



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

Rationale

Cookham, Maidenhead and The Lawns Nursery School Federation (the Federation) is committed to providing an appropriate and high quality education to all our children. We believe that all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have an entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and to be fully included in all aspects of school life. We believe that all children should be equally valued in school. We will strive to develop an environment where all children can flourish, feel safe and reach their full potential.

The Federation is committed to inclusion. Part of the Federation's strategic planning for school improvement is to develop cultures, policies and practices that include all learners. We aim to foster a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to all learners. This does not mean that we will treat all learners in the same way. We will respond to them as individuals, in ways which take account of their varied life experiences and needs.

We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background. We pay particular attention to the provision for the achievement of different groups of learners:

- Girls and boys;
- Minority, ethnic and faith groups, Travellers, asylum seekers and refugees;
- Learners who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL);
- Learners with SEN;
- Learners who are disabled;
- Those who are more able;
- Those who are looked after or have previously been looked after by the local authority;
- Others such as those who are sick; those who are vulnerable due to family circumstances;
- Any learners who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children have SEND if they have a *learning difficulty or disability, which calls for special educational provision* to be made for them.

Children have a *learning difficulty or disability* if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;



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- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority;
- are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

If the child has a medical condition that requires some additional support the Federation will refer to “Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions”, December 2015.

Special educational provision means:

- a) for children of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LA, other than ‘special schools’, in the area
- b) for children under two, educational provision of any kind.

This SEND policy details how the Federation will do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any child who has SEND. All practitioners will be aware of the special needs of individual children whom they teach. The Federation will use its best endeavours to ensure that all early years practitioners in the schools are able to identify, plan, provide for and monitor the progress of those children who have special educational needs. Children with SEND will join in the activities of the setting together with children who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the child receiving the special educational provision and the efficient education of the children with whom they are educated.

The setting will have regard to the **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (2015)** when carrying out its duties toward all children with SEND.

Partnership with Parents

Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling children and young people with SEND to achieve their potential. The Federation recognises that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child’s needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents of children with SEND will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their children’s education. Parents can view the Federation’s SEND Local Offer on the individual Nursery websites and also on the RBWM website at https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer.

Views of the Child

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities often have a unique knowledge of their own needs and their views about what sort of help they would like to enable them to make the most of their education will be ascertained. They will be encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes and contribute to the assessment of their needs, the review and transition processes. The views of the child will be



determined through focused observations of their engagement in tasks, the choices that they make in regard to participation in activities and through discussions with parents.

Identification, Assessment and Provision in Early Education Settings

The Early Learning Goals set out what most children will have achieved by the end of the Foundation Stage. The Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (2023) also sets out what children within age bands should be achieving. We recognise that children will progress at different rates during the Foundation Stage and some children will not be achieving the expected norms. Such children will need differentiated learning opportunities to help them progress and regular monitoring of their progress. As with all learners we follow the Assess, Plan, Do and Review cycle to ensure provision meets individual needs and secures progress.



Graduated Response

Monitoring of individual children’s progress throughout the Foundation Stage is essential. Where a child appears not to be making expected progress then it may be necessary to use alternative approaches to learning. Ongoing difficulties may indicate the need for help above that which is normally available for children in the setting.



The key test for action is evidence that the child’s current rate of progress is inadequate.

Adequate Progress

Adequate progress can be defined in a number of ways. It might, for instance, be progress that:

- closes the developmental gap between the child and the child’s peers;
- prevents the developmental gap growing wider;
- is similar to that of peers starting from the same developmental baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers;
- matches or betters the child’s previous rate of progress;
- ensures access to the full curriculum;
- demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills;
- demonstrates improvements in the child’s emotional regulation .

Once practitioners have identified that a child has special educational needs or disability, the setting will intervene through SEND Support and implement a graduated approach to support that child. The SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) will be involved from the outset and may need to seek advice and support from external agencies. Informing parents to contribute their knowledge and understanding of their child and raise any concerns they may have about their child’s needs and the provision that is being made for them, is an essential initial step.

Responsibilities for SEND within Cookham, Maidenhead and The Lawns Nursery School Federation

The Governing Body must report to parents annually on the schools provision for SEND. There are 2 members of the Governing Body responsible for SEND.

The Executive Headteacher has responsibility for the day to day management of all aspects of the Federation’s work, including provision for children with SEND.

Each school has a designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). They work closely with colleagues having responsibility for the operation of the Federation’s SEND policy and co-ordinating provision for children with SEND.

All practitioners in the Federation are involved in the identification, assessment and provision for children with SEND and in the development of SEND policy.

The practitioner usually responsible for the child is responsible for working with the child with SEND on a daily basis and for planning and delivering an individualised programme.

The SENCO

The SENCO will have responsibility for:



- facilitating liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of children with SEND;
- advising and supporting other practitioners in the setting;
- ensuring that appropriate Individual Education Plans/Play plans are in place;
- ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with SEND is collected, recorded and updated.

The SENCO will take the lead in further assessment of the child’s particular strengths and weaknesses; in planning future support for the child in discussion with colleagues; and in monitoring and subsequently reviewing the action taken. The SENCO will also ensure that appropriate records are kept including a record of children receiving SEND support and those with Education Health Care plans. The teacher/practitioner usually responsible for the child will remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis and for planning and delivering an individualised programme. There will be regular children’s progress discussions in team meetings. The SENCO will have regular discussions with key workers to develop teaching and learning strategies for individual children.

SEND Support

When a child is identified as having a special educational need, interventions should be devised that are additional to those provided as part of the setting’s usual curriculum. The triggers for intervention through SEND support could be concern about a child who despite receiving appropriate early education experiences:

- makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are particularly targeted to improve the child’s identified area of weakness;
- continues working at levels significantly below those expected for children of a similar age in certain areas;
- presents with persistent emotional and/or regulation difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the setting;
- has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of personal aids and equipment;
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and requires specific individual interventions in order to access learning.

If practitioners in consultation with parents conclude that a child may need further support to help them progress, staff should seek the help of the SENCO. The SENCO and colleagues will collect all known information about the child and seek additional information from the parents. In some cases, outside professionals from health, social services or the education psychology service may already be involved with the child. If external professionals have not already been working with practitioners, the SENCO should contact them if parents agree. If staff have concerns regarding a child’s speech, language and communication skills parents will be advised to self-refer to Speech and Language and will be signposted to the relevant information.



Nature of Intervention

The SENCO and the child’s teacher/key worker, in consultation with parents, will decide on the strategies needed to help the child to progress in the light of their earlier assessment. These strategies will comprise of individualised arrangements for learning and teaching.

These arrangements may include:

- extra adult time in devising the nature of the planned intervention and monitoring its effectiveness;
- the provision of different learning materials or special equipment;
- some individual or group support or staff development and training to introduce more effective strategies;
- access to LA support services for one-off or occasional advice on strategies or equipment;
- staff training to provide effective intervention without the need for regular or ongoing input from external agencies.

Individual Education Plans/Play Plans

Strategies employed to enable the child to progress will be recorded within an Individual Education Plan (IEP). In the Federation IEPs take the format of “play plans”. This should include information about:

- the short-term targets set for the child;
- the teaching strategies;
- the provision to be put in place.

The play plan will focus on up to four key targets (linked to the four areas of the SEND Code of Practice) and will be discussed with parents and the child. The play plans will be continually kept “under review”, but are formally reviewed two to three times a year. Parents will be consulted as part of the review process and will be asked to add their comments to the play plan review documentation.

A **graduated response** may be characterized by the involvement of external support services that can provide more specialist assessments, give advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials, and in some cases provide support for particular activities. The triggers for referral for seeking help from outside agencies could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme and/or concentrated support, the child:

- continues to make little or no progress in specific areas;
- continues working at an early years curriculum substantially below that expected of children of a similar age;
- has emotional or regulation difficulties which substantially and regularly inhibit the child’s own learning or that of the group, despite having an individualised support programme;



- has sensory or physical needs, and requires additional equipment or regular visits for direct intervention or advice by practitioners from a specialist service;
- has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

When the school seeks the help of external support services, those services will need to see the child’s records (with parental consent) in order to establish which strategies have already been employed and which targets have been set and achieved. The external specialist may act in an advisory capacity, provide additional specialist assessment or be involved in teaching the child directly. The resulting play plan for the child will set out new strategies for supporting the child’s progress. Delivery of the play plan will remain the responsibility of Early Years practitioner.

Requests for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment

For a very few children the help given by the early education setting through SEND Support will not be sufficiently effective to enable the child to progress satisfactorily. It will then be necessary for the setting, in consultation with the parents and any external agencies already involved, to consider whether a statutory multi-disciplinary assessment may be appropriate. Where a request for a statutory assessment is made to the LA (Local Authority), the child will have demonstrated significant cause for concern and the setting will provide evidence to the LA detailing:

- The school’s action through SEND support;
- Play plans for the child;
- Records of regular reviews and their outcomes;
- The child’s health including the child’s medical history where relevant;
- Educational and other assessments, for example from an advisory specialist support teacher or an educational psychologist;
- Strategies advised by a Speech and Language Therapist for those children with a speech and language delay;
- Views of the parents and of the child;
- Involvement of other professionals;
- Any involvement by the social services or education welfare service.

When the LA receives a request for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment it will work co-operatively with parents, the child’s educational setting and, as appropriate, other agencies, as to whether an EHC needs assessment of the child’s special educational needs is necessary. Where the evidence presented to the LA suggests that the child’s learning difficulties may call for special educational provision which cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to the setting, the LA has a duty to gather advice from relevant professionals about the child’s education, health and care needs, desired outcomes and special educational, health and care provision that can be required to meet the identified needs and achieve the desired outcomes. The Federation will co-operate with the LA by providing the requested advice and information.



Named School in an EHC Plan

The child’s parent has the right to request a particular maintained nursery school to be named in their EHC plan. The Federation will always grant admissions unless:

- it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEND of the child; or
- the attendance of the child would be incompatible with the efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources.

Providing the Support Specified in the EHC Plan

The Nursery School will have been involved in the development or review of the EHC plan to determine what can be provided from within the school’s own resources and what will require additional external expertise or further funding from the LA.

Reviewing an EHC Plan

EHC plans are reviewed at least every 6 months for a child under 5 years old. Reviews focus on the child’s progress towards achieving the outcomes specified on the EHC plan and must consider whether these outcomes and targets remain appropriate. The Federation refers to guidance provided in “The Early Years: Guide to the 0 to 25 SEND code of practice, 2014”, to guide the review process.

Approved by: Teaching and Learning Committee/FGB

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Date: 12th March 2025

Review Date: March 2026