

ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY

**Special Educational Needs Information Report
January 2026**



Let us remember we are in the presence of God "

Policy Adopted	Next Review	Author
January 2026	January 2027	S Condliffe

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Introduction

St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy is a mainstream secondary school serving the north of Stoke-on-Trent with its diverse social, economic and ethnic groups. We believe that all young people have a right to be valued, encouraged and accepted equally. This school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all young people. Some young people have Special Educational Needs, and/or Disabilities, which mean that they require provision that is additional to, or different from, others of the same age.

We follow a pupil-centred model based on the SEND Code of Practice:0-25 years (2015) which states that:

“A child or young person of compulsory school age is said to have SEND if they:

1. Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age.
2. Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.”

Some young people may experience these Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) throughout their time in school, whereas others require support at certain points in their school career. At St Margaret Ward we endeavour to help our young people to overcome any difficulties they may have and provide an education that equips them to fulfil their potential, both academically and as valued members of society.

What kinds of SEND does the Academy provide for?

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015) identifies four areas of SEND. At St Margaret Ward we support young people with difficulties in all of these areas. They include:

Communication and interaction

Young people may have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) which cause them to experience difficulty in communicating with others. Some young people may have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) including Asperger’s Syndrome and Autism; they may experience difficulties with social interaction, language, communication and imagination, which can affect how they relate to others.

Cognition and learning

Young people with learning difficulties learn at a slower pace than their peers. At St Margaret Ward we are able to cater for young people with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and specific learning difficulties (SpLD). These include dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which can lead to them becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These young people may suffer with underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety

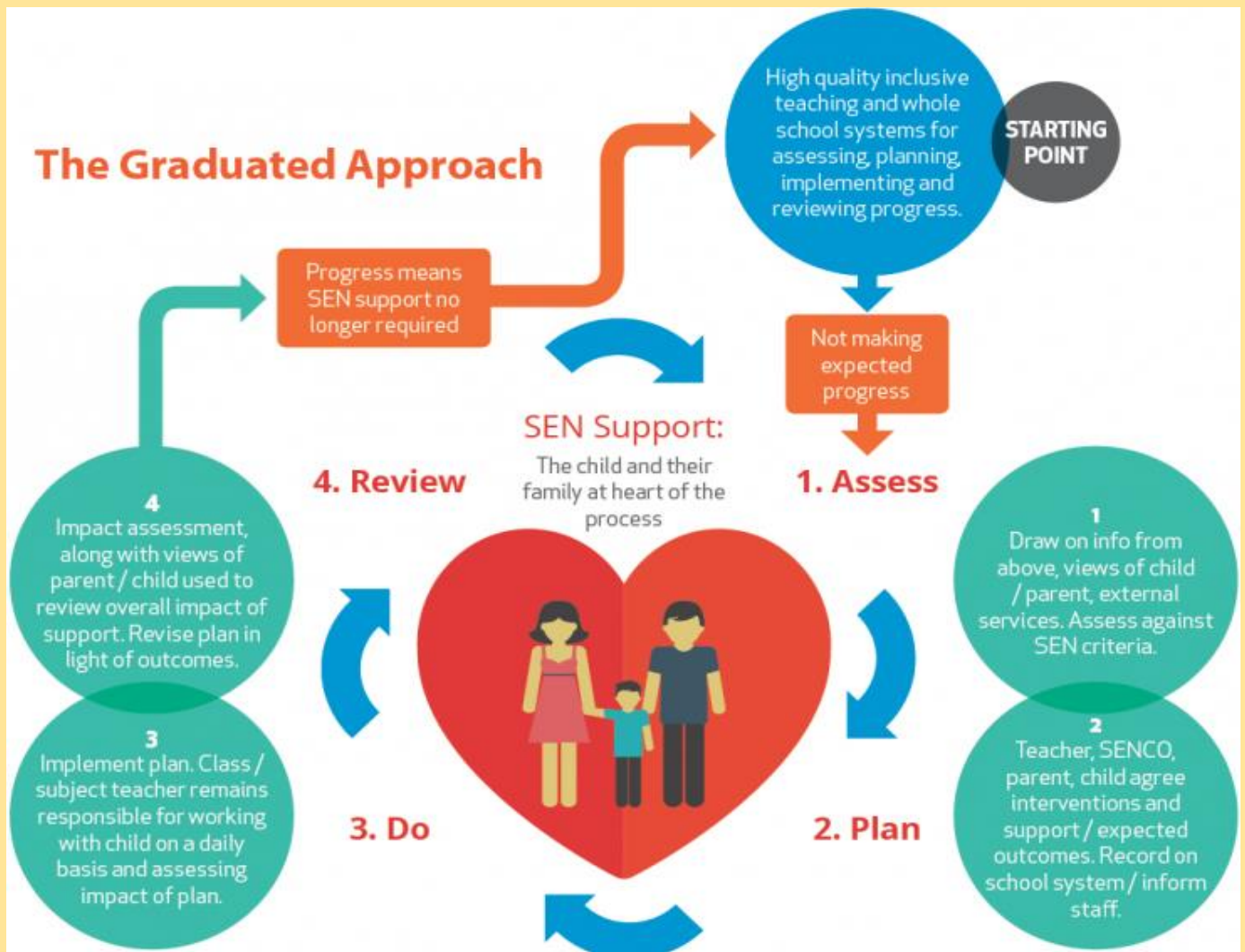
or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. They may also have disorders such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) or attachment disorder.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Some young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which makes it difficult for them to use the educational facilities that are generally provided. These young people may have vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI), a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) or a physical disability (PD). They require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning and all the opportunities available to their peers.

How do you identify and support young people with SEND?

At St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy, in line with the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25years (2015), we use a graduated approach to identify and support young people with SEND. The process involved is a four-part cycle (Assess, Plan, Do and Review), as illustrated below.



ASSESS

We identify that a young person has SEND through a combination of the following:

- Consultation with parents and carers
- Information from their primary school (shared prior to transition)
- Key Stage 2 results
- Reading and spelling test results (the academy is able to test our young people using standardised reading and spelling tests on entry)
- Subject teachers may identify young people based on their performance in lessons
- Fidei Tutors, Deputy Heads of Year and/or Heads of Year may identify concerns via the pastoral team
- External agencies provide information and/or assessments

PLAN

(How will the Academy staff support my young person and match resources to their needs? How is the decision made about what type and how much support my young person will receive?)

When a young person is identified as requiring additional support, the SEND team, in collaboration with school staff, parents and external services, decide on the most suitable provision. The SENCO will deploy Inclusion Practitioners, from within the Inclusion Team, to work alongside identified young people either in, or out, of the classroom. The Academy has a range of intervention programmes or strategies that can be used to address a wide variety of needs. All interventions are recorded on a Pupil Passport. Our interventions are research based, thus ensuring that they are quality assured.

The Academy provides some of our young people with an additional adult in the classroom, to offer support, where required. We also use the following interventions:

- Think Good, Feel Good: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- A nurturing group
- Direct Instruction: Corrective Reading: Decoding Strategies
- Beat Dyslexia: A step-by-step multi-sensory literacy programme
- Lexonik Leap: A literacy programme
- Power of 2: The One to One Coaching System for Maths Success
- Numicon: Maths teaching aid
- Study skills and/or catch-up sessions (years 10 and 11)
- Daily offload
- Emotional Literacy
- Socially Speaking: A social skills programme
- Growth Mindset
- Precision Spelling
- Alternative Provision in our De La Salle centre
- Counselling sessions
- Dockside Reading Programme
- Memory Improvement Games
- Flash Academy: A Learning Platform for EAL and Literacy

- The Homunculi Approach to Social and Emotional Wellbeing: A Flexible CBT Programme for Young People on the Autism Spectrum or with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
- Inference Reading Programme
- Language for Thinking
- Phonics Interventions
- Physiotherapy programmes (under the guidance of a Physiotherapist)
- Speech Therapy Programmes (under the guidance of the Speech Therapist)
- Teenagers Time to Talk

NB This is not an exhaustive list.

Inclusion Practitioners are responsible for organising and delivering the planned interventions to the identified young people. This may be on a one to one basis or in a small group. Depending on the provision made, and the nature of the SEND, there will be variation in the time and frequency of the interventions. Some will be daily interventions, others may be two or three times a week. The SENCO, along with the Assistant SENCO, will oversee programmes of intervention.

The SENCO informs parents/carers of the interventions that have been arranged for the young person. An invite to discuss the provision (either via telephone, in person or virtually) is extended to parents in this correspondence.

DO

(How will the curriculum be matched to my child/young person's needs?)



Staff use a wide range of strategies to adapt the curriculum as part of a graduated approach.

Universal - At the universal stage, all young people's needs are met, within the classroom, via Quality First Teaching. This is a style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all the young people in a class. Some subjects are taught in sets, where our young people receive work which is pitched at their level of ability. In other subjects, our young people are taught in mixed ability groups; here the work is planned and adjustments are made, to consider the range of ability.

Targeted - Those at SEND Support, are placed on the Class Pupil Passport. These passports inform staff of the needs of a young person and the additional strategies that are required in the classroom to support them. They also outline any specific interventions that will be delivered by the Inclusion Practitioners. At this stage, the young person may require access to specialist resources within the school, such as nurturing groups, therapies, identified interventions and some classroom support.

Specialist – At this stage, an external agency may be asked to advise on more specialised support, this is usually when a young person has not progressed as well as expected with existing support. The academy accesses support from the following external providers:

- The Educational Psychology Service
- SEND Services (see Local Offer)
- The School Nurse
- Family Support Worker
- Social Care Services
- Voluntary Sector Services such as Yellow House, The Dove Centre, NSPCC
- Medical Professionals such as Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy
- The Careers Service

NB This is not an exhaustive list.

Specialist provision is made when a young person has, or is in the process of applying for, an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). EHCPs were created to bring together education, health and social care to secure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND. According to the government's SEND code of practice, EHCPs should:

- Establish and record the views of parents and young people.
- Describe the young person's special educational needs and any health and social care needs they have.
- Establish desired outcomes across education, health and social care for the young person.
- Set out how education, health and care services will work together to meet their needs.

Some young people with an EHCP may benefit from having an adapted curriculum. This is determined on an individual basis, depending on their needs and the views of parents, the young person and other agencies involved. The EHCP usually entitles a young person to an increased amount of support from the Inclusion Team, both within, and outside of, the classroom.

REVIEW

(How will both you and I know how my child/young person is doing and how will you help me to support my young person's learning?)

Our young people's progress is monitored regularly by the school and a progress report is sent home twice a year. School staff meet with parents, as required, to discuss ways in which their young person can be supported. There is a formal opportunity every year for parents to meet with school staff via parents' evenings.

The SENCO and Assistant SENCO routinely assess what impact interventions have on our young people's progress by looking at:

- Reading and Spelling Ages
- Performance in curriculum areas
- School Reports
- Feedback from curriculum staff
- Feedback from parents

Pupil passports are reviewed three times a year with parents. This may be via SEND parent drop in days, phone consultation or, parents' evenings.

All young people with an EHCP have an annual review in which provision and outcomes are discussed with both parents/carers and external agencies working to support the young person. All information is stored, shared and discussed in line with GDPR guidelines.

What support will there be for my child/young person's overall well-being?

The school has dedicated pastoral teams for each year group. These comprise of a Head of Year; Deputy Head of Year and Form Tutors. Pastoral teams meet regularly where the well-being of our young people can be discussed.

Our young people's overall well-being is monitored by this team, in the first instance. For most young people, their well-being needs are met through such pastoral arrangements.

Certain staff in school have a more specific role in monitoring our young people's well-being such as the safeguarding staff: Mr Johnson (Deputy Principal) and Mrs Holdcroft (Safeguarding Manager); the Health and Well-Being Officer, Mrs Brown, and the Education Welfare and Family Support Teams. The collegiate also employs an independent Educational Psychologist and a Counsellor.

For some young people, it may be that additional provision is required in order to meet their well-being needs. This is discussed in the year team meetings and referred to the SEND team, if deemed necessary. Additional provision to support a young person's well-being may then be identified.

What training have the staff supporting our young people with SEND had?

The SENCO, Mrs Condliffe, is a Qualified Teacher who has completed the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination.

The Assistant SENCO, Mrs Bowers, holds a BA Degree in Education and a Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements for those students who require arrangements during formal examinations.

All Inclusion Practitioners hold, or are working towards, relevant qualifications for their post, at NVQ level and/or degree level. Members of the Inclusion Team have their own areas of

specialism/expertise which include dyslexia, phonics, running nurturing groups, etc. All members of the Inclusion Team complete ongoing Continual Professional Development related to their role. All staff receive relevant training related to SEND during INSETs. In September, all staff receive information about the pupils on the SEND register and the variety of needs they have.

How will my child/young person be included in activities outside the classroom, including school trips?

All of our young people, regardless of their SEND, are included in activities outside the classroom, including Educational Visits. Staff planning activities and trips take anticipatory action in order that pupils can be included. Where appropriate, Inclusion Practitioners are included in trips, visits and activities. Students with disabilities or special educational needs have also been included on residential trips in the UK and overseas.

How accessible is the Academy environment?

In recent years, the Academy underwent extensive building work to improve the facilities and physical environment. Height adjustable furniture, lifts access, ramps and more disabled parking are examples of some of the improvements that were made. Adjustments are made to rooming if there is a specific reason why a pupil is unable to access a part of the school. More information can be found in the Disability, Equality & Accessibility Plan.

How will the Academy prepare and support my child/young person to join the setting, transfer to a new setting or the next stage of education/life?

Moving on to another setting can be a difficult time for young people. The Academy takes certain steps to ensure that this happens as smoothly as possible.

Year 6 transition:

- Mrs Munden (Assistant Principal) and the transition team visit the feeder primary schools in the Summer Term to introduce themselves, and our school, to the young people.
- Mrs Holdcroft (Safeguarding Manager) and Mrs Bowers (Assistant SENCO) attend meetings at the feeder primary school to discuss the needs of specific young people.
- When invited the SENCO will attend Year 6 Transition EHC Plan reviews.
- Information/files are transferred from the previous school to our Academy.
- Additional transition visits, in advance of starting at the Academy, are available to specific pupils, where required.
- The SENCO and transition team are available to meet with parents individually or at the Y6 parents' evening.
- Friendship and academic days take place, where pupils sample some of the curriculum and meet their form groups.
- There is a Y7 Mass which celebrates the move to secondary school.

Year 9 transition:

- The SENCO, Head of Year and careers team are available to meet with parents individually, where required.

- There is an options evening where parents, and our young people, can speak to subject teachers about option courses.
- All parents receive an option booklet and/or information via the school website.
- For a young person with an EHC Plan a Transition Review will take place.

Year 11, 12 and 13 transition:

For older pupils, the transition may be to Further Education, Higher Education or even a work placement. Again, young people are supported through:

- Involvement of the Careers Service.
- Visits to Colleges/Universities, sometimes with a support worker, if required.
- Work experience or college taster days, supported by Academy staff, as required.
- For a young person with an EHC Plan a Transition Review will take place in Year 11 and Year 13 to plan next steps.

How will we be involved in the decisions about the learning of our young people?

All parents are encouraged to contribute to the education of our young people. This may be through:

- Discussions with the subject teachers or form tutor.
- During parents' evening.
- Comments in home/school planners.
- During discussions/meetings with SENCO, or other professionals.
- School questionnaires.
- Pupil Passport creation and reviews
- Annual Review meetings for pupils with EHC Plans.

How are parents involved in the setting? How can I be involved?

The SEN team run drop in sessions for parents to talk to members of staff about our young people's needs. Parents are able to communicate with the staff at the academy via the school planner.

There is a formal opportunity for parents to meet with teachers to discuss our young people's progress at parents' evenings and consultation evenings.

The school involves parents in a wide range of school activities such as: masses; transition events; sports day and prize evening.

From the young person's point of view

How does the Academy know if I need extra help?

The academy will look at information given by your previous schools to decide if you need extra help. Teachers and support staff will also use information from any assessments that you complete to help decide if you need any extra help.

What should I do if I think I need extra help?

If you think you need extra help, you could speak to your parents, your form tutor or the head of year. Alternatively, you could speak to Mrs Condliffe or one of the support staff. You can usually find a member of the SEND team in the SEND office which is opposite the Health and Well Being Office, by the dining room.

How will my coursework be organised to meet my individual needs?

Depending on what your needs are, you may receive support in completing coursework in a number of ways. These could include:

- Working alongside an adult to plan your coursework
- Working alongside an adult to complete your coursework
- Discussing your ideas with an adult
- Use of access arrangements (where permitted) such as extra time, a scribe, ICT support, a reader
- Support staff often work alongside young people in the classroom to help them prepare and complete coursework

How will I be involved in planning for my needs and who will explain it and help me?

We take a pupil-centred approach to the Pupil Passport which means that our young people are involved in discussing the support they need when the Pupil Passport is completed. This document allows you to share what information you think would be useful for your teachers to know about you. This will help them to take your needs into account when planning lessons.

Our young people are also frequently involved in meetings between parents/carers and school staff. Your views are important and we try, wherever possible, to take them into account when making plans to meet your needs in school.

Who will tell me what I can do to help myself and be more independent?

Your teachers are key in helping you to know what you can do to make progress in their subject. Teachers will do this by speaking to you; writing comments in your books; at parents' evenings/consultation days and in your annual school report.

School Support staff will also be able to help you to know how you can help yourself and become more independent. They might work with you on a regular basis, in or out of the classroom; they might also meet with you occasionally to discuss your progress or plans for the future.

What should I do if I am worried about something?

There are a number of things you can do if you are worried about something. You could:

- Tell your parents/carers
- Tell your Form Tutor or Head of Year.
- Tell a teacher
- Tell another adult in school

How will I know if I am doing as well as I should?

Your teachers will give you regular feedback both verbally and through marking your work. This will help you to know how you are progressing. This feedback is based on what progress you are expected to achieve.

The head of year will look at how each of our young people is doing in the year group; if they are worried about your progress, they may place you on an academic monitoring report or arrange some extra support.

Are there staff in the Academy who have had special training to help young people who need extra help?

There is a team of people who work in the Inclusion Department. Each member of staff has skills and expertise in supporting students in different ways for instance: some staff are trained in supporting pupils in the classroom; some are trained in using intervention programmes and some are trained in giving emotional and social support.

Mrs Condliffe is the SENCO. She is responsible for leading the team of people who give students support while in school.

Can the Academy get extra help from experts outside if they need to? (e.g. advice and training on medical conditions)

The Academy staff sometimes work with other professionals who give advice and help to plan the support given to our young people.

Professionals from outside the school regularly give training to the Academy staff on how best to help and support young people with needs.

How will parents and young people be able to raise any concerns they may have? How do we make a complaint?

There are a number of personnel in the Academy with whom you may raise concerns; there are however, key people who you may wish to contact should you have a concern:

The Fidei Tutor

Prior to transferring to our Academy, our young people are placed in form groups; each form group has a Form Tutor. This person is the first point of contact for any concerns that a parent/carer may have about a young person.

Assistant Head of Year

For each key stage there is an Assistant Head of Year, who works alongside the Head of Year, and is responsible for supporting and monitoring the development and standards of the young people within their year group.

Head of Year

For each year group, there is a Head of Year. This person is responsible for monitoring the progress of all young people in the year group in the areas of: Uniform; Behaviour; Attendance; Progress and Homework. Each Head of Year has a Deputy who assists them with aspects of their role.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and Assistant SENCO

The Academy has a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (Mrs Condliffe) and an Assistant SENCO (Mrs Bowers) who are responsible for the policy and process in place to meet the needs of our young people with SEND.

The SENCO is managed by the Vice Principal, Mr Johnson, who, in some cases, may be involved in concerns raised by parents/carers. In rare cases, the Principal, Mr McKenna, may become involved.

Contact with any of the above individuals can be made in the following ways:

- Through the pupil planner
- By telephone
- By letter
- By email
- Through meetings

If any person feels that their complaint has not been dealt with adequately by the school staff, they are able to contact the named Governor of Special Educational Needs and Disability who will report their concerns to the Governing Body. The complaints policy is available here:

<https://stmargaretward.co.uk/about-us/downloads/>

In addition, the Local Education Authority provides a disagreement resolution service.

Who can I contact for further information?

Further information is available from Mrs Condliffe (SENCO) and Mrs Bowers (Assistant SENCO). The Vice Principal with line management responsibility is Mr Johnson. Contact details are available here:

[Key Staff | St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy](#)

Q/ What other support is available to parents and how can I contact them?

The LA provides a parent partnership service to support with and guide parents/carers with regards to SEN (SENDIASS)

Tel: 01782 236414 E-mail: independent-supporters@stoke.gov.uk

Web: www.sendiass-stoke.co.uk

This Information report should be read in conjunction with all our other statutory policies which are available via this link:

<https://stmargaretward.co.uk/about-us/downloads/>

The following link provides information on the Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority: Local Offer

<http://localoffer.stoke.gov.uk/kb5/stoke/directory/home.page>