

This information is published in conjunction with Merton Local Authorities Local Offer which can be found at: www.merton.gov.uk/localoffer.htm

Key Contacts

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SENCO: Nicola van Zyl (Acting SENCO)

Director of Inclusion: Nicola Van Zyl

SLT Link/Vice Principal: Nicola van Zyl

1. What kinds of special educational needs does the school make provision for?

At St Mark's CofE Academy we cater for a wide range of Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and medical needs. These include Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD, learning difficulties, Diabetes and Visual Impairment, Speech and Language delay and other emotional difficulties. We work closely with parents and professionals to assist each child with achieving their true potential, ensuring the curriculum and environment are accessible, while supporting them with removing barriers to their learning.

2. How does the school know if students need extra help and what should I do if I think that my child may have special educational needs?

Transition

- All year 7 students have a transition interview, which provides an early opportunity for parent to inform us if their child needs extra help, or if they have special educational needs.
- As part of the transition process, we often contact primary schools, where a parent has informed us of special educational needs, as we seek to work with primary schools to ensure the transition process is as seamless as possible.
- Practitioners from primary schools are invited to attend meetings at the Academy, during the transition process.
- The school works closely with outside agencies involved with student who enter with a recognised need and we seek to do all we can to meet the need in the setting from the day they arrive.
- All new students undertake CATS tests.
- The Academy continue to support students post-16, sharing information when requested and arranging visits to the new setting so that the student feels equipped to begin the next part of their journey.

Within School

- The progress of every child is carefully tracked and progress reports are produced to map progress across all year groups. This provides an opportunity for any concerns to be identified, often through progress and behaviour data, classroom assessment and/or professional observations. These concerns are often raised and discussed with the parent/carer, coach, progress leader, or SENDCO.

- Similarly, a parent/carer with concerns should initially speak to the coach or class teacher or complete a SEND parent referral form found on the website.
- Conduct data enables the Academy to identify which students may require support with behaviour and conduct.
- There is a structured process of intervention based on several threshold being met.
- All interventions are rigorously monitored with regular parental contact, to review impact and progress.

Transferring to the Academy from another secondary (mid-year)

- Merton Admissions provided the Academy with transfer applications and Pupil Information Form (PIF) completed by the current/previous school – providing assessment information, support needs and reasons for the transfer.
- If a student has an EHCP, their admission will be managed through the consultation process with the SEND department of the local authority.
- Pre-admission meetings are conducted by the admissions Team with all new students and their family to prepare them for transition and determine any support needs.
- All new students transferring to the Academy attend an induction day prior to their date of admission to further assist the Academy in planning for their individual needs appropriately.
- Detailed student profiles are sent out to all teaching staff prior to new students starting – providing key information about skills, difficulties and support needs.
- Buddies from the same year group are assigned to new students to support with their orientation around the school (or buddies with same language assigned for translation support where no English is spoken by new student)
- EAL students join appropriately levelled support class upon admission to enable them to develop their language skills.
- EAL teaching assistants provide in class support for those with no English.
- SEND students join appropriate intervention/support programmes where necessary

Transferring from the Academy to a new school

- The Academy completes a Pupil Information Form (PIF) to provide key information to the new school
- SEND and main school files are transferred to receiving school.
- Transition meetings are held with the new school and family where necessary
Preparing students for further education or employment
- Teaching staff work closely with students to assist in making choices about applying for 6th form.
- A Careers Advisor is based in the Academy once a week to meet with students in Key Stage 4 to assist in planning for next steps beyond the Academy.
- Merton's My Futures team work closely with key students in Key Stage 4 who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) through regular mentoring sessions.

How do we support pupils to transition between phases of education and/or in preparation for adulthood and independent living.

- Early planning is embedded into the Plan–Do–Review cycle, ensuring transitions are anticipated and scaffolded well in advance.
- For pupils moving between key stages or settings, we provide:
 - Enhanced transition visits and familiarisation activities.

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- Pupil passports and one-page profiles to share strengths, needs, and strategies.
- Staff handovers that include SEND-specific strategies and successful interventions.
- For pupils preparing for adulthood and independent living, we focus on:
 - Life skills development, including travel training, money management, and self-advocacy.
 - Curriculum pathways that include vocational options, work experience, and supported apprenticeships where appropriate.
 - Annual Reviews that explicitly address Preparation for Adulthood outcomes (PFA), for students with an EHCP.
- Parents/carers and pupils are actively involved in transition planning through:
 - Review meetings, including six-weekly reviews for EHCP pupils.
 - Person-centred planning tools that capture aspirations and concerns.
 - Joint meetings with receiving settings or post-16 providers.
- Emotional readiness is supported through mentoring, wellbeing interventions, and gradual exposure to new environments.
- Post-transition follow-up ensures pupils are settling well and that any emerging needs are addressed swiftly.

3. How are the school's resources allocated and matched to child/young person's special educational needs?

Allocation of resources to support students' needs

- Decisions about provision for students with SEND are made by the Director of Inclusion/SEND/CO in collaboration with the Inclusion Team and SLT. This is based on information/assessments provided by teaching staff and/or external agencies.
- A high level of support is provided to students in Year 7 to support with transition and ensure that key skills are developed appropriately. All students' literacy skills are tested in September – those falling below a certain level are targeted for literacy support through the Inclusion Department.
- Students exhibiting behavioural and/or communication difficulties may be targeted for Speech and Language support or other Nurture Groups.
- Students at risk of exclusion may be referred to the Academy's Inclusion Panel – following which a period of timed intervention may be put into place.
- Pupil premium has been used to fund a number of services within the Academy, including: tuition services for students underachieving in core subjects and various other trips and events.
- Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have a careful programme of support that is planned around the identified needs and difficulties. This provision is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains effective and appropriate.

Students requiring a high level of support

- Students who are struggling to engage successfully with a mainstream curriculum may be referred to the Director of Inclusion. Recommendations may include a period of support through the Inclusion Department, an assessment with an external agency or a period of timed intervention outside of the mainstream lessons (within the Academy).
- Where the needs of a student exceed the available resources, an application for an Education, Health and Care Plan may be made with the student's local borough. Parents/Carers will be informed if this is required.
- Annual/interim review process for students with a Statement/Educational, Health and Care Plan can address any funding issues.

4. a) How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its provision for students with special educational needs?

- The development and use of IEPs assist with reviewing and monitoring progress.
- A Termly SEND report is produced to monitor the progress, achievements and overall well-being of every child.
- In addition to this the SENDCO will liaise with the progress leader and coach to monitor the progress of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- All interventions are carefully tracked and monitored to ensure that they are having the required positive impact.
- Attainment reports that are provided to governors, includes data of SEND students
- A yearly, SEND audit, provides a quality assurance process to help with evaluating effectiveness of our provision.

b) How will both the school and I know how my child is doing and how will the school help me to support their learning?

- All students have ambitious yet achievable targets in all areas of their learning, their progress is reviewed internal on a regular basis.
- Parent/carers are provided with a progress check style report.
- Parents evenings provide an opportunity for teachers to share information with families.
- There are reviews each term but the SENDCO is happy to talk to any parent about their child and additional meetings can be arranged at mutual convenience.
- Parent/carer events hosted by the SEND team

c) What is the school's approach to teaching students with special educational needs?

- As a school we believe in quality first teaching and have a rigorous observation process and professional development program to support teachers to meet the needs of all students.
- Our curriculum is broad, balanced and inclusive, so all children are given the opportunity to reach their potential and see themselves as learners.
- Specialist resources are provided when requested by specialists and training undertaken by staff. There is assisted communication along with adjusted materials for children who need it.
- Depending on the complexity of the need, outside support and expertise is sought from external agencies available to the SENDCO.
- Parents and carers are always consulted about all choices that are made concerning their child.

- Appropriate interventions are put into place for any child, with or without special educational needs, who are not making expected progress.
- We support students with special educational needs and disabilities by providing specifically prepared learning materials and the use of appropriate ICT equipment.
- Progress Academy provides intensive support for extended periods, which may involve withdrawing students from some or all of their lesson for a set period of time.
- Mentoring support is also offered for students e.g. to work on behavioural and emotional strategies

d) How will the curriculum and learning be matched to my child's needs?

- Every teacher is responsible for the learning in their classroom; the delivery of the curriculum is differentiated to cater for the varying abilities and learning styles of the children in the class.
- The approach to teaching children with special educational needs and disabilities listed above is employed when the needs of a child is outside the regular parameters seen within a class.

e) How are decisions made about the type and amount of support my child will receive?

- All decisions about the type and amount of support that children receive will be an ongoing collaboration between the child, parent, teachers, SENDCO, outside agencies, Senior Leadership Team, Principal and Governors.
- Working closely with parents and professionals we will always seek to teach every child so they can achieve his or her best; the type and level of support remains fluid depending on the specific needs of the child at any particular time.
- If the needs and required provision meets the criteria for additional funding from an outside source then a bid for that funding will be written by the SENDCO to further aid the support for that individual child.

f) How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom, including school trips?

- All children are included in school activities and trips.
- Where children have additional needs there will be child specific risk assessments completed and adequate support where appropriate will be put in place to ensure a safe and successful trip for all.

g) What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

- The Academy's Student Well-being Coordinator works to identify the well-being needs of students • Students are encouraged to discuss any issues they have, whether educational or social, with their teachers, coach, student support officer, progress leader, subject teachers or another adult.
- The school provide a counselling service that can be access by all students, with additional referrals made to CAMHS if required.
- The School Nurse provides a weekly drop-in service for students who might need some extra emotional support.

h) How you we assess and review pupil progress toward outcomes

- We follow the Plan–Do–Review cycle to ensure targeted, responsive support for pupils with SEND.
- Six-weekly reviews are held for pupils with an EHCP or higher level of need, focusing on progress toward individual outcomes and adjusting provision as needed.
- These reviews are collaborative, involving parents/carers and pupils to co-produce next steps and strengthen shared understanding.

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- Literacy Panels meet half-termly to evaluate the impact of literacy interventions using pupil voice, work samples, and progress data.
- Termly whole-school data analysis helps identify patterns, celebrate progress, and respond swiftly to emerging needs.
- SLT meetings include regular review of SEND progress and strategic oversight of provision and outcomes.
- Quality of Education meetings explore the impact of curriculum access and scaffolding for SEND learners, using case studies and work scrutiny.
- Data meetings provide a structured opportunity to analyse progress and attainment of SEND cohorts, informing targeted interventions.
- Staff use a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform decisions, including attendance, engagement, academic progress, and wellbeing indicators.

5. a) What training have staff supporting special educational needs had and what is planned?

- The SENDCO receives training from various local and national providers on a wide range of conditions such as Autism, Dyslexia etc.
- CPD is offered to all staff or individual coaching is provided if the need arises.
- The SENDCO, teachers, Teaching Assistants, other staff and governors also access training to learn how to support children with specific needs such as diabetes.

b) What specialist services and expertise are available or accessed by the school?

- The services of an educational psychologist are employed to assist with assessments and to support staff and parents.
- If, once the progress of a child has been monitored and strategies discussed with parents, it is considered that additional expertise is desirable then these outside specialist services can be accessed by the SENDCO.
- The school has access to a wide field of additional services e.g. visual and hearing support, occupational therapist, school nurse and the educational psychologist
- The Academy has specialist HLTAs who have been trained in speech and language support, emotional literacy support, behaviour, emotional and social disorder specialists.

c) The steps you have taken to prevent students with disabilities from being treated less favourably than other students

- Early identification and graduated response ensure that barriers to learning are addressed proactively through the Plan–Do–Review cycle.
- Reasonable adjustments are made across all areas of school life, including teaching, assessment, environment, and enrichment activities.
- Staff training is regularly delivered on inclusive practice, unconscious bias, and the Equality Act 2010 to embed a culture of equity and belonging.
- Accessible teaching strategies are embedded in Quality First Teaching, including scaffolding, chunking, visual supports, and assistive technology.
- Personalised support plans (e.g. Pupil Passports, EHCPs, risk assessments) are co-produced with pupils and families to ensure needs are understood and met.

- Inclusive enrichment: All students, including those with disabilities, are supported to access trips, clubs, leadership roles, and wider school life.
- Accessible environments: Physical adaptations (e.g. ramps, lifts, quiet spaces) and sensory considerations are in place to ensure full participation.
- Pupil voice is central to decision-making, with regular opportunities for students with SEND to share their experiences and shape provision.
- Parent/carer partnerships are prioritised through regular communication, review meetings, and collaborative planning.
- Monitoring and accountability: SLT and governors review SEND data, suspensions, and participation to identify and address any disproportionality.
- We ensure holistic planning between SEND, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, and wellbeing teams to provide coordinated, pupil-centred support that addresses academic, emotional, and social needs.

d) What support we offer pupils with SEN for their emotional, mental and social development?

- Pastoral mentoring and key adult relationships are prioritised to provide consistent, trusted support for pupils with additional needs.
- Wellbeing interventions (e.g. THRIVE, ELSA, Zones of Regulation) are embedded to help pupils develop emotional literacy, self-regulation, and resilience.
- Safe spaces and sensory-friendly environments are available for pupils who need time out, emotional regulation, or reduced stimulation.
- Social skills groups and structured peer interaction sessions support pupils in developing confidence, communication, and friendships.
- Regular pupil voice opportunities are built into review cycles, including:
 - One-page profiles and pupil passports co-produced with students.
 - Pupil contributions to EHCP reviews and six-weekly SEND reviews.
 - Informal check-ins and feedback through pastoral staff or trusted adults.
- Access to counselling or therapeutic services is provided where appropriate, including referrals to external agencies (e.g. CAMHS, school-based therapists).
- Assemblies, PSHE, and tutor time include inclusive content on mental health, identity, and belonging, ensuring all pupils feel seen and valued.
- Staff training ensures all adults understand how to recognise and respond to emotional and social needs, including trauma-informed and neurodiverse-aware approaches.
- Multi-agency collaboration supports holistic planning, drawing on input from safeguarding, attendance, and wellbeing teams to address wider contextual needs.

e) What anti-bullying measures we have in place?

- Whole-school policy: A clear, consistently applied Anti-Bullying Policy outlines definitions, procedures, and consequences, aligned with statutory guidance and the Equality Act 2010.
- Staff training: All staff receive regular training on recognising, preventing, and responding to bullying, including SEND-specific vulnerabilities and online safety.
- Student voice: Pupils are empowered to report concerns through trusted adults, anonymous systems, and structured pupil voice activities.

- Inclusive curriculum: Lifeology, assemblies, and coaching time embed themes of respect, empathy, and difference, including neurodiversity, disability, and identity.
- Early intervention: Behaviour logs, safeguarding alerts, and pastoral check-ins help identify patterns and intervene before issues escalate.
- Restorative approaches: Where appropriate, restorative conversations and mediation are used to rebuild relationships and promote accountability.
- SEND-specific safeguards: Pupils with SEND are monitored closely for signs of social isolation or peer conflict, with additional adult support and social skills interventions as needed.
- Multi-agency collaboration: External services are engaged when bullying has wider safeguarding implications.
- Monitoring and review: SLT and governors review bullying data, pupil feedback, and incident trends to ensure the policy remains effective and inclusive.

6. How will equipment and facilities to support students with special educational needs be secured? How accessible is the school?

- The school provides any appropriate and reasonable equipment and facilities that a child with special educational needs or disability may need
- This equipment will have been identified by an outside agency as required by the child in order for them to best access their learning.

7. What are the arrangements for consulting parents of students with special educational needs? How will I be involved in the education of my child?

- Parents are encouraged to speak to coaches or progress leaders, if they have any questions or concerns; these meetings can be informal or arranged.
- In addition to the parent evenings additional meetings are held to discuss targets and achievements with the SENDCO for students with complex needs.
- Parents can make an appointment to see the SENDCO by emailing the above email address. For a child to reach his or her potential it is important for the parent to be fully involved.

8. 8. What are the arrangements for involving young people in SEND in making decisions about their education?

- Students are involved with their target setting.
- Students are involved in developing a one-page summary of their needs for members of staff.
- In order to encourage motivation in the child, teachers ensure that they get to know the child so they can tailor the provision in school to meet their learning style and interests.

9. What do I do if I have a concern or complaint about the SEND provision made by the school?

- Parents are encouraged to bring any concerns to the attention of the SENDCO.
- For detailed information please refer to the complaints policy on Academy's website.

10. How does the governing body involve other organisations and services (e.g. health, social care, local authority support services and voluntary organisations) in the meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and supporting the families of such students?

- The Director of Inclusion and SENDCO usually the person who involves other organisations and services and reports directly to the Senior Leadership Team; the Director of Inclusion and VP of inclusion, reports to the governor with specific responsibility for Special Needs.
- Governors can see the data that informs them of the progress made by students with additional needs in order that they can ask questions to ensure that all student's needs are being met.

11. How does the school seek to signpost organisations, services etc. who can provide additional support to parents/carers/children?

- The SENDCO can signpost parents to the wide range of support organisations and groups available in the community.
- The School Nurse is available to add expertise and signposting that is more specifically related to health and mental-wellbeing; this service can be accessed by the SEND team.

12. What should I do if I am considering whether this is the right school for my child/young person?

- Attend open mornings/evenings as advertised
- Contact the Academy to arrange for a tour and/or a school prospectus to be sent out to you
- Visit the Academy website to get more information
- Contact the SENDCO to discuss any support needs
- Contact the Academy to speak with the appropriate member of staff to discuss any other details or concerns.

13. Who can I contact for further information?

Key Staff within the Academy

- Director of Inclusion - Nicola Van Zyl
- SENCO-Nicola van Zyl (Acting)
- Student Well-being Coordinator – Lynda Haughton
- Head of EAL Department – Nina Ahmed
- Vice Principal of Behaviour, Pastoral ad Inclusion – Esther Marshall
- Academy Principal – Aimee Gallagher (Contact Personal Assistant - Carol Low)

14. Where can I access further information?

For further information please refer to the school website; specifically, the Special Needs and Disabilities Policy. To have specific questions or concerns answered please contact

the SENDCO on the above email address. Information on Merton Council's SEND local offer can be found [here](#). Supported by Section 69 of the Children and Families Act.