

Special Educational Needs Policy

“The purpose of education for all children is the same; the goals are the same. But help that individual children need in progressing towards them will be different. Whereas for some, the road they travel towards the goal is smooth and easy; for others it is fraught with obstacles.” (Warnock Report, 1.4)

MISSION STATEMENT

Billbrough Country Classroom seeks to provide a high quality alternative educational experience for all individuals according to their needs, and to develop attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility.

General Objective

At The Billbrough Country Classroom the emphasis is on a holistic approach. All staff accept responsibility for providing all children with realistic learning goals in an appropriate curriculum. We believe in nurturing and developing the educational, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual aspects by curriculum design and teaching approaches. Whilst we do not follow the National Curriculum as we are a UK registered independent learning provider we do agree with the latter part of their Mission Statement which states that participation in the (National Curriculum) by pupils with special educational needs is most likely to be achieved by encouraging good practice for all pupils and that the majority of pupils with learning difficulties simply require work to be suitably presented and differentiated to match their need.

We therefore intend . . .

- To have regard to the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs.
- To work in partnership with the child, parent/carers, all staff, governors and outside agencies.
- That class practitioners will use a range of differentiation to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Enhance self-esteem by setting appropriate targets and by using the Records of Achievement to celebrate them.
- To use a variety of complementary approaches to support the class teacher and child – differentiation, 1-1, group, whole class, within the class or withdrawal when appropriate.
- To include the child within the class, wherever and whenever practicable.
- Endeavour to use all resources appropriately and efficiently.
- Make full use of all the support agencies that have been made available through the LEA.

Areas of Need

Children will have needs and requirements which may fall into at least one of four areas, many children will have inter-related needs. The areas of need are:-

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- behaviour, emotional and social development

- sensory and/or physical
- medical

Identification and Assessment

“The law says that a child has special educational needs if he or she has:

- a learning difficulty (ie a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or a disability which makes it difficult to use the educational facilities generally provided locally). special educational provision (ie provision additional to, or different from, that made generally for children of the same age in local schools).

Whether or not a child has SEN will therefore depend both on the individual and on local circumstances. It may be entirely consistent with the law for a child to be said to have special educational needs in one school but not in another.”(Excellence for all Children, DfE, October 1997).

Therefore the importance of early identification, assessment and provision for any child who may have special educational needs cannot be over emphasised. The earlier action is taken, the more responsive the child is likely to be, and the more readily can intervention be made without undue disruption to the organisation of the school, including the delivery of the curriculum for that particular child. If a difficulty proves transient the child will subsequently be able to learn and progress normally. If the child’s difficulties prove less responsive to provision made by the school, then an early start can be made in considering the additional provision that may be needed to support the child’s progress.

Any of the following may trigger a concern. The child and parent/carer are involved throughout.

- Parents/carer
- Child
- Class teacher assessment
- Response/ length of time on SEN register
- Any of the support services mentioned later
- Records – transferred from another school
- Base line assessments
- SAT results
- In-house testing and assessment
- Records of achievement

English as an Additional Language

The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of children whose first language is not English, requires particular care. Lack of competence in English must not be equated with learning difficulties as understood in the Code of Practice. We would look carefully at all aspects of a child’s performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of the language that is used there or arise from special educational needs. Advice would be sought from outside agencies as and when necessary

Records

Class practitioners may keep anecdotal records, which are part of their continuous assessment.

- Mark books
- Individual records of support work kept by the support teacher
- Records of children who are working on specific programmes

- Reading interview sheets
- Examples of work – see records of achievement and assessment folders

Most of these records are part of continuous assessment. Records should always provide precise positive information about what a child can do, and about what steps are being taken to help them make progress.

Medical Information

The Bilbrough Country Classroom database is updated as and when information comes in. Any major changes are passed on to the teacher straight away. Updated class medical information is passed on to the teacher every term and kept in the class SEN file.

However a medical diagnosis or a disability does not necessarily imply SEN. It is the child's educational needs rather than a medical diagnosis that must be considered. However, medical conditions may have a significant impact on a child's experiences and the way they function in school and if not properly managed could hinder their access to education. Therefore consultation and open discussion between the child's parents, the Bilbrough Country Classroom and/or the child's GP and any specialist services providing treatment for the child will be essential to ensure that the child makes maximum progress.

The "small steps" Approach

It is very important to realise that many children have complex, inter-connected needs and they should not be categorised or labelled. The Bilbrough Country Classroom will endeavour to build on what a child already knows in a 'small steps' approach and will use star charts and rewards to celebrate these. It is more valuable to think in terms of individual differences and achievements rather than deficits from within children. We must be aware that children's needs and difficulties can be linked to a mismatch between task demands, levels of concentration and the child's ability/disability.

The main aim is always to give children access to all aspects of what the Bilbrough Country Classroom offers, with priorities which are

Real	-	relating to the child's needs
Relevant	-	so that the child sees the purpose of the activity
Realistic	-	so that the child can achieve success

This means – differentiation of work by:-

1. Using a multi-level approach in the classroom with tasks matched to the individual needs of the children.
2. Breaking difficult tasks down into more manageable parts, across the curriculum.
3. More attention to the child's point of entry.
4. More variety between practical and written tasks.
5. Making use of computers, concept keyboards and cassettes.
6. Building on a child's strengths and interests, rather than dwelling on his weaknesses.
7. Modifying of worksheets and activities when necessary.
8. Being aware of the differing concentration levels of children within the class.
9. Praising and enhancing self-esteem.
10. The setting of achievable targets.
11. Effective use of additional staff, parents and other children.

Managing Children

Behavioural difficulties are usually complex. Poor work attitudes and under-achievement, poor concentration levels, miss-match of work to child, personal and home problems, lack of appropriate resources, movement around the room/school, unstructured days, constant change are some of the factors that need to be addressed.

Code of Conduct

Whole school expectation by all who work in our school is that we all should accept responsibility for our own actions and learn/choose to act in an acceptable way. Children have a right to learn and staff have a right to teach.

Bilbrough Country Classroom Rules

Our rules have been negotiated with the students to get a sense of ownership and responsibility with the emphasis on there being few in number. Staff remind the whole class of their commitment to these regularly and involve them in decisions about Bilbrough Country Classroom life.

Managing behaviour at the Bilbrough Country Classroom

We use praise and a positive approach as much as possible with all students. We give children attention for behaving well, not just for behaving badly. Negative behaviour will often be discussed privately, not in front of the class.

We accept that some children find it particularly difficult to conform all the time and try to praise them for progress, however minimal.

We praise positive behaviours, discuss inappropriate ones but avoid comments which suggest that you expect poor behaviour or work from a child.

A few children may need some extrinsic motivation, and will benefit from receiving rewards for good work or behaviour. Rewards include:-

- Praise by staff/colleague
- Being given a responsible job
- Choosing an activity for himself or a group
- Giving extra stars on the reward chart

Rewards should be achieved on a session or daily basis, to make success as immediate as possible.

Rewards are always better than punishment.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

At the Bilbrough Country Classroom we try to minimise disruption by forming strong relationships with the individuals and their parents in our truly holistic approach. This makes managing challenging behaviour easier. However, there are times when this does not work. Before a student's needs become acute we counsel and reinforce the positive approach. If the challenging/inappropriate behaviour persists then we will seek additional help and advice from the placing authority/school.

Exclusion from school

Occasionally, a child finds the following of our rules very hard and continually behaves in an unacceptable way putting others or themselves at risk or disrupting others persistently. We will have worked closely with the parent/carer. The child may be excluded from our setting for a set number of days. Parents are informed as is the authority. Parents are given reasons for the exclusion through both a telephone call and a written letter. Students are given work to do during the exclusion and there is an expectation that this is completed.

Access and Integration

Our aim is for all children to have access to what we do here at the Billbrough Country Classroom and in doing so are meeting their educational, emotional, social and spiritual needs.

“At Risk Register”

All practitioners are responsible for child protection issues, all paperwork is kept secure and appropriate authorities are contacted immediately if any concerns are raised.

Partnership with Parents (all those with parental responsibility)

“Parents hold key information and have a critical role to play in their children’s education. They have unique strengths, knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child’s needs and the best ways of supporting them.”

(Special Educational Needs Code of Practice January 2002 p.16)

We actively encourage all of our parents to support their child through positive attitudes, giving user-friendly information and effective communication. However all staff should be aware of the pressures a parent may be under because of the child’s needs.

To make communications effective professionals should:

- acknowledge and draw on parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their child
- focus on the children’s strengths as well as areas of additional need
- recognise the personal and emotional investment of parents and be aware of their feelings
- ensure that parents understand procedures, are aware of how to access support in preparing their contributions, and are given documents to be discussed well before meetings
- respect the validity of differing perspectives and seek constructive ways of reconciling different viewpoints
- respect the differing needs parents themselves may have, such as a disability, or communication and linguistic barriers
- recognise the need for flexibility in the timing and structure of meetings.

We aim to inform parents as soon as a child is “flagged” as a cause for concern, so that they are fully involved in the school based response for their child, understand the purpose of any intervention or programme of action, and be told about the parent partnership service.

“A local education authority must arrange for the parent of any child in their area with special educational needs to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to those needs.”

(Education Act 1996 Section 332A)

The Billbrough Country Classroom will try to talk both informally/formally to parents in school, may write, telephone or home visit if appropriate.

Parents also have a responsibility to communicate effectively with professionals to support their children’s education. They should:

- communicate regularly with us and alert us to any concerns they have about their child’s learning or provision
- fulfil their obligations under home-school agreements which set out expectations of both sides.

We will ensure that parents are fully involved in any discussions that we may have about their child.

Partnership with Pupils

We will continue to work towards positive pupil involvement in decision-making related to their development. Most children have their own views on how they see their special needs which may give insight into the problems experienced by both pupils and teacher. From an early age, children with SEN should be actively involved at an appropriate level in discussions about their IEP's, including target setting and review arrangements and have their views recorded. Children should be encouraged to share in the recording process and in monitoring and evaluating their own performance so that every achievement is given a sense of worth, developing confidence and self esteem. As all children are working towards setting achievable targets for themselves within the class then this can only be viewed as a natural extension.

Complaints Procedure

Parents/carers are asked to speak to us in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved then parents should contact our Governors in writing. If following this action the matter remains unresolved then subsequent recourse can be taken through the prospective LA.

The Use of Information Communication Technology

ICT is a very useful tool for all children, but can be an invaluable resource for a child with learning difficulties. Once again, peer group or independent use is encouraged. Word processors and specific programmes are used when appropriate.