

Selworthy Special School

Policy for Special Educational Needs and Disability and Information Report

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1. Introduction

Welcome to our SEND information report, which forms part of the Somerset LA local offer for learners with special educational needs or disability (SEND) in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, January 2015. The governing bodies of all maintained school proprietors have a legal duty to publish an information report on their website about the implementation of the governors' or the proprietors' policy for learners with SEND. The information published will be updated annually. The information report also applies to all learners who are looked after by the local authority and have SEND.

When we talk about 'provision', we mean what we provide in order to meet the needs of a learner and help them to make progress at school.

2. What are special educational needs (SEN)?

At different times in their school career, a young person may have a special educational need. The 2014 code of practice defines special educational needs (SEN) as: "A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them".

A child or young person of compulsory school age 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 a mainstream school or post-16 mainstream institution.

3. What is disability?

The Equality Act 2010 gives the following definition of disability:

“A person has a disability for the purpose of this Act if they have physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. This definition of disability includes children and young people with long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disability and SEN. A child or young person may therefore be covered by both SEND and disability legislation.

4. Selworthy Qualities

We know that no two learners require the same curriculum and we have therefore built in the flexibility to meet these highly personalised needs. Our families consistently tell us that preparing their children for life after Selworthy is their highest priority. In direct response to this, we have embedded independence as the golden thread running through everything that we do.

SUPPORTIVE	Our curriculum is taught in a carefully scaffolded and responsive way. Learners are helped to identify their destination and then supported to work towards their individual goals. Staff are well versed in the Selworthy Levels of Support which allow learners to refine a skill and embed what they have learnt.
PERSONALISED	Every learner has a carefully tailored curriculum that is aligned to their interests and abilities. This is clearly documented and communicated to families and takes into account what individuals need both within and beyond school.
EMPOWERING	Learners are enabled to feel special and celebrated at every opportunity. They are given the power to make choices and influence their life in school. Our rich and diverse curriculum focuses on their personal interests, playfulness and celebration. This fosters their sense of self and the belief that anything is possible.
CREATIVE	All elements of the curriculum are delivered in unique and innovative ways to ensure maximum impact. We utilise every space as a possible learning opportunity. Learners are given regular opportunities to express themselves creatively; particularly through performance and the arts.
INSPIRATIONAL	Our curriculum is built in to instigate awe and wonder in our learners on an everyday basis and ignite their interest. Through WOW days/weeks we are able to explore topics further and provide immersive experiences with a specific purpose. Our aim is that learning is always the highlight of every school day for our learners.
ASPIRATIONAL	Through celebration of their achievements, learners are instilled with the belief that they can achieve anything. We constantly challenge and support them and their families to strive for their next goal. We explore the world of work through careers education and valid work experience to prepare our learners effectively so they can lead a purposeful and meaningful life beyond Selworthy.
LIFELONG LEARNING	Independence is the golden thread running through our entire curriculum. Preparing our learners for their future begins at the earliest ages through the development of positive behaviours for learning such as perseverance and resilience. As learners get older we introduce explicit teaching of life skills and greater integration and participation in the local community and access and interaction with a range of positive adult and peer role models.

5. What is our approach to teaching learners who have SEN?

Selworthy School caters for a range of unique learners who encompass a broad range of learning needs. At Selworthy School, we aim to offer a bespoke curriculum for each learner focused on their individual needs and strengths.

The teaching staff at Selworthy School are highly trained professionals who work collaboratively in order to assess and respond to a variety of learning differences, understand and be able to use a variety of strategies in order to differentiate teaching and learning for every individual and appropriately meet their needs. The school employs an interactional model of learning difficulties in which it recognises the complex interactions between learners and the school environment and focusses upon the role of the school in identifying barriers and minimising them through provision of appropriate support. The school aims to set suitable learning challenges, and respond to learners' diverse learning needs by making adaptations to the curriculum, methods of teaching and learning and resources.

At Selworthy School, we aim to discover what it is individuals can do, as well as identifying barriers to their learning. The school aims to educate and develop individual talents, and support every individual's sense of being and a sense of purpose. At Selworthy School, learners are provided with the opportunity to discover what gives them joy and meaning in life.

At Selworthy School, we believe in, and practise, participation for all. For us, the learner and the family are at the heart of all we do:

- We believe that all adults and learners should participate in learning and we celebrate all members of our school community.
- We celebrate an inclusive culture in our school and aim always to be as responsive as possible to the diverse backgrounds of our learners, their interests, experience, knowledge and skills.
- We do our very best to encourage and support our learners to take part in whole-school activities during the school day or extra-curricular activities at the end of, or outside the school day. This will include a wide range of activities such as:
 - Drama and music events
 - Sports events
 - Residential and educational visits
 - Breakfast Club and after school clubs

We will always involve parents in how we support their child in the context of the Code of Practice.

We value high-quality teaching for all learners and monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the school. We use a range of methods to do this, including regular lesson

observations, work scrutiny by phase leaders and senior leaders, learning walks and continuous professional development training for all staff. Our training of, and support for, staff (including all non-teaching staff) with regard to supporting SEND learners includes and has included:

- guidance on working with learners with SEND, their parents, and exemplar practice on how and when to consult more senior colleagues so that we keep in mind how we can always improve what we do to help our learners succeed.
- detailed guidance on differentiation and specialist strategies used to support learners with a variety of learning needs.
- regular feedback from learning walks, observations and work scrutiny.

Selworthy School has access to specialist expertise such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, health and social care bodies or charities which support learners with emotional health issues by:

- standing service agreements with the children's services department of the local authority;
- buying in additional support where necessary by means of traded agreements;
- referral through children's services for additional support on a wide range of issues which can affect learning and progress;
- referral to health and social care bodies by the appropriate school staff.

We aim to create a learning environment which is flexible enough to meet the needs of all members of our school community. We regularly monitor the progress of all learners, and staff continually assess progress to ensure that learning is taking place. Our whole-school system for monitoring progress includes tracking by teachers, subject leaders, phase leaders, the behaviour lead, communication team and the senior leadership team.

6. How do we identify and assess SEND at Selworthy School?

Before entry to the school, each learner's profile is thoroughly assessed to ensure that their needs are understood and that the specialist nature of provision is maintained. The initial enquiry might be made by parents at which time they may be asked to submit the learner's:

- Education Health and Care Plan
- School Reports
- Educational Psychologist (EP) Report
- Speech and Language Therapist Report
- Any reports from other professionals including medical professionals

All reports, in conjunction with discussions with parents/carers, allow the school to gain as complete a picture of the learner as possible including their strengths and their needs. Once a learner is accepted into the school, they are invited to attend a number of transition days (the number may be variable depending on each individual) and a pre-entry meeting is held to create a bespoke plan. Transition days enable staff to look beyond the information provided to assess all the learner's strengths and needs in order to ensure appropriate provision. Transitions days also allow the learner to become familiar with their new environment, friends and staff.

The information provided by the pre-admissions assessment enable the school to identify areas of difficulty, barriers to learning and areas of strength for the learner. The school then responds with a plan for targeted support. Highly specific targets are set by class teachers in conjunction with multi-professionals including relevant therapists, (such as speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and physio therapist), EP, the Communication Team and the Senior Leadership Team. These are recorded as individualised targets included on the learner's positive learning support plan. Therapists, EP and the Communication Team work alongside teachers to ensure lessons provide suitable opportunities for learners to work towards their individual targets and that the curriculum is adapted to reflect any specific needs.

Teachers, therapists, EP and the Communication Team monitor learners continually through a range of informal activities and classroom observations. They measure learners' progress towards their targets which can then be updated, evaluated and shared with learners, parents and staff.

Suitable adjustments are made and, where necessary, the positive learning support plan may be altered. The impact of these changes are monitored by the class teacher and multi-professionals (as above). Throughout this process all members of staff work to ensure that learning will continue.

7. How do we support learners with SEND and/or disability at Selworthy School?

Approaches to Meeting Different Needs

Selworthy School recognises, understands and caters for a variety of learning needs which can encompass all of the following:

Cognition and Learning Needs:

- Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD, for example Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia)
- Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)
- Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)

Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)

Communication and Interaction Needs

- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Sensory and/or Physical Needs

- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)
- Physical Disability (PD)

Research has shown that collaborative practice maximises the effectiveness of services provided for learners with learning needs. The model of practice at Selworthy School is multi-disciplinary, meaning the disciplines are interwoven, providing a fully integrated approach. The exchange between the different professionals is mutually productive. With extended skills and knowledge, staff are able to employ a number of specialist strategies to support the delivery of the curriculum to all learners.

At Selworthy School, we recognise the individual learning needs of each learner. The school recognises that no two learners with the “same” need will necessarily require the same strategies or adaptations to the provisions made. Each learner in the school (as described by the categories above) may require an individual mix of any of the following strategies in order to overcome potential barriers and support their learning:

Strategies for Communication and Interaction Needs:

- **Modified Language.** Through training, staff learn to adapt language to the needs of individual learners. They may need to shorten sentences, simplify syntax, talk slowly and repeat key vocabulary and phrases.
- **Cross-curricular Links.** Staff attempt to make links between curriculum subjects to support learners with acquisition and generalisation of language.
- **Direct pre-teaching of vocabulary.** A multi-sensory approach is used to pre-teach vocabulary. Parental involvement is encouraged.
- **Approaches to Literacy.** Specialist programmes and strategies in literacy are used to support the acquisition of language skills.
- **Signing** Many learners find visual and kinaesthetic support helps them to focus on and process spoken language. The Communication Team deliver training to all staff in staff meetings/continuing professional development/INSET days.
- **Cued Articulation.** A system used to assist learners in learning the sounds of speech.
- **Visual supports.** Symbols, photographs and objects help to convey meaning and support understanding.

- **Experiential Learning.** Real life experiences and practical activities are used whenever possible. Functional situations are always used to demonstrate abstract concepts.
- **Over-learning.** Learners may not retain language as well so need to over-learn new vocabulary. Teachers may need to repeat key words many times in a lesson and regularly check for comprehension and retention.
- **Parental Involvement.** Parents may be asked to reinforce and extend learners' learning of language at home.
- **Pace.** It is recognised that many learners with learning difficulties can attain, but at a slower rate.
- **Auditory Memory.** Memory aids may be used to prevent poor memory interfering with learning. Instructions are given one at a time and repeated where necessary.
- **Social Skills.** Teachers identify and focus on social learning to help learners build effective relationships and communication skills.
- **Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC).** Methods of supporting communication that fall outside spoken language. Methods can range from the use of sign language and paper based symbols (low-tech), to switches and simple iPad Apps (mid-tech) to individual communication technologies and eye-gaze technology (high-tech).

All staff are trained in these strategies in staff meetings and as part of their INSET.

Meeting the Needs of Learners with Additional SEND

In order to make provision for the full range of needs set out in each learner's Education Health and Care Plan, teaching staff need to be aware of the challenges faced by learners with additional needs and need to be able to modify their style of delivery accordingly.

- **ASD/Sensory Processing Difficulties.** Learners will benefit from a carefully-controlled environment, with carpet, blinds, a shielded 'chill-out' area, a shut door and low-glare lighting. Staff will need to be sensitive to learners' likes and dislikes to control their anxiety levels. It might be necessary to control seating plans. Learners will follow a visual timetable for each lesson at the side of the board. ASD learners will need direct teaching of social skills and the pragmatic use of language in lessons. The Sensory Specialist will establish a sensory timetable as appropriate and will provide sensory integration therapy for these learners.
- **ADHD.** Learners will sit out of the sight-line of distractions, windows or doors. Key lessons will be taught early in the day. Gross motor breaks will be included in all lessons. A whole-school approach to encouraging active listening will be developed.
- **Dyslexia.** Vocabulary and concepts will be taught in a multi-sensory way. Computer-based multisensory reading programmes may be used by learners throughout the school day. High interest, low level reading books will be provided. There will be a whole school awareness of dyslexia through ongoing in-house training for all staff.
- **Dyspraxia.** Teachers will structure lessons in short bursts with regular breaks. Time and support will be allowed for completing practical tasks. The OT will

offer specific strategies for supporting these learners and will assist in lessons where appropriate.

- **Physical Difficulties.** The school will promote the inclusion of learners with physical difficulties and will ensure that staff understand their individual needs. The OT will be involved with the support of these learners.
- **Hearing Impairment.** These learners will need a quiet environment with lots of visual cues. Staff will use signing and soundfield systems to ensure as much access as possible to spoken language.
- **Visual Impairment.** Resources such as book written in braille will be provided as well as objects of reference, textured symbols and auditory cues.
- **SEMH.** Learners will be assessed and supported as necessary.
- **PMLD.** The school will develop its own PMLD curriculum in which learners will be able to develop their understanding of their world and have access to a broad range of experiences.

The lists of strategies above are by no means exhaustive but are meant to indicate the range of strategies that may be used by staff as needed for each individual. As a team, the staff are highly adaptable and able to offer effective support for any of the needs catered for by the school. The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for coordinating support for all learners and refer to external agencies if necessary. Formal training in the specific SEND of learners at the school is given internally by different professionals for example SLTs, OT, the Communication Team, EP. On an everyday basis, the team of therapists work with teaching staff in the classroom to develop strategies for the effective management of additional SEN.

Meeting the Needs of Learners with Different Characteristics

The Head of Achievement uses systems in order to separate data according to socio-economic context, attainment on entry, gender, free school meals, and learner mobility. If a particular group is underachieving, interventions are put in place immediately to improve progress.

The quality of initial staff training, and the ongoing relationship between members of the multi-disciplinary, team are essential to the consistency and quality of the support for learner' full range of strengths and needs.

Behaviour

As part of the creation of a positive learning environment, Selworthy School encourages and reinforce positive behaviour and mutual respect for all. It is recognised that difficulties in controlling behaviour or understanding social interaction or norms may be intrinsic to learners' SEN. Through positive behaviour support approaches, the curriculum, positive learning plans and therapy, all learners, whatever their difficulties are supported, enabling them to make a positive contribution to the school community.

The Senior Leadership Team have developed a whole school behaviour policy, supported and followed by staff members, parents and children. The policy makes use of the multi-disciplinary team in understanding and then supporting behavioural needs. It includes:

- **Positive policies to encourage good behaviour.** Positive Behaviour Support will be used across the school. All staff are trained by the in-house 'What's the message' trainers to understand that behaviours that challenge can be a form of communication used by learners to express their underlying needs. These needs must be identified and responded to appropriately. Proactive behaviour support and interventions are incorporated within each learner's positive learning plan.
- **Responsible behaviour is taught through the school curriculum.** Values and attitudes are taught formally in focussed lessons where necessary, but are reinforced in all subject areas.
- **Staff model positive values, attitudes and behaviour.** This helps learners to learn these and generalise them in a wide variety of contexts.
- **Staff address problems when they occur.**
- **Therapeutic input develops learners' self-regulation skills.** Learners with sensory processing difficulties are given gross motor breaks and sensory integration therapy to manage their level of arousal.
- **Developing independent management of behaviour.** Older learners are supported in gradually developing independent positive behavioural strategies, with less reliance upon external motivation.

Positive Behaviour Support

Learners with SEND may struggle to make themselves understood by friends or may find it very hard to make sense of what is being said to them. Those with ASD or pragmatic difficulties may also find it difficult to interpret other people's behaviour and at times be clumsy, even unintentionally offensive, in their own attempts at interaction. Not surprisingly, research shows that communication difficulties can lead to frustration, withdrawal and emotional distress in older children. Problems need to be treated in a caring and sympathetic manner in the hope of achieving an improvement in behaviour.

The school's positive approach to behaviour management and ethos of ensuring success for all learners means that formal 'exclusion' from school is avoided wherever possible. Instead, considerable efforts are made to investigate the root causes of behaviour and to design individual positive learning plans with the long term aim of reducing significantly disruptive or aggressive behaviour.

All staff receive 'What's the message' training, a strategy used for managing challenging behaviour in the classroom. The method teaches positive behavioural strategies designed to reduce anxiety, risk and restraint. Any use of such techniques by staff will be logged and the pattern of their use will be scrutinized by the Headteacher.

Other Agencies

To ensure that learners are successfully supported in their placement at Selworthy School, agencies are used appropriately and effectively to help identify and address learners' needs.

Research has confirmed that learners with SEND and those with ASD are at greater risk of developing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties than typically developing children and young people. A number of our learners may already have links with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and new referrals will be able to be made by the school. The Senior Leadership Team work closely with this service to ensure learners get the best possible support. The service will provide treatment for learners with emotional difficulties, anxiety, fears or unhappiness.

Most learners come to the school with a relatively recent Educational Psychologist's report. If, however, an issue arises during their time at the school that is beyond the school staff's SEND expertise, an Educational Psychologist's advice might be sought.

Access to speech and language therapists is provided for learners at Selworthy School if it is included in their EHC plan. Specialist SLTs may be brought in to support learners with eating and drinking difficulties (dysphagia) as most SLTs do not have the appropriate training or experience to deal with this complex difficulty.

8. Teaching Assistants

Our Teaching Assistants work in classrooms alongside teachers to provide personalised learning programs. They develop individualised knowledge of how our learners learn best and work collaboratively with teachers to deliver and support lessons designed to minimise an individual's barriers to learning and continue to develop their strengths.

9. Wider collaboration

Selworthy School is also a member of SEN.se (Special Educational Needs Somerset Expertise). For more information please visit the SEN.se website at: sen-se.org.uk

10. Other opportunities for learning

All learners have equal opportunity to access extra-curricular activities at Selworthy School and the school offers a range of additional clubs and activities. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure participation for all.

11.Transitional support: then next steps

Selworthy School is committed to ensuring the best support for their learners as they leave for a range of destinations. We work closely with all the local providers and have established relationships with those further afield. We have arranged extended transitions when appropriate for our learners and arranged work experience and taster sessions at a range of post-19 providers. We also offer a Providers' marketplace event and invite parents and members of the local community to attend and see the provision available.

12.Useful links

The Somerset LA local offer for SEND is available on the website.