

Bedford Nursery Schools Federation



Special Educational Needs & Disability

Reviewed by: Suzie Hoefkens
Reviewed: December 2025
Next Review: December 2026

Rationale, Definitions & Principles

This policy meets the statutory requirements of the 1996 Education Act and is reviewed and redrafted annually in the context of the Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice (2015) Children & Families Act (2014) and Equality Act (2010). Every pupil with SEN and disability (SEND) in this inclusive school has an entitlement to fulfil his or her potential. *The Special Needs Coordinator (SENDCO) for Peter Pan Nursery School is Suzie Hoefkens (Deputy Headteacher) and for Cherry Trees Nursery School is Ally Mastrandrea.*

'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.' (SEND Code of Practice, 2015).

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local authority

Children should not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication in the home is different from the language in which they will be taught (Education Act 1996, Section 312).

This policy is based on the key principles which underpin the **Code of Practice 2015**:

- All pupils have the right to a broad, balanced and relevant education
- The recognition of a continuum of need
- Early intervention
- Responsibility for SEND lies collectively with all staff
- The use of best practice can minimise the impact of SEND
- Parents as partners in decision-making and their child's education
- Integration of and collaboration between all agencies involved with the pupil
- Successful preparation for adulthood

Please note that 'parents' is used throughout this policy to denote parents and/or carers.

Aims and Objectives

We believe that every child is an individual with differing and particular strengths and needs. We aim to create a learning environment which enables all children to access the curriculum, so they can learn, play and progress at their own pace with adults providing sensitive support and interventions.

We aim to create an ethos in our schools which is warm and welcoming to all children and their families, regardless of culture, language, religion or special needs, as long as the particular needs can be met within the school.
(Please refer to our Teaching and Learning Policy)

We know that identifying children who may have special educational needs is a sensitive and complex process, particularly in the early years. For most children coming into nursery school it is their first experience of life away from home; for some children this may be particularly challenging and it may take time to manage the transition. Unless we have major concerns about a child or there is a very clear need for an additional plan of support, we give children time to settle and adjust into nursery – generally half a term – before we escalate our interventions, in discussion with their parents.
(Please refer to Settling in Policy)

We know that children will progress at different rates during the Foundation Stage. Children making slower progress may include those who are learning English as an additional language or who have particular learning difficulties. It should not be assumed that children who are making slower progress have special educational needs, but they will need carefully differentiated learning opportunities to help them progress as well as regular, frequent and careful monitoring.

We recognise that some children need support which is **additional to and different from** that of their peer group to fully access the curriculum. We aim to support these children with appropriate resources and interventions to ensure that they have full and free access to the same broad, balanced curriculum as all children, in the context of the nursery setting.

Where we have concerns about a child's development and progress we work collaboratively with parents from the outset, sharing concerns, discussing strategies, planning and reviewing. This team approach means that staff, parents and outside support agencies work together for the best outcomes for the child, in a spirit of co-production.

We aim to work with sensitivity and care, respecting issues of confidentiality.

Admission and Inclusion

We are committed to the philosophy of Inclusion as set out in the Code of Practice. The special educational needs of children will normally be met in the mainstream setting.

We will ensure that there are equal opportunities for all pupils including those with learning, communication, behavioural, emotional, sensory and physical needs. Some children need longer than others to settle into nursery; whether children are eligible to attend nursery for 15 or 30 hours per week we will always gradually increase children's hours in accordance with their needs so that we can ensure the right support is in place for them. We provide suitable physical access arrangements such as a ramp and a disabled toilet and changing area (further arrangements can be found in our Accessibility Plan). We provide support for emotional well-being through following the Personal, Social and Emotional curriculum guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We also engage with the children through group times led by their key person, and we monitor their well-being and involvement levels using the Leuven Scales (see Appendix 2 below). We give pupils a voice regarding their SEND provision and progress through observation, discussions with parents, and/or individual and small group discussion if appropriate.

We aim to be flexible in our approach to cater for all children's individual needs.

(Please refer to our SEND Information Report)

Identification and Provision of Needs

We use observation, staff knowledge of child development and parents' information, and analyse whole-school data to identify pupils with SEND and to decide on the provision to put in place to support their needs. Their progress is monitored through provision mapping and Individual Support Plans. Staff meet twice daily to discuss children's progress, plan for their interests and discuss any difficulties individual children are having in accessing the nursery curriculum. Individual Support Plans are continually updated, with practitioner knowledge, written observations and photographs used as evidence towards achieving their targets. Plans are formally reviewed half-termly by the key person, SEND Support Practitioner and parents, with support from the SENDCO.

If we need to provide enhanced adult to child ratios to meet a child's needs, we will seek parents' permission to submit a funding form to the local authority.

We engage in transition arrangements with primary schools to ensure early intervention and continuity for pupils identified as having special educational needs. These may include transition meetings attended by parents and other agencies as appropriate as well as transition visits, over and above those for the majority of children. Where possible ~~with~~ children are accompanied by their current SEND Support Practitioner to ensure all relevant information is effectively shared. We have good links with our feeder schools and with St John's and Rivertree Special Schools.

Role of staff

It is the responsibility of the class teacher/key person to oversee the particular needs of each child within their class group. The class teacher/key person has responsibility for liaising with others – parents, colleagues, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO).

Staff working most directly with a child have responsibility for making initial assessments about their ~~particular~~ needs. The assessments take the form of observations, both formal and informal, undertaken within the nursery to identify specific issues and concerns, and information from other sources such as health visitors or past records (accessed with parents' consent and knowledge). If, after a period of high-quality personalised teaching, a child's development continues to be of concern the child's teacher/key person will make a referral for SENDCO involvement.

Staff working most directly with the child will work under the guidance of the class teacher to gather information, including through observations, and to keep records of the child's work and development. Where appropriate the class teacher/key person, under the guidance of the SENDCO and in consultation with parents will write an Individual Support Plan. The SENDCO will use the child's records, assessments and Support Plans to complete referrals to appropriate outside agencies and, if necessary, requests for statutory assessment using the criteria set out in the local authority guidance.

Staff will support children through a range of strategies and interventions generally in the main nursery provision alongside other children. When appropriate, children may take

part in more individual or small-group work in a quieter, distraction-free room. Staff will undertake training and individual research to keep themselves informed of practice and thinking, supported by the SENDCO.

The Role of the SENDCO

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the SEND provision as laid out in this policy and in the framework of the Code of Practice, using the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.
- Ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of children with SEND.
- Advising and supporting practitioners in the setting.
- Ensuring that appropriate Support Plans are in place.
- Ensuring that relevant information about children is collected, recorded and updated.
- Making referrals to the relevant outside agencies.
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff and working with external agencies including the Early Years Support Team and other support agencies.
- Supporting the application for statutory assessment as and when appropriate.
- Undertaking reading, personal research and training to keep informed about relevant and current research, thinking and practice.

The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will appoint a nominated governor to oversee the school's approach to provision for children with special needs. In conjunction with the Head Teacher and the SENDCO they will monitor the funding arrangements for appropriate staffing, resources and training. The governor responsible for Special Educational Needs provision is Rebecca Lund. Governors will also ensure that the annual SEND Statement to parents includes an update on the success of the school's SEND Policy and any significant changes to this policy, as well as any consultations with the Local Authority or other Governing Bodies involved in co-ordination of provision and the allocation of resources to and among special needs children in the school since the last report.

The day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the operation of this policy will be the SENDCOs, Suzie Hoefkens and Ally Mastrandrea, and the Governors.

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will have responsibility for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the school including special needs provision. It is her job to keep the Governing Body fully informed and to work closely with the SENDCO.

Monitoring and Assessment

In line with the SEND Code of Practice, a graduated response will be used to support children with SEND (please see Appendix 1)

The Code of Practice guidance for monitoring and assessing children is used to provide support and interventions.

When either an early years educator or teacher who works day-to-day with the child or the SENDCO identifies a child with special educational needs, they should devise interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the setting's usual curriculum offer and strategies (*School Support*).

The triggers for intervention through *School Support* could be the practitioner's or parents' concerns about a child who despite receiving appropriate early education experiences:

- Makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are particularly targeted to improve the child's identified area of need.
- Continues working at levels significantly below those expected for children of a similar age in certain areas.
- Presents persistent emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the setting.
- Has sensory or physical problems and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of personal aids and equipment.
- Has communication and/or interaction difficulties and requires specific individual interventions in order to access learning.

There are some children who may be experiencing short-term, transient difficulties due to specific issues, for example returning from long-term absence, being unsettled due to family issues, etc. In these circumstances we would put in a short-term intervention but would not necessarily deem that child to have special educational needs.

Strategies used to help children make progress may be recorded on Individual Support Plans, which include clear information about short-term goals for the child, teaching strategies and the provision to be made.

Support Plans are working documents and are reviewed as an ongoing process, but are formally reviewed at least half-termly. Parents will have direct involvement in the review process, with opportunities to share their views and to contribute towards their child's new targets. Support Plans are shared with all adults involved in the child's life in school including support staff, lunchtime supervisors as well as parents. It is the child's key person's responsibility to ensure that this sharing happens.

If a child does not make any measurable progress and outside agencies become involved, the SENDCO takes a leading role in reviewing the targets in conjunction with teachers, support staff, external agencies and parents.

In some cases the support given to a child through *School Support* may not be enough and it may be necessary for an **Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment** to be requested from the Local Authority, to ensure that additional and appropriate support for the child can continue to be accessed when they start primary school. The request for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment will be made by the school in partnership with parents and in consultation with other professionals involved in the child's education and welfare. If this assessment takes place the Local Authority may agree to draw up an **Education, Health and Care Plan** (EHCP). This will then form the basis for the child's subsequent Support Plans.

The EHCP will be reviewed with all relevant professionals at least every six months for children under five years of age. The review process will identify the continuing need for an EHCP and recommend any necessary amendments to the plan.

Policy review

All teaching and non-teaching staff will be involved in the development and review of this policy and must make themselves familiar with all procedures for identifying, assessing, monitoring and making provision for children with special needs, especially special educational needs. This policy will be reviewed and monitored annually by the Governing Body and School Staff.

Appendix 1

Appendix to SEND Policy

Implementation of the graduated response at the Bedford Nursery Schools Federation

Each child and their family are unique, so at the Bedford Nursery Schools we feel it is essential to get to know them as individuals and to ensure discussions relating to SEND are handled in a sensitive, considered and respectful way.

The flowcharts below indicate the usual progression of our graduated response, but there is flexibility built in in order to take account of each child's and their family's individual circumstances.



