Building a Legacy

Andrews Memorial Primary School

Policy on Special Educational Needs
Our school ethos

Andrews Memorial believes in the potential of every child: to create; to achieve; to celebrate; to make a difference. We believe in blending and balancing the traditional elements of literacy and numeracy with a stimulating, up-to-date and challenging curriculum. We recognise the potential for ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum.

We aim to ensure that we provide a welcoming, caring and happy learning environment, in and beyond the classroom; also that we deliver learning that is valued by the whole school community and which develops an understanding and an appreciation of the world around us.

Ultimately, we hope to nurture well-rounded young people, who can engage with each other and with adults; who respect everyone and who have a sense of moral responsibility.

We believe it is our duty to:

✓ Enthuse and enable pupils to reach their full potential by developing independence, self-discipline, self-confidence and self-esteem

✓ Create an atmosphere of encouragement and high expectations

✓ Build and nurture partnerships between home, school and the community

✓ Provide a well-balanced, exciting curriculum in a safe, caring and happy environment

✓ Promote an ethos of ambition and achievement

✓ Instil a sense of purpose in making a contribution to life in and beyond school
Our School Aims

Our school aims to provide a happy, inspiring and secure environment in which all our pupils will develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically and morally.

It is the right of every child to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum at a level appropriate to his/her age, aptitude, ability and attainment in order to develop his/her full potential.

This policy explains the provisions we make for children who have special needs in our school; for those who experience difficulties learning or adapting to the physical or behavioural demands of our school environment, and for those who exhibit high levels of academic achievement, requiring extra support and provision to extend and challenge their endeavour (see relevant section below).

Definition of Special Educational Needs

The term ‘special educational needs’ is defined in the relevant legislation ‘as a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made’. ‘Learning difficulty’ means that a child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of comparable age, or has a disability in learning which hinders his or her use of the facilities generally provided in the mainstream school environment. ‘Special educational provision’ means educational provision that is different from, or additional to, provision made generally for children of comparable age.

We recognise that the definition of SEN embraces a breadth of learning difficulties varying in type, duration and severity. We recognise that special educational needs can arise as a result of:

- Specific learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy
- Physical impairment
- General learning difficulties
- Sensory impairment – hearing, visual
- Speech and language impairment
- Emotional / behavioural problems
- Medical conditions
- Erratic attendance / long absences from school
- Cultural differences – English as an additional language (EAL)
- Adverse social circumstances

Organisation of Special Needs support within Andrews Memorial Primary School

- All teachers have a collective responsibility for the special needs of our pupils.
- Class teachers create a secure learning environment where the special needs of their pupils are known and catered for.
All children will be identified and assessed as early as possible, following procedures determined within school and by the South Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB).

Teachers take into account the individual needs of each pupil in planning and preparing work.

Class teachers and support teachers liaise to ensure each child follows an agreed programme of work.

Lessons are planned and delivered in such a way to ensure special needs pupils are able to make measurable progress.

Support provided by the Special Needs teacher and Peripatetic support teachers is not viewed in isolation to class work; there needs to be continuity between class work and outside support.

Roles and Responsibilities towards Special Needs

The Governing body of Andrews Memorial Primary School endeavours to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any child who has special needs in accordance with the Education Order (N.I.) 1998.

Its duties are:

- To determine and keep under review the SEN Policy of the school
- To see that all teachers in the school are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for all the children who have special needs
- To ensure that all such children join in the activities of the school together with pupils who do not have special needs as far as that is reasonably practical
- To report annually to parents on the steps taken to implement the school’s Special Educational Needs Policy, including:
  - Special admission arrangements
  - Equality of treatment
  - Provision of facilities to assist access to the school
  - Provision of resources

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Managing SEN provision
- Keeping the Governors informed
- Working closely with the SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

The Designated Teacher is responsible for:

- Day-to-day administration of the school’s SEN Policy
- Liaising with and advising colleagues
- Coordinating the SEN provision throughout the school
- Formulation / development / implementation and review of individual programmes
Maintaining the SEN Register
Liasing with parents of children with SEN
Informing the general parent body of SEN provision within the school
Establishing and maintaining a bank of alternative resources for class use
Liasing with external agencies, which may include:
   - School Psychology Service
   - Inclusion and Diversity Service
   - Peripatetic Services for specific literacy difficulties
   - Peripatetic Service hearing impairments
   - Learning and Behavioural Outreach Support
   - Speech and language
   - A.S.C.E.T.
   - Medical bodies
   - Support for physical impairments
Attending courses and conferences to keep up to date with new developments in managing SEN
Disseminating new information and contributing to the in-service training of staff

The Class Teacher

“Class teachers ... are in a key position to observe responses in the classroom, to recognise the child who is having difficulties in learning and to try out different approaches.”

DES Circular 22/89

The class teacher has overall responsibility towards the children with special needs in the classroom.

S/he is responsible for:

Planning and delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated for individual needs
Collecting relevant information on each child
Working in conjunction with the SENCO to identify learning difficulties
Planning, monitoring and evaluating appropriate Individual Education Plans (IEP)
Monitoring and evaluating progress
Maintaining close contact with parents to ensure maximum provision
Participating in, and contributing to, reviews regarding a pupil’s progress
Liasing with and advising classroom assistants and other support assistants, in order to plan for, and meet the needs of, their special needs pupils
Attending in-service training sessions on SEN
Admission Arrangements

The admission arrangements with respect to pupils with special needs are consistent with the school’s general arrangements for all other pupils. Andrews Memorial Primary operates a fully inclusive admission policy as detailed in the published criteria in the SEELB booklets.

Procedures for identifying pupils with Special Educational Needs

“The Code of Practice, acknowledging that there is a continuum of special educational needs, sets out a five stage approach within which responsibility for pupils within Stages 1 – 3 lies at school level (with close involvement by the Board at Stage 3) and with both the Board and school at Stages 4 and 5.”

Code of Practice 2 – 16

Implementation of Individual Education Plans

Decisions regarding the need for the drafting and implementation of an IEP are made by the school and are based on the following:

- Use of classroom observations/qualitative data
- Use of quantitative data where appropriate
- Discussions between class teacher and SENCo
- Discussions between class teacher and/or SENCo and parent

The Principal is updated and retains a copy of the number of children on an IEP and stage according to the current Code of Practice. Copies of IEPs are supplied to parents for their reference, a working copy is retained by the teacher, and a copy is stored electronically. Use of an IEP may be initiated or discontinued throughout the year in accordance with the above criteria.

Stage 3 Referrals

It is important to clarify that a child may only be recorded as being at Stage 3 of the current Code of Practice if advice has been given to the school from the Education Authority, Health or if RISE NI is providing support. Information provided to school by parents from themselves, a GP, or a private report does not trigger a Stage 3 referral.

The Principal, SENCo and Educational Psychology will prioritise cases to be referred for Stage 3 assessment within the confines of the school’s allocated Educational Psychology time. Permission from parents is sought before a consultation with Educational Psychology takes place and written feedback is provided post consultation. If a referral for Stage 3 assessment is to proceed, the relevant form is completed by the school (class teacher) and signed by both the parent and the Principal.
Special education provision in Andrews Memorial Primary adopts a staged approach consistent with the Code of Practice.

**Stage 1 is the responsibility of the class teacher:**

- Identify the child and the area of concern
- Inform SENCO of this concern
- Consult with the child’s parents and, when appropriate, the child
- Collect together any relevant information
- Assess the child’s special education needs
- SENCO to offer advice and assist with differentiated learning programme and/or IEP, where appropriate
- Work closely with the child in the normal classroom setting
- Monitor the child’s responses and achievements
- Review the child’s progress and plan any future provision

After the review, the child may be removed from the register, continue at Stage 1 with a new, amended action plan, or be moved to Stage 2.

**Stage 2 is the responsibility of the class teacher and the SENCO:**

This stage is an extension of the previous one and involves the same process but with additional support strategies, such as:

- Jointly devising an individual learning programme (with an IEP) for the child which will be implemented for a pre-determined period
- Using a team-teaching approach within the classroom
- Withdrawing the child within the classroom to work individually with either the class teacher or the SENCO
- Withdrawing the child from the classroom to work in a small group situation with the SENCO
  - withdrawal will be offered to parents depending on available resources and relative to the overall needs of the other SEN pupils in the school
- Withdrawing the child from the classroom to work individually with the SENCO
- Review the child’s progress and plan any future provision

After the review, the child may be returned to Stage 1 on the register and monitored, or continue at Stage 2 with a new, amended education plan (IEP).

If the review indicates the current provision is not addressing the child’s needs, the school with parental consent will ask for advice and assessment from services outside the school.

**Stage 3 is the responsibility of the class teacher, the SENCO and external support services or specialists:**

- Additional support is usually accessed through the SEELB Educational Psychology Service, but for some needs access is direct to the specified support service
- Our school psychologist is contacted through the Principal or SENCO
- Before the psychologist meets with a child the parents will be informed and their
permission sought

- The SENCO carries out preliminary tests for the psychologist using tests specified by SEELB: these cover English (including writing) and Maths
- After discussion with the teacher, the SENCO and the Principal, the psychologist will meet with the child to assess his / her educational needs and report on a course of action
- Such action may be school-based and may involve support from outside agencies
- The child’s progress will be reviewed

Where such action fails to meet the child’s needs then Stage 4 is reached.

**Stage 4 is the responsibility of the SEELB:**

- The child is referred for Statutory Assessment

A multi-disciplinary assessment of the child and his / her needs is carried out. Personnel involved in the assessment include SEELB officers, Principal, class teacher, parents, Educational Psychologist, GP, Social Services and others as required.

**Stage 5 is the responsibility of the SEELB:**

If, having considered the advice received from a statutory assessment, the Board is satisfied that the child’s needs cannot be reasonably met with the resources normally available to mainstream schools, it may make a statement of special educational needs and arrange, monitor and review appropriate provision.

All stages of provision feature a structure of targets, strategies and programmes of work to address identified needs, together with records of the provision and the outcomes of the review. Parents are consulted at each stage and encouraged to support their child’s learning where appropriate.

**Review Procedures**

**Stage 5**

Each child with a statement has an annual review to determine if the statement requires being amended or discontinued. This is organised by the SENCO; the parents, Principal, class teacher, Educational Psychologist, Board officer, support teacher or care assistant and medical personnel are all invited to contribute and attend.

**Stages 1–3**

The class teacher, SENCO, parents and involved external agencies normally carry out reviews of provision at Stages 1, 2 & 3. Targets are reviewed and extended or updated as necessary. Informal monitoring of targets is ongoing throughout the year.

**Integration and access to the curriculum**

As far as possible, special educational provision is made in normal classroom settings where
children will experience learning across the breadth of the curriculum in whole class groups, ability groups, mixed ability groups and through individual teaching. Most children are at Stage 1 in the classroom.

Some provision may take the form of additional teacher support in the mainstream classroom or through withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes for special tuition (Stage 2) decided by the class teacher in consultation with the SENCO. When this happens, the SENCO and other support staff work closely with the class teacher following agreed programmes of work allowing for differentiated learning where appropriate.

**Strategies for Differentiation**

*By Planning:*
- Having planned activities, tasks and skills suitable to all abilities so that there is a challenge and pace at all levels

*By Assessment:*
- By knowing where children are at varying levels of learning and to use a standard of achievement to inform the teaching

*By Organisation:*
- By having a wide range of resources, materials and equipment at different levels within reach of the classroom, allowing access and entitlement for all children

*By Task:*
- By breaking down tasks into small achievable steps so that children can achieve success along the continuum of learning, albeit at their own ability

*By Outcome:*
- By appreciating that the amount of effort is not always commensurate to the output and reserving judgement
- By allowing as many means of presentation of work as possible to show each child’s strengths and abilities

**Partnership with parents**

“The relationship between the parents of a child with special educational needs and their child’s school has a crucial bearing on the child’s educational progress and the effectiveness of any school–based action. Children’s progress will be diminished if their parents are not seen as partners in the educational process with unique knowledge and information to impart.” (C.O.P.2–21)

Andrews Memorial Primary operates an ‘open door’ policy with parents. We value their knowledge, experience and views and seek to establish a partnership with them in making appropriate provision for all pupils.
Arrangements for passing information to parents:

- Informal meetings between parents and teachers
- Curriculum meetings in September
- Parent–teacher consultations in the Autumn term
- Parent–teacher consultations in the Easter term
- School reports issued in June by class teacher
- Reports issued by support teachers
- Consultations with class teacher, SENCO and support teachers, including, where appropriate, at an Annual Review (Stage 5)
- Letters notifying parents of proposed SEN provision

Arrangements for involving parents in provision for their children:

- Parents input into carrying out education plans (follow up work at home)
- Interviews with Psychologist, support teachers, SENCO and class teacher
- Parental input to, and attendance at, review meetings

Policy Review

As a school, we are aware that new developments at local and national level will ultimately have an impact on our policy. It will therefore be regularly reviewed to take account of, for example, the Special Educational Needs Disability Order (SENDO 2005) and the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Staff Development

The SENCO has a responsibility to ensure that teachers receive the necessary support to help pupils achieve their full potential. It is important that the SENCO is aware of the need for continued staff development. When the need arises, In-service (INSET) training will be planned to ensure staff are successful in working with pupils with Special Educational Needs.

In the event of new legislation / research it may be appropriate that the SENCO will organise INSET to make staff aware of the implications this new legislation will have on pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Complaints Procedures

Any complaints regarding SEN provision should initially be discussed with the SENCO and class teacher. If this fails to provide a satisfactory answer, the issue should then be discussed with the Head of Key Stage, Vice Principal or Principal.

Gifted and Talented

There is a group of children within Andrews Memorial Primary School who do not fall into the SEN categories outlined above, but they do have ‘particular’ needs. These are the most able children in our school.

If we are to raise children’s aspirations as well as levels of achievement, it is crucial that we
consciously provide for the most able, because in doing so we also raise the sights of the children around them.

Gifted and Talented may be defined as any of six broad categories of ability:

- Artistic Talent
- Creativity
- High intelligence
- Leadership
- Mechanical ingenuity
- Physical talent

Differentiated learning is provided when appropriate.

Curriculum programmes are developed, which focus on the promotion of independent learning and research skills, eg research homework, cross-curricular topics and projects, especially at the end of KS1 and throughout KS2.