

THE GRYPHON SCHOOL



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY Information Report and Local Offer

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The Gryphon School

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Report September 2025

1 Introduction

This Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Report fulfils the statutory requirements of the Children and Families Act, 2014. It shows how we as a school provide for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities who are in our care and is part of Dorset's Local Offer.

What is the local offer?

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to publish information on services and provision across education, health and social care for children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The purpose of a local offer is to enable parents and carers to see more clearly what services are available for children with SEND in their area and how to access them. The Local Offer can be accessed at: www.dorsetforyou.com.

2 Definition of Special Educational Needs

'A pupil has special needs where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.' Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, 2014.

Children are not regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language used in their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. However, support will be available and should a student have difficulties not related to their second language skills, these will be identified and met under the SEND policy.

Special educational provision means provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from the educational provision made generally for students of their age in academies and schools maintained by the LEA (other than special schools) in the area.

2.1 Areas of Special Needs and Disability provided for at The Gryphon School

The Gryphon School provides for the full range of SEND as identified in the Code of Practice 2014.

1. **Communication and interaction** Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with some or all the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Children and young people with Autism are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication, social interaction and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

2. **Cognition and Learning** Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate

learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

3. **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties** Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorders, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.
4. **Sensory and/or Physical Needs** Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and /or equipment to access their learning. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties, which makes it even more difficult for them to access the curriculum than for those with a single sensory impairment.

Some children with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

3 Intention

Our aim is for the school to use its best endeavours to ensure that:

- All Academy Committee Members and staff have maximum awareness of SEND and appropriate training to enhance their professional skills.
- Students with SEND are the shared responsibility of all staff in line with the Code of Practice (2014) and the Standards for Teachers (2014).
- All students have a broad and balanced curriculum which is differentiated to enable maximum progress.
- There is a flexible, graduated structure of provision, according to the Code of Practice 2014, and appropriate resourcing for meeting SEND.
- Students with SEND receive inclusive education where their needs are met within the least restrictive environment with particular regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, 2014 and the Equality Act, 2010.
- Parents are involved as partners in the education of their children.

4 How does the setting college know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child/young person may have special educational needs?

We work in partnership with parents and if you have concerns about your child's needs, please talk to our SENCO; Bethan West, the SEND office, your child's Year Head, Deputy Year Head or tutor. We welcome your questions, suggestions and comments and encourage an open conversation with you.

We work closely with the partner primary schools through visits, gathering information about the current provision for students with SEND and their needs.

All students at Key Stages 3 are assessed when they start the school using Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT scores) and standardised reading and spelling tests. From these assessments, we are able to identify further students who need more help.

Within school, class teachers make regular assessments of progress for all students. From these assessments, it is possible to identify students who are not making expected progress. Indicators could include progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;
- fails to match or better the student's previous rate of progress;
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers.

We use a graduated approach to assessment of SEND. First, high quality teaching is targeted at the student's area of weakness; if progress continues to be less than expected, the SENCO in consultation with parents, the student, teachers and external support agencies, if appropriate, will assess whether the student has SEND.

A student's difficulties are recorded on the Code of Practice register in line with the Student Level Annual School's Census (PLASC) system of categorisation. Students are also placed on the Gryphon School Code of Practice register. This encompasses students with Educational and Healthcare Plans (EHC) and students on SEN Support.

In addition, the school has its own second category, SEND monitoring, listing students whose needs are noted. All staff are aware of the students categorised E, K and M so these students can be provided for and monitored.

We contact parents and carers of students at E and K three times a year and informally as needed. Parents and carers of students who are under monitoring are contacted as needed.

The SENCO is:

Ms Bethan West

Tel 01935 810139 or email: Bethan.west@gryphon.dorset.sch.uk

5 How we consult with parents and carers

We regularly assess the progress of all students, including those with SEND formally and informally, face to face and in writing. In addition to the regular assessments, reviews and reports to which every student is entitled, we discuss with you how students with SEND are doing and how families can help in the following ways:

- Conversations face-to-face, by phone or email as often as needed but we will make contact at least three times a year for every student who is identified formally as needing SEND Support
- Learning plans
- Annual Reviews for students with Statements or Education and Healthcare Plans
- The SENCO attends all Parents' Evenings.

We assess all the students we are monitoring for reading and spelling to assess whether they need more or different support or indeed, whether they no longer need extra help. Assessments are made before all SEND interventions start and we assess students at the end to monitor how they are doing. We will report back to you to let you know how your child is getting on.

When appropriate, other agencies visit the school to assess the students. We will tell you when this is going to happen, invite you to contribute and report back to you.

The SENCO meets with the County Educational Psychology, SALT and Specialist Teacher at least three times a year to discuss students of concern.

6 What support will there be for my child's/young person's overall wellbeing?

The Gryphon has a strong ethos of support that is extended to students and staff alike.

- Every student has a tutor who they see once a day for registration.
- The school has a strong pastoral system with each year being led by a Year Head and a Deputy Year Head.
- The school combats bullying through its 'I Am Me' campaign that focuses on celebrating difference and diversity.
- The Haven is an important facility where students take time out and receive support and guidance from staff. They can come for an informal chat or may have regular appointments.
- Vulnerable students are encouraged to use the Haven as a place to relax, chat, play and eat at breaktime and lunch.
- We have experienced staff working in the Haven to support social and emotional development and needs of young people.
- The school has several counsellors who work with young people who have greater emotional needs than can be met by Haven staff.
- We refer students to a range of outside agencies for further or different support including the Rendezvous, the Balsam Centre, Dorset Families Matters, North Dorset Family Partnership Zone, Paragon, Mosaic and CAMHS.
- The school employs two members of staff who are ELSA trained.
- The School Chaplain is available to give emotional and social support to students.
- Students with SEND are invited to take part in Student Voice activities to promote their viewpoint.
- We have a designated Student Welfare and Attendance Officer.
- We have a designated Mental Health Lead, Jackie Brighouse.

7 What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the setting/school/college?

We will make referrals to specialist services when the interventions we are using in school are not making a sufficiently significant difference to your child's progress. The specialist professionals will work with your child to understand their needs and make recommendations.

We work with a range of services including:

- Educational Psychologists (EP)
- Dorset Specialist Teachers
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Community Paediatrician
- School nurse
- Special schools outreach
- Localities Team
- Hearing and Visual Difficulties Service
- Social Services
- Rendezvous
- Dorset Inclusion
- A range of local charities

8 What training have the staff supporting children and young people with SEND had or are having?

The Gryphon School Learning Support department is fortunate to have a highly qualified and well-trained team. There is a strong programme of training in the department involving outside speakers, national and local courses and internal training. In the past, members of the team have received training in Dyscalculia, Emotional Literacy Support Assistance, practical strategies for ADHD, Person-Centred Reviews, Managing Behaviour, Ipad training, software training, Dyslexia, strategies to support low attainers, Coaching, Attachment, Early Trauma and self harm. The list is not exhaustive. Two members of the teams are trained to undertake screening assessments, we have members of the Learning Support staff who are trained teachers and we have two trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, and an Educational Psychologist.

In addition, the SENCO initiates and plans whole-school training on specific special needs and this is carried out in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Lead. The SENCO and Learning Support Staff also offer support and guidance with differentiation and strategies to improve outcomes for students with SEND to individual teachers, departments and year teams on a formal and informal basis as required. Recent training has included working with ADHD, Dyslexia, improving performance of low attaining students, Access Arrangements, working with teaching assistants and marking and assessment to support SEND students. The SENCO runs sessions for trainee teachers and NQTs.

At the beginning of each academic year the Learning Support Department updates the Code of Practice Register, including information on those students with SEND, students in receipt of Student Premium, students who are 'Looked After', students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and young carers. This information is available to staff on the MIS, Arbor. Important documents such as EHCPs, specialist reports and assessments are also on Arbor.

The SENCO is an experienced teacher and holds the National SENCO Award. We also have two assistant SENCO's who hold the National SENCO Award and support on a part time basis.

9 How will my child/young person be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

The school has a comprehensive programme of extra curricular activities and we encourage and help all students, including those with SEND, to take part in these. We have a member of the Learning Support team whose role is to ensure SEND children take part in these trips and event.

10 How accessible is the setting/school/college environment?

The School applies SENDA (2001), which puts institutional responsibilities on schools and Local Education Authorities. These key duties are reinforced in the Equalities Act (2010). They are:

- To prevent discrimination and to promote disability equality and equality of opportunity.
- To make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled students, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.
- These duties cover admissions, education and exclusions.
- The school provides facilities to give access and full inclusion to physically disabled students. The Learning Support Department aims to cater for a wide range of SEND, with appropriate support from the Local Authority when the available resources cannot meet the identified needs of the students concerned.

The Learning Support Department is a specialist suite of rooms which provides support for students with a wide range of SEND. This includes a therapy room, the Haven, a disabled toilet, space for physiotherapy, specialist teaching areas and rooms for intervention and nurture group work.

There are also facilities in other areas of the school for those with physical and/or sensory disabilities. These include wheelchair access, lifts, and disabled toilets; in addition all classrooms are equipped with a range of ICT. Furthermore, many classrooms have been adapted to cater for students with Hearing Impairment through the provision of soundproofing boards.

Arrangements are made for students who cannot follow the normal PE curriculum to enable them to participate in an alternative form of physical activity.

The SENCO is responsible for Examination Access Arrangements and is supported by a team.

11 How will the setting/school/college prepare and support my child/young person to join the setting/school/college or next stage of education and life?

We usually have an Open Evening in the Autumn term of Year 6 which gives parents a chance to view what we have on offer and talk to the SENCO and members of the Learning Support Team. The team runs a strong transition programme for young people with SEND starting the school in Year 7. This includes close liaison with primary schools with a focus on sharing information, visits to the young people in their primary schools and opportunities for them to visit us. There is some additional transition available to for students with additional needs.

Students joining us at other points usually start in the Haven where they are assessed for reading and spelling. The Year Team offers support and arranges for a buddy so they integrate quickly.

Careful guidance is provided to all students to ensure that they make successful transition to sixth form, FE/HE or to another school if they are doing in-year transfers. Our Careers Officer can support this process.

There is a very clear programme of advice and guidance for all students which forms a natural part of conversations with parents of students with SEND during review meetings. The school careers officer attends these meetings and advise the students and parents as needed. For students with statements or EHC plans, discussions about careers and careers advice is part of the Transfer Review.

The school has a good relationship with local colleges and meets a representative from Yeovil College annually as part of their transition programme. We also arrange informal visits to colleges and members of the Learning Support team frequently accompany students on these.

We actively support independent living and participation in society through our programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education programme as well as our extensive range of extra curricular activities and trips, including residential visits.

12 How are the setting's/school's/college's resources allocated and matched to children/young people's special educational needs?

The school's resources are allocated in a variety of ways to match students' special educational needs. Funding is used for a wide range of services and provisions including:

- Learning Support Staff;
- Small group and individual specialist teaching in literacy and numeracy;
- Nurture groups Years 7-11;
- Wide range of interventions and support for individuals and small groups;
- Wide range of emotional support including the Haven, ELSA and counselling;
- Outside agencies;
- ICT;
- Differentiated resources;
- Staff training;
- Curricular provision outside of school.

13 How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child/young person will receive?

We use a graduated approach to assessment of SEND and decisions about appropriate support for a student with SEND. Impact is carefully assessed and is recorded on the school's provision map. First, high quality teaching is targeted at the student's area of weakness; if progress continues to be less than expected, the class teacher, working with the SENCO, will assess whether the student has SEND. This includes consultation with parents/carers and students. External support agencies are consulted as appropriate. If necessary, we will offer extra help. We use a wide range of interventions to support literacy, numeracy, science and emotional needs.

The SENCO is part of conversations with SLT following data drops to track progress of student and offer appropriate support to those who are not making expected progress.

The Learning Support Department staff review the progress of students who are receiving the SEND interventions they deliver. The SENCO review the progress of all students receiving interventions or who are being monitored to decide on the most appropriate next steps.

14 How are parents involved in the setting/school/college? How can I be involved?

You can be involved by attending Parents' Evenings and forums.

Teams allows you to see what homework your child has so you can offer support. You will receive emails outlining the curriculum your child will be receiving.

You are welcome to contact the SEND office and SENCO at any time to discuss your child's needs.

You are invited to be involved in your child's progress through meetings, emails and phone calls. In addition to the reports and consultations at Parents' Evenings which every student is entitled to, we also consult with parents and carers of students with SEND support in additional ways. These include:

- Conversations face-to-face, by phone or email as often as needed but we will make contact at least three times a year for every student who is identified formally as needing SEND Support. Learning plans are shared with parents.
- Annual Reviews for students with Statements or Education and Healthcare Plans
- SENCO attends all Parents' Evenings
- There are occasional opportunities to become a parent Academy Committee Member.

15 Complaints procedure

It is hoped that all situations of concern can be resolved quickly through discussion and early action. However, if a parent / carer feel that their concern or complaint regarding the care or welfare of their child has not been dealt with satisfactorily, an appointment can be made by them to speak and explain the issues to the SENCO.

There is a school policy that outlines the procedures for complaints published on the school website.