

St Agnes Primary School

“With Jesus beside us, we do our best”

Special Educational Needs And Disabilities (SEND) Within Our School

At St Agnes school our mission is to ensure that all of our children are achievers, regardless of their need or disability. We have a committed and highly skilled staff and pride ourselves on our inclusive ethos. We believe in quality first teaching alongside group and individual intervention, where needed, in order to ensure that every child can make progress in his or her learning. We adhere to the ‘Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years Statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities’ (2014 & updated 2020).

Our School Provision

At St. Agnes’ school we are committed to providing an appropriate and high quality education to all of our children. We believe that all children, including those identified as having special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), have an entitlement to a broad and balanced academic curriculum. This curriculum must be accessible to all and allow everyone to be fully included in all aspects of school life. Furthermore, we believe that all children should be valued at our school. We are constantly striving to eliminate prejudice and discrimination and to develop an environment where all children can flourish and feel safe.

St. Agnes’ school has continuing plans for school improvement, we hope to develop cultures, policies and practices which include all learners. We work holistically and to do that we work we engage with parents and outside agencies. We aim to fully understand a child’s needs and we deliver learning experiences that overcome their barriers to learning.

Our school is a small, one form entry Catholic primary school in the heart of Bow, East London. Our intake ranges from nursery to Year 6, comprising of children with a wide range of abilities and needs, including:

***Communication and Interaction** – children who may be experiencing difficulties in communicating with others, including those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

***Cognition and Learning** – children with very mild to severe learning difficulties affecting different aspects of their learning, including those with dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia

***Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties** – children experiencing a range of social and emotional difficulties

***Sensory and/or Physical Needs** – children with difficulties in accessing areas of their environment, including hearing loss, physical or visual impairment

We have good community links with a number of key agencies, providing additional support and advice for children across these four areas of need. These may include: Educational psychologists, speech therapists, the hearing and physical impairment teams, local outreach teams, school nurses, disability advisers and the support for learning services.

Defining Special Educational Needs

We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background. This policy aims to outline the foundations of our practice for meeting the needs of children who may experience barriers to their learning. These barriers may relate to physical or sensory impairment, emotional or social development, learning difficulties or to factors in the child's environment, such as children on the at risk register.

At St. Agnes we are very aware that children learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting achievement, including ability, background, emotional state, age and maturity. We acknowledge that at some point in their school career, many pupils will experience difficulties which will affect their learning and we recognise that these may be long or short term. We therefore aim to identify need quickly, as it arises, and provide teaching and learning contexts which will continue to enable a child to reach his or her full potential.

With this in mind, we adhere to the following definition of special educational need:

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of

compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

(a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or

(b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them (Clause 20, Children and Families Bill 2014).

Identifying Special Educational Needs

At St Agnes school we believe in a process of early identification, supported by thorough and focussed observations over a set period of time. We liaise with parents upon their child's initial arrival to our school, beginning with home visits in the Foundation Stage, and strive to maintain this cooperative home-school link throughout a child's schooling. Parents are asked to raise concerns on our entry profiles, given to each new parent with a child of nursery or reception age. These concerns can then be followed up, usually by the class teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) or school nurse. If concerns arise at later stages in their child's education, parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher as soon as possible. This may result in a general dialogue between the teacher and parent, which alleviates concerns, or progress further to a referral to the SENCo.

The school SENCo has a role of coordinating the learning support for all children with additional needs, ensuring that these needs are met and that each child is achieving at his or her own full potential. In our school, children are monitored thoroughly throughout each term. Meetings are held with staff, both individually and within groups, to explore progress across differing periods of time, with issues addressed and referrals made as and when they are needed.

Supporting Children With Special Educational Needs

In St Agnes school we believe that every teacher is responsible and

accountable for all pupils in their class. We strive for quality first teaching, lessons are carefully differentiated to meet every child's stage of development, with a strong emphasis on independent and skills-based learning. Different teaching strategies and techniques are employed and resources provided, as needed, to ensure that every child is able to access learning, with examples of good practice regularly shared across the school. Further, in order to maintain the high standards of our practice, planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time is covered across the school by experienced and highly qualified staff members.

Quality first teaching may also include class specific intervention programmes aimed at supporting the progress of the majority of children within the classroom. These interventions are tracked using a class provision map. When a child is identified as having a special educational need which requires a higher level of input, it is dealt with on a case by case basis. The individual child may receive a personalised, or become part of a group, provision map in which key programs and targets are set out and evaluated by the class team. All provision maps are revised termly and overseen by the SENCo.

We currently employ a number of highly trained teaching support assistants who provide group and individual care for children with a variety of SEND needs. These members of staff are allocated to particular children, usually by way of their expertise, and are responsible for specific areas of a child's need, as well as for keeping track of an individual's targets alongside the class teacher. Staff who support children on a 1:1 level are also responsible for a daily diary to ensure good home-school links. The SENCo meets regularly with the teaching support team to ensure programs and interventions are relevant and effective in that key needs are being met and progress is being made.

Allocating Resources For Children With Special Educational Needs

At St Agnes school we believe in allocating funding to achieve the best possible outcomes to ensure all of our children make significant progress in their learning. We put a large amount of our SEND budget into resourcing, which includes an emphasis on high quality staffing and continual staff training. All classrooms are well resourced and well organised, with clear visual supports, interactive displays and accessible equipment. Individual or group resources are supplied where needed.

Allocating staff to groups of children or individual children is a carefully thought through process by the senior leadership team, with the needs of the child paramount. In order to ensure that children continually develop their independence, 1:1 support assistants are not allocated to the same child for more than a period of two academic years, with some exceptions made for difficult transition times. For example, moving from key stage 1 to key stage 2 or when transitioning to Year 7.

In order to ensure that a child's support is effective, the SENCo undertakes termly 'learning walks' each with a specific learning focus. Both teaching and support staff, as well as classrooms and resources, are subject to critical observation. All staff are given feedback to aid their professional development and outcomes are examined in order to enable the school to judge the effectiveness of our resources.

Keeping Parents Informed

At the beginning of each academic year, all parents are asked to attend a class welcome meeting. This is designed to allow them to meet the staff and view the classroom, alongside collecting general information regarding their child's new academic year. Parents are reminded during this time to contact the classroom teacher with any concerns that may arise throughout the year, including concerns for a child's academic or social development. Teachers are available by appointment which can be made through the school office. Parents meetings are held termly to enable discussions of short term progress, with reports circulated towards the end of each summer term.

Parents of children with 'Statements of Education' or 'Educational Health Care Plans (EHCs)' are invited to attend yearly review meetings. These annual reviews are opportunities for the whole team around the child to highlight good areas of progress, discuss concerns and to set a child's key targets for the upcoming year. The child is always invited to these meetings although they may not be present throughout the whole duration, we very much want them to have a voice in their plan. Daily diaries are kept for all such children, by the allocated teaching support assistant, and are sent home to each parent at the end of the school day.

If a parent has a new or known concern for their child, regarding his or her needs, they are welcome to make an appointment to see the school SENCo. This can be done through the class teacher or school office. The SENCo may be able to alleviate concerns through discussion, highlight or refer to additional agencies for support or initiate a series of observations of the individual child in order to ascertain whether additional support is required.

Pastoral, Medical and Social Care

As a small school, with long serving and local members of staff, our children and their families are often familiar faces. We are supported by our church community and children attend a school Mass or a service every Friday, to which parents and community members are regularly invited, as well as to several Masses held in the church throughout the year. Parents are encouraged into the school through coffee mornings or as volunteers for our weekly reading programs, as well as being encouraged to attend class assemblies or support school trips. The headteacher is available in the playground each day to further develop these links and as a focal contact for concerns, should they arise.

Medical and health issues are documented as children enter school and parents are asked to update details, on a regular basis, by the first aid coordinator. Medical issues from allergies to major ailments, which may affect a child's learning, are displayed in the staff room to ensure that all staff are kept informed. First aid boxes are present on the wall of each classroom, away from children's reach, and details of specific needs are presented in a diagram on each box to highlight treatments. Most treatments are kept in these boxes or with a designated member of staff.

Through regular weekly staff meetings children with particular needs, such as long or short term social and emotional difficulties, can be highlighted sensitively. The school office diligently track issues concerning attendance and punctuality and children affected by this may be contacted by the school office, headteacher or the attendance and welfare officer. With careful tracking, those issues brought about by other factors affecting a child's welfare might be discussed with the school SENCo and parents may be put in contact with such agencies as the school nurse, parents' advice teams or the school social worker.

Accessibility and Our School Environment

We aim to ensure that our school environment is supportive to all children, including those with SEND. A large, central Smartboard is located in every classroom and hall to ensure that every child can see and respond to visual stimuli. Displays around the classroom, including regularly updated 'working walls', allow constant reminders to specific vocabulary and key skills, whilst also encouraging children to develop their independence.

In recent years, our school building has undergone a number of key changes. Larger classrooms, hallways, dining areas and community spaces have been built making key areas accessible to all. We have a shower and changing room with a disabled toilet, located within the new half of our school building, and are regularly visited by the borough disability adviser in order to assess and develop further in our accessibility plans. Frequent liaison with other key agencies, such as the Hearing Support Team, have also allowed us to learn best practice throughout the school, for example, suggested seating arrangements for children with specific needs.

Preparing for the future

Children who are new to our school and joining in the Foundation Stage receive a home visit before they attend. This enables them to meet their new staff in a safe and secure environment and eases the transition at this important key stage. It also enables parents to highlight any areas of SEND concern that they may have and resources or additional support plans can be made very early on. When new children with SEND attend key stage one or key stage two, they are carefully monitored by staff to ensure that they feel happy and secure in their new surroundings. Our buddy system allows new children to develop relationships with their peers and all school staff are made aware of the new child's name and areas of need. The SENCo will also arrange to meet the parents within the first few weeks of settling in.

As a very small school, we are very aware of the need to prepare our children for transition to new and often larger schools. As children reach Key Stage 2, we begin to look at future needs that could be added to their curriculum, for example developing life skills, such as crossing the road or stranger danger. These are part of our regular SEAL curriculum across the school, but may be particularly important to children with SEND.

Children with high levels of need are prepared more thoroughly for the change from Year 6 to Year 7 in a series of programs covering independent travel and road safety, using shops and getting change and asking for help either in the new classroom or when lost in the school or between school and home. When a child is placed within a specific secondary setting, our SENCo will begin to arrange visits to and from that school in order to develop good links and help the child become aware of their transition. This will also enable more focussed training, such as learning new staff names, accessing the correct public transport and/or identifying key landmarks or safety points when they are developing their new routines.

How To Contact Us

At St Agnes school we are always ready to speak with parents regarding any concerns they may have for their child. You may request an appointment with the headteacher or SENCo, cited below, or with your child's class teacher at any time.

Head Teacher – Ms Brid McDaid

SENCo – Louise Wilcox

To make an application for your child to attend our school, please visit our school reception and speak to an office member:

***St Agnes Primary School
Rainhill Way
E3 3ER***

If you have more general questions or concerns regarding SEND and your child, you may also contact:

*Tower Hamlets special educational needs section
5th Floor, Mulberry Place
5 Clove Crescent
London
E14 2BG
Tel: 020 7364 4880
Fax: 020 7364 4303*

*Parents Advice Centre
30 Greatorex Street
E1 5NP
Tel: 020 7364 6489
Email: pac@towerhamlets.gov.uk*

Our offer to children with special educational needs and disabilities was prepared in July 2014.

It will be reviewed in July 2023