

Our approach to identifying Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

At St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School and Preschool, children are identified with SEN according to the paragraph from the 2015 Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years quoted below.

6.15 A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support. Such improvements in whole-class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable.

The school takes a very inclusive approach and uses universal teaching approaches that are accessible to and support the learning of children with a wide range of abilities and aptitudes. These include the Literacy Programmes, Read Write Inc and Literacy and Language; Maths Mastery and a Well-being and Emotional Resilience for Learning methodology. In addition, children have access to interventions, including Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) according to need whether they are identified with SEND or not.

In addition, with a high proportion of learners of English as an Additional Language, our pedagogy makes extensive use of visuals, real-life experiences, employs careful scaffolding of learning and does not take understanding for granted.

In Early Years (EY), whilst recognising the crucial importance of early intervention, we do not identify children with SEND unless we are certain that such needs are there. Most of our children at entry (80%+) are not developed at the level typical of a child their age. Many of our children have had restricted access to early learning experiences and have not benefitted from a rich home learning environment. In addition, they have not had high quality models of spoken language. Our experience is that most EY children, once exposed to the rich learning environment of school, make accelerated progress. They do not have SEND. We also provide an enhanced level of adult support; some mother tongue teaching; SALT-advised programmes and emotional literacy support to EY children who we think would benefit.

For these reasons, the proportion of children identified with SEND is lower than typical at a school of our size and characteristics. Children are identified only when they have not made progress despite the learning provision made and there is no clear reason (e.g. extended absence) apart from SEND why they have not.

When children are identified with SEND, a detailed Learning Plan is created. This includes individual teaching and learning experiences for children, an approach which is consistent with statutory requirements. Class teachers manage this process for a small number of their children, supported by the SENDCo and Inclusion Team. Teachers will meet with parents three times a year to develop high quality provision for both school and home. Parents will be involved in the necessary provision to support their child's needs. The child will be involved in this process at an age appropriate level. Sometimes external professionals will be requested to support and enhance provision.