

SENCo's Annual Newsletter

As I am sure many of you will know, my name is Miss Dickson and I am SENCo here at English Martyrs', responsible for coordinating the day to day provision of children with special educational needs. I have recently completed the National Award for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities through Nottingham Trent University.

Here at English Martyrs' Catholic Voluntary Academy, we are concerned with the growth of each and every child entrusted to our care. We strive to nurture their spiritual, academic, social and personal development, emphasising the teaching of Gospel values and the mutual respect we should all have for one another.

We have developed a whole-school approach to our Special Educational Needs policy recognising the entitlement of all children to a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities (who have communication and interaction needs; cognition and learning needs; sensory and physical needs; and, social, emotional and mental health needs) have full access to the curriculum and are included in all aspects of school life.

I am writing this letter to review information found on the SEN information report, on the school website, and outline to our parents and families what they should expect from our staff and school over the year, in terms of the growth and development of your children.

How do I know if my child has special educational needs?

At English Martyrs' Catholic Academy early identification of pupils with special educational needs is a priority. The school largely uses progress measures as a way of identifying that a child requires extra help. The signs that class teachers look for and discuss with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) are if children under their care:

- make very little or almost no progress over a sustained period despite receiving first teaching
- work at considerably lower than year group and/or age related expectations
- have profound difficulties in developing English or mathematical foundational skills
- show persistent emotional/social difficulties which impedes their learning
- have sensory/physical problems, and make little progress despite the provision of specialist support and/or equipment
- experience communication and/or interaction problems and make little or no progress despite receiving the quality first teaching and differentiated curriculum which the school prides itself on.

If you think your child requires additional support, or may indeed have special educational needs, please make an appointment to discuss these issues, in the first instance, with your child's class teacher. He or she will then arrange a further meeting with you and the school's SENCO if they feel that your child may have special educational needs.

What should happen next?

Special needs provision is reviewed and evaluated at the school as part of an on-going cycle, providing a graduated response to the child's needs. As part of this, we assess, plan, do and review, and continue this cycle to ensure best provision is in

place. As part of this process, we plan provision and strategies that are aimed at addressing pupils' individual special needs and which help to overcome barriers to learning; and which aid in making appropriate progress. The planned provision and strategies are recorded on pupil progress forms and discussed within review meetings for staff which also establish educational targets for pupils to achieve. Parents are invited to make additional appointments with the class teacher to discuss their child's progress, as and when they feel necessary.

The individual may have a PSP (Personal Support Plan) which creates a child centered approach in working towards personalised targets. These will be created by the class teacher and the children, and then you will be invited to discuss these plans and offer any changes if necessary. These plans are then evaluated and refined three times a year so expect class teachers to contact you to discuss the targets in place. Please do not worry if your child does not have a PSP; this means their needs are met within their personalised curriculum and they do not need additional intervention and support.

What specialist services and expertise are available or accessed by the setting/school?

The school also recognises the important contribution that external support services make in assisting to identify, assess, and provide for, special educational needs pupils. External support services may be asked to provide further assessments and advice, and possibly work directly with a pupil. Parental consent is sought for any such additional information.

Where appropriate, the school also requests direct intervention/support from a specialist provider. These include from time to time: Family support; Speech and Language Therapy (SALT); Behaviour Intervention Specialists; Health Professionals, including –GPs, the school nurse, the clinical and educational psychologist, community paediatricians, occupational and physiotherapists, Physical Disabilities Service; social services; CAMHS/EHWB (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service/Emotional Health and Well Being); Faith in Families; and, outreach services including voluntary organisations.

Conversations

As many meetings and conversations will happen over the year, we feel it is important to keep a log of this to ensure that any action points discussed are put into place. Attached, you will find a "conversation slip" which the teacher you are talking to should use to make a note of anything important that was discussed. This would be used if you had a meeting/ conversation that was not arranged as part of a normal parents evening or a PSP discussion, to document additional action points or concerns. The teacher will let the SENCO know this conversation has happened and will keep the conversation slip as evidence.

Please also find attached a parental views form and a consent form. Both are invaluable in the planning and delivering of the provision we provide for your child so it would be greatly appreciated if you could fill in and return as soon as possible. Thank you.

We hope you and your children have another successful year with us. Any concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your support.

Kind Regards

Miss Dickson