



Willow Bank School SEND Information Report

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Overview

Welcome to our SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disabilities) Information Report. Last revised March 2024.

All Governing Bodies of maintained schools and maintained nursery schools and the proprietors of academy schools have a legal duty to publish information on their website about the implementation of the Governing Body's or the proprietor's policy for pupils with SEND. This published information is updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year are updated as soon as possible.

For new pupils preparing to join our school, as a parent or carer we understand you are likely to have many questions. Our information report attempts to answer many of these, but you are welcome to visit the rest of our website or our school 'Twitter' feed to find out more. We will also be happy to answer any questions over the phone or arrange for you and your child/young person to visit the school so please feel free to get in touch.

SENCo Contact Details

Current SENCo: Mrs E Bainbridge

Telephone: 01744 678745

Link to St Helens Local Authority Local Offer

[SEND \(sthelens.gov.uk\)](https://www.sthelens.gov.uk)



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1. How are Special Educational Needs defined and what kinds of SEND do you provide for at Willow Bank School?

The term 'Special Educational Needs' has a legal definition, referring to children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age.

The DfE Code of Practice defines SEND as follows:

A child or young person has SEND if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- b) Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Willow Bank School currently provides for pupils from Year 5 to Year 11 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH).

All of our pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) however each individual is unique.



Some of our pupils have difficulties with communication and interaction, some have difficulties with cognition and learning which may include specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, some have sensory and physical impairments, and some are diagnosed as Autistic or with conditions such as diabetes, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and/or specific mental health disorders.



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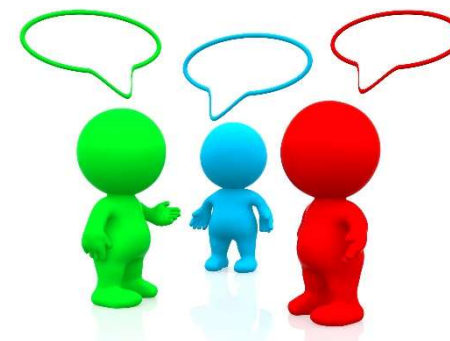
2. Who should I speak to about my child or young persons' difficulties?

At Willow Bank School, we have an open-door policy and encourage parents/carers to discuss their concerns with your child/young persons' form tutor team or SEND key worker (if applicable) as soon as possible. This helps to ensure early identification of need and enables us to ensure provision is adapted as efficiently as possible to best support our pupils.

All staff at Willow Bank School are experienced SEN professionals who, due to the size of our school, are able to communicate daily.

Where necessary staff may share concerns with the school SENCo, designated safeguarding lead or another member of the senior leadership team to access further support.

Your child/young persons' SEND key worker, form tutor, SENCo, safeguarding lead or another member of SLT can be contacted by telephoning the office staff on 01744 678745 who will arrange for the member of staff to return the call as soon as reasonably possible.





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3. How will you know if my child needs extra support/help and how are decisions made to adapt provision?



All our pupils arrive at Willow Bank School with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which contains information about the extra support/help they need. These plans are reviewed annually, in line with statutory requirements, in collaboration with pupils, parents/carers, key workers, form staff, subject teachers, the school SENCo and any other professionals involved.

We appreciate that individual needs can change over time. Regular reviews of progress help us to identify any strengths and areas of difficulty so that we can respond effectively.

- Academic progress is reviewed formatively by teachers within lessons.
- Summative subject reports are provided and reviewed termly.
- All pupils are also screened in literacy and progress reviewed termly.

Analysis of academic progress supports us in identifying pupils' strengths and where they may benefit from additional support. We recognise, however, that our pupils may also need support in other areas of development and school life. As such.

- Achievement and behaviour records are recorded daily and reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- Attendance records are recorded daily and reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- A range of screening tools such as the Boxall Profile may also be utilised where appropriate to provide further insights and help set appropriate targets.

In response to analysis of formative assessments, progress data, observations and communications, staff set appropriate targets and review the curriculum, teaching strategies and the learning environment regularly, adapting these accordingly to ensure they continue to best meet individual needs and optimise progress.





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Pupil and parent/carers voice is also invaluable in identifying needs and in helping us to determine what works for each individual learner.

- A focus upon the development of positive, trusting relationships between all staff and pupils provides daily channels of communication.
- Pupils, Parents and Carers are invited to termly progress meetings and annual reviews during which individual needs are discussed and appropriate provision agreed in collaboration with the pupil's form tutor team or SEND key worker as applicable. Interim meetings may also be arranged where there are imminent concerns.
- If parents/carers have any concerns in between meetings they can raise these by contacting their child/young person's SEND key worker, form tutor, SENCo or other member of SLT at any time.

Our school SENCo, Designated Safeguarding Lead and SLT Leads for Quality of Education and Attendance, Behaviour and attitudes also meet regularly. These meetings provide the opportunity to discuss and share concerns regarding any individual pupil needs to inform our graduated response. Where further expertise is required the advice of multi-agency professionals may be sought to provide additional insight. Parents/carers would always be informed prior to any referrals to outside agencies and consent sought.

4. [How will I know what progress my child/young person is making, how you are supporting my child and how I can help?](#)

In addition to annual reviews, pupils and their parents/carers are invited to termly progress meetings with their form tutors, subject teachers and SEND key workers, where applicable. Interim meetings may also be arranged where there are imminent concerns. During these meetings, experience, and progress across a range of areas is reviewed and short-term targets and associated provisions are agreed to provide focus for the following term. Should subsequent reviews suggest any particular difficulties are ongoing provision is adapted accordingly and interventions escalated where necessary in line with a graduated approach. This may involve additional in school intervention at Tier 2 (such as 1:1 literacy interventions or mental health support) or referrals to outside agencies at Tier 3.



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To ensure all involved are working as a team towards a common goal in the best interests of your child/young person, together we will identify and agree.

- How best we can support your child/young person in meeting these agreed targets
- How your child/young person can help themselves
- How you can support at home



At least two weeks prior to your child/young persons' EHCP annual review you will also receive an invitation alongside.

- Their most recent curriculum reports
- Their most recent form tutor progress reports (which detail progress towards outcomes detailed in their EHCP from a school perspective)
- Any reports received from multi-agency professionals (if applicable).

We encourage you to read through these reports and share any comments/home observations during the annual review meeting so we can best ensure your child/young persons' EHCP annual review report includes a holistic view and accurately reflects their strengths and needs.

5. How will my child/young person and I be supported and included in decision making about their education?

Willow Bank School values the opinions of pupils and regular discussions with individual and groups of pupils are used to assess the effectiveness of provision. For example, pupils have the opportunity to make suggestions about school life through the school council.



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To involve pupils in choices about their provision all pupils are encouraged to complete termly pupil voice activities to ensure they have a trusted channel through which to tell us.

- what they do and don't like,
- what they feel is going well
- what they would like further support with
- what is important to them
- what their future aspirations are



Understanding these things helps us to ensure our provision meets individual needs.

Pupils are also supported to communicate their thoughts and reflections prior to the annual review of their EHCP and are actively encouraged to take part in this meeting in addition to their termly progress meetings.

Pupils receive verbal and written feedback in all areas of the curriculum. They also discuss their progress, including in relation to their individual targets, attendance, achievements and behaviour with key workers and form staff regularly.

The views of parents/carers are also invaluable. Parents/carers are encouraged to share their views through.

- Our open-door policy
- Termly questionnaires
- Within termly progress or other meetings
- During annual reviews
- When completing referrals (if applicable).

Events are also organised regularly for our parents/carers. These events provide opportunities to

- Socialise and network with other parents/carers
- Develop relationships with key staff
- Provide an additional channel of communication.



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6. How do you adapt teaching, the curriculum or learning environment to best pupils with SEND?

We recognise that our children and young people may need extra support to progress and take a full part in school life therefore our provision is adapted accordingly.

In striving for inclusivity, a personalised approach is taken when planning lessons which reflects the pupil's strengths, areas for development and specific barriers to learning. Individual needs are reviewed regularly in collaboration with pupils and their parents/carers.

There are times when some pupils require extra support or encouragement. Some pupils may require a short-term intervention; others may require additional adjustments or support on a longer-term basis. We escalate and involve multi-agency professionals as required to ensure progress as part of a graduated response, in line with the SEN Code of Practice.

All staff at Willow Bank School have access to pupil EHCPs (Education, Health, and Care Plan) which are used to inform individual provision.

Designated form staff, and SEND key workers were applicable, ensure key information, including agreed necessary adjustments and interventions, is accessible to all those working with our pupils via our dedicated SEND Teams channel and any additional support plans (IEPs/Pupil Passports etc). During annual reviews consent is sought to share the report with all staff so they are aware of any key updates in a timely manner.

All teachers at Willow Bank School are experienced teachers of SEND and access to quality first teaching from committed staff is a priority for all of our pupils.





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All pupils benefit from small classroom sizes (usually of up to a maximum of 8 pupils) and all classrooms are staffed with a teacher and a learning support assistant, providing a high pupil to staff ratio. Additional access to 1:1 support may be provided where appropriate.

- Pupils are generally taught in year group classes however these are flexible to best meet the needs of individual cohorts.
- A Nurture Group model is adopted within KS2.
- Different learning styles are recognised, and appropriate resources selected to suit individual pupils.
- Provision is very much linked to individual need. Some of our pupils, for example, use a variety of concentration aids in class, others have personalised workstations to reflect their preferences, others may use sensory aids such as ear defenders. Many of our pupils benefit from 'chunked' activities and regular movement breaks.

Pupils are encouraged to become independent learners through.

- The setting of appropriately challenging levels of work which take into account individual starting points and are informed through ongoing formative assessments in all subjects
- The use of a variety of resources to support such as vocabulary banks, writing frames and visual aids.
- Texts which take into account the reading abilities of pupils to ensure work is accessible across the curriculum.
- Subject curriculums which are carefully broken down into small, manageable steps and tailored to ensure regular opportunities for revisiting and consolidating key concepts to ensure that over time all our pupils are able to know more, do more and remember more.
- Effort and achievement being recognised and celebrated with all pupils being supported in the development of a growth mindset.

Where necessary we offer a range of in school interventions for pupils who may require additional support in specific areas. These include.

- Attendance support
- Draw and Talk therapy
- Resilience and/or Counselling sessions
- 1:1 literacy and numeracy interventions
- Language Link and/or SALT programmes
- Mentorship programmes



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More information about the provision provided at different levels can be found on our provision offer.

Pupils in KS4 undertake a range of examinations and accreditations according to their stage of working including a range of AQA awards, Entry Level and Level 1 awards, GCSEs, and vocational qualifications. Access arrangements are in place for those pupils who require reasonable adjustments to reflect their normal way of working in the classroom to support them during examinations.

7. How do you check how well you are meeting the needs of pupils with SEND?



In addition to ongoing communication and formative assessment by staff across the curriculum and within interventions, progress within which is discussed during weekly SEND team 'Pupil Provision planning' meetings, pupils are assessed at least termly across a range of areas and results are discussed with pupils and their parents/carers at termly progress meetings

Where satisfactory progress is not being made provision is adapted accordingly in line with the graduated approach.

Learning walks, including with a SEND focus, take place throughout the school termly in addition to whole school-book scrutiny. Termly impact reports are also presented to governors at the end of each term.

Surveys with pupils and parents/carers are also conducted regularly to help us understand what we are doing well and where we can continue to improve. Your views and that of our pupils is valued and helps us to deliver the highest possible standards of education, care and support for you and your child/young person.

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8. How are staff in the school supported to work with children and young people with special educational needs and what training do they receive?

As noted above, all staff have access to individual pupil EHCPs, Annual review reports, 'Pupil on a Page'/Pupil Passport documents and 'Individual Education Plans' so they are continually best informed in order to successfully meet current individual needs. These documents are stored securely online within Teams and/or using our 'Behaviour Watch' software.

Since all of our pupils have Special Educational Needs, all Continued Professional Development for staff members has a Special Educational Needs focus. Our Senior Leadership Team, faculty leads, behaviour lead and SENCo co-ordinate training on learning and additional needs as appropriate to our current cohort. As examples, all staff have recently received training on how to best meet the needs of pupils with Sensory Needs, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, Diabetes and around Mental Health and Well-being, Developing resilience, Working memory and Rosenshein's principles of instruction. Relevant resources are regularly shared between staff.

The Senior Leadership Team cascade down to staff information regarding new requirements and legislation in the areas of Safeguarding, Welfare and Curriculum.

'Team Teach' de-escalation and physical intervention training is delivered annually to all staff. A member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Lead Professional for Behaviour and a Teaching Assistant are all externally accredited Team Teach trainers. Our school SENCo has completed the National SENCo award and attends termly local authority SEND Forums.



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9. When you have needed expert advice and support how have you secured this and what services they provided?

If, following discussions with pupils, parents/carers and our inclusion officer, further advice is deemed necessary, our school SENCo and/or designated safeguarding lead or other member of SLT will seek this and make the appropriate referrals to external agencies.

These include.

- Social Care support
- Mental Health Services (including CYPMS and FCAMHs)
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Community Developmental Paediatrics
- The Neurodevelopmental Pathway
- LASCs (Local Autism and Social Communication Service)
- Hearing and vision screening
- School nursing Team
- Educational Psychologists
- Youth Justice Service
- Police, Fire, and other Community Services



At Willow Bank School our qualified senior mental health lead and Barnardo's colleagues provide mental health support on-site to pupils who require additional support or are in crisis. Pupils may self-refer for this support if they so wish.



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10. How do you ensure that my child/young person will be included in activities outside of the classroom including physical activities and school trips?



- KS2 pupils are offered on-site forest school sessions and off-site swimming lessons
- KS3 and KS4 pupils are offered fortnightly outdoor education activities.
- Some of our pupils also access additional off-site provision including alternative education projects and sporting activities.

Full risk assessments are undertaken to support pupils and staff in making outdoor activities accessible.

Reward activities that take place during or after school and residential trips are accessible to all and are linked to individual targets. These may be related to attendance, behaviour, and progress.



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11. How do you provide for pupil's overall well-being and any medical needs?

- All pupils at Willow Bank School are allocated a designated form tutor team. Pupils are also allocated a designated SEND key worker in addition to their form staff team with whom they have regular opportunities to 'check in' and communicate as required.
- Emotional and social development are a key component of our daily practice, and our curriculum includes sessions such as 'Communication and Social Skills,' 'Personal and Social Development' and 'Forest School' which have a focus upon teamwork and well-being.
- Issues around confidence or self-esteem are shared with designated key workers and form staff in the first instance and referred to other staff, as necessary.
- As above, our senior mental health lead and Barnardo's colleagues provide mental health support to pupils who require counselling or are in crisis. Pupils may self-refer for this support if they so wish. Our Art teacher is also trained to deliver Draw and Talk therapy with pupils who may prefer this over traditional counselling.
- Any specific concerns about the wellbeing of individual pupils are reported to the safeguarding team. Further information in relation to safeguarding measures including those to prevent bullying is available on our school website within the Safeguarding policies section.
- Health care plans, informed by health care professionals are shared with all staff and any training in relation to individual medical needs arranged, as necessary. Prescribed medication is kept securely in the office and staff who administer this log details in a book. In the care of a medical emergency a dynamic risk assessment is carried out and the relevant emergency service requested. Parents/carers would be contacted.



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12. How accessible is our school both indoors and outdoors for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (our accessibility plan/policy)?

- Our current building is a purpose-built, single storey building equipped with a variety of additional spaces including a dedicated sensory room and 'calm' zones.
- All entrance doors comply with DDA regulations to ensure they are wide enough for wheelchair access.
- Our reception area complies with DDA regulations, and the visitor reception desk is split height.
- There are accessible car parking spaces.
- Toilets and changing room facilities are accessible.
- The site has controlled access by the use of key fobs to designated users.
- All classrooms have door locks fitted that enable pupils to exit freely but require a key or fob to enter from the corridors.



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13. What are your admission arrangements for children/young people with SEND and how do you prepare and support pupils when joining the school and moving on from the school?



As a specialist provision, pupils are allocated a place at Willow Bank School following decisions made by the Local Authority.

Before your child or young person starts a placement with us, we want to learn as much about them as possible to ensure we are best informed to meet their needs effectively and to help them enjoy a successful transition.

During or following local authority consultation parents/carers are contacted by our Learning Mentor with responsibility for transition support who will arrange an initial admission meeting and a tour of the school. Contact may also be made with your child or young person's current school to obtain further background information.



A tailored transition programme is agreed according to the needs of individual pupils. Initial sessions to facilitate a gradual introduction to staff, curriculum areas and school routines are often arranged.



An official start date is given which is usually the first day of the following term.



Our Learning Mentor with responsibility for transition support monitors the settling in period and reports to parents and carers.

Following initial transition all pupils are offered a designated SEND key worker to provide ongoing support on an individual basis in addition to their form staff team.



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As young people prepare for adulthood outcomes should reflect their ambitions, which could include higher education, employment, independent living, and participation in society. Pupil and parent/carer voice is paramount in ensuring transition support accurately reflects future aspirations. This is gathered through designated key worker sessions, participation in pupil and parent/carer voice activities and attendance at termly progress meetings and annual reviews. Local Authority SEND Casework Managers are invited to attend all annual reviews, particularly at key transition points, including during Years 6, 9 and 11. During preparations for transition additional needs and support may be identified. These may include, for example, travel training or the opportunity to attend taster sessions.

To prepare pupils for leaving school 'Career Connect' advisors meet with pupils from Year 8 onwards to explore and discuss options. These advisors are also invited to all KS4 annual reviews where parents/carers can make enquiries regarding possible career choices.

14. How do you include arrangements for young people who are looked after by the local authority and have SEN?

Each pupil who is looked after by the local authority will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP).

The designated teacher works closely with the pupil, parents and carer, social services, the virtual school, and other relevant agencies to identify how best to support the pupil and enhance learning.

Where a pupil is looked after by the Local Authority, we will endeavour to synchronise EHCP reviews with social care reviews.



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15. Where can I find the school's SEND policy and who can I contact for further information?

Willow Bank School's SEND policy is available on our school website alongside details of the point of contact for further information.

16. What are your arrangements for handling complaints from parents/carers of children with SEND?

We strive to work in partnership as a team with the parents/carers of our pupils in order to best meet their needs.

In the first instance we encourage parents/carers to share their concerns with form staff and/or designated key workers where applicable. Members of SLT are also available if required.

Should you wish to pursue a complaint a copy of the school's complaints policy is available on our school website, or a hard copy can be provided if preferred.



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St Helens SEND strategy

St Helens Council published a 3 year SEND Strategy, identifying priorities for SEND children and young people in St Helens. The strategy identifies 5 priorities for SEND in St Helens.

We have identified these outcomes and looked at how we achieve these at Willow Bank School.

Outcome	Why is this important?	What we aim to do at Willow Bank School?
<p>Children have their needs identified early and the family have access to high quality provision.</p>	<p>Early intervention is key to helping children and young people with SEND and their families. Timely assessments and access to high quality services is vital to ensure children and young people with SEND and their families, achieve their potential and prevent an escalation of their needs. 'It's important to make sure people have the help they need at the start'</p>	<p>Stay in regular contact with pupils and their families through development of positive working relationships to ensure open lines of communication.</p> <p>Analyse and monitor the progress of all pupils closely.</p> <p>Hold regular pupil progress meetings where progress, needs and impact of provision and interventions are discussed. In collaboration pupils and their parents/carers, form staff look at progress of pupils and identify possible routes for support.</p> <p>The Graduated Approach is followed, ensuring that appropriate support is sourced.</p>



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Outcome	Why is this important?	What we aim to do at Willow Bank School?
<p>Children and young people with SEND experience positive mental health and wellbeing and supported to build resilience and confidence.</p>	<p>Mental health issues are more prevalent in those with SEND who are over twice as likely to experience anxiety disorders and approximately six times as likely to experience conduct disorders. The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND is paramount to their sense of wellbeing, achievement and progress in education and life.</p>	<p>All pupils have a designated form tutor team and develop close working relationships with form staff. Some pupils may also be allocated a designated key worker.</p> <p>Pupils have access to pastoral support from our Behaviour and welfare team, in addition to an on-site, qualified Senior Mental Health Lead.</p> <p>Pupils have access to personalised SEND Provision designed to best meet their needs.</p> <p>All behaviour at Willow Bank School is viewed as communication. Staff continually explore ways to best support all our pupils.</p> <p>Achievements and successes are actively celebrated with each day a 'new day.'</p> <p>Opportunities to build resilience and confidence and embedded within our core curriculum.</p> <p>Our building offers a variety of sensory spaces and 'calm' zones where pupils may spend time when needing support to regulate.</p> <p>Team Teach training is delivered to all staff annually to ensure pupils receive support when in crisis.</p> <p>Training for staff on aspects of SEN and trauma and trauma-based approaches has been delivered to help support pupils with emotional needs.</p>



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Outcome	Why is this important?	What we aim to do at Willow Bank School?
<p>Children with SEND experience smooth transitions and are successfully prepared for adulthood.</p>	<p>Any transition can be an extremely daunting process for young people with SEND and their families. Parents and carers in St Helens tell us that the transition to adulthood as one of the greatest challenges. Transition from childhood into adulthood involves establishing themselves as autonomous individuals with rights and responsibilities and having choice and control over how they live their lives. Having meaningful employment reduces welfare dependency and improves health and happiness.</p>	<p>Support is provided via our Learning Mentor for Transition Support upon transition into Willow Bank School. Tailored induction programmes are offered and close communication with parents/carers is encouraged to ensure the transition is successful.</p> <p>All pupils have a designated form tutor team who remain as consistent as possible to support with transitions within school.</p> <p>Changes during transitions are carefully considered with decisions made to minimise disruption and offer gradual transitions between key phases.</p> <p>The development of skills required for independent living, further education and future employment are embedded across our core curriculum.</p> <p>School works closely with 'Career Connect' and preparation for adulthood outcomes are embedded during Year 9 annual reviews with needs and required support identified early.</p>
<p>There is clear and consistent information, communication, participation and coproduction with children,</p>	<p>The principle of co-production is at the heart of a successful and inclusive SEND system. Young people and their families are experts by their experience and working together we build greater</p>	<p>Pupils and their parents/carers engage in regular pupil and parent/carer voice activities.</p> <p>Pupils and their parent/carers are actively encouraged to attend and engage in termly progress meetings and annual reviews.</p>



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Outcome	Why is this important?	What we aim to do at Willow Bank School?
<p>young people, and their families.</p>	<p>insight, trust and ownership of the challenges and solutions</p>	<p>Pupils have an understanding of their own targets and have the opportunity to respond and discuss their own progress.</p> <p>We operate an open-door policy and actively encourage regular communication between pupils, parents/carers, and key staff.</p> <p>Regular parent/carers events are organised to promote networking opportunities.</p>
<p>Children with neurodevelopmental conditions receive timely assessments and quality support</p>	<p>Earlier diagnosis is associated with better outcomes and lengthy waiting times for assessment may impact on access to effective support.</p>	<p>Staff strive to reduce barriers to learning for all children. Termly progress meetings with form tutors underpin an ongoing cycle of Assess, Plan, Do Review during which needs and provision are continually monitored. Where satisfactory progress is not being made or where needs remain despite initial interventions additional intervention is considered.</p> <p>Our school SENCo and Learning Mentors meet weekly at 'Pupil provision planning' meetings and regularly with additional members of SLT where individual pupils may be discussed, and concerns shared as required. Where necessary additional advice may be sought from outside agencies. Advice sought/received is cascaded to staff and parents.</p> <p>A Graduated Approach is in place to ensure evidence is gathered to support any potential referrals.</p>