



# **Thorns Primary School**

## **SEN Policy**

**Policy prepared by S Hinkley - September 2025**

### **Review**

**The policy will be reviewed in September 2026**

## **Rationale**

This policy outlines the provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN) at Thorns Primary School. The policy follows guidance from the *Special educational needs code of practice: 0-25 years* produced by the Department for Education (2014). The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the governing body, headteacher and all teaching staff.

## **SECTION 1: Introduction**

At Thorns Primary School, we welcome all pupils with or without special educational needs and disabilities. We believe that all children have the right to a quality education that is designed to meet their needs through challenge, self-belief and achievement. We strive to create a sense of community for all our pupils and have an inclusive ethos with high expectations. We aim for all our children to feel safe, be happy and be able to achieve without limits in line with our values set out in the Thorns Way.

## **Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Thorns Primary School is part of the Excelsior Multi Academy Trust. Schools in Excelsior Multi Academy Trust follow the definition for special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) set out in the Children and Families Act, 2014:

A pupil has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other pupils or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

Pupils 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.

## **SECTION 2: Aims and Objectives**

### **Aims**

At Thorns Primary, we believe that every child is an individual and that all children make a special contribution to life at our school. Children are encouraged, respected and valued regardless of their ability and/or behaviour. We aim to identify and meet the individual needs of each pupil as early and as quickly as possible. We endeavour to raise the aspirations and expectations of all pupils, including those with SEN, by working collaboratively with parents/carers and listening to the voice of the pupil. Our aim is to provide children with the best possible outcomes in preparation for lifelong learning.

## Objectives

- To ensure, wherever possible, early identification and early intervention for pupils who have SEN and additional needs.
- To support children to overcome barriers to their learning and participation as early as possible.
- To ensure that all pupils with SEN are fully included in all school activities in consultation with parents/carers and carers, health and care professionals and external agencies.
- To collaborate with education, health and social care services to provide support.
- To work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014.
- To operate a 'whole-school, whole-child' approach to the management and provision of support for SEN.
- To provide a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) who will support all stakeholders to work within the guidelines of the SEND Code of Practice.
- To provide support and advice for all staff working with SEN pupils.
- To work in partnership and support the families in our school.
- To ensure all pupils make good academic and social progress in relation to their prior attainment and developmental history.

## **SECTION 3: Roles and Responsibilities**

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENCo) is Mr Hinkley.

The SENCo will:

- work with the Headteacher and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school;
- have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEN policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plans;
- provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents/carers, and other agencies to ensure that pupils with SEN receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching;
- advise on the graduated approach to providing SEN support;
- advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively;
- be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support service;
- liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure pupils and their parents/carers are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned;
- work with the headteacher and governing board to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- ensure the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEN up to date;

The governor with responsibility for SEN is Mrs Tilley.

The SEN governor will:

- help to raise awareness of SEN issues at governing board meetings;
- monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEN provision within the school and update the governing board on this;

- work with the Headteacher and SENCo to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school;

The headteacher is Rebecca Jordan.

The headteacher will:

- work with the SENCo and SEN governor to determine the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the school;
- have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEN and/or a disability;

All class and group teachers have responsibility for SEN pupils.

Each teacher is responsible for:

- the progress and development of every pupil in their class;
- working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching;
- working with the SENCo to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision;
- ensuring they follow this SEN policy;
- ensuring that children's needs are identified at the earliest opportunity and then working through the "Assess, Plan, Do, Review" cycle;
- writing and reviewing the SEN support plans (Individual Provision Plans or IPPs) where appropriate;
- involving the child in conversations and plans about their SEN in a developmentally appropriate way;
- ensuring that parents/carers are a partner in the process and that their views are taken into account;

#### **SECTION 4: Identification of SEN**

Schools across Excelsior Multi Academy Trust have worked closely together to ensure identification of SEN is consistent and accurate. The purpose of identification is to formulate what action the school should take in order to meet the needs of the child. We recognise that pupils have or may have a special educational need if they:

- begin school with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP);
- are in the process of being assessed for an EHCP when they begin school;
- are experiencing learning difficulties significantly greater than the majority of pupils of the same age;
- fall two or more years behind the age-related expectations of their year group; \*
- are being supported by an external agency such as an educational psychologist or speech and language therapist; \*\*
- have a formal diagnosis of a disability that may impact on their learning in school such as autism or ADHD.
- are experiencing emotional difficulties that significantly impact on their learning or behaviour within the school environment;
- are experiencing social difficulties that significantly impact on their learning or behaviour within the school environment;

- have a physical disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities of a kind provided for pupils of the same age;
- are identified as having learning difficulties by Early Years Development Bands;
- have a serious medical problem which has implications for the learning process.

Excelsior Academy Trust recognises that pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Some children with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

We recognise that early identification and assessment of SEN is necessary to provide greater educational opportunities for each child. This cannot be regarded as a single event but as an ongoing process throughout a school year. We use a graduated approach to support pupils in school. We will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry, which will build on previous settings and key stages, where appropriate.

Class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all pupils (including those at risk of underachievement).

Pupil progress meetings are held every term, during which we identify and track pupils whose progress:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;
- is not making expected national attainment and/or progress;
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress;
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers;
- widens the attainment gap.

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social needs.

If a teacher feel a pupil may have SEN, they will make a referral to the SENCo.

Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEN. When deciding whether special educational provision is required, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

The following areas of need are not considered to be a special educational need but may impact on progress and attainment:

- Disability (the Code of Practice outlines the "reasonable adjustment" duty for all settings and schools provided under current Disability Equality legislation – these alone do not constitute SEN);
- Attendance and punctuality;
- Health and welfare;
- English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium grant;
- Being a Looked After Child;
- Being a child of serviceman/woman.

A pupil is not regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she will be taught.

Differentiation between SEN and the needs of the bi-lingual learner must be carefully made. However, such needs can overlap, and it is vital that SEN are not overlooked in pupils whose first language is not English.

The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take in order to meet the needs of the pupil. Despite high quality, targeted teaching some pupils may continue to make insufficient progress. For these pupils, strengths and weaknesses are identified in consultation with parents, and used to create an appropriate, individualised support plan. At this point, because the pupil requires additional and extra provision, we will have identified that the pupil has a special educational need and requires SEN support.

*\* Pupils who fall two or more years behind their age-related expectations do not automatically classify as SEN. There may be additional factors that contribute towards this, such as poor attendance, which will need to be explored before a child is placed onto the SEN record.*

*\*\* Pupils supported by an outside agency do not automatically classify as SEN. For example, a pupil supported by the hearing impairment team, once reasonable adjustments have been made, may access learning in line with peers.*

## **SECTION 5: Quality First Teaching and a Graduated Approach to SEN**

Teachers, teaching assistants and parents/carers are encouraged to come to the SENCo at any time to discuss children they have concerns about. We aim to support all practitioners in **"delivering education through common learning environments where all children and young people learn with their peers in community schools."** (*Reaching Out to All Learners, UNESCO, 2016*). We refer to the Dudley Inclusive Pathways document to ensure inclusion is at the heart of all we do.

### **Quality First Teaching**

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all of the pupils in their class. Lessons are accurately pitched to meet the needs of all pupils and to include an element of challenge. The quality of teaching is reviewed each half term through lesson observations, book trawls and analysis of assessment data – see our School Development Plan for further details.

Teachers deploy any teaching assistants in their class to support children of all abilities to extend their thinking and deepen their understanding. Where children have not fully understood a task or need further support to embed their understanding, the teacher and/or teaching assistants will quickly address this through quality intervention work where possible.

All provision that we as a school offer to pupils is listed on our whole school provision map. This enables us to make choices about the kind of intervention that will match the child's need and will support them most effectively.

The Whole School Provision Map details all the different support we can offer as a school. This is used to make informed choices about which provision is best suited to the needs of individual pupils

(not just SEN pupils). Individual Provision Plans (IPPs) are used to show exactly what provision is being used with a pupil, the frequency of different interventions and the impact on learning.

It is important that parents/carers are kept up to date with the progress of their child and any difficulties they are experiencing. Teachers meet with parents/carers each term at parents' evening but may ask parents/carers to meet with them at any point during the school year to discuss possible support they could be providing at home and the kind of work they are doing in school.

## Assessing SEN

When identifying SEN and assessing progress, we apply the ASSESS – PLAN – DO – REVIEW model.

### ASSESS

At the end of each term teachers meet with the SENCo and the Head Teacher meet to discuss the cohort. We will discuss the progress data for the term and the identified needs of children in the cohort. Any children who are failing to make adequate progress in their learning are discussed at length; we compare individual progress to that of the rest of the cohort and also refer to national rates of progress. We look back at the intervention work provided over the term to see the frequency and nature of such intervention and what impact it has had. We discuss if any further strategies are appropriate at this time. If it is felt that all possible intervention strategies have been employed and that further specialist support is appropriate, this is detailed on the child's IPP. An IPP may be drawn up to focus on key areas for improvement.

### PLAN

Following identification of the area of need, we plan the support required for individual children. We also decide if an outside agency is required and which one we need to approach for specialist support. Parents/carers are invited to contribute to discussions and parental permission will need to be given before a referral to outside agencies can be made. Parents/carers can offer useful background information to include in referrals as well as information provided by the teacher and teaching assistant. The SENCo uses the Provision Map to select the appropriate agency and may refer to Dudley's Local Offer to find details of all possible agencies available to schools. For further details of what Dudley can offer please access the Local offer at <https://dudleyci.co.uk/send-local-offer>

### DO

Planned provision is carried out in school. Outside agencies coming into school may initially meet with parents/carers and then observe the child or work with the child on an individual basis or provide training for staff to deliver a programme in school. A written report is usually provided following this involvement and targets are provided for the child with a programme of work to be completed in school. Work is then set to be completed in school and at home (where appropriate) which directly links to the targets set. The SENCo will make sure that staff are trained appropriately and that provision is timetabled to support the child to work towards achieving the targets set.

## REVIEW

The SENCo monitors the outcomes of the planned provision and the success of work provided by outside agencies through observations of the pupil, assessment data, evidence in books, discussions with the teacher, teaching assistant, pupil and parents/carers. Following involvement from an outside agency, an initial meeting will be held to discuss the report and the targets set and the SENCo, teacher, teaching assistant and parents/carers are invited to attend this meeting, with copies of reports provided for parents/carers to take away. The outside agency will also review progress towards the targets over time at an agreed future date.

For children for whom this process still results in a lack of progress, or a child's needs are more severe and require more specialist support over and above what can be funded from the SEN budget, it may be agreed by the school, the child and their parents/carers, that it is appropriate to put together an application to the LA for an Education and Health Care (EHC) plan.

The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the child, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, to prepare them for adulthood. To achieve this, local authorities use the information from the assessment to:

- Establish and record the views, interests and aspirations of the parents/carers and child or young person
- Provide a full description of the child or young person's special educational needs and any health and social care needs
- Establish outcomes across education, health and social care based on the child or young person's needs and aspirations
- Specify the provision required and how education, health and care services will work together to meet the child or young person's needs and support the achievement of the agreed outcomes

*SEN Code of Practice, 2014 Page 142 9.2*

For children with more complex needs who currently have an EHC plan, termly review meetings and an end of year annual review meeting are held to discuss whether the EHC plan is deemed to be still appropriate. These annual reviews are an opportunity for all agencies involved with the child to meet together with the school and the parents/carers to discuss the child's progress and the next steps needed. We still adopt the ASSESS - PLAN –DO –REVIEW model to meet these children's needs as above.

Children who have been identified as having an SEN or have access to outside agency support are now recorded in school as K on our SEN Record. Those who have an EHC plan are recorded as E. The SEN Record gives an overview of children across school with identified SEN and the area of need. It helps us to continue to update our provision map, ensure staff training, resources and deployment of staff is closely matched to the needs of the children in school.

## **SECTION 6: Criteria for Exiting the SEN Record**

If during review meetings it is felt that a child has met their targets over time and their progress is now improving to rates comparable with that expected of a child of that age and starting point, there



will be a discussion involving the child, parents/carers, staff and any agencies about whether it would be appropriate for the level of support provided to be reduced or removed. If outside agencies agree that their involvement is no longer required, the child can be removed from the SEN Record and their needs will continue to be met through quality first teaching and intervention work as with the rest of the class.

## **SECTION 7: Supporting Pupils and Their Families**

Dudley Local Authority's Local Offer aims to provide information about all the services and support available for those children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) with or without an education, health and care (EHC) plan from birth to 25. Dudley's Local Offer can be accessed here: [DudleyCL](#)

Our school's SEN Information Report can be found on our website under the Inclusion section of the 'Key Info' area, in accordance with Regulation 51, part 3, section 69(3)(a) of the Education Act.

Dudley Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) can provide legally based advice, information and support on all matters relating to SEN and disabilities including health and social care issues. Their advice is free, impartial and confidential. For more information telephone 07900161363 or visit their website: [Dudley SENDIASS](#)  
[| Dudley Council](#)

There are statutory requirements for children to be formally assessed at the end of specific years in school.

Year group	When	Type of Test
Year 1	June	Phonics Check
Year 4	June	Multiplication Tables Check
Year 6	May	KS2 SATS

If a child is working below the level expected in a particular year group, this may mean that the child is unable to access the test or may need modifications to the testing arrangements. If a child's needs mean that it may be difficult for them to sit a test, parents/carers will be informed before the decision is finalised so that they can be involved in discussions. We refer to the relevant DFE guidance to check the access requirements for each test and any arrangements that may be required such as additional time, having a reader to support, a scribe etc. Some access arrangements for Key Stage 2 require a decision to be made by the Standards and Testing Agency; we submit an application online for consideration prior to children sitting tests. There are specific criteria for children to meet before an application can be granted. In the case of the year 1 phonics check, children who do not sit the check in year 1 or do not pass the check in year 1 will re-sit the test at the end of year 2. For further clarification on testing arrangements, we would encourage parents/carers to come into school and discuss arrangements with the class teacher and SENCo.

School follows the Dudley LA Admissions policy for all pupils. When a child moves from our school to another school, information about individual pupils is passed onto the receiving school as soon as possible. A telephone call is made in the first instance to inform the SENCo of the important

information relating to the child's needs and how they might best be met. Planned visits for the child and parent to visit the new school can be arranged where necessary. The same process can be reversed for children moving to Thorns.

When children reach year 6 and are preparing to move to secondary school, staff from Thorns meet with receiving secondary schools in the summer term, to ensure key information and reports are shared. From these meetings any support required can be planned before a child starts at their new school. Additional visits can be made for some children before and after induction week. Additional visits for parents/carers can also be arranged in consultation with the SENCo.

Before children start in the Foundation Stage at Thorns Primary, a comprehensive induction programme is organised to provide opportunities for children to come into school with their parents/carers and get to know the Early Year Foundation Stage staff and the classroom environment.

### **SECTION 8: Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs**

Thorns Primary School recognises that pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Some children with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act, 2010.

Some children may also have special educational needs (SEN) and may have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision and the SEND Code of Practice (2014) is followed.

Pupils with long term and complex medical needs may require on-going support in relation to the administration of medicines and/or their personal care needs during the school day to manage their condition. Others may require monitoring and interventions in emergency circumstances.

For further details about the way we support children to manage medical conditions, please refer to our Medical Conditions Policy.

### **SECTION 9: Monitoring and Evaluation of SEN**

Evaluation and monitoring arrangements promote an active process of continual review and improvement of provision for all pupils. Book Looks to see children's progression over time as well as pupil interviews are undertaken regularly by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to gain an understanding of learning taking place. Lesson observations and Learning Walks take place throughout the term to ensure teaching meets the needs of all learners. Pupil Attainment Reviews are held termly and the progress of all learners is looked at closely. Children not making the expected progress are discussed and subsequent referrals for further support may be made as a result. Impact of interventions are measured by class teachers and SENCo. Annual reviews for children with EHC plans are held each academic year.

### **SECTION 10: Training and Resources**

SEN Funding in school is split into different sections. Our main budget is used to provide support staff, resources and additional agency support comes from the Notional SEN Budget.

Training is conducted through whole staff inset provided by the SENCo or other trained members of staff or may be delivered by other professionals as required. In order to maintain and develop the quality of teaching and provision to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils, all staff are encouraged to undertake training and development.

All teachers and support staff undertake induction on taking up a post and this includes a meeting with the SENCo to explain the systems and structures in place around the school's SEN provision and practice and to discuss the needs of individual pupils. The school's SENCo regularly attends LA SENCo network meetings in order to keep up to date with local and national updates in SEN.

### **SECTION 11: Storing and Managing Information**

All current SEN information is held securely by the SENCO and Inclusion Lead. Information that is no longer current is archived as school policy. Information held for pupils that leave our school is passed on the new setting as per GDPR guidelines. Please refer to the Data Protection policy.

### **SECTION 12: Reviewing the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually. The policy will be reviewed by our governing body and an updated version of the policy will be shared at the first meeting of the new academic year (September). Subsequent amendments may be made at different points in the year as required.

### **SECTION 13: Accessibility**

Schools are required to produce accessibility plans for their individual schools and LAs are under a duty to prepare accessibility strategies covering the maintained schools in their area. Accessibility plans and strategies must be in writing. A copy of our Accessibility Policy is available upon a request at the main office and is also available to view via the school website under the SEN section. The school's Accessibility Plan is produced by the Head Teacher.

### **SECTION 14: Dealing with Complaints**

Please refer to our general Complaints Procedure. If at any time, parents/carers feel they need to discuss the support provided for their child or need to make a complaint, an appointment can be made to meet with the SENCo or the Head Teacher as soon as possible. If the complaint concerns either the SENCo or the Head Teacher, an appointment can be made to meet with the Chair of Governors, or the complaint can be made in writing and given to the main office. At this point our complaints procedure would be followed. If parents/carers require impartial support in this circumstance, we suggest approaching SENDIASS as referred to in section 7.

### **SECTION 15: Bullying/Child-on-Child Abuse**

At Thorns Primary School we believe that the safety of our pupils is paramount. We have very few incidences of bullying, however any such concerns are taken very seriously. We refer directly to our Behaviour Policy in these circumstances. A copy of our Behaviour Policy is available on request at the main school office.

If parents/carers have any concerns regarding bullying, we encourage them to come into school to meet with the head or assistant head teachers as soon as possible. All children are encouraged to seek the support of a member of staff at any time.

## **SECTION 16: Appendices**

- The School's SEN Information Report, 2025 can be found on our website under the Inclusion heading of the 'Key Info' section.
- Parents/carers' Guide to the 2014 SEN Code of Practice can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-parents-and-carers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-parents-and-carers)
- SEN Code of Practice 2014 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
- Mental Health and Behaviour in schools document can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2)