

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report

At St. Mary's Pre-School, we welcome children with differing needs and abilities and we work with parents and carers to provide tailored support to each child and family. We seek to cater for all types of SEND including physical disabilities, communication & interaction needs, cognition & learning needs, social, emotional & mental health needs, & sensory needs.

Our Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator is Bethany Levett who has Early Years Teaching Status as well as a Level 3 SENCO Qualification. You can contact her by email at senco.stmaryspreschool@gmail.com

Below we have tried to answer the questions you might have about what support our setting could provide for you and your child. If you have further questions, please do email us, phone us or make an appointment to visit.

1. How does the early years setting know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs or disabilities?

The large experience of our staff team helps us to identify children with special educational needs. In addition to this, we use our observations to assess children against the checkpoints of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework which highlights any child not reaching age expected levels. If you have concerns about your child's development, you should speak to your child's key person who will then take advice from the special educational needs co-ordinator and managers. If a child needs extra help, staff would then consider why this is and discuss this with the family. An individual plan will be created in the first instance and then they may seek further support from local authority advisors, make referrals to specialist teams and/or support families in requesting help through their health visitor or Doctor.

2. How will early years setting staff support my child?

The Special Educational Needs coordinator will support the key person in planning for meeting the child's needs and all this will be overseen by the managers. The key person will have discussions with the family at every stage. We access advice and specific training from West Sussex County Council to ensure we are equipped as best we can be to support your child. We will monitor progress for each child and take further action if a child is not progressing. We ask for feedback from parents, other professionals and receiving schools to ensure our provision is effective and for ideas of how to improve.

3. How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?

Next steps for each child with special needs are planned for individually. Staff support children as individuals in group activities. Individual plans are written by the child's key person and the Special Educational Needs coordinator with input from the parents and are used by all staff. All staff make observations on all children which are used by the key person to make assessments for the child. These feed into planning for the next steps and into the individual plan.

4. How will both you and I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

We welcome brief discussions with your child's key person or the supervisor at the start and/or end of any session. Appointments can be made for longer discussions. We also have two parent consultation evenings each year which are held in the Autumn and Summer terms where all parents can speak to their child's key person about progress. During the consultation evenings we sometimes run a workshop to give parents a taste of some of the activities we do with the children. We use our online journal to share with parents what a child has been doing at pre-school and also ask the parents to put on photos and experiences from outside pre-school. We offer parenting courses, in conjunction with St. Mary's Church, which have been very successful. We invite parents to help in pre-school once their children have settled.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

As a pre-school with a caring Christian ethos, the pastoral care of our children and their families is a top priority. We have policies and procedures to cover administration of medicines and we seek specialist training if required. We monitor the well-being of the children in our care and will seek extra support if needed. We have policies and procedures for promoting positive behaviour. Where finances allow or funding is available, we use extra staff in order to avoid exclusions. We regularly review our inclusion to reflect on measures taken to meet the needs of all our children and plan ways we can improve.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the early years setting?

We have no specialist staff but offer experience and an enthusiasm to provide care and support. We also have access to the wider support of St. Mary's Church who are our owners. All staff use some sign language. As well as experience of working with children with special needs, we have experience of working with speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, health visitors and social workers.

7. What training have the staff, supporting children with SEND, had or what will they be having?

Our staff have completed training on speech, language and communication development, autism and promoting positive behaviour. When a member of staff attends a course the learning is fed back to the whole team during the next staff meeting. Our Special Educational Needs coordinator has attended SENCO training for inclusion, behaviour and autism as well as training on attachment and sensory exploration and has spent some time observing in specialist schools.

8. How will my child be included in activities outside the early years setting including trips?

Activities and trips are planned with the individual children in mind. If children have special needs, a risk assessment beforehand will ascertain whether special access arrangements need to be made or whether we need extra staff or volunteers to support us. For children with food allergies, special ingredients may need to be purchased in cooking activities. For children with sensory needs or skin conditions gloves may be required. Where we are unsure, we consult with the family.

9. How accessible is the early years setting environment? (Indoors and outdoors)

The setting is accessible with a wheelchair and there is a disabled toilet. We use auditory and visual prompts for changes in activities such as a tambourine for a 5 minute warning, a visual count-down to listening time, 'tidyup' music and 'music time' music, visual behaviour signs, a 'feelings' choice board and signing welcome song. For parent carers whose first language is not English, we have a bank of contacts who could provide interpreting support and we check understanding. We encourage them to visit the setting to share their language and culture with all the children and sometimes have dual language story telling sessions. We sometimes use equipment from the Children and Family Centre toy library such as sensory equipment. We work with physiotherapists and occupational therapists to access special chairs, choosing boards etc.

10. How will the early years setting prepare and support my child to join the early years setting, transfer to a new setting/school?

If there are known special needs before a child starts at our setting, we often arrange a home visit and arrange for the child to come to the pre-school for more than the usual one visit before starting. We may form a settling-in plan with the family if necessary. We have an online welcome booklet which has photos and text about the daily routines and activities at pre-school. Families can look at these with the child at home to help with the settling-in process. We ensure that the key person is present on the first few sessions a child attends to support them in building attachments and the parent or carer is welcome to stay until he/she is confident the child will settle and is also welcome to return early. We use our online learning journal system to send photos to the parents to show how a child is settling. We also contact parents by phone to keep them informed. We prepare all children for moving on to school by encouraging independence in changing shoes, putting coats on, hand washing, changing for PE sessions and managing a packed lunch. New teachers, practitioners and teaching assistants visit the setting and children and staff visit the new schools and settings. Each child's Learning Journal is passed onto the school or new setting with permission from parents. For children with special educational needs, we use the local authority transition framework to agree with parents additional information which needs to be passed on to the new school/setting and meet with all parties to discuss the transition. Extra visits, a more gradual start and extra visual resources may be arranged to aid the transition.

11. How are the early years setting's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

All special educational needs funding from the local authority has so far been allocated to employing extra staff. In the past, we have also been able to use money from our reserves to pay for extra staff when managers and our Governance Panel have agreed that there is a need. This is becoming more difficult, however, as our reserves fall with the low level of local authority funding. Some funds raised by our social team have been used to provide sensory resources and resources for our 'feelings' area which particularly benefit children with special educational needs. Much of our training budget is directed to training for skills in supporting children with special educational needs and we also allocate resources to pay for our special educational needs coordinator to spend time in that role.

12. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?

If the family or key person consider that extra support is needed for a child they will discuss it and involve the special educational needs co-ordinator and managers. A plan will be created

as the first step to ensure that all staff and the family are consistent in their support for the child. If further support is required, the special educational needs coordinator, with the agreement of the family, will request this from the local authority. If staff, family and local authority advisors consider that extra staff are required for support, a request will be made to the local authority for financial support and the Governance Panel will need to decide whether the cost of extra staff can be covered.

13. How are parents involved in the early years setting? How can I be involved?

We have two parent representatives on our Governance Panel who will raise any concerns and ideas parents have and speak on behalf of the parents at meetings. All parents are invited to contribute to reviews and revisions of policies and procedures. Parents are invited to share skills and experiences with the children at preschool or to help generally with a session at the main pre-school or forest school or an outing. Parents comment on and contribute to any individual plans or next steps set for their children.

14. Who can I contact for further information?

If your child is already at the setting your first point of contact is your child's key person. Our special educational needs coordinator is Bethany Levett who you can contact by email at senco.stmaryspreschool@gmail.com For further concerns, the managers are Lai Brooking and Karen Inglis-Taylor. If you wish to speak to a member of the Governance Panel, please contact Janet Palmart via the Parish Office on 01403 253762.

If you are considering whether your child should join the setting, please contact Lai Brooking on 07510303043 between 9am and 3pm, term time only or email stmspreschool@gmail.com