

Special Educational Needs Policy



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Review Date	
Date Amended	

The school and its facilities

Valley School is a special school with a specialist Nursery and Early Years provision maintained by the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport.

It caters for primary aged pupils, with physical and learning difficulties, pupils with complex needs, pupils on the autistic continuum and some who present challenging behaviour.

The school is on one level with access to secure outdoor play areas. Facilities for pupils reflect their wide-ranging needs and include:

- Specialist classrooms for pupils with complex learning and physical needs
- Specialist ASD provision with distraction free environments
- A hydrotherapy pool
- Sensory Integration room and facilities outdoors
- Ball pool and soft play
- Multi-sensory room and specialist areas in classrooms for pupils with VI
- Specialised ICT equipment with a range of access devices
- Treatment rooms for nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists
- Minibus

As reflected in the school's aims all children at Valley have an equal right to a broad and full education. In order for many of our children to achieve their full potential it is essential that their learning requirements are thought out carefully and that they are provided with the appropriate support. This policy statement for SEN addresses their requirements.

Ethos and Values at Valley School

Our philosophy is based on the belief that all children learn best in a caring stimulating and well structured environment which provides opportunities for challenge and responsibility. Our pupils are entitled to high standards of teaching that will help them to achieve their full potential in terms of education and independence. Each child is unique in his/her learning needs and we aim to meet those needs as fully as possible. The Child is at the centre of all we strive to do in school. This means that all staff within the school function as a team and cooperate together to design and implement the child's teaching programme. The school has a responsibility to manage resources, both human and financial, so that our aims can be realised as effectively and efficiently as possible. The following specific objectives support the successful implementation of the policy.

We aim:

- a) to meet our pupils educational needs by access to an appropriate curriculum according to individual needs
- b) to provide teaching and therapy support to develop children's ability to communicate, including the use of alternative means of communication, so that they have control and choice in their environment
- c) to ensure all children grow in their independence and self reliance to become confident and capable learners
- d) to gain the involvement of parents in their children's learning
- e) to set achievement targets and monitor their success

Allocation of resources

The aim is for class size to be no greater than 8 pupils in each class with one teacher and a minimum of three classroom assistants. Additional staffing, both teaching and non teaching are allocated according to the needs of the individual pupils within each class group.

Much of the specialist physical equipment in school is specific to individual children. As such it is replaced as needed via funding through the Local Authority and NHS. Resources in classes are accessible and shared throughout the school.

Identification and review of pupils` needs

The vast majority of pupils are admitted into school with an Education, Health and Care Plan already in place. The children who have a resourced nursery place have already been identified as having additional needs are likely to be referred for Statutory Assessment during their nursery year. The Deputy Headteacher is the Special Educational Needs Coordinator for the nursery pupils.

Valley pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have a termly IEP which works towards the outcomes in the EHCP (section E). An 'annual review' of the EHCP takes place each year. This review will examine their special educational needs, consider how well they are being met and progress towards the outcomes in the plan. Each of the professionals involved with the child write reports on their involvement over the past year, and indicates the action or objectives they plan for the coming year. The programme of Annual Reviews is planned by the end of the summer term for the following academic year with a clear timetable for the collection and distribution of reports. Careful consideration is given to the decision of who is to be invited to the Annual Review in order to give a full picture of the child e.g. staff from integrated placements. The Annual Review meeting is held at school, and parents and staff from other agencies are invited. Each child is at the centre of the meeting, their views and feelings being represented by staff and parents/carers. The review discusses the reports and takes account of the views expressed by the parents/carers. At the end of the review meeting, amendments are drafted on the EHCP ready for the SEN section of the LA to update. Action and recommendations are noted, detailing decisions made and targets are set for the coming year. A copy of this report is sent to the parents, to the Local Authority, and to all parties who were invited to the review meeting.

The School Curriculum

We seek to address the individual learning needs of all pupils at Valley. In accordance with the Aims of the School and our Teaching and Learning Policy we accept the responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. In order to ensure relevance for the pupils we teach, we need to be flexible in terms of balance within the curriculum so that it meets their needs at the different stages of their school career. This means, in effect, that not all Valley pupils will necessarily experience all aspects of the curriculum all of the time. For example, in the early years pupils may benefit from periods of exploratory play and at this age may require intensive therapy sessions. For older students it may be appropriate to focus on self-help and independence skills. Our pupils with complex needs will benefit from a sensory curriculum, and may have extended periods devoted to various forms of therapy, including specialist input for pupils with severe visual impairment. Some pupils with challenging behaviour may need individual sessions of intensive interaction, sensory integration and opportunities to withdraw with supervision in a safe environment from time to time. All teaching is carefully planned to be appropriate for the individual needs of the pupils.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, the National Curriculum and the Curriculum for children with learning difficulties may therefore be seen to provide part of the Valley Curriculum entitlement of our pupils. We also address other priorities – a range of therapies in consultation with health professionals.

The precise balance between these aspects of the whole curriculum varies according to the individual and changing needs of our pupils. The balance is determined through the annual review process, curriculum plans, and the pupil's individual educational programme, with agreement between teaching and therapy staff and parents/carers.

Governors

The Governing body routinely evaluates the quality of the education that is provided to Valley pupils. It is responsible for ensuring the appropriate structures to achieve this are in place e.g. termly I.E.P's which are linked to pupil's progress, annual reviews with the formulation of clear targets to work on. The Headteacher provides written reports for termly Governors meetings. The monitoring of the school improvement plan is an agenda item for each meeting. Governors are linked to specific areas of interest e.g. Pupil Premium, Children who are Looked After, Assessment etc. They come into school for routine and special events and are encouraged to take an active part of school life.

Complaints

The school places partnership with parents as a high priority. Much effort is made to ensure that communication is kept open and parents feel confident to discuss any queries or concerns at an early stage should they arise. In the event of a formal complaint the school would follow the appropriate guidance and procedures from the LA.

In Service Training

The Governing body is made aware of arrangements for staff in-service training by the regular report provided by the Headteacher. Governor's input in the school improvement plan ensures they are able to monitor specific training. A school training log is kept. Governors are invited to attend in-service training.

Links with education, health and social care – Stockport Family

Multidisciplinary work is a key feature of the approach to meeting SEN at Valley School. A large number of outside agencies are at times involved in the work at Valley School. These include the following:

- The Team Around the School which includes a School Aged Plus Worker, link Social Worker and nurse
- The Sensory Support Service
- Community Learning Disability Team and Healthy Young Minds
- Portage Service
- Riding for the Disabled
- Education Psychology Service
- Consultants + other medical professionals
- Local Authority's School Improvement Service
- Educational Welfare Service

A range of health colleagues from Stockport NHS Foundation Trust and several private companies are commissioned by the LA to provide services to the school. These include:

School nursing team, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and a number of health care and therapy assistants

The school's Family Worker makes referrals to other agencies through an 'Early Help Assessment' e.g. for Statutory Assessment, access to Social Care Aiming High and therapy services.

Partnership with parents

Valley School believes strongly that parents and carers who have placed their children in the school's care are our partners. We aim to be open and honest in our dealings with them and to encourage their active participation in raising their child's attainment. Communication between home and school is encouraged by the 'Open Door' policy and a range of strategies to keep information flowing. Parent and carers views are specifically sought via questionnaires and feedback. The Family Worker is a key member of the school staff with a primary focus on parental support, engagement and safeguarding.

Links with other schools

There are a wide variety of integration programmes involving individual and groups of children. Valley School has links with a number of mainstream schools and settings in most parts of Stockport. One

teacher has a responsibility for managing inclusion. Teaching Assistants from within Valley support pupils on inclusion links and facilitate some of the mainstream links into Valley School. This

Transition

Transition programmes to support children moving from Valley school are well established. Close links exist with the secondary phase special school. Links are also established with all primary schools receiving children leaving Valley.

Links with voluntary organisations

Strong links exist with a number of voluntary organisations e.g. short break providers and various charities. Volunteers work in school on a regular basis. Valley School benefits from the fundraising efforts of a number of organisations over the school year.

Debbie Thompson

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