health and Care Plan.

There are some pupils who have very complex needs and require specialised support. A referral for an EHCP may be necessary where a coordinated assessment is required if SEN provision cannot be reasonably provided within the resources normally available to school. At this stage, we would collate assessment information regarding the pupil along with evidence of the support currently provided and the difficulties the pupil is experiencing. A detailed plan is then compiled by professionals, parents and the pupil and implemented in school. These plans are then reviewed at least annually with all involved in its construction, to identify if outcomes have been achieved and decide if adaptations are necessary.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

At St Thomas' we feel it is important to involve parents/carers, and that they hold valuable knowledge and experience in terms of their children. We believe that parents play a key role in enabling children to reach their potential, and so engage in formal and informal meetings regularly throughout the year. Meetings can be arranged at any time of year at parental request.

Involvement of Pupils

At St Thomas' we encourage our SEN pupils to share their views and opinions about their special educational needs and the support they require to ensure they are at the centre of their learning and have high aspirations. We encourage them to reflect and make comments on their progress, and work together to decide on next steps or targets for learning. We also discuss their enjoyment of intervention and the support that has been put into place as well as extra-curricular activity.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Governing Body:

- to co-operate with the headteacher to determine the school's general policy and approach to provision for children with SEN;
- to establish the appropriate staffing and funding arrangements;
- to maintain a general oversight of the school's work;
- to report to parents annually on the school's policy on SEN.

SEND Governor – Mrs Rachael Baker

Role of the Headteacher/Head of School:

- to be responsible for the day-to-day management of provision for children with SEN;
- to keep the governing body fully informed;
- to work closely with the school's SENDCo

Headteacher – Mrs Emily Alty

The Role of the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator:

- to oversee the day-to day operation of the school's SEN policy.
- to co-ordinate provision for children with special educational needs.
- to liaise with parents/carers and pupils.
- to liaise with and advise colleagues.
- to identify and provide for staff training needs.
- to oversee the records of all children with special educational needs
- to manage assessment procedures for children with special educational needs
- to manage resources, (human & physical) to enable appropriate provision for children with SEN.
- to liaise with external agencies including the Local Education Authority's (LEA) support and educational psychology services, health and social services, and voluntary bodies.

SENDCo – Mrs Amanda Reid

Complaints Procedure

We are committed to working in close partnership with parents/carers. Any parent who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the special needs support should make their complaints;

- In the first instance to the Headteacher.
- If a parent is still unhappy, he/she can put their complaint in writing to the chairperson of the Governing Body;
- Further appeal can be made to the LEA by contacting SENDIASS