

Special Educational Needs Policy



Written by	Harriet Carter	August 2025
Next review due by		August 2026

Definition of SEN

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 them.

A child or young person of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty if they: (a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or

(b) Has a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions. (SEN Code of Practice (2015, p15))

Definition of disability

This policy is informed by, and complies with, the following statutory guidance and legislation:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Independent School Standards (ISS), particularly Parts 1, 3 and 6
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest statutory guidance)

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’ (SEN Code of Practice (2015, p5))

Earley Springs Provision

Earley Springs is a provision for children and young people with communication and interaction difficulties.

School Vision

Earley Springs provides a safe, supportive environment to foster happiness and confidence to every child in our care. As soon as each child walks through the front door for the first time we identify their skills and abilities and provide experiences and activities to develop them holistically.

To be a vibrant learning community where every child:

- **Flourishes:** Experiences a safe and nurturing environment that fosters confidence, self-esteem, and emotional well-being.
- **Thrives:** Benefits from a fun, stimulating, and individualised curriculum that incorporates personalised learning opportunities and shared goals.
- **Succeeds:** Has the opportunity and support to reach their full potential within a supportive and encouraging culture.
- **Belongs:** Experiences a community where care, respect, and the celebration of achievement are paramount.
- **Grows:** Develops strong foundations, builds meaningful relationships, and gains valuable life experiences to prepare for their future.
- **Individualised:** Unique needs, interests, and aspirations recognised and valued.

Admissions Criteria

Children and young people attending our school will all have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Decisions on the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan are made by the Local Authority.

Facilities and Pupil Provision

Assessment

Earley Springs is a 'needs-led' provision and as such we operate both formative and summative assessment.

Pupil's achievements are recorded electronically via Evidence for Learning and Bsquared. This system covers the objectives/statements relating to:

- Foundation Stage Profile
- Bsquared Assessments
- National Curriculum Stages
- Functional Skills assessments
- Engagement profile

Teachers and Teaching Assistants update these objectives as and when applicable, for example

after a unit of work. However, it is expected that these statements/objectives are updated at least three times a year. Evidence for learning has provision for photos of work and scanned worksheets to be uploaded as part of this evidence base.

Three times a year Teachers make a summative judgement about the pupils' progress. These judgements are used for data capture and analysis at the beginning of each new term and form part of the regular pupil progress meetings held between teachers and the senior leadership team.

Alongside assessments made against these descriptors, our different curricula use a range of alternative assessment processes, in accordance with the identified needs of individual pupils, as a means of capturing a full picture of their progress. Assessment for learning is carried out daily as teachers develop and adjust their lesson plans, strategies and curriculum allocation time to match the learning readiness of their pupils. The school uses a "basket of indicators" approach which includes gathering information and evidence for the acquisition of learning using Evidence for Learning and Bsquared Progression Steps, Steps 4 life, particularly for pupils who have different priorities and a slower pace of learning we use other means to track progress such as MAPP, Leuven, Barry Carpenter Engagement Scales, SCERTS, Living skills

Framework, MOVE, Sensory Profiles, Behaviour For Learning Audit, Thinking Skills and Routes for Learning.

School leaders monitor the progress of all pupils with the teachers three times a year. From these meetings progression maps or learning journeys will be developed to ensure that all pupils make evidenced progress.

We also use a range of diagnostic assessments where appropriate such as the Derbyshire Language, Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, Phonics Screening, Key Stage 1 Phonics Screening Check and The Salford Sentence Reading Test.

Where children and young people continue to make inadequate progress, Case Studies are written to put the person, their condition and their lives into a context that comprehends, understands and engages with them as they are.

Progress Review

All children and young people will have a review each year of the provision made for them, which will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the special provision and the other bodies involved with the pupil. The collation of the Annual Review evaluations of effectiveness will be reported to the Executive Board and to the Local Authority Curriculum and Teaching Approaches Staff at the School are committed to offering our children and young people high quality teaching, differentiated for individuals that has an impact on their development, quality of life and aspiration for the future.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Annual Reviews are held at least annually, or more

frequently where required. Advice and reports are gathered in advance, and review paperwork is submitted to the Local Authority within statutory timescales. Outcomes from reviews are implemented and reflected in provision planning.

As written above, the School is a Needs Led school and as such we not only group children and young people according to their learning needs and learning style but we also offer different curriculum models to deliver relevant learning opportunities for individuals.

The Early Years learning approach curricula The Sensory learning approach curricula is for pupils at key fundamental and foundation levels of development (who are working within the Engagement Model). The Practical learning approach curricula is for pupils who are working consistently, and over time, below or very near the start of the national curriculum, who benefit from a practical approach to their learning. Pupils may typically (but not always) have a diagnosis of severe learning difficulties.

The Structured learning approach curricula The Formal Learning approach curricula for pupils who are working below age-appropriate expectations but are able to access parts of the National Curriculum.

Curriculum and Teaching Approaches

Staff at Earley Springs are committed to offering our children and young people high quality teaching, differentiated for individuals that has an impact on their development, quality of life and aspiration for the future.

As written above, Earley Springs is a Needs Led school and as such we not only group children and young people according to their learning need and learning style but we also offer different curriculum models to deliver relevant learning opportunities for individuals.

The Early Years learning approach curricula is for pupils of a nursery, reception and Year 1 age. It plays a diagnostic role in establishing which learning approach/curriculum pupils embark on.

The Sensory learning approach curricula is for pupils at key fundamental and foundation levels of development (who are working within the Engagement Model), who typically have a description of profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The Practical learning approach curricula is for pupils who are working consistently, and over time, below or very near the start of the national curriculum, who benefit from a practical approach to their learning. Pupils may typically (but not always) have a diagnosis of severe learning difficulties.

The structured learning approach curricular for pupils who are working consistently, and over time, below or very near the start of their national curriculum, who benefit from structured learning environments. Pupils may typically (but not always) have a diagnosis of Autism.

Inclusion

To enhance inclusion possibilities for our children and young people, Earley Springs will provide a personalised provision to each pupil. Each pupil will be considered using a holistic approach and this will enable the pupil to receive the best possible educational offer.

Clubs, trips, and activities offered to children and young people at Earley Springs are available to all where practicable. Where necessary, the school will use the resources available to provide additional adult support to enable the safe participation of our children and young people in the activities offered.

Reasonable adjustments are made in line with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure pupils can access the curriculum, environment and wider school activities. This includes adaptations to teaching approaches, sensory environments, communication methods and staffing support.

Pupil Well-Being

Earley Springs recognises that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities may be at increased risk of safeguarding concerns due to communication difficulties, emotional regulation needs, or increased dependency on adults.

All safeguarding concerns, including peer-on-peer abuse, bullying, online safety issues or concerns arising from behaviour, must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest statutory guidance).

At Earley Springs, we understand that an important feature of the school is to enable all children and young people to develop emotional resilience and confident social skills, both through direct teaching, for instance through PSHE, SMSC, Well Being activities, and indirectly with every conversation adults have with them throughout the day.

For some children and young people with the most need of help in this area, we can also provide the following, for example, an in-school play therapist, access to a counselor, external referral to other agencies including school health and CHYPMH's, time-out spaces for use when upset or agitated.

Children and young people in the early stages of emotional and social development because of their special educational needs will be supported to enable them to develop and mature appropriately. This will usually require additional and different resources, tailored to their needs.

SEN Coordinator

The role of the SENCO at Earley Springs is taken on by Harriet Carter. The SENCO has appropriate authority, time and resources to fulfil the role effectively and works closely with

the Designated Safeguarding Lead, curriculum leads and the Executive Board to ensure statutory duties are met and provision is effective.

These SLT members are available through contact with the school office or office emails.

All teachers and teaching assistants have received appropriate training to teach the children and staff receive enhanced training targeted to support student needs.

Where a training need is identified beyond this, we will find a provider who is able to deliver it. Training providers we can approach are other special schools in the consortium and beyond, Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, feeding specialists, etc.

Facilities

Where external advisors recommend the use of equipment or facilities which the school does not have, we will purchase it using the notional SEN funding or seek it by loan. For highly specialist communication equipment, the school will seek the advice of the Kent County Council (KCC) Communication and Assistive Technology team.

Partnership with Parents

All parents of children and young people at Earley Springs are invited to discuss the progress of their child on at least three occasions a year and receive a written report twice per year, the first in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) review and the second at the end of the academic year. In addition, we are happy to arrange meetings outside these times.

As part of our normal teaching arrangements, all children and young people will access some additional teaching to help them catch up if the progress monitoring indicates that this is necessary. All such provision will be recorded, tracked, and evaluated on a Provision Map which will be shared with parents three times a year.

Parents of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be invited to contribute to and attend an EHCP Review, which, wherever possible, will also include other agencies involved with the child/young person. Information will be made accessible for parents. The child or young person will be consulted about and involved in the arrangements made for them as part of person-centered planning. Parents are likely to play a more significant role in the childhood years with the young person taking more responsibility and acting with greater independence in later years.

Executive Board

The Executive Board is involved in all aspects of school life. They meet regularly with the Principal throughout the year to discuss issues relating to the school.

The normal arrangements for the treatment of complaints at Earley Springs are in operation

following our Complaints Policy. We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, Learning Approach Lead or a member of the SLT to resolve the issue before escalating the complaint at Stage 1 to the Complaints Officer in school and then at Stage 2 to the Chair of Executive board.

There are some circumstances, usually for children who have an EHCP where there is a statutory right for parents to appeal against a decision of the Local Authority. Complaints which fall within this category cannot be investigated by the school.

Further information is available in the school's Complaints Policy. Matters relating to EHCP content or placement may be subject to statutory appeal routes through the Local Authority and SEND Tribunal and cannot be investigated by the school.

Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK)

Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK) is a free and confidential information, advice, and support service available to parents of a disabled child or child with special educational needs, and to children and young people up to age 25 who have a special educational need or disability.

Trained staff can provide impartial, legally based information and support on educational matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities, including health and social care. The aim is to empower parents, children, and young people to fully participate in discussions and make informed choices and decisions. They can also feel confident expressing their views and wishes about education and future aspirations.

IASK can be contacted on:

- HELPLINE: 03000 41 3000
- Office: 03000 412412
- E-mail: iask@kent.gov.uk
- Website: www.kent.gov.uk/iask

Transitions

At Earley Springs, we work closely with the educational settings previously attended by our students to ensure a seamless transition. We gather information to understand their needs and provide the next setting with relevant details about their progress at our school.

The Local Authority's Local Offer

The Local Authority's Local Offer is published on

<http://www.kent.gov.uk>. Parents/Carers without internet access should make an appointment with the school office for support in obtaining this information.