

Ballymacward Primary School



Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Policy

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Ballymacward Primary School

Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Policy

1. Mission Statement

Central to the ethos of Ballymacward Primary School is the determination to provide a learning environment within a safe, supportive, stimulating and co-operative school community where every child can think and grow and be happy.

2. Rationale

Ballymacward Primary is committed to the provision of a broad & balanced curriculum that offers equal access for all children. Respecting each child's unique personality, experiences, interests, strengths and weaknesses, we aim to maximise the development of our children and to work towards realising their individual potential. To this end teachers will monitor children's progress and provide appropriate experiences and tasks to stimulate, challenge and reinforce learning. In doing so, teachers will identify both, children of exceptional ability and children who display significantly greater difficulties in learning than their peers.

We recognise that during their school career some pupils may have special educational needs and/or a disability and we will make every possible arrangement to provide for their individual needs. The provision for the special educational needs of these children will be in line with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (Education (NI) Order 1996) as amended by the Special Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the application of these requirements to Ballymacward Primary School and its aims are as outlined in this Policy.

3. Key Principles of Inclusion

'Inclusion is about the quality of children's experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school.'

(Removing Barriers to Achievement, 2004)

Through the process of inclusion the school will seek to develop cultures, policies and practices to include pupils and encourage a whole school acceptance of including children with special educational needs/disability in the work and life of the school.

In order to make sure that we meet our pupils' needs and include them in all aspects of school life, this SEN policy links closely with all our other policies in supporting pupils such as; Promoting Positive Behaviour, Child Protection and Anti Bullying.

4. Aims of SEN provision in Ballymacward Primary School

In providing for children with special educational needs, we aim to:

- Identify children with SEN/disability as early as possible through a variety of means and in consultation with parents and other relevant personnel
- Raise and maintain the self-esteem of children with SEN/disability so that they feel valued as individuals within the family of the school
- Promote the inclusion of all pupils with SEN/disability into the mainstream classroom, as appropriate
- Provide appropriate, stimulating experiences to challenge and support learning for all children in line with the Northern Ireland Curriculum
- Encourage the use of a range of teaching strategies which incorporate different learning styles and ensure effective learning for all

- Prepare children for known and unknown situations by developing a range of general skills, including bodily and manual skills, social skills, communication, expression, numeracy, observation, classification, research and investigation, recording, reasoning and the ability to evaluate evidence and opinion
- Encourage good manners, kindness and respect towards other people and a tolerance of their cultures and beliefs
- Nurture the innate curiosity of children, their sensitivity, creativity and sense of fun and develop in children a sense of responsibility for their own learning and behaviour
- Promote close and supportive links between the home, school and community, achieving a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting special educational needs
 - To encourage parental involvement in all aspects of SEN provision
 - To consider the wishes of the child when planning and implementing SEN provision.
 - To strive for close co-operation between all services and agencies concerned in order to achieve an effective multi-disciplinary approach to meeting special educational needs.

5. Definitions

Children with special educational needs and/or disability may include those with learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems, medical conditions, speech and language difficulties, visual and aural impairments and physical disabilities. In this context, a learning difficulty is apparent when a child has 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age¹', or when a child's disability has a 'substantial or long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities²'.

(¹Code of Practice 1998 paragraph:1.4 and ²Disability Discrimination Act 1995: 1.1)

On occasions, children will be enrolled with information in existence about their needs. More often these needs will become apparent as a child progresses through the school. Whenever possible, provision for these children will be made by class teachers to ensure that those with special educational needs have access to the whole curriculum.

5. New SEN Categories as of September 2019

The following areas encompass all aspects of SEN/Disability:

1. Cognitive and Learning – Language, Literacy, Maths, Numeracy

Dyslexia or Specific Learning Difficulty – Language/Literacy
 Dyscalculia or Specific Learning Difficulty – Mathematics/Numeracy
 Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
 Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
 Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (

2. Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Wellbeing

Social and Behavioural Difficulties
 Emotional and Wellbeing Difficulties
 Severe Challenging Behaviour SLD

3. Speech Language and Communication

Development Language Disorder
 Language Disorder associated with differentiating biomedical condition
 Communication and Interaction Difficulties

4. Sensory Difficulties

Blind

Partially sighted

Severe/Profound Hearing Impairment

Mild/Moderate Hearing Impairment

Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

5. Physical Needs

Physical

New Medical Categories as of September 2019

Epilepsy

Asthma

Diabetes

Anaphylaxis

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

ADD/ADHD

Dyspraxia DCD

Developmental Language Disorder (medical)

Global Development Delay

Down Syndrome

Complex Medical Needs

Anxiety Disorder

Depression

Eating Disorder

Psychosis

Other Mental Disorder

Cerebral Palsy

Spina Bifida with Hydrocephalus

Spina Bifida without Hydrocephalus

Muscular Dystrophy

Acquired Brain Injury

Visual Impairment

Hearing Impairment

Physical Disability

Other Medical Conditions/Syndrome

Guidance for Schools: Recording Children with Special Educational Needs – SEN Categories (Page 2 & Annex 2) (Department of Education)

7. The Management of Special Educational Needs

In Ballymacward Primary School we follow the new three stage introduced as set out in the new Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (2021)

While individual children's needs vary greatly and the provision may range from temporary and minor to permanent and major, it is hoped that many children will have their needs addressed in the short term within Stage 1.

Teachers who have concerns about a child's learning or who identify a child as having special

educational needs will inform the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) of their concerns as early as possible. A 'Goal Keeping' form may be used in P.1 initially to support / identify children who may need to move on to the SEN stages.

Stage 1

Stage 1 begins with a concern that a child may have special educational needs. Normally such a view is expressed either to or by the class teacher. The class teacher will maintain day-to-day responsibility for meeting the pupil's SENs and should inform the SEN Co-ordinator / Principal and consult the child's parents.

In addition, the class teacher will:

- Collect and record information about the child and make an initial assessment of SEN.
- Provide or arrange special help within the normal curriculum framework, such as: increased differentiation of class work, alternative teaching and learning strategies to help meet the child's needs. The nature and aims of such provision should be recorded on a Stage 1 Individual Education Plan (IEP), together with the targets, monitoring arrangements and review date and monitor and review progress and report back to SENCo.

The SENCo will:

- Ensure that parents are consulted and together agree that the child's name is included in the school's SEN register.
- Help the class teacher gather information and assess the child's needs.
- Advise and support the class teacher.

Stage 1 Review

Parents will be informed of proposed action and any review date. Having considered review outcomes the SENCo will decide whether to remove pupil's name from the register, keep the pupil at Stage 1 or move the child to Stage 2.

Stage 2

Stage 2 begins with a decision either at the Stage 1 Review, or following discussions between teachers and parents, to proceed with early and more intensive action.

The SENCo will:

- Take the lead in assessing and identifying the child's learning difficulty. This includes planning, monitoring and reviewing the special educational provision working with the child's teacher. The class teacher remains responsible for working with the child in the classroom.
- Working with the class teacher, the SENCo will ensure that an Education Plan is drawn up for the pupil.
- All these operations should take into account, as far as possible, the child's own views and the parents' views.

Stage 2 Review

Normally the Stage 2 review will be conducted by the SENCo, in consultation with the class teacher and, where possible, child and parents. It should focus on the child's progress.

If progress has been satisfactory the SENCo may decide that the child should continue at Stage 2 in order to consolidate gains. If the progress continues to be satisfactory, the SENCo may decide that the child no longer needs special educational provision at Stage 2 and may decide to move the child to Stage 1.

The child's name should be kept on the SEN register until there is no longer any significant concern about progress.

If the relevant and purposeful measures at Stages 1 and 2 do not result in adequate progress the SENCo will move the child forward to Stage 3 and referral may be made to specialist support services/agencies outside school.

Stage 3

Stage 3 begins with a decision either at Stage 2 review or following discussions between the SENCo, Principal, teachers and parents, that early intervention with external support is necessary. At this Stage the SENCo takes a lead role, working closely with the child's teacher and drawing on the expertise of relevant external support services.

The SENCo, working with the class teacher, and with the help of the external support services, will ensure that a Stage 3 Education Plan is drawn up. Together they will consider a range of teaching approaches and appropriate support materials, including the use of ICT.

The Education Plan should set out revised strategies for supporting the child's progress and arrangements for monitoring and review. It should be implemented, as far as possible, within the everyday classroom setting.

The SENCo should ensure close liaison with the child's teacher. Parents will always be kept informed and the child will be involved as far as possible.

At Stages 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice the SENCo and class teacher should consider potential benefits of:

- The Good Practice Guidelines.
- SEN Resource File
- Encouraging inclusive activities to ensure integration of the pupil.
- Differentiated teaching.
- Withdrawal for more intensive support.
- SEN resources available within school; support programmes, ICT, etc.
- Available staff skills which support pupils with SEN.
- Implementation of any provision/strategies as a result of external advice, support and training provided by relevant ELB/other services.

Stage 3 Review

The review of the Stage 3 Education Plan will normally be conducted by the SENCo, in consultation with the class teacher and where possible, parents and child. Relevant external support services may also be present, particularly if the child's progress has not been satisfactory. The review should focus on the child's progress and whether this has been adequate.

If intervention remains appropriate the child will remain at Stage 3 for a further period of time.

If the progress has been satisfactory and intervention is no longer required, the SENCo, following consultation, may agree that the child no longer needs external support at Stage 3 and may decide to move the child back to Stage 2 and action appropriate to that stage will be taken.

If the relevant and purposeful measures at Stage 3 have not resulted in adequate progress, following consultation with the SENCo, teacher, external support services and parents, the principal may request a Statutory Assessment.

Stage 4

'In some cases schools will conclude that the pupil's needs remain so substantial that they cannot be

effectively met within the resources normally available to the school.’ (Supplement to the Code of Practice – 4.64)

Following an application to the EA from school’s principal or the parent, the Board will consider the need for transition to Stage 4. It should be noted that a request of this kind will not always result in Statutory Assessment nor will Statutory Assessment always lead to a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

In reaching a suitable decision, the Board will consider:

- The degree of the child’s difficulty
- The nature of the provision required
- Whether the child’s needs can reasonably be met by the resources normally available to the school
- Use the 5 Board Provisional Criteria for Statutory Assessment.

Following Statutory Assessment

The EA will either:

- Make and maintain a Statement of Special Educational Needs and arrange, monitor and review provision.

or

- Provide a Note in Lieu of a Statement.

A Statement of Special Educational Needs sets out the child’s educational and non-educational needs, the objectives to be secured, the provision to be made and the arrangements for monitoring and review.

A Note in Lieu of a Statement sets out the reasons for the Board’s decision not to make a Statement of Special Educational Needs and includes supporting evidence from the Statutory Assessment.

Stage 5

Once the statement has been made final:

Provision and /or support will be arranged to meet the child’s needs.

The SENCo ensures that a Stage 5 Education Plan is drawn up, implemented, monitored and reviewed

The Annual Review and Transition processes will take place.

The Annual Review

Article 19 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 requires that any child or young person who is the subject of a Statement of Special Educational Needs, whether attending a special or mainstream school, must be reviewed annually, to make sure that the needs of the child or young person are still being met and to consider the appropriateness of the placement. Annual Reviews should be seen as part of the process of continuous monitoring of the child's progress.

The Annual Review will:

- Gauge the child’s progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the statement.
- Review the special provision made for the child, including placement.
- Consider the appropriateness of maintaining the Statement of SENs.

Relevant school staff will undertake the Review on behalf of the EA.

The Review will take place in school, chaired by the Principal (or other person as delegated).

Exceptional Cases

In most cases transition through the five staged assessment process occurs in sequence. However, in exceptional circumstances, pupils may demonstrate such significant or unforeseen difficulties that with multi-professional and parental agreement a move to a higher stage of need is necessary immediately.

8. Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs in Ballymacward Primary School

'It is vitally important that children with SEN are identified as early as possible and that an awareness of their possible difficulties is clearly communicated between all the professionals involved with their development.'
(Code of Practice 1998 paragraph 2.14)

In identifying children with special educational needs, information will be gathered from various sources and treated confidentially.

The following may be used to identify pupils' needs:

- Parental information
- Information from Nursery School or other transferring school
- Cognitive ability tests
- Attainment tests
- Summative and formative assessment
- Key Stage Assessments
- Teacher observation
- Professional Reports
- Attendance records
- Statements of Special Educational Need
- Care Plans
- Personal Education Plans for looked after children and
- IEP Reviews
- Annual Reviews

9. Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with SENs

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored.

- IEP targets will be monitored for quality, progression and appropriateness, through meeting with teachers on a regular basis, class visits and review of pupil class work and well-being.
- IEP reviews and other relevant and purposeful measures will focus on educational outcomes to inform future planning and inform movement either up or down through the Code of Practice Stages.
- Formal meetings for staff will be held during each term to monitor SEN provision and discuss issues arising.
- Parents with children on the Learning Support register will have the opportunity to discuss their child's individual targets for learning and their progress at parent interviews or can contact the school at any other time to arrange a meeting.
- The Board of Governors will be kept informed of the SEN provision on a regular basis.
- Liaison with outside agencies will be maintained.

10. Addressing Individual Requirements

In attempting to meet the needs of individual children, a range of teaching strategies and classroom management styles may be required. Advice and programmes from outside agencies such as RISE

NI, to include occupational therapy and speech and language, will also be integrated into classroom practice. These will be noted in education plans and their effectiveness considered at times of review.

In general, teachers will ensure that:

- Activities are provided to encourage children to work at their own levels in groups or as individuals – neither so difficult as to frustrate or so easy as to bore; skills and knowledge will be introduced in small amounts and in a logical order; concepts will be established slowly through the varied revisiting and practice of knowledge and skills.
- Interventions in Literacy (Reading Partnership) and Numeracy (Digit Club) implemented for SEN children who are identified as requiring it.
- Sensitivity will be shown towards children whose limitation in talking and listening, reading, writing and number work influence their learning in other areas of the curriculum; appropriate help will be given to overcome such weaknesses.
- Children with specific hearing or sights problems will be carefully positioned in the room.
- Whenever possible, children will be made aware of expectations in terms of time, behaviour, work etc. and be encouraged to share the responsibility for their progress. .
- Children with behavioural issues will be carefully positioned in the room to enable all members of the class to progress; if this requires isolation, it will be short term and with the clear goal of integration
- Children with behavioural problems, including disciplinary and motivational, may be given a daily progress chart tailored to their difficulties and providing opportunities to record progress, to offer praise and to inform parents

11. Record Keeping

A register will be maintained by the SENCo, detailing those children who have special educational needs. Teachers will provide the SENCo with copies of pupil IEPs and use the originals as working documents, filing them when used in the child's folder (held by class teacher) and sending an evaluated copy to the SENCo for record keeping.

Class teachers and the SENCo will keep records of their own testing through informal assessments, standardised or diagnostic tests.

The SENCo will keep copies of all letters, referrals, minutes, reports and relevant correspondence pertaining to special needs.

12. Organisation and Management

Depending on staffing, priorities and the time available, the SENCo, Assistant SENCo or Classroom Assistants may work to support individuals or groups of children within their own classes or may withdraw individuals or small groups to concentrate on particular difficulties.

13. Resources and Additional Support

A variety of resource materials including ICT packages will be used to supplement the differentiated class work provided by the teacher to support special needs.

For example:

- Visual timetables, visual instruction cards, personalised cards
- Chewellery, weighted lap mats, movement cushions
- Magnetic boards and letters, white boards and markers, timers
- Reading schemes including Rapid Readers (Pearson), Bug Club (Pearson) and Ginn 360 and Big Books.
- ICT: Online resources, e.g. Nesy, Rapid Reader & Bug Club.

- Phonic programmes: Jolly Phonics (P.1) and Linguistic Phonics
- Individual laptops and iPads
- Memory games
- Sensory tent

14. Literacy and Numeracy Intervention

Literacy and Numeracy Interventions (Reading Partnership and Digit Club) may be offered to children who have been identified by the SENCo/class teacher as experiencing or having potential reading / numerical difficulties. The programmes last from 8 - 10 weeks and the child has individual / small group support two times per week for 20 minutes. Regular attendance by the child and full support from his/her parents is a vital element of the programme.

15. Professional Development

The Principal / SENCo oversees the professional development of all staff. The SENCo should keep a record of all training relating to SEN.

It is essential that all staff keep up-to-date with developments in the whole area of SEN in order to provide effectively for pupils. Any staff attending INSET should disseminate the training with colleagues.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors should:

- Ensure that all pupils' special educational needs are addressed
- Have regard for the Code of Practice/SEND0
- Have regard for the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy
- Ensure the policy is kept under review
- Allocate funding for SEN and disability; prepare & take forward a written accessibility plan

Mr. Gerry Gordon has been appointed as Link-Governor for Special Needs.

Role of the Principal

The principal should:

- Keep the Board of Governors informed about SEN/Disability issues
- Work in partnership with the SENCo
- Where necessary liaise with parents and external agencies
- Delegate and monitor the SEN budget
- Ensure the Strategic Learning & Thinking Team is actively involved in the management of SEN within the school.

The Role of the Coordinator (SENCo / Principal)

The SENCo should:

- Coordinate provision for children with SEN/Disability
- Ensure that the policy relating to Special Educational Needs/Disability is adhered to within Ballymacward Primary School and in particular, the principles of prompt assessment and appropriate provision.

- Advise and liaise with colleagues and contribute to their training on SEN/Disability issues.
- Maintain the school's Learning Support register and oversee the records of all pupils with SEN/Disability.
- Liaise with parents and external agencies.
- Report to the Board of Governors at each BoG Meeting.

Role of the Classroom Teacher

The classroom teacher should:

- Be aware of current legislation and the staged approach to special needs as outlined in the Code of Practice
- Gather information through formal and informal assessment/observation
- Develop an inclusive classroom
- Write and review education plans in the consultation with the SENCo
- Liaise with the SENCO and Special Needs teacher
- Involve classroom assistants as part of the learning team

Special Needs Support Teacher (when required)

The Special Needs teacher will work under the direction of the SENCo & should:

- Be aware of current legislation
- Be familiar with the administrative process within the school
- Be involved in testing and recording data for the SEN Register
- Work closely with all members of staff to identify pupils' needs
- Implement the delivery of suitable programmes for all identified pupils with SEN/Disability which promote progression within an inclusive setting
- Contribute to IEPs which inform learning and teaching
- Monitor and review progress
- Be involved in the Annual Review process
- Attend professional development training

Role of the Classroom Assistant

Classroom Assistants should:

- Support the child in all areas of the curriculum, as directed by the class teacher
- Assist in the planning of relevant activities & preparation of appropriate materials & provide practical support
- Liaise regularly with the class teacher and SENCo and when necessary with other professionals

Parents/Carers

'The relationship between the parents of a child with SEN and their child's school has a crucial bearing on the child's educational progress and effectiveness of any school based action..... Professional help can seldom be wholly effective unless it builds upon parental involvement and provides reassurance that account is taken of what parents say and that their views and anxieties are treated as intrinsically important.' (*Code of Practice 2.21*)

- It is essential that parents inform the relevant school staff of any significant needs their child may possess. They should do this as early as possible. For example, important information

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may need to be made available by a parent upon a child's entry to the school.

- The school will inform parents when staff are considering placing the pupil's name on the SEN register or moving the child to a higher or lesser stage of need.
- At all stages of the Code of Practice parents will be kept informed and encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning.
- Parents will be notified by letter when their child's name is added to the Learning Support Register and thereafter kept informed of their child's progress and any movement to a different stage on the register will also be notified by letter.
- The class teacher and SENCo will inform the parents about the concerns, targets and action taken, and discuss ways in which they might co-operate in partnership for the child's benefit.
- Parents will be encouraged to contact the school at any time to clarify or follow-up any SEN queries.
- Parents will have the opportunity to speak with teachers at parent interviews regarding their child's individual education plan and may be invited to additional interviews to discuss specific SEN issues.
- Workshops may be held to guide parents as they support their child's learning and to develop a partnership with school.

Pupils

'The child should, where possible, according to age maturity and capability, participate in all the decision making processes which occur in education.'

(Supplement to the Code of Practice – para 1.19)

Key decisions for a particular pupil might include:

- Contributing to the assessment
- Contributing to education plans through setting targets
- Working towards achieving agreed targets and
- Contributing to the review of IEPs, Annual Reviews and the Transition process in Year 7

17. Admissions

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with SEN are consistent with the school's general arrangements for all other pupils.

Children with Statements of SEN are placed in schools at the request of the relevant Education and Library Board.

When seeking to place a pupil with a Statement, the Board will take into account the wishes of the child's parents and the provision of efficient education for other children in the class or school and the efficient use of resources to determine the suitability of the placement. This arrangement is in line with SENDO legislation.

Accessibility

The school will ensure that all children in each year of Foundation, KS 1 & KS2 have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Within our school development plan we will endeavour to improve access to the environment and access to information for children with SEN/Disability.

18. Complaints

Complaints regarding SEN/Disability issues will be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. In most cases this will be successfully achieved on an informal basis with a class teacher and/or SENCo. Should the issue require further discussion it may be addressed to the principal.

Unresolved issues may be submitted in writing to the Board of Governors.

19. SEN Advice & Information Service

The Education Authority aims to ensure that parents of children with Special Educational Needs/Disability know where and how to access information and advice in relation to the needs of their children so that they can make appropriate and informed choices and decisions. Most of the advice and information is available at <http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/get-advice-on-special-education/>

20. Dispute Avoidance and Reconciliation Service (DARS)

The function of this service is to provide, within an independent, confidential and informal forum, a further opportunity to resolve previously unresolved disagreements between a school or Education and Library Board in relation to the special educational provision being made for a child.

21. Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

In instances where an agreement about a child's special educational needs cannot be reached by parents with the Education & Library, an appeal can be made to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

22. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and/or in light of changes in legislation or practice. This will happen in consultation with the Board of Governors and all staff members.

23. References

The law dealing with Special Education in Northern Ireland is contained in the The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 as amended by The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO).

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-code-practice>

1998 Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of SEN (here after referred to as the Code of Practice'

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/the-code-of-practice.pdf>

Supplement to the Code of Practice (Operative from September 2005)

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/supplement.pdf>

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents>

Other Links

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-legislation>

http://www.belb.org.uk/Downloads/psy_sen_code_of_practice.pdf

24. New SEN Provision/implementation

September 2024

New SEN legislation was introduced in 2016 but due to lack of government has not yet been passed as law. Preparations for implementation of the SEN legislation have been ongoing and as a school we are ready to fully implement the new legislation when it is made law. During the 2023/24 academic year we will be rolling out PLPs for SEN pupils.