



St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

October 2026

Agreed by the Governing Body	October 2026
Review date	October 2027
Policy lead	Headteacher / SENDCo
School	St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Jarrow

This policy should be read alongside the school's SEND Information Report, Accessibility Plan, Equality Information and Objectives, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

1. Purpose and statutory framework

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School is committed to an inclusive education in which every pupil is valued, enabled to participate and supported to achieve the best possible outcomes. Our approach reflects our Catholic mission to recognise the dignity and worth of every child and to remove barriers to learning and participation.

This policy has been updated for the 2026/27 academic year. It has regard to the current statutory framework in England, including:

- Children and Families Act 2014, particularly Part 3 on children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, as amended, including the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance).
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Education Act 1996 and the school's duties to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the school's current safeguarding arrangements.
- Statutory guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Current statutory assessment and access-arrangements guidance where applicable.

Government SEND reform proposals published in 2026 are not treated in this policy as changes to existing statutory entitlements. The school will review this policy if and when new legislation or statutory guidance comes into force.

2. Definitions

A child has special educational needs (SEN) where they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Special educational provision is provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for pupils of the same age.

A child may be disabled under the Equality Act 2010 whether or not they have SEN. The school will not require a diagnosis before considering and putting in place appropriate reasonable adjustments or SEN provision where evidence shows that support is needed.

The four broad areas of need

- Communication and interaction.
- Cognition and learning.
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

These areas help the school plan provision. They do not describe the whole child, and identification will consider strengths, barriers, context and individual circumstances. Where needs overlap, provision will be planned holistically.

3. Aims

- Identify needs as early and accurately as possible and respond through high-quality teaching and timely support.
- Use the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review to secure improving outcomes.

- Ensure pupils with SEND access an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum and the wider life of the school.
- Make reasonable adjustments to avoid substantial disadvantage for disabled pupils.
- Work in genuine partnership with parents and carers and involve pupils in decisions about their support.
- Use evidence, assessment and specialist advice proportionately and effectively.
- Promote successful transition within school and between settings.
- Ensure SEND and safeguarding practice are closely connected, recognising the additional safeguarding barriers some pupils with SEND may experience.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

- Has strategic oversight of SEND and inclusion and holds leaders to account for the quality, impact and value for money of provision.
- Ensures the school fulfils its statutory duties towards pupils with SEN and disabled pupils.
- Monitors the implementation of this policy, the SEND Information Report, accessibility arrangements and equality duties.
- Maintains a link governor for SEND and receives appropriate information about outcomes, provision, parent/pupil voice and priorities.

The Headteacher

- Has overall responsibility for implementing the school's SEND policy and ensuring an inclusive culture.
- Works with the SENDCo and governing body to ensure appropriate staffing, professional development, deployment of resources and evaluation of impact.
- Ensures teachers understand that they are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

The SENDCo

The school's SENDCo is Miss H Shawcross. The SENDCo works with the Headteacher, Mrs Eve Alderson, and the SEND link governor. The SENDCo will coordinate provision, advise colleagues, liaise with parents and external professionals, support transition, contribute to strategic improvement and monitor the quality and impact of SEND provision.

For SENCOs beginning the relevant mandatory qualification route on or after 1 September 2024, the mandatory qualification is the National Professional Qualification for SENCOs (NPQ for SENCOs), subject to the transitional arrangements in the amended SEND Regulations. The school will ensure that statutory qualification requirements are met.

Teachers and support staff

- Teachers retain responsibility for the progress and development of every pupil they teach.
- Staff use assessment information and pupil/parent views to adapt teaching, resources and the environment.
- Support staff work under appropriate direction and should supplement, not replace, the teacher's interaction with the pupil.

- All staff raise SEND and safeguarding concerns promptly through the school's agreed procedures.

5. Identification and early response

The school uses a range of information to identify emerging needs, including day-to-day assessment, progress and attainment information, observations, attendance and behaviour information, pupil voice, parent/carers concerns, transition information and relevant professional advice. Slow progress or low attainment does not automatically mean that a pupil has SEN, and attainment in line with chronological age does not rule SEN out.

Where there is a concern, the class teacher will work with the SENDCo and parents/carers to identify barriers, consider appropriate adjustments and agree next steps. Difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language will not be identified as SEN.

6. SEN Support and the graduated approach

Where, despite appropriate high-quality teaching and reasonable adjustments, a pupil requires special educational provision, the school will normally record the pupil as receiving SEN Support. The provision will be developed through a cyclical process:

Assess: Establish a clear analysis of the pupil's needs using relevant evidence and the views of the pupil and parents/carers.

Plan: Agree outcomes, provision, adjustments, responsibilities and review arrangements. Parents/carers and the pupil will be involved and staff who work with the pupil will understand the plan.

Do: The class teacher remains responsible for implementation, working with support staff and specialists as appropriate. Provision should be integrated into day-to-day teaching wherever possible.

Review: Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of support against agreed outcomes, taking account of pupil and parent/carers views, then refine, continue or cease provision as appropriate.

At St Matthew's, school-level plans may be referred to as SEND Support Plans. The precise format of a plan does not alter the school's duty to implement the graduated approach and review provision regularly.

7. Education, Health and Care needs assessments and EHC plans

Where a pupil has not made expected progress despite relevant and purposeful action, the school and parents/carers may consider requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment from the local authority. Parents and young people also have a right to make a request themselves in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014.

For pupils with an EHC plan, the school will use its best endeavours to secure the special educational provision specified in the plan, work with the local authority and partner agencies, and contribute to the statutory review process. EHC plans must be reviewed at least annually. Reviews for pupils approaching transfer between phases will support timely transition planning.

8. Pupil and parent/carers participation

Children and their parents/carers are partners in decision-making. The school will provide clear information, listen to concerns and aspirations, involve families in decisions about

outcomes and provision, and explain how support will be reviewed. Communication will be adapted where needed so that participation is meaningful and accessible.

Pupils will be supported to express their views in ways appropriate to their age and communication needs. This may include conversation, pupil voice activities, visual supports, contributions to SEND Support Plans and annual reviews, and a “My View” or equivalent contribution for EHC plan processes.

9. Curriculum access, high-quality teaching and reasonable adjustments

High-quality, inclusive teaching is the first response to pupils who have or may have SEND. Teachers will use adaptive teaching, explicit instruction, scaffolding, carefully selected resources, appropriate technology and adjustments to routines or the environment where these remove barriers without lowering ambition.

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Adjustments are anticipatory where the Equality Act requires this and may include changes to the physical environment, auxiliary aids, communication support, accessible information and adjustments to policies or practices. The Accessibility Plan sets out the school’s longer-term accessibility priorities.

10. Assessment and statutory tests

Pupils with SEND should participate in statutory assessments where they are working at the standard of the test and can access it appropriately. Access arrangements will only be used where they are permitted by the current statutory guidance and reflect the pupil’s normal way of working. Where statutory requirements provide that a pupil should not take a particular assessment, the school will follow the applicable guidance and report achievement through the appropriate route.

11. Additional and specialist provision

Provision is matched to assessed need and reviewed for impact. Depending on need, this may include:

- Targeted individual or small-group teaching linked to clearly defined outcomes.
- Speech, language and communication programmes informed by assessment and professional advice.
- Support for literacy, numeracy, fine/gross motor development, sensory and physical access, emotional regulation and social communication.
- Appropriate equipment, assistive technology and environmental adaptations.
- Advice or involvement from services such as Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, health services and local authority specialist teams.

The involvement of a specialist does not depend on a pupil having a formal diagnosis where advice is appropriate. External advice will be incorporated into teaching, provision and review arrangements.

12. Social, emotional and mental health support

The school recognises that social, emotional and mental health needs may be a primary area of SEN or may interact with other needs. Support will be matched to assessed need and may include emotional-regulation approaches, targeted interventions, pastoral support and liaison with relevant health or mental health practitioners. Where a mental health

concern is also a safeguarding concern, the school's safeguarding procedures will be followed immediately.

13. Safeguarding pupils with SEND

Pupils with SEND or certain medical conditions can face additional safeguarding barriers, including communication difficulties, assumptions that changes in behaviour relate to disability, and increased vulnerability to isolation, bullying or harassment. Staff will remain professionally curious, make communication accessible, listen carefully to pupil voice and liaise with the DSL and SENDCo where safeguarding and SEND issues intersect.

14. Attendance, behaviour and suspension/exclusion

SEND needs do not remove the school's high expectations for attendance or behaviour. However, leaders will consider whether SEND, disability, communication needs, mental health or unmet provision may be contributing to difficulties and whether reasonable adjustments or additional support are required. Decisions will be made lawfully, proportionately and in line with the school's Behaviour, Attendance, Safeguarding and Suspension/Permanent Exclusion procedures.

15. Medical conditions and SEND

Some pupils with medical conditions may also have SEN or a disability. The school will coordinate SEND provision, individual healthcare arrangements and reasonable adjustments so that responsibilities are clear and the pupil can access education safely and as fully as possible. Having a medical condition does not, by itself, mean that a pupil has SEN.

16. Transition

Transitions will be planned in partnership with pupils, families and receiving settings. This includes transition from early years into Reception, between year groups and key stages, and into secondary or specialist provision. Where appropriate, enhanced visits, additional information-sharing and multi-agency planning will be arranged. Relevant SEND information will be transferred securely and promptly.

17. Funding and use of resources

SEND provision is funded through the resources available to the school and, where applicable, additional high-needs funding determined through local arrangements. The school will use resources transparently and according to assessed need, statutory duties and local funding guidance. Costed provision mapping may be used to understand provision and evaluate impact. Funding thresholds and local banding arrangements can change and therefore are not fixed in this policy.

18. Working with external agencies and the Local Offer

The school works with South Tyneside Council and relevant health, social care and specialist services. The local authority must publish a Local Offer setting out information about provision expected to be available for children and young people with SEND. The school also publishes its own SEND Information Report, which explains school-specific arrangements and is reviewed in line with statutory requirements.

Families can also obtain impartial information, advice and support from the local SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). Current contact details and links

are maintained through the school website and South Tyneside Local Offer so that this policy does not become inaccurate when service details change.

19. Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision

Leaders and governors evaluate SEND provision through a range of evidence rather than relying on a single measure. This includes:

- Progress towards individual outcomes and curriculum goals.
- The effectiveness and fidelity of interventions and reasonable adjustments.
- Attendance, behaviour, participation and successful inclusion in enrichment and wider school life.
- Pupil and parent/carer voice.
- Quality of teaching and implementation of agreed provision.
- Transition outcomes and relevant specialist advice.
- Use of resources and provision mapping.

Findings inform professional development, deployment of resources, the school development plan and future provision.

20. Staff development

SEND is a whole-school responsibility. Leaders will identify professional-development needs through monitoring, pupil needs and school priorities. Training may include adaptive teaching, specific areas of need, communication, assistive technology, emotional regulation, statutory duties, safeguarding and effective deployment of support staff.

21. Complaints and resolving concerns

The school aims to resolve concerns about SEND provision promptly and in partnership with families. Parents/carers should normally raise concerns first with the class teacher and/or SENDCo and, where necessary, the Headteacher. Formal complaints will be considered under the school's published Complaints Policy. Rights relating to EHC needs assessments and EHC plans, including mediation and appeal rights, are governed by the statutory SEND framework and will be explained by the local authority where applicable.

22. Links with other school documents

- SEND Information Report and South Tyneside Local Offer
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies
- Attendance Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Intimate Care and First Aid arrangements
- Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching & Learning policies
- Complaints Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion procedures
- Data Protection / UK GDPR policies

23. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and SENDCo will keep implementation of this policy under review. Governors will monitor compliance and impact through their strategic oversight arrangements. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier where legislation, statutory guidance, local arrangements or school circumstances materially change.

24. Main school contacts

Role	Name	Telephone
Headteacher	Mrs Eve Alderson	0191 489 8355
SENDCo	Miss H Shawcross	0191 489 8355

Appendix: Key updates made for October 2026

- Reframed the document as a school SEND Policy, with the Local Offer and SEND Information Report clearly distinguished from the policy itself.
- Updated the statutory framework and included the 2024 amendment introducing the NPQ for SENCOs, with transitional arrangements acknowledged.
- Added explicit duties on high-quality teaching, teacher accountability, reasonable adjustments and the graduated approach.
- Removed outdated references to “statements”, Year 2 SATs as a routine statutory assessment, fixed local funding thresholds and unrestricted examples of test access arrangements.
- Strengthened pupil and parent participation, safeguarding, mental health, medical needs, attendance/behaviour, transition and evaluation of impact.
- Clarified annual review of EHC plans and the school’s role in EHC needs assessment requests.
- Cross-referenced the school’s current Accessibility, Equality and Safeguarding documents and protected the policy from becoming inaccurate when local contact details or funding arrangements change.
- Noted that 2026 SEND reform proposals are not presented as current law unless and until legislation/statutory guidance changes.