**What does ‘special educational needs and disabilities’**

**(SEND) mean?**

Some children find it more difficult to learn and make progress. Children can have needs or disabilities that affect their ability to learn, these can be temporary or permanent. For example, a child with behaviour / emotional / social difficulties may have problems making friends, a child may have specific problems with Reading, Writing or Maths, a child may have concentration or memory problems, or a child may have a disability, for example a hearing or sight impairment.

Children who are identified as having problems learning are categorised as having special educational needs or SEND.

**Who should you talk to if you think your child has special educational needs?**

As a parent, or carer, you are always welcome to make an appointment to talk to your child’s class teacher or you can ask to speak to our teacher responsible for special educational needs, the SENCO, Mrs Slater.

**How does the school identify children with SEND and inform you?**

Approximately 17% of children nationally are identified as having SEND but many more children will have special educational needs of some kind during their education.

Every child’s progress is measured accurately throughout each academic year in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science. Whilst there are times when all children’s learning slows or accelerates, we use this information to identify any children who may have difficulties. At this point, your child’s class teacher will talk to you about whether you have any concerns, and will ask you questions about your child’s development. Following this discussion a decision will be made as to how, together, we can support your child more effectively.

**How do we ensure SEND children are fully included in school to support their well-being?**

Whilst children identified as having SEND are fully supported where required, it is also important to ensure that we provide them with basic independent personal, social and learning skills.

Children with SEND are monitored continually so that we are familiar with their needs and the aspects they may have difficulties with during the school day. Staff involved with these children will ensure that they have a ‘meet and greet’ start to the day with a familiar adult or ensure that there is a buddy system in place for them, both in and out of the classroom. This helps to monitor the child’s well-being from different perspectives.

Through whole class, small group or 1:1 provision these children are provided with strategies, particularly within their areas(s) of difficulty. They are also given the opportunity to apply these skills in relevant situations.

**What are the different stages of SEND support?**

At St Thomas More we have three stages of support:

**SEND Support – Targeted Support and Intervention (T. S. & I.) and Personalised Intervention (P. I.)**

Any child who is not making the progress we expect is identified by their class teacher, parents or at pupil progress meetings. Their progress is then monitored and reviewed. If your child is identified as still not making the progress expected then a meeting will be called with you to discuss any concerns.

During the term we will have a meeting to discuss and agree specific targets that we would like your child to achieve. As a parent, or carer, you may receive a target sheet, a provision map or a pupil passport with these targets on and how the school is expecting to help your child achieve them.

**SEND Support – Intensive Support**

This stage involves specialists. At this point the school is seeking specific advice that could help us to help your child. A child with a disability, e.g. hearing loss, would involve a specialist observing your child in class and providing the school with clear strategies to help them e.g. present instructions one at a time. Often the specialist uses a link teacher from the Learning Support Team or an Educational Psychologist who will carry out further tests with your child. They are trained to make sure your child is made to feel comfortable, and often the

tests are presented in the form of games. This helps to identify any specific gaps in your child’s learning or helps them to identify the best teaching methods to suit your child’s preferred style of learning.

Using this advice, a new education action plan is agreed with you, which identifies the targets we hope your child will meet and how we intend to help them.

**Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)**

Children in this category have some significant difficulties, and often need an education that is different to other children much of the time. Children with complex needs have an EHC Plan.

An EHC plan can only be given by Leicester City Council and is based on your child’s individual circumstances. Often these children will have an adult assigned to them for some or all of the school day who is trained to help them achieve their targets.

**What type of support is available for children with SEND at St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy?**

All children at St Thomas More including those with SEND receive teacher input via excellent classroom teaching also known as Quality First Teaching. Initially, your child will be set particular targets, as all children are, and progress will be monitored.

For your child this would mean:

 That the teacher has the highest possible expectations for your child and all the pupils in their class.

 That all teaching is based on building on what your child already knows, can do and understand.

 Different ways of teaching are in place so that your child is fully involved in learning in class. This may involve things like using more practical learning.

 Specific strategies (which may be suggested by the SENCO or outside staff) are in place to support your child to learn.

 Your child’s class teacher will have carefully checked on your child’s progress and will have identified that your child has gaps in their understanding / learning and needs some extra support to help them make the best possible progress.

**Stage of SEND code of practice:**

**Targeted Support and Intervention or Personalised Intervention**

This means your child has been identified by the class teacher as needing some extra support in school. This type of support is available for any child who has specific gaps in their understanding of a subject / area of learning.

This can be specific group work with a smaller group of children or 1:1 teaching.

This kind of teaching may:

 Run in the classroom or outside.

 Run by a teacher or a teaching assistant who has had training to run these groups.

For your child this would mean:

 He / She will engage in sessions with specific targets to help him / her to make more progress.

**SEND Support – Intensive Support**

This type of support is available for children with specific barriers to learning that cannot be overcome through Quality First Teaching and intervention groups.

This means your child has been identified by the class teacher, together with the SENCO, as needing some extra specialist support in school from a professional outside the school.

This may be from:

 Local Authority central services such as the Learning Support Team or Sensory Service (for students with a hearing or visual need).

 Outside agencies such as the Speech and Language therapy (SALT) service.

For your child this would mean:

 Your child will have been identified by the class teacher / SENCO (or you will have raised your concerns) as needing more specialist input instead of, or in addition to, quality first teaching and intervention groups.

 You will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss your child’s progress and help plan possible ways forward.

 You may be asked to give your permission for the school to refer your child to a specialist professional e.g. Speech and Language Therapist or Educational Psychologist. This will help the school and yourself better understand your child’s particular needs better and be able to support them better in school.

The specialist professional will work with your child to understand their needs and make recommendations, which may include:

 Making changes to the way your child is supported in class e.g. some individual support or changing some aspects of teaching to support them better.

 Support to set better targets which will include their specific expertise.

 A group run by the school staff under the guidance of the outside professional e.g. a social skills group.

 A group or an individual works with outside professionals.

 The school may suggest that your child needs some individual support in school. They will tell you how the support will be used and what strategies will be put in place.

**Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)**

This type of support is available for children whose learning needs are severe, complex or lifelong.

This is usually provided via an Education, Health and Care Plan (ECH). This means your child will have been identified by the class teacher / SENCO as needing a particularly high level of individual or small group teaching support which cannot be provided from the budget available to school.

Usually, your child will also need specialist support in school from a professional outside the school. This may be from:

 Local Authority central services such as the Learning Support Team or Sensory Service (for students with a hearing or visual need).

 Outside agencies such as the Speech and Language Therapy Service (SALT) Service.

For your child this would mean:

 The school (or you) can request that the Local Authority carry out a statutory assessment of your child’s needs. This is a legal process which sets out the amount of support that will be provided for your child.

 After the school has sent in the request to the Local Authority (with a lot of information about your child, including some from you), they will decide whether they think your child’s needs (as described in the paperwork provided), seem complex enough to need a statutory assessment. If this is the case they will ask you and all professionals involved with your child to write a report outlining your child’s needs. If they do not think your child needs this, they will ask the school to continue with the support with SEND Support – Personalised Provision.

 After reports have all been sent in, the Local Authority will decide if your child’s needs are severe, complex and lifelong and that they need more individualised support in school to make good progress. If this is the case they will write an EHC Plan. If this is not the case, they will ask the school to continue with the support at SEND Support – Personalised Provision and also set up a meeting in school to ensure a plan is in place to ensure your child makes as much progress as possible.

 The Education, Health and Care Plan will outline the number of hours of individual / small group support your child will receive from the LA and how the support should be used and what strategies must be put in place. It will also have long term goals for your child.

 The additional adult may be used to support your child with whole class learning, run individual programmes or run small groups including your child, depending on targets set.

A list of the standard programmes we offer are located on our provision map. Alongside this we offer bespoke programmes for individual or small groups of children.

**What outside agencies / people does the school use to support children with SEND?**

Early Years Support Team: 0-5 years old

Learning Support Team: 5-16 years old

The Autism Team: 5-16 years old

Behaviour Support Team

Educational Psychologist

Speech Hearing Impairment Team

Visual Impairment Team

Health Visitor / School Nurse

Physiotherapists

Occupational Health

**What training do staff supporting SEND children have?**

All school staff receive basic training on how to support children with more common SEND learning issues e.g. individualised reading support. The St Thomas More school team also includes a number of highly trained staff in particular areas.

SENCO – Special Needs Coordinator – This is a teacher who is highly trained in recognising different types of special needs, who has a significant knowledge about the possible needs of SEND children, and knowledge of how a child could be supported with different teaching methods. This teacher is also

responsible for meeting with specialists and ensuring a child receives the kind of support they are entitled to.

Learning Support Assistants – We have a team of highly trained staff who have experience of supporting children with different needs. At St Thomas More our team strengths include supporting children with:

 Behavioural / Social difficulties

 Reading, Writing or Mathematical difficulties

 Physical disabilities – multisensory difficulties

 Physical disabilities – e.g. mobility issues

 Complex Needs – Down’s Syndrome, Autism

Sometimes children with complex needs may require adults to have additional training. We aim to identify any requirements and ensure staff are trained in additional areas before your child starts at the school, which is why the initial meeting with you is very important. An open and honest meeting will help ensure a smooth start for your child.

**How accessible is St Thomas More for children with SEND?**

 St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy aims to be inclusive to all children.

 The buildings and most rooms are accessible to children with a physical disability via ramps.

 Classroom Audits are regularly carried out to monitor acoustic levels and visual contrasts to ensure an inclusive learning environment for children with a hearing or visual impairment.

 Equipment and resources used are accessible to all children regardless of their needs.

 Trips are accessible for children with SEND.

 After school provision is accessible to all children including those with SEND.

**How do we support SEND children moving classes or schools?**

Whether children transfer between classes within the school or move to another school we ensure:

 A face to face meeting with the new teacher to communicate the child’s strengths, progress, targets and effective strategies.

 Transfer of all written records which includes a full history of information collated about your child. All of these documents will be records you will already be aware of as part of our partnership and continued communication to ensure the best for your child.

 Where necessary, pre-transition arrangements are also put in place to support a seamless move.

**Leicester City LA Local Offer**

St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy works in partnership with the Corpus Christi Trust and Leicester City Local Authority. You can find further information about the Leicester City offer at <http://families.leicester.gov.uk/local-offer/>