

The Blandford School

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Report October 2023

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Introduction

2023/24 Staffing:

Learning Hub Class TA		
Academic Learning Mentor		
Learning Hub TA		
Deputy SEND Manager		
Specialist English Teacher		
SEND Administrator		
Specialist Maths Teacher		
Literacy Mentor	x3	
One-to-one Teaching Assistant		x2
Assistant Headteacher, DSL		Mrs Burrows
Inclusion Leader/SENDCo		Mr Hayball
Governor with responsibility for SEND		Mr Seal

All students at The Blandford School, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, have full access to the wide range of opportunities and experiences available at school.

At The Blandford School (TBS), we recognise that some of our young people may require additional support to achieve their potential. Each student, regardless of their starting point, is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is relevant to their educational needs. As an inclusive school, it is our intention to ensure that all our young people have their needs met within a caring and supportive environment.

1. What is the local offer?

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to publish information about services and provision across education, health and social care for children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The purpose of a local offer is to enable parents and carers to see more clearly what services are available for young people with SEND in their area and how to access them. The Local Offer can be accessed via the link on our school website.

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs

‘A young person has special educational needs where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to young people of the same age.’ Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, 2014.

Children are not regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language used in their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. However, support will be available and should a student have difficulties not related to their second language skills, these will be identified and met under the SEND policy.

Special educational provision means provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from the educational provision made generally for young people of their age in academies and schools maintained by the LEA (other than special schools) in the area.

Communication and interaction

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with some or all the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Children and young people with an Autism Spectrum Condition, are likely to have difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication, social interaction, and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and Learning.

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties.

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorders, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Sensory and/or Physical Needs.

Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and /or equipment to access their learning. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties, which makes it even more difficult for them to access the curriculum than for those with a single sensory impairment.

Some children with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

3. Aims and objectives.

All students at The Blandford School, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, have full access to the wide range of opportunities and experiences available at school.

At The Blandford School (TBS), we recognise that some of our young people may require additional support to achieve their potential. Each student, regardless of their starting point, is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is relevant to their educational needs. As an inclusive school, it is our intention to ensure that all our young people have their needs met within a caring and supportive environment.

Our aim is to use our best endeavours to ensure that:

- all governors and staff have maximum awareness of SEND and appropriate training to enhance their professional skills.
- young people with SEND are the shared responsibility of all staff in line with the Code of Practice (2014) and the Standards for Teachers (2014).
- all young people have a broad and balanced curriculum which is adapted to enable maximum progress.
- a flexible, graduated structure of provision, according to the Code of Practice 2014, and appropriate resourcing for meeting SEND.
- young people with SEND receive inclusive education where their needs are met within the least restrictive environment with regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, 2014 and the Equality Act, 2010.
- parent(s) and carer(s) are involved as partners in the education of their children.
- young people make expected progress.

4. How does TBS know if a young person needs extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have a special educational need?

We continue to encourage parent(s) and carer(s) to contact the school via their child's tutor, Head of Year, or Inclusion Leader to raise any concerns they might have about their child's rate of progress or potential unidentified needs.

TBS works closely with partner Primary Schools to identify learning needs and provision through classroom observations and interviews with young people and teachers. Information from feeder schools is transferred on entry to TBS and any identified needs recorded. All young people at Key Stages 3 and 4 are assessed on entry and then annually for literacy and/or numeracy difficulties.

Teachers and tutors regularly assess the progress for all our students. From this it is possible to identify those who have not made expected progress. Indicators could include progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;
- fails to match or better the student's previous rate of progress;
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers.

At TBS we follow the graduated response to SEND, as per the Code of Practice 2014.

Our aim is to create an inclusive learning environment, through high quality teaching, allowing all learners access to the curriculum. If progress is significantly slower than that of their peers who start from the same baseline and/or progress fails to match or better the student's previous rate of progress and/or progress fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers, additional support or assessments will be considered.

5. Communication with parents and carers

A formal assessment of progress for every young person at TBS is published annually. A formal face-to-face meeting with teachers and tutor is held during the academic year and gives parent(s) and carer(s) the opportunity to raise concerns. In response to parental preference, Parents' Evenings have taken place virtually. In addition to this, parent(s) and carer(s) can request a meeting with their child's tutor, Head of Year or Inclusion Leader. Live information showing learning behaviours and progress can be accessed via the SIMS Parent app.

In addition to the regular assessments, reviews and reports to which every student is entitled, we communicate in the following ways:

- Conversations face-to-face, by phone or email as needed.
- Student Profiles.
- Annual Reviews for our young people with an Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- Reports by external agencies.

6. What emotional wellbeing support is available at TBS?

- Tutor activities focusing on emotional wellbeing.
- Knowledgeable and skilled Heads of Year.
- Student Support Worker.
- Anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Anti-bullying room.
- Student mentors.
- The Academic Mentoring Room for those with emotional based school avoidance (EBSA)
- Safe spaces at break and lunch times.
- Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST)
- Referral to CAMHS or other specialist services.

7. What specialist services are available at or accessed by the school?

- Educational Psychologist.

- Dorset Specialist Teacher, Literacy.
- Dorset Specialist Teacher, Communication and Interaction.
- Speech and Language Therapy.
- Occupational Therapy.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).
- NHS School Nurse.
- Dorset Early Help Team.
- Dorset Hearing Support Service.
- Dorset Vision Support Service
- Social Care.

8. Staff training at TBS

During the academic year 2022-23 staff received training in the following areas:

- Assistive technology
- Emotional literacy
- ASC
- Person-centered reviews
- Social stories
- Therapeutic Thinking
- ACES - attachment difficulties
- The inclusive classroom
- ADHD
- Emotionally based school avoidance
- Vision impairment
- Literacy
- The emotionally safe classroom
- Bold voices
- Men at Work

Staff will receive further training this year in areas that promote emotional safety in the classroom and emotional safety in school. This will be delivered via whole school INSET and fortnightly CPD sessions.

9. How are young people with SEND included in activities outside the classroom?

The school continues to promote a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities and trips for all our young people. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken for every trip and arrangements made for those with additional needs. This has enabled access for all our young people to all trips and activities. Adaptations last year include additional training for PE staff, adapted PE equipment, additional staffing on school trips, adapted transport and adapted activities.

10. How accessible is the school environment and curriculum?

TBS continues to upgrade facilities and methods of working to accommodate all students, visitors and staff. The school has seen some adaptations and upgrades during the academic year 2022-2023. Student toilets in block 5 have been adapted to create an emotionally safer environment. The introduction of a one-way system in block 1 and block 3 has helped reduce traffic during transition times helping to reduce sensory load. Most of the school site is now accessible to wheelchair users except for the first floor in block 4. The car park was resurfaced removing trip hazards for visitors and students accessing the school via reception. Steps and edges have been painted to provide high contrast for the visually impaired. Staff

training and adaptations to the P.E. curriculum have enabled students with visual impairments to participate in lessons and extra curriculum activities.

Further upgrades planned for 2023-2024 to the school's IT will enable school wide access to assistive technology. This will provide reliable access to speech-to-text and text reader functions for our young people with fine motor difficulties, visual impairments, or language barriers and offer them better access to the curriculum. Our Accessibility Plan outlines the programme of upgrades over the next three years.

Access to a broad and balanced curriculum is a stated aim and pathways are open to all students in Stage 3. Similarly, options at Key Stage 4 are not restricted. Lesson observations and curriculum reviews scheduled for 2023-2024 will focus on curriculum access for all our young people with SEND. Staff training during 2023-2024 focussed on the emotionally safe classroom and we will build on existing practices, such as, choral reading and direct questioning techniques to help reduce student anxieties and lesson avoidance. Curriculum reviews are ongoing, and consideration of alternative qualifications are being considered. The Prince's Trust Award was introduced in this academic year.

All students are tested for reading proficiency on entry to the school and Exam Access Arrangements considered. Teachers can make a referral for assessment should they have concerns about a student's progress. Parent(s) carer(s) can raise concerns via their child's tutor or Head of Year. Where appropriate, Exams Access Arrangements will be put in place. It is important to note that the young person must use these arrangements as their normal way of working. Formal Exams Access Arrangements assessments will take place no earlier than the summer term of Year 9, as per Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) requirements. If assessments indicate a long-term learning need and the student has used Exam Access Arrangements as their normal way of working, the school will apply to JCQ for Exams Access Arrangements on their behalf.

11. How is transition to and from TBS managed?

TBS holds an Open Evening and an Information Evening for parent(s) and carers(s) of children in Year 6 and a transition day for young people in Year 6, and feedback from these events is pleasing. This gives parent(s) and carer(s) the opportunity to ask questions and view the facilities. In addition to the Year 6 transition day, young people with SEND have access to enhanced transition sessions.

For young people transferring to TBS at other times in the academic year, we undertake literacy assessments on entry and gather information from the previous school.

Careful guidance is provided to all young people to ensure that they make successful transition to sixth form, FE/HE or to another school and all SEND information is passed on. There is a very clear programme of advice and guidance for all young people which forms a natural part of conversations with parent(s) and carers(s) of young people with SEND during review meetings. For young people with an EHCP, careers advice is a part of the transfer review.

12. How are resources allocated?

The school's resources are allocated in a variety of ways to match needs. Funding is used for a wide range of services and provisions including:

- Learning Support staff.
- Adapted resources.
- Assistive technology
- Small group and individual specialist teaching.
- Outside agencies.
- Staff training.

13. How are parents involved in school life?

Parent(s) and carer(s) are invited to request meetings with school staff via letters, emails and phone calls. In addition to the reports and Parents' Evenings which every student is entitled to, we also consult with parent(s) and carer(s) of young people with SEND in additional ways. These include:

- Conversations face-to-face, by phone or email
- Student Profiles
- Annual Reviews for young people with an EHCP
- School events
- Parent Questionnaires
- ASC parent(s) and carer(s) group

14. Arrangements for the admission of disabled students.

Admission for all our young people is in accordance with the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset Council 2023-2024 policy and Parent's Guide. Admissions documents can be found on The Blandford School website.

We encourage parent(s) carer(s) to visit the school and/or speak to the Inclusion Leader/SENDCo to discuss their child's needs and potential provision. TBS admission form includes space for parent(s) carer(s) to include any information relating to SEND and this is passed to the Learning Support department for consideration. All SEND information is recorded and passed to the relevant staff. We continue to develop strong links with our feeder Primary Schools and during the academic year 2022-2023, TBS attended Year 6 planning meetings and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan annual reviews. For young people transferring to TBS at other times in the academic year, we request student information from the feeder school and undertake literacy assessments on entry.

For young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, consultation with the SEN Provision Lead and parent(s) carer(s) is carried out to ensure suitability of placement. Further information about this can be requested from the young person's SEN Provision Lead.

15. Complaints procedure

It is hoped that all situations of concern can be resolved quickly through discussion and early action. However, if a parent(s) carer(s) feels that their concern or complaint regarding the care or welfare of their child has not been dealt with satisfactorily, an appointment can be made by them to speak and explain the issues with the Inclusion Leader or Governor with Responsibility for SEND. The complaints policy can be found on the school website.

Summary

For SEND data, please contact the school at the address below.
office@blandfordschool.org.uk