Meath School SEN Information Report

Paragraph 6.79 of the SEND Code of Practice requires schools to produce an SEN Information Report updated annually to reflect changes and plans within the school. This report describes the current provision within Meath School.

WHAT ARE THE KINDS OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR WHICH PROVISION IS MADE AT MEATH SCHOOL?

This is a non-maintained residential special school for children aged 4-11 years. Pupils are referred to the school because they have severe and/or complex speech and language disorders, or Level 1 Autism Spectrum disorder where language is the primary barrier to their access to learning and is currently preventing them from realising their full potential intellectually, academically and socially.

We are able to cater for a number of other difficulties which are commonly associated with communication difficulties. These include: problems with attention and memory, motor dyspraxia, sensory difficulties, emotional problems, physical impairments (hearing/visual) difficulties with friendships and social relationships, poor self-image and low self-esteem. However, the **primary** disability of pupils at Meath School is their speech, language and communication difficulty.

This means they may have difficulties and experience problems in the following areas:

- Articulation problems
- Phonological problems
- Syntactic problems
- Semantic problems
- Pragmatic problems
- Literacy problems
- Social Communication Difficulties

These difficulties may affect a pupil's ability to comprehend the language that they hear and / or to express what they want to say. They may also lead to difficulties in forming and maintaining friendships and /or difficulties in conforming to expectations of a learning environment.

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S POLICIES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS / STUDENTS ATTENDING THE SCHOOL?

Parents or Local Authorities refer children and young people to the school when it is felt that they have a speech, language or communication difficulty, or a diagnosis of high functioning Autism, which is preventing them from making progress at school. An independent multi-disciplinary assessment can be carried out by the Assessment Service to provide advice or to determine whether a place at the school would be appropriate.

The assessment takes place over two days. It includes some formal testing and observations within class and during leisure times. The child / young person joins a class in the school appropriate to his / her age for the two days. The assessment is carried out by an assessment team of a specialist teacher, a speech and language therapist and an educational psychologist.

Findings from the assessment are fed back verbally to parents and local authority at the end of the two days and a full written report is provided within three working weeks.

The independent assessment service is available to parents and professionals seeking advice about a young person's difficulties, and the strategies and consistent approaches for learning and educational provision. For more details, please see Speech and Language UK's assessment service policy document. Please email the Head of the Assessment Centre, kturner@meath-ican.org to request a copy, or look on the website https://www.meathschool.org.uk/school-policies/. If appropriate, a formal offer of a place is made to the referring local authority, or to the parents / carers.

The school seeks to co-operate fully with parents and LAs, as well as the SEN Disability Tribunal, on those occasions when parents appeal to the tribunals over the issue of placement.

The school's admission policy can be accessed via the school's website: https://www.meathschool.org.uk/school-policies/

Parents or carers who are interested in seeking a place at the school are very welcome to contact the school. We welcome informal visits from parents or carers of children with speech, language and communication needs. Arrangements for a visit can be made by telephoning the school 01932 872302

WHAT IS THE MAIN PROVISION FOR PUPILS / STUDENTS AT MEATH SCHOOL AND HOW IS IT EVALUATED?

The main objectives of the school's SEND policy are to ensure that the school provides the best quality education, therapy and care for children with severe / complex speech and language disorders

We aim to achieve this by:

- Enabling the pupils to develop their ability to communicate in spoken and written language so that they can take their place in society.
- Providing the spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development of the pupils at the school.
- Providing a language focused environment which is the product of collaboration between members of our multidisciplinary team.
- Preparing the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- Understanding and meeting the special educational needs of the pupils.
- Enabling the pupils to have access to the National Curriculum.
- Increasing each pupil's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Enabling each pupil to develop as much independence as possible.

- Developing opportunities for students within community settings and within mainstream provision
- Helping each pupil to achieve success regardless of disability, gender, class, race or sexual orientation and to develop in all our pupils a spirit of understanding, co-operation and respect for all members of the community.
- Engaging the parents and carers of our pupils in an active partnership to the benefit of the social and intellectual development of the children.

A copy of the school's SEND policy can be downloaded from the school's website: https://www.meathschool.org.uk/school-policies/

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

We offer one-on-one speech and language therapy, group language therapy, as well as, integrated speech and language learning into all learning activities.

A full-time Speech and Language Therapist works collaboratively with the class teacher and learning support assistants. Therapists are closely involved in planning and reviewing lessons, helping to tailor them to pupil's needs. Children are also offered individual or group speech and language support in therapy rooms attached to classrooms. Our therapists aim to develop children's functional communication, help them to access the curriculum, and build their confidence in communicating.

Some children benefit from the use of alternative and augmented communication aids (AAC). We have a dedicated therapist in place to support the use of VOCA (voice output communication aids).

Our Speech and Language Therapy staff understand each child's difficulties and strengths. They work together with school staff to use language which is tailored to each pupil's comprehension levels.

We encourage and celebrate all forms of communication. All staff and pupils learn **Sign Supported English** and use this to support verbal communication in the classroom. SSE is based on Makaton but has grammatical markers.

We offer a range of speech and language therapy services to support children in one to one, group and whole class teaching. These include:

INTEGRATED LEARNING AND THERAPIES

We use a range of integrated approaches throughout the day to enable children to access the curriculum and maximise their learning potential.
These approaches include:

SIGN SUPPORTED ENGLISH

All staff use **Sign Supported English** throughout the school. We use this form of sign language alongside the spoken word to provide visual support to help children with their understanding of language. It also provides a mode of communication for those children who find speaking difficult.

JOINTLY PLANNED AND DELIVERED STORYTELLING AND LITERACY LESSONS

Literacy, storytelling and conceptual learning are jointly planned and delivered by the teacher and therapy teams. Occupational therapists advise on how to adapt equipment and present worksheets and displays, and speech and language therapists help to plan the sessions so that literacy is delivered at the appropriate level and incorporates specialist approaches.

VOCABULARY TEACHING APPROACHES

Teachers and Therapists work collaboratively to deliver "Buzzwords" which focus on transferable conceptual vocabulary. This is a multi-sensory approach. We use Word Aware to support children's vocabulary development. This is a whole class approach which helps children learn the words they need to access the curriculum.

BLANKS LEVELS OF QUESTIONING

Our speech and language therapists use the Blanks Model to assess pupils' ability to understand questions. This model involves using different levels of questioning that increase in complexity. Questions are pitched at an appropriate level for each pupil, enabling them to answer and show their learning, and grown into the proximal zone of development.

SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS

All pupils receive weekly social skills groups to support their attention and learning behaviours, social interaction skills (interacting and communicating with others) and emotional literacy skills (ability to understand and express feelings).

AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

These are a range of tools and strategies used to support communication. The children are provided with a 'toolkit' for communication which can include speech, signing, gesture, symbols and a VOCA:

- Sign Supported English: Sign Supported English is used by all staff throughout the school. This sign language is used alongside the spoken word to provide visual support to help children with their understanding of language. It also provides a mode of communication for those children who find speaking difficult.
- Aided Language Stimulation (ALS) Boards: ALS boards are grids of pictures which support understanding and enable the pupils to communicate functionally, using longer sentences, during play and snack times and in lessons.
- Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA): Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA) are devices which are programmed with a voice. VOCAs may be trialled with children who have very little speech or whose speech is difficult to understand.
- Cued Articulation: This is a signing system for all speech sounds used in the English Language. The signs help children to represent the way sounds are produced. The approach is used throughout the school to support phonological awareness (awareness of the sound structure of words). This allows the children, even those with unclear speech or no speech at all, to participate in phonics sessions.

COLOUR–CODING (COLOURFUL SEMANTICS) FOR SENTENCE BUILDING

We colour code grammar throughout the school, progressing in complexity as children's language develops. Each word class has a colour to help children understand how words link together and how to structure sentences. This approach is used in therapy sessions, classrooms, and embedded throughout the school day.

ZONES OF REGULATION

The Zones of Regulation is a whole–school approach that helps children to understand and recognise their emotions. There are four Zones that are named the Green, Blue, Yellow and Red Zones. Each Zone includes a range of emotions. We teach children specific emotional vocabulary, the Zones and strategies to use as they progress through the school. This provides a consistent way for children to identify and share how they are feeling.

Zone boards are displayed throughout the school, and we encourage children to refer to them throughout the day. As well as sharing how they are feeling, we support them to identify and use strategies to help themselves be ready to learn.

ELECTROPALATOGRAPHY (EPG)

Some pupils use specialised equipment which shows contact between the tongue and hard palate when they speak. A custom-made artificial palate is moulded to fit against a child's hard palate, then this is shown visually on a computer screen to help the children understand how to produce their speech sounds.

VIDEO ADULT AND PARENT INTERACTION THERAPY (VACI/VPCI)

We use video feedback to allow staff to reflect on their interactions with children and reflect on the sessions. With the support of a therapist, this is used to reflect on and adapt their communication to help the child's understanding and use of language.

We offer Video Parent/Carer Child Interaction Therapy where parents/carers and therapists work together to identify specific, personalised strategies to support and develop their child's communication.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Our occupational therapy (OT) team aim to remove barriers to pupils' learning, develop their functional abilities and increase their independence. Our occupational therapists collaborate closely with class teams, speech and language therapists and families to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting each child's needs.

OTs use purposeful activities (activities which required active participation and are directed towards a goal) to help children develop their skills for learning and life.

This includes developing sensory processing, emotional regulation, attention, movement, visual perception and organisational skills. This helps pupils to achieve independence in activities such as dressing, using cutlery, accessing playground

equipment, handwriting, cutting with scissors and organising their classroom resources.

This direct therapy takes place in our sensory-integration space (a special room designed and equipped to stimulate the senses), or where appropriate, within functional spaces such as the classroom and playground.

OTs can also provide equipment to meet children's individual needs, such as specialist seating and slope boards to write on. This helps all our pupils access the curriculum and learn to the best of their abilities.

THE APPROACH TO TEACHING PUPILS / ADAPTATIONS MADE TO THE CURRICULUM

The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which is differentiated to meet the needs of pupils with communication difficulties. Our experienced team of teachers and speech and language therapists work together to plan and deliver integrated teaching and therapy tailored to the needs of each individual pupil. Meath School offer the full Primary Curriculum, excluding MFL. Teaching and therapy may take place in whole classes, small groups or individually.

Classes are primarily based on pupils' comprehension of verbal language skills, also taking account of curriculum attainments, learning and social needs. In this way we know behaviour and progress are maximised.

Class groups can include between eight and twelve pupils, across year groups and Key Stages.

Personal and social skills, as well as academic skills are nurtured in order to encourage the development of confident, well adjusted, sensitive and independent young people. All pupils follow the National Curriculum differentiated to meet the needs of the individual.

Our multidisciplinary approach and the partnership between teachers, therapists, learning support assistants and childcare officers mean that the pupils are enabled to make the maximum progress possible in all aspects of their growth and development.

Across the school and in the residential setting, an approach is used which builds on pupil strengths. Concepts, ideas and vocabulary are introduced in a flexible way to make learning more effective: pupils watch and do as well as listen and talk. The use of visual strengths is emphasised through signing, symbols, pictures and technology.

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and therapy. Staff use termly assessment to measure what each pupil has achieved and to plan the next step in the learning. Assessment also helps us to have clear and accurate information about what pupils find difficult and this enables us to help them more effectively. At the end of each key stage in a pupil's school career, assessment helps us to record what the pupil has achieved in that stage of his or her school career.
The very specific needs of the pupils placed at Meath School necessitate explicit and high priority teaching of certain aspects of the curriculum: social communication, organisational and study skills, PHSE and citizenship. Emotional and behavioural development are also high priority for some pupils.

Pupils' individual needs are assessed and provided for by the school's systems for curriculum planning and assessment and Individual Learning Target (ILT) planning. The pupils' core teams are pivotal in this process.

EVALUATION

Pupil progress is carefully monitored, using Earwig (an online system for recording assessment, tracking and monitoring) for recording attainment. Although levels have now been removed nationally, target setting within the school continues to be informed by PIVATS, EHCPs and SLT assessments. Comparison with national data sets informs target setting to ensure students are challenged to fulfil their potential. This approach ensures targets are ambitious and relevant.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

We are committed to the highest quality education, therapy and care for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties.

- To enable the pupils to develop their ability to communicate in spoken and written language so that they can take their place in society.
- To provide for the spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development of the pupils at the school.
- To provide a language focused environment which is the product of collaboration between members of our multidisciplinary team.
- To prepare the pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of the next stage of their education.
- To understand and meet the special educational needs of the pupils.
- To enable the pupils to have access to a bespoke Curriculum
- To enable each pupil to maximise their achievements in every area of the curriculum
- To increase each pupil's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- To enable each pupil to develop as much independence as possible.
- To help each pupil to achieve success regardless of disability, gender, class, race or sexual orientation and to develop in all our pupils a spirit of understanding, co-operation and respect for all members of the community.
- To engage the parents and carers of our pupils in an active partnership to the benefit of the social, intellectual and academic development of the pupils.

THE ETHOS AND VALUES OF THE SCHOOL

Meath is a specialist school for children with speech, language and communication needs. We enable all Meath learners to 'Talk, Learn, Grow'.

Our learners have a range of difficulties and complexities in their speech, language and communication. At Meath, we provide a total communication environment which means that communication through any means (talking, signing, gesture) are accepted, valued and reciprocated.

Speech and language therapists work collaboratively with the teachers to deliver outstanding teaching and experiential learning. Our staff's wealth of experience helps the children to build confidence and increase their understanding.

All learners are encouraged to grow in independence and resilience both in their learning and daily life skills. Our **occupational therapists** and our **Residential Care** team are an integral part of our team who support specific skills and nurture the children's abilities.

PURPOSE

- To provide the highest quality of education, therapy and care for children and young people from 4-11 years who have speech, language and communication needs including ASD Level 1 and associated difficulties.
- To provide a breadth of opportunities and experiences across the day and the extended curriculum which support the philosophy of inclusive practice.
- To identify and build on the pupils' strengths and to help them to develop the age-appropriate leisure interests and personal, social and independent living skills needed if they are to play an active role in their community on return to their local area.
- To develop positive and constructive relationships between all members of the school community and promote an understanding and tolerance of people of different ethnic backgrounds, religion and sexuality.
- To work in partnership with families, professionals and other stakeholders.
- To provide a safe and stimulating environment where members of the school community can achieve their potential and grow in self-esteem.

SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- At Meath School, all members of the school community treat one another with fairness and respect.
- At Meath School, everyone has a right to feel welcome, safe and included. No-one should be bullied, threatened or left out in any way.
- At Meath School, everyone should understand and accept that members of our school community come from many different backgrounds and cultures. This makes our school an interesting place in which to learn.
- At Meath School, we do not make comments or jokes that make others feel uneasy or unhappy by making fun of people's differences, be it their race, gender, class, sexuality, ability or appearance.
- At Meath School, we have a trained ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) to support children with their emotional literacy and self-esteem.

Everyone at Meath School will work to support these principles. The school's Anti Bullying Policy can be found in our Bahaviour policy which can be downloaded from the school website https://www.meathschool.org.uk/school-policies/

The code of conduct is very important as it sets the standards of behaviour that we expect of every member of our school community. However, we recognise that the needs of our pupils mean that achieving this standard is a challenge for some.

Our aim is to support the pupils in developing an appropriate standard of behaviour and to enable them to take control of their own behaviour management. To help them in this our behaviour policy sets out the steps towards this and the sanctions that are used when behaviour falls below expectations. The staff work to eliminate undesirable behaviour such as rudeness, aggression and bullying and to reward good behaviour in a positive way.

The school's behaviour Policy can be downloaded from the school's website by following the link below: https://www.meathschool.org.uk/school-policies/

THE EXPERTISE AND TRAINING OF STAFF IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF PUPILS

Staffing levels are enhanced so that pupils are usually taught in classes of up to 12 with a teacher and at least two learning support assistants. Each pupil has a designated SLT who may support within class by a small group or individual approach.

The school receives advice from a range of health professionals in order to meet the needs of the students as assessed by the appropriate professionals. Staff are organised in the following professional teams: teachers / speech and language therapists / occupational therapists / learning support assistants / registered childcare officers. Qualifications and compliance with professional standards are regularly audited through supervision and performance management procedures.

Staff details and qualifications are held in the school's Single Central Record.

Meath School is a learning community. All members of our community learn together. However, we recognise that the staff, as well as the pupils, need access to programmes and resources which foster their professional development.

Ongoing professional development is available to staff through 'on the job' training, peer mentoring, whole staff training days, focused training for particular groups of staff and opportunities for staff to attend courses outside school. Regular signing sessions for foundation and enhanced signing (for staff) are held weekly.

The health, safety and welfare of pupils are prime concerns of the school. Policies and procedures for child protection are securely in place and all staff receive regular training to ensure practices are of the highest standard. Speech and Language, UK recruitment and selection of staff follows best practice in this area.

Staff development is supported by appraisal and performance management. Regular appraisals are carried out for all members of staff. Teachers take part in performance management processes following the process of maintained schools.

HOW WILL EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES BE PROVIDED TO SUPPORT PUPILS AT MEATH?

Meath School is a purpose-built building and is fully accessible for wheelchair users being on one level.
The school makes use of SSE to support children's learning. The use of symbols is encouraged to develop both spoken and written expression. The school also promotes the use of a range of voice output devices to support individual pupil's communication.

There are four occupational therapists at Meath School. The OT works with the classroom staff and care staff to provide the children with the appropriate seating, writing implements, therapeutic music, chewies etc. They may work with individual pupils on more focused, intensive work, e.g. addressing visual perception, gross and fine motor skills.
The school has an occupational therapy room, quiet rooms, zones areas and use of the gym. The school is also fortunate to have a swimming pool on site.

MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS

In order to ensure that the health and medical needs of our pupils are met at school our Residential Services Manager co-ordinates all matters relating to the health and medical needs of the pupils. We also have an LSA coordinator and two senior LSAs who have responsibility for Medical under the supervision of the Residential services manager. A health care plan is produced for each pupil which details the provision required to meet their needs. Medical records are kept for all our pupils.
The Residential Services Manager meets with parents and carers when their child is admitted to the school in order to compile their medical history. The Residential Services Manager oversees the administration of any medication necessary for the pupils at school. Our Medical Policy can be downloaded from the school's website. https://www.meathschool.org.uk/school-policies/

WHAT ARE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING PARENTS OF PUPILS/STUDENTS AT MEATH AND INVOLVING THEM IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILD?

We aim to fully include parents in our working with their children/young adults.
To achieve this aim, we ensure there are:

- Initial parental visits to school
- Placement meetings on entry
- ILT (Individual learning target) meetings class teacher and SLT
- Annual Review of EHCP provision.
- Regular communication with parents via home/school and care / home books for information exchanges and key messages
- Text / e-mail messages home if preferred
- Coffee afternoons
- Parent Representatives on School advisory Board
- Annual surveys of parents / cares views and opinions /parent partnership meetings.
- Invitations to school events e.g. sports day, Meath's Got Talent etc.

PASTORAL AND SAFEGUARDING LEAD

We have a pastoral support and safeguarding Lead. She is available to provide:

- Initial family assessments to identify a family's needs and levels of support required
- One-to-one support and guidance, and a listening ear, for families and children
- Referral to external services so that families can access holistic support
- Signposting to other local support services or community activities
- Support to access Early Help intervention
- Support and guidance through social services when necessary

WHAT ARE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING YOUNG PEOPLE AT MEATH ABOUT, AND INVOLVING THEM IN THEIR EDUCATION?

All children and young people in our school are treated with dignity and respect.

A personalised approach to the curriculum has been adopted for each pupil/student across all phases so that they can access and experience success throughout their school and residential care experiences.

The School Council and Rights Respecting school's forum involves students to contribute and decide on aspects of school life relating to their needs.

There is a residential forum for the children which support their decision making of what activities we have and how the place is decorated.

Residential children have 1:1 sessions with a keyworker.

A team of staff have been trained in facilitating a person-centred approach to the annual review process of EHC Plans to ensure the choices and views of pupils/student are central to the process.

Pupil contributions are talked through before the annual review.

Pupil questionnaires are held annually.

WHAT ARE THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY THE GOVERNING BODY FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FROM PARENTS/CARERS OF PUPILS/STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION MADE AT MEATH?

Any parent or carer who has a complaint should discuss the matter with a member of staff and/or refer to the Principal. We hope to resolve any complaints quickly and informally. However, where this is not possible, we have a formal complaints procedure which is followed in such circumstances. Copies of the complaints policy can be accessed from the school's website https://www.meathschool.org.uk/school-policies/Speech and Language UK's, Director of Education, acts as the organisation's complaints officer for issues or concerns from parents, carers, LAs or others if these matters are not satisfactorily resolved within the school.

Parents also have a right to take their concern or complaint to Ofsted
Ofsted, Compliance Investigation Enforcement Team,
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA –
Tel: 08456 404045

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL INVOLVE OTHERS – INCLUDING HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF PUPILS / STUDENTS AT MEATH AND IN SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES?

The school is fortunate to have a wide range of staff working together within the school to support the children, young people and their families. Most are employed directly by the school. This includes teachers, learning support assistants and lunchtime supervisors; speech and language therapists, occupational therapists; and Pastoral and Safeguarding Lead. Admin staff are also school employees as are catering and domestic and residential care staff.

The school also works collaboratively with professionals from other agencies such as colleagues from CAMHS; health; social care; educational psychologists; targeted support teams (such as teachers for the hearing impaired) and SEN officers from placing authorities all of whom provide training and / or advice on individual pupil's needs.

Transport to school is organised by the placing Local Authority not the school. Transport staff are employed by the transport companies.

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORTING PUPILS / STUDENTS IN TRANSFERRING BETWEEN PHASES OF EDUCATION OR IN PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD?

All transitions are well planned for throughout the school as children and students move from class to class and phase to phase. Parents/carers have the opportunity to meet the new core team.

The Year 5 Annual Review has a statutory Transition Plan as part of the procedure to move to secondary school. All transition reviews follow a person-centred approach. The review in Year 6 confirms and amends plans for the next educational phase.

WHERE IS THE INFORMATION ON THE STUDENTS PLACING AUTHORITY'S LOCAL OFFER PUBLISHED?

The school works with many placing authorities. Each of the local authorities are required to publish their local offer which should be found via the councils' website SEN page.

Review of this document is scheduled for September 2027