

Dowson Primary Academy

Special Educational Needs Information Report- our 'Local Offer'

The term 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) can sound quite upsetting and frightening to many parents, but it needn't do! A pupil is said to have SEN where their learning or disability requires 'provision different from or additional to that normally available for pupils of the same age' which is a very broad term and includes children with a wide range of additional needs, some that are relatively simple and others quite complex. At Dowson, all children are taught within the mainstream classroom setting, including children with a range of SEN.

FAQ

What are the admission arrangements for pupils with SEN or disabilities?

Dowson Primary Academy currently follows the Tameside Local Authority admissions criteria when and pupils with SEN will be admitted to school via this system. Details of this can be found here:

<http://www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions>

How does the school identify if a child has special educational needs and what should I do if I think my child has special educational needs?

At Dowson we appreciate that every child is an individual and so we use a wide range of strategies to help us identify if a child has SEN. These may include:

- looking at how well your child is doing and how quickly they are making progress
- discussions with previous settings such as Nurseries/previous schools
- a variety of different tests/checklists which might flag up specific difficulties
- discussion with Parents/Carers
- liaising with external agencies e.g. paediatricians
- observing your child in the classroom and supporting staff with ways in which they might be able to help your child.

If you think your child may have SEN, please come in as soon as possible and chat with your child's class teacher or make an appointment to see Mrs. Garside, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). Usually, we check to see if there are any reasons why your child might be finding learning difficult, such as

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poor attendance or a problem within the classroom, before deciding if a child has SEN. The SENCo will usually monitor a child for a half term to see if any alterations/intervention that has been put in place has improved the situation. If concerns are still held by either staff or Parents, then the possibility of the child being identified as having SEN will be discussed.

What is the school's approach to teaching pupils with SEN? How does the school ensure that my child is not treated less favourably than others?

Dowson believes that most children learn successfully within the classroom when the correct support is put in place for them. It is your child's class teacher who has the responsibility for ensuring that the curriculum and the work set is appropriate for your child within lessons, which may mean that your child has a totally individualised approach to their learning within the classroom. Your child will often be taught within small groups by a member of staff to work towards their targets or help them understand something they are struggling with, and this may be within a lesson or additionally at another point in the day (called an intervention). Mrs. Garside will oversee that any interventions your child has are successful, and she is responsible for making sure that your child makes good progress throughout the year. Children with SEN participate in all aspects of school life, including all trips, curriculum topics and residential visits with your child's class teacher being responsible for making sure that all risk assessments are completed where applicable. To ensure that all children are treated equally, whole school systems are applied to as many aspects of SEN as possible e.g. SENCo attends regular meetings regarding the progress of all children in school.

What kind of support might my child receive? What are the school's access facilities?

Again, this is decided on an individual basis depending on what the difficulties and targets are for your child. The school has made reasonable adjustments wherever possible to ensure the best accessibility the buildings can offer. For further information, please see the Governing Body's accessibility plan. We also often work on targets set by other professionals, such as Speech Therapists. It is difficult to generalise how the curriculum might be adapted or made more

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accessible for your child, but all details will be recorded on their Pupil Passport, which is shared with you once a term. Examples of support may include:

- interventions led by an adult to support work in class or to fill gaps in learning
- sessions with a Learning Mentor to support social and emotional skills, such as building self-esteem.
- group sessions to work towards targets set by other professionals, such as speaking and listening, physical coordination and memory.
- specialist resources, such as pencil grips and writing slopes, visual timetables and netbooks.
- adaptations to the learning environment, such as changing the layout or displays.
- an additional adult to support your child at lunchtime/playtimes
- support via an Education, Health and Care Plan (a legal document to support children with the most complex needs that outline their provision and allows access to additional funding and/or resources from the Local Authority.)

How will I know how well my child is doing? How will my child be involved?

At the beginning of each school year, your child's teacher will meet with you to discuss what you would like your child to be able to achieve by the end of the year, as well as give advice as to how you can help your child achieve this at home. Every child in school takes part in working towards their targets in class, but your child will have the opportunity to express what they would like to be able to do more generally (e.g. tell the time, get dressed independently, tie shoelaces etc). This information will be recorded on a Pupil Passport, and will be formally reviewed three times a year to ensure that your child will meet their targets. This will be discussed with you at Parents' Evening, but you are always welcome to come in and chat with your child's class teacher or the SENCo at any time. It may also be appropriate to have review meetings with a number of professionals if your child's needs are very complex as it allows you to access expertise and information from everybody at the same time, leading to a more streamlined approach to the support your child receives.

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What happens if my child's progress does not improve?

It is unusual that children do not make good progress if they have the correct support in place. Every child's progress is continually assessed and recorded every half term so that the effectiveness of any intervention or help your child is receiving can be monitored (and altered quickly if necessary). The range of expertise amongst staff at Dowson is vast, and the SENCo/Deputy Headteacher ensures that staff are trained in the relevant areas. If the SENCo feels that school needs further expertise in order to support your child, they will seek your permission to consult with an external agency, such as an Educational Psychologist, Speech Therapist, or Paediatrician for example. Occasionally, it may be appropriate for school to apply for more support from the Local Authority in order to meet your child's needs. This is called an Education, Health and Care Plan.

What other professionals might work with my child?

If school felt that more advice is needed from other agencies, we would always seek your permission and ask for your input in the application process (with the exception of child protection cases). The other professionals we might work with are:

- Health Professionals (GP, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, school nurse, paediatric consultants)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHs)
- Health and Social Care
- Early Help support (to support families)
- Educational Psychologist
- Pupil Support Service (supporting difficulties in social communication, behaviour, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia)
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Team (EMAT), helping children secure English.
- Virtual School (supporting children who are in the care system).

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Will my child have to do SATs tests and exams? My child is very anxious about transition- what can you do to help?

Most children take the SATs at the end of Year 2 and 6. Whilst the ultimate decision is the made by the Headteacher, if parents and school feel that due to a child's ability taking the tests would be inappropriate, then a child can be withdrawn. This happens rarely as most children cope well in test situations as much can be done to support them (e.g. they might have a reader, rest breaks etc).

Transition arrangements are extremely flexible and are not limited to children in Year 6! Some of the things we do include:

- extra visits to their new class/school, including at lunchtimes
- setting up a key adult for your child to 'check in' with
- booklet to take home over the summer with photographs of new adults and places
- dedicated transition lessons with the learning mentor for Year 6, as a whole class or in small groups.

Staff also undertake an extensive program of transition, including passing over pupil passports and information regarding every child's learning. Close liaison with your child's previous/new setting is undertaken, including transferring all paperwork. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan then one of the review sessions will be used as a transition meeting and a representative from the new school will be invited.

Will my child be able to take part in everything? Will my child miss out on things if they need to be given medicine?

The school has a separate policy regarding the administration of medicine, but this rarely presents any problem in school. Dowson is an inclusive school and every after school club, residential trip and activity is open to every pupil. Your child's needs may mean that school have to complete an additional risk assessment for some activities and if this is the case then you will be consulted directly. In the unlikely event that it is considered unsafe for a child to take

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part in an activity, then alternative activities which cover the same curriculum will be provided in school.

What support is there to support my child's overall wellbeing? Who can I speak to if I need support at home?

The ethos of the school is that an adult will always make time to speak to children and that there are a variety of ways children can make contact. At Dowson, we are very lucky to have 2 full time staff (Mrs. Ashley and Mrs. Bradley) who support children in school with all aspects of social and emotional health. They also are involved with families and often attend meetings with lots of different professionals to ensure that families have the support they need at home. They are always available to speak to children and run whole school initiatives in the prevention of bullying (see separate policy).

What can I do if I am not happy with the support my child is receiving at school?

Come and talk to us! There are very few problems or worries that we cannot sort out at school if we work together. Please just drop in and have a chat to your child's class teacher or to Mrs. Garside, the SENCo. If you are not happy with the response you receive then please make an appointment to see Mrs. Rathburn, the Headteacher. If you are still not satisfied with the response, contact the Chair of Governors and/or the Local Authority. You may also wish to contact Parent Partnership, a free organisation who help mediate problems between parents and school.

Where can I find further information?

- come in and chat to Mrs. Garside, our SENCo.
- look at our SEN policy on the school website.
- look at the pages on the Local Authority Website, including details about their Local Offer for children with SEN. <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/localoffer>

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-contact IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Educational Advice)
www.ipsea.org.uk