

Inclusion and SEN pupils: Policy document
Nursery and Primary School, SEEH
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Every pupil is different, with different aptitudes, skills, and experiences. However, some pupils face greater challenges than others in their learning, and we say that such pupils have *special educational needs* (SEN). We use ‘special educational needs’ in a neutral use, which includes special advantages as well as special disadvantages. For example, a pupil may have SEN because they have difficulty in reading or in focusing their attention, or, equally, because they are in some ways more advanced than their peers.

1. Inclusive classrooms and individual education

There are two central principles to our SEN policy:

First, *inclusion*: All pupils have a right to mainstream education, as far as possible. We believe that SEN pupils benefit from an inclusive environment, and that other students benefit from their presence too.

Second, *individual education*: We believe that pupils learn best when drawing on their strengths, and we aim to provide each student with the best possible learning environment for himself or herself. This applies to all pupils, including SEN ones.

Putting these principles together, our aim is *inclusive classroom learning with individual education programmes*. We aim to create a positive learning environment where all pupils flourish and achieve their best. SEN pupils have challenges to face, but they also have many strengths to offer, and we aim to draw on these strengths to help them deal with the challenges, and to enrich the experience of the classroom as a whole. This is what genuine access to learning is all about.

Our school is not a mass-production facility where every pupil receives the same kind of teaching and is expected to achieve the same results. Rather, it is a pupil-centred environment, where each child draws on their own strengths, develops their particular abilities, deals with their particular challenges, and achieves their best. In this sense SEN pupils are no different from other students.

2. Study programmes for SEN pupils

We aim to develop comprehensive programmes of study for SEN pupils by liaising between the pupils, class teachers, parents, and other specialist staff involved in each particular case. Such programmes will be sensitive to pupils’ strengths as well as needs.

To help implement the agreed programmes, the school will draw on relevant legislation, assessment procedures, and funding for technological support and additional/parallel teaching (where available).

SEN pupils will be supported by the teaching staff and by their class and school peers. As with all pupils, we will have high expectations of SEN pupils, and their learning will be enriched by direct instruction, continuous assessment and evaluation, feedback, and adjustment.

Pupils’ programmes of study will be assessed and reviewed in frequent meetings between pupils and teaching staff, between staff and parents, and between the school and outside experts, and programmes will be amended as necessary to reflect pupils’ progress over time. So, for example, a curriculum subject originally omitted from a pupil’s programme may be re-introduced at a later stage when the pupil is ready to return to it.

The aim will be to ensure that all parties are fully briefed, so that problems can be anticipated and positive results ensured.

3. Support for staff

Inclusive, individual education is good for students but also demanding for teachers, who must teach to individuals, not to a class. Teachers need to be familiar with the various kinds of support SEN pupils may require and know how to implement them in particular cases. They need to be sensitive to the specific needs and aptitudes of individual pupils and be ready to adapt their teaching style and level of teaching to them. Such understanding, sensitivity, and adaptability are essential for the effective implementation of inclusive strategies, and it is therefore vital that teaching staff are well supported.

Class teachers will receive support both from within the school and from external experts, to help them keep abreast of current theory and practice, and get advice on how to deal with specific cases. There are four elements to this:

- 1) Regular briefing and debriefing sessions will be held for staff, at which knowledge and good practice can be shared and problem cases discussed.
- 2) Teachers with training in, or experience of, SEN teaching will be asked to brief other staff on best practice,
- 3) Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with recent work in SEN theory and to study cases of successful implementation of inclusive strategies elsewhere.
- 4) The school will seek advice from outside experts with knowledge of the best strategies for dealing with SENs, whether concerning particular students, classroom management, or school policies.

4. SEN Officer and Advisory Committee

The school will appoint an SEN officer. (It is proposed that the duties be combined with those of the existing Integration Officer.) The school will also create an SEN Advisory Committee, which will meet as needed to discuss individual cases and SEN policy. Meetings will be called by the School Director. The membership of the committee will consist of:

- School Director and Deputy Director (Chair)
- School Officer for Integration and SEN
- European Schools SEN inspector (to be consulted via email, telephone, or Skype)
- Teachers of pupils whose cases are to be discussed
- Parents of the pupils concerned
- Outside specialists (as needed)

The committee will have an advisory role, and the precise nature of the SEN provision will be decided by the School Directorate, in the light of the overall context. The schools' SEN policy will be updated as needed.

The School Director may propose that a particular pupil no longer needs the individual learning programme set up for them and may call a committee meeting to discuss such cases. Again, the final decision will be with the Directorate.

5. Conclusion

In a sense all pupils are SEN pupils, with their own special needs and abilities. We will treat SEN pupils like other pupils, nurturing their talents and helping them to realize their potential.

We will devise individual learning programmes for SEN students and provide support for their teachers, and we will plan, assess, and evaluate the work of pupils, teachers, and the school in order to ensure the best outcome for all. This is what our SEN policy is all about.

Maria Kasmirli 20/11/13