



Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Policy

Definition of Special Educational Needs

It is the policy of St. Teresa's Nursery School that special educational needs (SEN) be defined according to the Education (Northern Ireland) order 1996 which suggests that "A child has special educational needs if he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age or a disability which prevents him or her from making use of educational facilities generally provided in ordinary schools." Translated into the school situation, the child will be deemed to have special needs if they demonstrate a significant delay in the development of cognitive skills, social/emotional skills and communication skills. It is noted that about 20% of children will have special educational needs at some stage in their school careers.

Aims of the School

It is the policy of St. Teresa's Nursery School that the aims for children with special educational needs are consistent with the general aims of the school. St. Teresa's Nursery School endeavours to provide a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum so that all children learn at a pace appropriate to their ability and reach their full potential. Key to this is effective communication between the Principal, staff, Governors, parents and, where appropriate, external agencies in order to create a positive learning environment.

At St. Teresa's Nursery School children with special educational needs are integrated as fully as possible. It is the aim of the school to ensure that they are offered the full Nursery Curriculum, which may be structured or modified to suit their particular needs. Where it is deemed to be necessary, or appropriate, a child may be encouraged towards certain areas of the curriculum in order to address a specific developmental concern.

Admission Arrangements

Children with special needs are admitted to this school in the same manner as all other children.

Special Facilities

Access to the main building is down a blocked path incline, readily accessed on foot or wheelchair. Internally, one classroom has wheelchair access to a toilet cubical. Special arrangements for parking within the school grounds can be made for children with physical difficulties. If one to one support is required, the Education Authority can provide additional adult support staff, should the pupil have a Statement of Educational Need in place. Without the appointment of additional designated support staff, the school operates with the usual Nursery staff to pupil ratio, which is one adult to thirteen pupils.

Arrangements for co-ordinating provision

The SEN coordinator (SENCO) will manage the school's special educational needs provision. In St. Teresa's Nursery school this is the Principal. Mrs Evans keeps Governors informed.

All staff should be familiar with the school's special educational needs procedures and should be involved in the monitoring and review of the school's Special Educational Needs and Inclusion policy.

The Role of the Principal

The SENCO will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy. The Principal will ensure the fostering of appropriate attitudes, set standards, monitor the provision for pupils with special needs and the school's pastoral care system. The responsibilities of the SENCO include:

- Helping to identify children with special educational needs.
- Providing support and advice to colleagues to ensure effective teaching.
- Maintaining the special educational needs register, with records of pupils with special educational needs.
- Liaising with colleagues and specialists in drawing up the Personal Education Plan and setting targets for development for pupils.
- Establishing the service training requirements of the staff and contributing as appropriate to their training.
- Managing and developing appropriate resources.
- Liaising with parents, support services and agencies.
- Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's policy.
- Ensuring detailed notes, observations and assessments are being carried out by the class teacher and any other staff working on a one to one with special educational needs children.

Support staff and outside agencies

There will be planned and regular opportunities for liaison between support staff and teaching staff. Planning occurs at staff meetings involving teachers and all classroom assistants. Full cooperation will be given to all outside agencies and support staff, information made available and facilities provided for peripatetic staff to work with the SEN children within the school. This school maintains a multi - disciplinary approach and will liaise fully with external agencies.

Identification and assessment

Children with special educational needs are identified in different ways.

1. The Educational Psychologist has often identified many children prior to the child starting Nursery School and therefore the school is aware of any special needs before the school term begins.
2. Children who are identified as having special educational needs after observations and assessments carried out by staff.

3. Communication of difficulties/concerns made by parent or carer.

Staff will monitor and assess all children on a regular basis, with any concerns being acted on at an early stage in accordance with the five steps as laid out by the Code of Practice.

The structure of Special Educational Provision

The school follows the five-stage approach as set out by the Code of Practice (September 1998). However, with the young age of the children being catered for in the Nursery and the short timescale that they attend, it may be that, after consultation with the Education Authority (EA) SEN Section, some of these stages may be shortened or passed over in order to obtain the best provision for the child. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and in consultation with the appropriate personnel.

Access to the curriculum

Pupils with special educational needs should experience teaching and learning in a variety of situations. This will include working with the whole class, in a small group situation and on an individual one-to-one basis. Focused planning and individual educational plans with clearly defined and appropriate objectives will ensure that children with special educational needs enjoy success in learning. This school recognises the importance of providing a broad and balanced curriculum for children with special educational needs. Should one to one classroom assistance be in place, this is used as a support rather than to single out a child and therefore ensure that special educational provision is, as far as is possible, made within the classroom setting.

Allocation of resources

The number of children with special educational needs who are enrolled within the school is not known until the new school year commences and the pupils have settled in to school. Children identified throughout the year will benefit from personalised learning plans and, where necessary, additional support from the Education Authority. Staff will keep equipment and resources under review and if the budgets allows, any necessary additional resources can be purchased.

Partnership with parents and carers

St. Teresa's Nursery School aims to work in partnership with parents/carers and to foster an atmosphere in which effective partnership between the parent and the school can flourish.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the school's policy review schedule.