



St. Nicholas' Primary School  
Minorca Place  
Carrickfergus  
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## **St. Nicholas' Primary School, Carrickfergus**

### **Special Educational & Additional Needs Policy incorporating Inclusion & Learning Support**

#### Introduction

A significant number of children attending any mainstream primary school may experience a learning related difficulty during their school career.

In Northern Ireland, any child who is having a persistent difficulty accessing the curriculum at a level which is significantly below that of their peers is recognised as having a special educational need (SEN).

The cause and nature of that difficulty can be due to any one of a multitude of factors. It may be a small and temporary difficulty or it may be a significant, long-term and complex problem.

*St. Nicholas' PS is committed to the development of each child's full potential in a climate of joy, challenge, co-operation and celebration in partnership between Home, School and Parish.*

St. Nicholas' PS, is a forward-thinking inclusive Catholic primary school.

Our aim is to create a Christian environment which emphasises and reinforces the values of Catholic living whilst providing the children with a range of learning experiences appropriate to the curricular objectives and key learning areas of the Revised NI Curriculum.



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Our school attracts children from the immediate area and further afield. It attracts a broad spectrum of children from a wide variety of social, economic, religious and non-religious backgrounds.

Within this context, St. Nicholas' PS, in common with many other primary schools in Northern Ireland, has a proportionate SEN and Inclusion register, which has ranged between 25% to 30% of the pupil body over the past three years (P1 to P7).

When viewed in tandem with our Free School meals figures, our SEN register is fairly large.

As a result, St Nicholas' PS maintains a thorough Special Educational Needs and Inclusion register, monitoring and supporting the special educational needs of all from the most in need of support to the most gifted and academically talented & any children experiencing a barrier to accessing the curriculum in between.

This policy sets out to explain how we fulfil our obligation to our children and our community in providing high quality SEN and Inclusion provision.

## Rationale

*St Nicholas' Primary School is committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, which offers equal access for all children. As a school we recognise that some pupils during their school career may have special educational need and / or a disability and we will make every possible arrangement to provide for their individual needs.*

## Definitions

Children may experience a learning difficulty in one or more area. For the purposes of this policy, a learning difficulty may be defined as follows:

*'Learning difficulty'* means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age, and / or has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational facilities.

*'Special education provision'* means educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of a comparable age.  
Code of Practice (1998, paragraph: 1.4)



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A child with a disability may be defined as:

'Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

## **Legal framework for school-based SEN and inclusion provision**

St Nicholas' PS adheres to SEN and disability legislation including the Education (NI) Order 1996, The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (NI) 2005 (known as SENDO 2005), Codes of Practice (DE 1998, DE 2005 and Equality Commission 2005).

## **School Development Planning (SDP) and Accessibility Audit Mapping**

Within the above legal context, the Quality Indicators for the Work of SENCOs has been developed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), and is a core tool of the school SENCO. The Quality Indicators Audit and resulting Action Plan demonstrate the school's embracement of '*Every School a Good School*' (ESAGS), '*Together Towards Improvement*' (TTI) and more recently, *Count, Read, Succeed* which firmly places the onus on schools themselves to assess need, provide early intervention and remediate with a view to overcoming barriers to learning.

This forms the basis of the schools Accessibility Audit Mapping process and from this process priorities are identified for inclusion in the annual SDP.

Individual area Action Plans are drawn up in accordance with these priorities in line with established school SDP policy and practice in accordance with School Development Planning Regulations (DE 2011).

Where possible, SDP work is intertwined into individual teacher's Performance Review Staff Development (PRSD) foci.

## **Classifications**

Following the Code of Practice (1998, appendix 1) the following areas of SEN/disability will be applied in classifying a child's needs:

- Learning Difficulties – Dyslexia, Dyscalculia etc
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)



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- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)
- Physical Difficulties – Disability, Dyspraxia etc
- Sensory Difficulties – physical, visual and auditory
- Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties
- Medical conditions
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

### **Our Definition of Inclusion:**

The Department of Education's Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (September 2005) states that all learners are entitled

***'to worthwhile experiences, which help develop their knowledge, skills and understanding'.***

At St Nicholas' Primary School, in seeking to develop a wholly inclusive environment in which to learn and work, we apply the following definition of inclusion:

1. Inclusion means that all children at St Nicholas' should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their full personal potential;
2. Inclusion is a process by which our school develops its caring, Catholic ethos, culture, policies and practices to include all pupils;
3. Inclusion means that, with the right staff training, teaching and learning strategies and support, the majority of children with special educational needs can be included in our school;
4. It is our belief that an inclusive school takes account of and incorporates the views of children and parents;
5. Inclusion means safeguarding the interests of all children;
6. Inclusion means that we, as a school, actively seek to identify and remove barriers to learning and participation;

Finally, while welcoming children of all abilities to our school, we recognise that mainstream education will not always be right for every child. Equally, just because mainstream education may not be right for a child at a particular time, this does not mean the child cannot be successfully included whenever it is appropriate.



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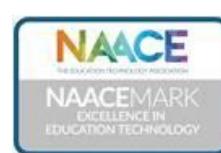
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Adapted from Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (2005) p. 41, paragraph 5.4 – 5.5.

## **Aim of Special Educational Needs & Inclusion provision at St Nicholas' P.S.**

1. To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum as a right for all children;
2. To identify children with SEN/Disability as early as possible through a variety of means with appropriate personnel;
3. To ensure that all children with SEN/Disability feel valued and have a positive self-image;
4. To encourage parental involvement and co-operation between various external agencies in the diagnosis and treatment of pupils with SEN/Disability;
5. To offer experiences and opportunities which allow pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills which ensure progress, promote success and develop self-confidence;
6. To develop a system for recording continued assessment so that each pupil's performance can be monitored;
7. To promote the inclusion of all pupils with SEN/Disability into the mainstream classroom;
8. To encourage the use of a range of teaching strategies which incorporate different learning styles and ensure effective learning for all;
9. To create a caring and supportive environment in which all pupils can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual learning needs;
10. To develop and utilise resources in support of pupils with SEN/Disability.



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## Arrangements for Co-ordinating SEN Provision

The school's SENCO (Mrs Byrne) is responsible for the strategic management of SEN/Disability provision under the principal and BOG.

The SENCO will always be a member of the Senior Management Team.

Teaching Staff meet annually with the SENCo and Assessment Co-ordinator to use data to track, inform and confirm teacher judgements in the early identification of those children experiencing SEN or AN.

Teachers are responsible for tailoring the curriculum and teaching, planning and assessing children allocated to them within their class and to work in partnership with the SENCo and/or Learning Support Assistant to direct targeted instruction through withdrawal and/or in-class tutoring.

Additional support mainly takes place on a withdrawal basis in dedicated Learning Zones to SEN support, specifically created around the school.

The SENCo provides SEN support but continuous provision is met by a full time Learning Support Assistant Monday-Friday.

Additional support staff, i.e. Inclusion & Diversity Service (IDS), Educational Psychologists, (EPS), and Autism Support (ASD) also work in partnership with the SENCo and school staff as appropriate. From 2015 -16 academic year we have been involved with the MASTS Strategy, accessing training and support for Foundation and KS1 pupils.

## Culture and Ethos of St Nicholas' PS regarding inclusion

Our school strives towards being an inclusive environment for our school community as follows:

- The school is child centered in terms of ethos and culture;
- High expectations are maintained for all children;
- The school is committed to a school improvement agenda;
- Social deprivation or other barriers to learning are seen holistically within a child's profile when planning for their academic and social inclusion and are not seen as a reason in themselves for low attainment;



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- The voice of the child is given high importance in terms of planning to meet their needs, including establishing and reviewing individual education plans (IEPs);
- The school is actively trying to engage in community development and supporting community learning needs;
- Parents are welcomed as partners in the planning and delivery of learning;
- The needs of the whole child are addressed rather than focusing only on measurable outcomes;
- Collaborative and shared practice is encouraged and fostered externally and internally. Staff (both Teaching & Non-Teaching) meet regularly to discuss pupil progress and identify areas of concern. We also work closely with our partners in Pre-School, Post-Primary, Health Professionals and Charities such as NSPCC and Barnardo's.

## Planning for SEN and Inclusion

SEN and Inclusion is systematically planned for via careful macro and micro management as follows:

- The School Development Plan consistently identifies areas for improvement and SEN and Inclusion;
- School resources, including budget, are regularly targeted to provide for SEN and Inclusion;
- Good practice in SEN and Inclusion is identified and disseminated in school and between schools, pupil achievements are recognised and celebrated;
- Planning for the IEP process is systematically undertaken on a twice yearly cycle and managed by the SENCO;
- All stakeholders (parental, external and internal) are involved in the IEP process.



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## **Role of the Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors has a statutory duty to:

- Take account of the provisions in the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs;
- Use their best endeavors to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that parents are notified of their child's special needs;
- Maintain and operate a policy on SEN;
- Ensure that where a registered pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all those who are likely to teach them;
- Ensure the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching;
- Allocate funding for SEN and disability needs;
- Prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

The role of the BOG also involves:

- Delegating responsibility for pupils with SEN/Disability to a staff member who assumes the role of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator – the SENCO is Mrs Claire Byrne (DT);
- Appointing SEN and Inclusion classroom assistants for children with statements of Special Educational Needs to facilitate provision in line with their statements;
- Delegating one of the Board's members as a governor with responsibility in the area of Special Educational Needs – the BOG member with responsibility for SEN and Inclusion is Mrs S Gilmore;
- Ensuring that all pupils' special educational needs are addressed by ensuring barriers to achievement are identified and meaningful steps are taken to remove these barriers;
- Have regard to and familiarity with the Code of Practice and related directives;
- Have regard to and familiarity with the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy;
- Ensure the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy is kept under regular review.



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St Nicholas' PS Governors should consult and familiarise themselves with *The Role of Governors (Every School a Good School)* for specific guidance pertaining to their roles and responsibilities.

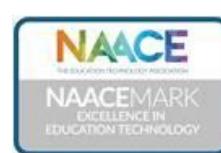
## **Role of the Senior Leadership Team and Principal**

- The principal is passionate about ensuring all children in St Nicholas' PS have their needs identified and met;
- Management ensures that all staff take responsibility for meeting the needs of all pupils in the school, regardless of the child's ability, SEN, disability, social background or home language;
- The SENCO and management ensures that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is given a high priority for all staff in the school (teaching and non-teaching);
- Support staff are seen as an important part of the inclusion team and are included in the planning process, monitoring and evaluation;
- Data is used effectively to identify pupils in need of support and monitor their progress during intervention;
- Pupils needs are supported on the basis of individual and personalised planning and support is offered accordingly;
- A balance is maintained between supporting pupils through withdrawal and in-class support;
- Keep the BOG of informed about SEN/Disability issues;
- Work in close partnership with the SENCO;
- Where necessary liaise with parents/carers and external agencies;
- In partnership with the SENCO embed an inclusive ethos on an ongoing basis;
- Delegate and monitor the SEN budget.

## **Role of the SENCO**

The SENCO should:

- Develop and implement a whole school policy on Special Educational Needs and Inclusion on an ongoing basis;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion programme;
- Secure and monitor resources to ensure equality of pupil experience;



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- Co-ordinate the day-to-day provision of the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy;
- Liaise with and advise colleagues;
- Keep fully informed of the school's statutory obligations regarding SEN and Inclusion and, in conjunction with management and other interest groups, lead the school in meeting these obligations;
- Co-ordinate provision for children with special educational needs;
- Maintain the school's SEN/Disability register and oversee the records of all pupils with special educational needs;
- Liaise with parents/guardians of children with SEN/Disability;
- Arrange and implement appropriate training for all staff;
- Liaise with external agencies;
- Keep abreast of current best practice, training in SEN provision and maintain professional development in the area of SEN/Disability with the aim of continually developing provision;
- Lead the day-to-day management of learning support.

## **Quality Assurance, Accessibility Audit Mapping and the Quality Indicators for the Role of the SENCO**

DE (2011) established and issued the Quality Indicators for the Work of the SENCO as part of ESAGS and TTI. St Nicholas' PS embraces these developments and sees them as a quality assurance tool which fits naturally into our established model of provision in SEN and Inclusion. The Indicators are seen as a rigorous process through which we can continually strive to raise our provision via self-evaluation and meaningful improvement.

From October 2011, St Nicholas' PS will utilise the Indicators in the manner specified by DE (2011) and accordingly prioritise areas for development via the SDP process and ongoing development. The three key areas within the Indicators are:

- Quality of Leadership and Management
- Quality of Provision for Learning
- Quality of Achievements and Standards

The results of Quality Assurance, Accessibility Audit Mapping and the Quality Indicators for the Role of the SENCO will be made available annually to the BOG for their consideration and input.



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## Learning Support Policy

This part of the SEN and Inclusion policy sets out how St Nicholas' PS practically supports our children who at some stage may experience difficulty in their learning or accessing the curriculum.

This policy is further supported by our other practices in terms of Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Newcomer, Literacy & Numeracy and Religion policies.

SEN and Inclusion is not seen as an entity separate to, or an addition to, the core areas of the curriculum. Instead, SEN and Inclusion permeate all aspects of school life, curricular and extra curricular, pastoral and social.

Learning support takes place throughout the school on a continual basis through general teaching and differentiation. Indeed, this is where the majority of learning support takes place. Teaching is monitored and evaluated through self-reflection, via the PRSD model of evaluation and performance review, School Award & MER Schemes and termly '*Book Looks*'. This is, in the main, undertaken by the principal/SENCos with additional differentiation observations undertaken by the Literacy & Numeracy co-ordinators along with their focus group, including the monitoring and evaluation of learning support by Non-teaching staff through Pupil Tracking Files.

## Role of the Class Teacher

The teacher should:

- Have a nurturing and supportive disposition to the children whom they support;
- Deliver individual teaching programmes based on carefully differentiated Individual Education Plans (I.E.P's.);
- Liaise closely and regularly with SENCO to ensure effectiveness of provision;
- Write and review SMART Learning Support targets specific to the needs of each child in IEPs in accordance with the school assessment schedule;
- Complete CEFR assessments for newcomer pupils and access differentiated support materials where appropriate;
- Undertake or seek support to administer diagnostic assessments of children in the area of SEN/Newcomers;
- Be familiar with the resources available for SEN/Newcomers;



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- Identify areas within their own professional development which could be enhanced to further childrens' learning – i.e. be a reflective practitioner;
- Assume that the majority for teaching children with SEN occurs in the classroom via carefully planned differentiation;
- Work with Classroom Assistants to support the work of the Learning Zones and implement IEP targets;
- Be aware of the staged approach to SEN as outlined in the code of practice;
- Gather information through formal and informal assessments and observation;
- Continually seek to develop an inclusive classroom;
- Promptly raise concerns over progress of children with SENCO;

## **Role of the SEN Learning Support Assistant**

SEN learning support assistants assigned to individual children with SEN/Disability have their roles and responsibilities agreed with the principal/SENCO.

Their primary obligation is for the care and welfare of the child to whom they are ascribed in accordance with the requirements of the child's Statement of Special Educational Needs. SEN C.A.s via their role in this regard may work with other children with a SEN through group work which does not detract from the education of the child to which they are ascribed.

All assistants assigned to support individual pupils are tasked with their care and welfare.

ANY and ALL concerns should be raised with the SENCo/Principal. Assistants are asked to work in partnership with the class teacher and SENCo and to maintain up-to-date accurate tracking files for their pupils in accordance with the assessment schedules.

## **Role of the Pupil**

Commensurate with their age and abilities and in line with the Code of Practice, children with SEN/Disability are involved in personal target setting and self-reviewing through the IEP process under the guidance of their teachers/assistants. Continual monitoring and evaluation is built into the IEP process and the Code of Practice. Children, where age appropriate, contribute to the development and content of their IEP via one-to-one reflective chats with their teacher/assistant and setting/review of their personal targets.



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## **Role of the Parent**

The school will inform parent/carers when a child's name is placed on the SEN/Disability register and discuss with them the nature of that child's special educational needs.

Similarly, upon the generation of new I.E.P's. (Nov and May each year), parental views and co-operation are always sought.

Parents are asked to sign each new IEP before it is acted upon to ensure good channels of communication and educational effectiveness. Good parental support is often central to the success of an individual education programme. Parents are asked to meet with either the class teacher or SENCO to discuss each IEP to ensure maximum support for the child. Parents are additionally consulted with at each further stage of the code of practice. Other meetings occur as required.

## **The Structure of SEN/Disability Management and Provision in St Nicholas' Primary School**

The Code of Practice sets out a five stage approach which Education and Library Boards, schools and all others, should have regard to when identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with SEN. Responsibility for pupils within stages 1-3 lies at school level (with close involvement of external agencies at stage 3) and with the NEELB and school at stage 5 (see appendix).

St Nicholas' Primary School adheres to the Code of Practice.

Management of provision lies with the SENCO and learning support is carried out by the SENCo and learning support assistants.

Within classes, essential differentiation is carried out and managed by class teachers in consultation (where appropriate) with the SENCO.

## **Responsibility for SEN provision / SENCO**

Mrs Claire Byrne (SENCo) has been delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination.



## Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs

St Nicholas' Primary School is committed to identifying and addressing the needs of children with SEN as early as possible in line with the Code of Practice which states that;

*'children with SEN should be identified as early as possible and assessed as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness.'*

And further that;

*'it is vitally important that an awareness of their possible difficulties is clearly communicated between all the professionals involved with their development'.*

(Code of Practice 1998 paragraphs 2.14 and 1.6)

The School's SENCO co-ordinates and manages this assessment and intervention in conjunction with class teachers, learning support assistants, school management, Board of Governors, parents and external agencies. The framework in which this occurs is based on the Code of Practice (DENI, 1998), Recording Children with Special Educational Needs, Guidance for Schools (DENI, 2005) and the Supplementary Guide to the Code of Practice (DENI, 2005). The school sees early identification of SEN or high functioning / cognitive skills as integral to its overall policy regarding assessment.

### Strategies for the early identification and assessment of SEN/Disability:

Following the application of diagnostic and/or standardised assessments across the school, the SENCO and individual class teachers identify children for whom initial testing has raised queries regarding assessment outcomes.

The children flagged are discussed at length and where necessary, further assessed using assessment batteries specific to their age group, developmental stage and area of concern in order to seek further diagnostic data which can aid intervention and remediation.

SEN assessments are individually administered for additional thoroughness and validity. This is also a pre-requisite of the assessments. Integral to all assessments are the observations of all parties concerned with the child's education and development. Within the school assessment is seen as a holistic exercise which includes observations by class teachers of the child's academic, social and personal



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development, communication with parents and input from external agencies (therapists, social workers, health visitors, doctors, etc.).

Teacher led, in-class diagnostic assessments, monitoring, evaluation, marking, observations and teacher-pupil-parent communication are central to the overall assessment of all children at the school. If a child is flagged as needing additional assessment to double-check, corroborate or investigate further an area of concern, the SENCo or appropriate Assistant instigates additional assessments as outlined below.

This list is not intended as a complete inventory of SEN assessment at the school, but gives an overview of the main assessment batteries utilised. The SEN team will administer additional/supplementary assessments depending on the focus of the overall assessment. SEN assessment is a central component of the overall assessment strategy of the school. At the current time of writing the following are the central SEN assessment tools, however as new initiatives are put into practice or new strategies are adopted, the nature and extent of assessments may change.

## SEN Intervention Strategies

### Harberton Reading Programme

The programme is aimed at Children who are unable to learn to read using any of the commercially produced reading material currently available because they have:

- difficulties with memory capacity and retention/retrieval over time,
- difficulties with the thinking skills required to allow a range of reading strategies to develop and be applied.

These difficulties result in overdependency on others to help them carry out even the simplest of tasks. May present in two groups:

1. Children who have not acquired any literacy skills. ( NONE!)
2. Children who have acquired a small sight vocabulary and limited sound symbol awareness but can not proceed beyond this . ( Can't go beyond level 1 or 2 on commercial reading schemes.)

In the early stages of commercially produced reading schemes support activities often lack challenge and in some cases do not go beyond copying underneath or visual matching. Neither of these activities result in worthwhile learning outcomes. Wordload then increases significantly and the children cannot participate in more challenging activities because their visual memory is not able to cope. The



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Harberton Reading Programme is designed to ensure that, even with a sight vocabulary of 5 words, the children are presented with associated tasks that challenge their thinking and enable them to acquire a secure sight vocabulary. This allows contextual links to become established and reading strategies to develop.

The programme is designed to reduce memory load (retention) and associated problems of retrieval and application (of knowledge) by:

- engaging visual memory through Match, Select, Say word game,
- linking teaching of sounds to reading words (using analytic approach),
- linking teaching of spellings to reading words,
- incorporating what has already been taught to ensure retention,
- developing syntactic knowledge around the target words,
- developing comprehension of usage of target words,
- developing understanding and ability to use punctuation effectively,
- introducing words which are not targeted allowing a top down (as well as a bottom up) processing approach to be incorporated.

This programme expects children to carry out reading tasks (in the activity sheets) that challenge their thinking skills and therefore a high level of support is required when each new task is introduced. This support is reduced gradually until the child can complete each task independently. These independent tasks are retained until the next level of the task is mastered and only then is the easier level dropped.

### PIPS

In Primary One a baseline assessment (PIPS) is conducted. When children are being identified in Foundation Stage as having some early indicators of memory, sequencing, gross or fine motor skills and / or early alphabetic conceptual difficulties, differentiated learning games for the under fives are utilised (for those in P1 identified as at risk).

It is recognised by staff that without alphabetic understanding by P1 a child is presenting with an emerging barrier to learning.

Early indicators can be poor recognition of:

- Visual perception and discrimination
- Auditory perception and discrimination
- Manual dexterity for fine motor control
- Shapes and relationships



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- Directionality
- Colour
- Basic number
- Essential oral skills

Research indicates that the above are all fundamental to enable child to access the written alphabet presently or later in their schooling.

### **Beat Dyslexia & BELB Guidance on the Dyslexia Friendly Classroom**

This is a step-by-step multi sensory literacy programme with a strong auditory and visual aspect. The use of flash cards is central to the programme to aid visual memory. Audio CDs are central to each section in the programme. The programme also places a heavy emphasis on cursive handwriting throughout. The latter is central to many IEPs due to the strong body of research which supports the view that cursive joins and patterns support spelling retention due to its reliance on motor-memory. Beat Dyslexia is backed by the recognised charity Dyslexia Action.

### **Coloured Overlays**

Research demonstrates that the use of coloured overlays can help with visual discrimination, tracking and text shake and blurring reduction. Currently we use the Cerion Visual Screener to decipher for whom overlays would be beneficial and what colour and matt or gloss finish is most appropriate. Children are allocated coloured overlays according to this procedure. For some children coloured overlays are effective only by placebo effect whereas for others the use of overlays is of measurable benefit. Either way, children are offered them as a support tool.

### **Additional Reading Support Materials**

Additional reading support materials are housed in the Reprographics room specifically for use by children with SEN/AN.

This adds breadth to the school's main reading programme as overseen by the literacy co-ordinator by enabling children access more books at the same level to enable greater reinforcement of reading high frequency words and early and emergent reading strategies.

### **Games and resources in the Learning Zone**

To support the cumulative, multi-sensory learning support programme on offer in the Learning Zone, the learning support assistants use ICT and a wide variety of games to reinforce and develop learning intentions.



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[www.strnicholasps.org.uk](http://www.strnicholasps.org.uk)

All staff have been trained in using these resources and appropriate websites to access, which are also used in class under the guidance of class teachers.

Software packages include:

- EducationCity
- Lexia
- Wellington Square

### **Planning and co-ordination**

Coherent linking between classroom assistants, teachers, the SENCo and IEPs is created through an ongoing professional dialogue facilitated by the SENCO. This is derived from the needs of the school as identified in our annual SDP/accessibility audit mapping.

### **SEN and Inclusion Assessment and Diagnostic Tools**

#### **Early Literacy:**

- **Phonological Awareness Test**
- **Ruth Miskin Phonics Assessments**
- **Active Literacy Kit**

#### **Reading & Spelling:**

- **Salford X & Y assessments**
- **NILA**
- **PM Benchmarking**
- **Schonell Spelling Tests**

#### **Developed Ability:**

- **CATS**



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## Literacy & Numeracy

NFER PT Maths & PT English

CBA – NINA & NILA

Ready, Set, Go

Heinemann & Abacus assessments

## GL Assessment Dyslexia & Dyscalculia Screening

To ensure rigor in our screening processes, St Nicholas' PS utilises GL Assessment Dyslexia/Dyscalculia Screener. This is an ICT based diagnostic assessment tool for Dyslexia & Dyscalculia we use for children identified as being at risk from Age 6 or with parental consent/request at an earlier stage.

We use the Dyslexia/Dyscalculia Index to measure children within the associated continuum from A to E. Parents are advised of the details of the results of the test, which are reported in standardised format in sub-tests across key fields.

Parents and teachers are advised that the tool is only a screener and not a diagnosis of dyslexia or dyscalculia, which can only be undertaken by a registered member of the British Psychological Association or an Educational Psychologist. The purpose of the assessments is to verify or expand teacher/parent judgement, assist in the design of educational provision and planning, aid differentiation and support referrals to the Educational Psychology Service and other external agencies.

## Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)

Non-reading Intelligence Tests help teachers to sample a wide background of pupil experience and ability and so provide a measure of potential which may not be revealed on other forms of assessment. The assessments are completed by the pupil without the involvement of reading, which can in some children become an inhibiting factor in attaining a true measure of their ability. It is a screening tool which measures potential but is not a stand-alone diagnostic assessment. A child flagged using the NRIT would need further assessment to pin-point areas of weakness for intervention.

Its application is as follows:

Level 1 – ages 6:4 to 8:3

Level 2 – ages 7:4 to 9:3

Level 3 – ages 8:4 to 10:11

- ages 11:00 to 13:11



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## **The Middle Infant Screening Test & Forward Together Programme**

The Middle Infant Screening Test & Forward Together Programme (MIST) focuses on reading, writing and listening skills and together provide a screening, diagnostic and recovery package. The programme encourages parental involvement by getting parents/guardians to support the work taking place in school with a multi-sensory home/school programme. The aims of MIST are:

- To give a profile of class performance;
- To screen for the children who are the lowest performing 20% to 25% of their peer group in reading and writing;
- To pinpoint significant difficulties and confusions which are contributing to lowered reading and writing performance;
- To yield information on which to build a follow-up programme;
- The child then follows an individual programme based on diagnostic assessment.

MIST is applicable with children of 5 to 6 years of age.

## **The Neale Alalysis of Reading Ability (NARA II)**

The Neale Alalysis of Reading Ability (NARA II) is an internationally recognised diagnostic tool and attainment measure for reading from 6:00 to 12:11 years. It screens Reading Accuracy, Comprehension and Rate. Within these parameters it measures and provides diagnostic information covering mispronunciations, substitutions, refusals, additions, omissions and reversals. It also screens reading behaviors, grapho-phonetic errors, syntactic/semantic errors, discrimination of initial and final sounds, letter names and sounds and auditory discrimination and blending.

## **Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)**

Allows screening and structured analysis of children whose spelling age is below that of their peers. Allows for year-on-year measurement of progress, equips pupils with strategies specific to their needs and follow-up activities. Spellings are learned and assessed within sentence contexts.

## **Assessment Manager and whole-class group assessments**

In common with whole school assessment policy, separate SEN assessment data is recorded, monitored and tracked using Assessment Manager. The management of this is shared via close collaboration between the assessment co-ordinator and the SENCO.



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## **Continual Summative and Formative Assessment**

Continual Summative and Formative Assessment takes place in all teaching settings in the school and this feeds and is integral to the overall assessment cycle, including SEN assessment.

## **Education Plans, Review procedures and Annual Reviews**

The school follows the Code of Practice in its application to the staged approach to the recording, identification, assessment and remediation of special educational needs. Customized pro-formas for the recording of intervention are known as Individual Education Plans (I.E.P's.). The I.E.P. is a central component of provision. Key to its successful implementation are the contributions and support of all parties (parents/carers, pupils, teachers, external agencies, etc.).

At St Nicholas', I.E.P's. are drawn up by class teachers in consultation with all relevant parties. Parental and pupil participation in the drawing up and implementation of I.E.P.s are routinely sought and integral to the child success.

**Annual Reviews of Transition Plans/Statements must be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> April.**

All other annual reviews must be completed and reach Special Education Branch by June 30<sup>th</sup>. All key parties must agree and sign annual statement reviews.

### **Stage 5 Annual Reviews**

In line with statute, St Nicholas' PS conducts annual review meetings with all stakeholders. The record and outcomes of these meetings are forwarded to Special Education at NEELB by the 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. This process contributes to the maintenance or amendment decision surrounding statements annually.

### **Transition to Post Primary**

Meetings and procedures for transition to post primary of pupils with special educational needs follow the structure laid down by NEELB. Key dates in the process by which the school must provide the Board with the relevant documentation are:

Transferors processed (mainly primary to secondary)      by 31 December



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## **Annual Report**

The BOG will report each year on SEN/Disability provision in the school.

## **Complaints**

Complaints regarding SEN/Disability will be dealt with in line with the school's existing complaints procedures.

## **Advice and Information Service**

An Advice and Information Service has been set up by NEELB to support parents of children with Special Educational Needs. This can be accessed by telephoning 028 2566 2407.

## **Dispute Avoidance and Reconciliation Service (DARS)**

This service was established and came into on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005 as part of the implementation of the Special Needs and Disability Order (SENDO, 2005).

DARS aims to provide an independent, confidential forum to resolve or reduce the areas of disagreement between parents and schools/Boards of Governors or ELBs for pupils who fall within the scope of the Code of Practice, in relation to special educational provision. Where interested parties have made an attempt to resolve a disagreement and this has been unsuccessful, a referral may be made to DARS.

Members of the DARS team will facilitate the possible resolution of disagreements (in a neutral venue) but do not have the authority to resolve the dispute. Agreement can only be reached with the approval of interested parties. The period from referral to conclusion is approximately 40 working days. DARS is separate and independent from Special Education Branch.

Involvement with DARS will not affect the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SENDIST).

Parents/Guardians may contact this service directly;

DARS NEELB County Hall                    028 2566 2391 / 028 2566 2387

182 Galgorm Road                          Email: [Dars.enquiry@neelb.org](mailto:Dars.enquiry@neelb.org)

Ballymena

BT42 1HN

DARS Officers:

Miss Frances McKinney (AAO Nursery & Primary)

Mr. David Lewers (Secondary)

Oliver Sherry

Inter-Board DARS:



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## **Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SENDIST)**

Where agreement cannot be reached between a parent and the ELB with regard to a child's special educational needs, legislation gives the right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal or SENDIST.

SENDIST considers parents' appeals against decisions of ELBs and also deals with claims of disability discrimination in schools.

There is a two month time limit from the notified date of 'disputed decision' to appeal to the tribunal.

Various time limits apply for:

- Board Compliance with Orders of the Tribunal
- Boards to Comply with Unopposed Appeals

Further information regarding the appeals procedure can be obtained from:  
Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SENDIST)

Secretariat

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Albany House

73-75 Great Victoria Street

Belfast BT2 7AF

028 9032 2894

Email: [secretary@sentrival.co.uk](mailto:secretary@sentrival.co.uk)

**This policy will be reviewed in light of changes in legislation or practice. This will happen in consultation with management, staff members and the BOG. This policy is an ongoing working document. Details pertaining to daily learning support may change as practice is continually evolving to meet individual needs.**

## **Appendix**

### **(1) Outline of the staged approach of the Code of Practice**

**Claire Byrne  
September 2022**



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