



**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS POLICY**

Oasis Academy Watermead
September 2023

Dawn Hudson -SENDCO

Introduction

At the heart of Oasis is a deep-rooted commitment to inclusion, a desire to treat everyone equally and a respect for differences. These values are a natural outcome or result of Oasis' Christ centred theology. Oasis does not seek to impose these beliefs on anyone but is committed to ensuring that the behaviours which flow from those beliefs – equality, diversity, and inclusion – are implemented in all that is done in the name of Oasis.

Our **Curriculum Statement of Intent** details how we work in partnership with our communities to transform lives, where everyone is included, can contribute and is able to reach their God-given potential.

Oasis Ethos

Our ethos is rooted in what we believe and who we are. Equality and inclusion are at the heart of Oasis:

- We have a passion to include everyone
- We have a desire to treat everyone equally, respecting differences
- We have a commitment to healthy and open relationships
- We have a deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed
- We persevere and keep going for the long haul

In this policy, Oasis Community Learning is "OCL", Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is "SEND" and the staff member responsible for overseeing SEND is the Special Educational Needs Coordinator "SENCo."

Oasis Inclusion

Our vision is driven through a passion and commitment to include everyone.

- We believe all our pupils are precious; we prioritise social inclusion and integration in all we do
- We model and set high aspirations and expectations for every student and member of staff
- We provide opportunities and experiences for all of our pupils, as well as their wider families, giving advantage to the disadvantaged

Our aim is to provide an exceptional education for all our pupils both academically, emotionally and socially. Our commitment to equality must be communicated to all members of the extended Academy community - including staff, members of the Hub Council, learners, parents/ carers and visitors. Pupils with SEND, like all pupils, are entitled to a broad, balanced curriculum adapted to suit their particular needs, following National Curriculum requirements. We are passionate about removing barriers to learning wherever possible and making reasonable adjustments to allow inclusive practice at every level so that every pupil reaches their full potential.

We believe in early identification and intervention and recognise how vital parental involvement is in keeping a child's self-esteem high. We aim to develop a strong partnership with parents/ carers and value the insight they bring of their child's needs. This partnership fosters a continuous dialogue that includes parents'/ carers' observations and is crucial when planning provision.

•

OCL, through its strong ethos and values, promotes the 9 Habits and use these to guide our practice in supporting pupils with SEND. By developing these habits, we help to foster resilience and social awareness that will facilitate future success for pupils with SEND.

1. Aims of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

OCL is totally committed to developing the character and competence of every student and believes that all pupils should receive exceptional education - including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

OCL has a graduated approach to SEND and has implemented changes as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice' (January, 2015). The 'SEND Code of Practice' offers guidance designed to help Academies make full entitlement and appropriate provision for pupils with SEND. OCL follows the 'SEND Code of Practice' whenever decisions are taken relating to children with SEND.

OCL recognises that Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is a whole Academy responsibility and quality first teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in provision for pupils who have SEND. We recognise that every teacher is a teacher of SEND and every teacher upholds high expectations for all pupils.

Furthermore, every teacher is responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, even when they access support through Inclusion teams. Therefore, this policy should be considered within the wider context of Oasis Watermead's policy relating to learning and teaching.

The following pages set out the provision OCL will provide in line with the new 'SEND Code of Practice' (January, 2015). Our SEND policy ensures the successful inclusion of all our pupils, as every child is:

- Included in decisions about themselves, listened to and respected
- Encouraged to develop an independent, healthy lifestyle
- Supported to achieve their best possible outcomes - educational and otherwise
- Supported to have a successful transition to adulthood
- Provided with the skills to become an independent and confident young adult who participates in society

2. Categorisation: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The 'SEND Code of Practice' (January, 2015) identifies four broad categories. These are:

1. **Communication and interaction**, including Speech and Language difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorders
2. **Cognition and learning**, including specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia
3. **Social, emotional and mental health**, including anxiety, depression and ADHD
4. **Sensory or Physical**, including hearing, visual or physical disabilities

A student may have Special Educational Needs if they are making less than expected progress, given their age and individual circumstances. This might be characterised by progress which:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers
- Fails to match or better their previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap with their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

A student with low attainment, or who is making slow progress, may not have SEND. However, these may be an indicator of underlying difficulties yet to be identified. Watermead recognises that early identification of need is essential in supporting pupils with SEND and uses a range of strategies, information sharing and assessments, especially during Transition.

Under the Equality Act (2010), a student has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a *substantial* and *long-term* adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3. Admissions and Transition Arrangements

Starting school, or moving between schools, is a crucial time for pupils with SEND, who may be anxious about their learning and how they will be supported in their new school. OCL champions inclusion and welcomes all pupils, including those with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and pupils with disabilities, ensuring that appropriate provision is in place to meet their needs.

If a pupil has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), Oasis Watermead will be consulted by the local authority before any decision is taken by the authority on admission to the Academy, to ensure that the Academy is suitable for the student and his/ her needs. If the Academy is suitable, the SENCo may be present at the annual review meeting, or at a meeting with the Pre-School provider, and so will be fully aware of those' needs from the outset.

Oasis Watermead has close links with feeder Pre-Schools and other Primary schools. Staff will visit local feeder schools/ Pre-Schools, meeting children and talking with their teacher and the SENCo, looking at work samples and assessment, thus ensuring that the transfer of SEND pupils from Pre-School to Primary and Year 6 to Year 7 happens smoothly and successfully.

During times of transition to or from Oasis Watermead, additional visits for pupils, especially those who may be anxious about transferring, or those who are the only student coming from their Primary school may be organised. Engaging with parents/carers at this early stage is crucial to effective support and allaying any fears.

4. Graduated Approach

4.1 Assessment and Identification

OCL believes that most needs of most pupils will be met in mainstream lessons, taught by professionals, where learning is adapted and scaffolded according to need. OCL Academies work hard to ensure that information about pupils' needs is shared, so that teachers are better able to plan lessons accordingly. Whenever possible, for most of the time, pupils with SEND are educated alongside their peers in mainstream lessons.

There are several ways that a pupil may be identified as having additional needs and Watermead may use some of the following ways to identify pupils with SEND:

Information from Transition. Watermead liaises closely with feeder Pre-Schools/ Primary schools and staff may visit each one to gather information so that teaching staff are fully prepared for the autumn term.

This information is shared with them through the SEND Register and Student Profiles. In the first instance, some pupils may need monitoring more closely at

-
- the beginning of Nursery, Reception or the point of transition so that staff can gauge their progress as they settle into their new school.
- **Information gathered from baseline data**, including Early Years baseline, Headstart tests, CATS scores, reading and spelling ages, (Birmingham Oasis Academy Toolkits (BOATs)). Any pupil who joins our Academies midyear will be assessed in this way. Such information is invaluable in supporting them effectively from the start of their time at Watermead.
- **On-going observation** and information sharing amongst staff and Inclusion teams relating to a pupil's progress is used to inform future planning. This may include lesson observation from the SENCo.
- **Data from Progress checks**. If a pupil is falling below expected grades of progress, this will be picked up by regular Academy reviews and data drops, as well as through Raising the Attainment of Pupils meetings. Also, Subject Leaders will review progress and put in place a variety of subject specific interventions as necessary.
- Using a **dyslexia screener, PSED Pivats, Boxall Profile** and other on-line Assessments.
- **Academic and Pastoral meetings**. Information is shared by Academy staff, allowing support to be coordinated, including any possible referrals to outside agencies. This may include referrals to, CAMHS, FUSION, the EP, Healthy Minds, Think for the Future for example.
- **Outside agency support** plays an important role in identifying, assessing, and providing provision for pupils with SEND. If a student at the Academy is making less than expected progress, despite tailored support, Watermead seeks to utilise support from external specialists for pupils with higher levels of need to improve their outcomes. Watermead can make referrals to the Educational Psychologist, Specialist Advisory Teachers, Speech and Language Therapists, Fusion (SEN Consultants), the Autism Team, Attendance and Inclusion Team.
- The SEN Team will work closely with the **Attendance Officer**, and the pastoral team to monitor children's needs in school.

4.2 The Support Register

A pupil with SEND that calls for support that is **additional** and **different** from most of their peers, in discussion and agreement with parents, will be placed on the Support Register. The outcomes of the support will be agreed and regularly shared with parents/ carers (and the pupil where appropriate). Teachers will monitor the pupil's progress closely in lessons, through data drops and other assessments and tracking systems.

If the support arrangements do not lead to improved levels of progress, then outside agency support may be called for and a request for a Statutory Assessment may be necessary once sufficient evidence has been gathered.

If, however, the pupil begins to make good progress because of support put in place, they may be removed from the Support Register. Again, such decisions will be discussed with parents/ carers and the young person themselves before any decision is made.

• **4.3 Statutory Assessment for an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)**

For a few pupils, the help given by the Academy will not be enough for them to make good progress and it may become necessary to make a request for a Statutory Assessment and an EHCP assessment application. The statutory assessment request may be submitted by the parent/ carer or the Academy.

The school follows the Sheffield City Council guidelines for making EHCP statutory assessment applications and will attend Locality B Family of School panel meetings to discuss each child and their needs. Panel decisions will inform actions for next steps.

Once it has been agreed by the Locality panel that a request can be made to the local authority and the Statutory Assessment agreed, information is gathered by the SENCo, including any professional assessments (e.g., an Educational Psychologist's report), parents'/ carers' and student's views and any progress data. This is then presented to the local authority for a decision about whether it is necessary for the needs and provision to be formally set out in an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). If the local authority agrees, an EHCP is drawn up in consultation with all parties and the advice of professionals, including the student, parents/ carers, specialist teachers, medical professionals and the Educational Psychologist.

Local authorities must decide within 20 weeks whether to carry out such an assessment and subsequently, whether to issue an EHCP for that student.

5. Plan and Do: SEND Provision

Watermead recognises that SEND provision is a whole Academy responsibility and should be seen in the context of other Academy policies. All pupils, including those with SEND, should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, underpinned by quality first teaching, where teachers plan appropriate learning outcomes for the pupils in their care. Working with classroom teachers, Inclusion teams work flexibly to meet the varying needs of pupils.

The following list of interventions is not exhaustive, but provides an example of OCL Academy support arrangements:

- Full-time education in the classroom with quality first teaching, adapted for individual pupils
- Hover support in the classroom from dedicated Inclusion teams/ allocated Teaching Assistants (TAs)
- OPP's Pupil Profiles, which include personalised strategies written by pupils/ parents, carers and teachers and are shared with relevant staff
- Small group withdrawal with lead Inclusion staff/TA's to work in a range of subjects including English and Maths
- Speech and Language and writing interventions
- Social skills and anger management interventions
- Reading and comprehension programmes
- Small group or 1:1 withdrawal for reading and phonics
- Academic mentoring from the Inclusion team, where pupils review outcomes, what went well in the past week and discuss any areas of concern
- Supported SATs club
- Support from external professionals including an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapists, Fusion and the Autism Team
- Access arrangements for tests

Review

If a student is receiving SEND support, it is important to monitor the progress of any chosen outcomes and to see whether any interventions that have been put in place have had an impact on learning. This must happen at least three times a year, one of which

•

may be during the annual parent's consultation evening. Every term, the SENCo will organise meetings with parents/carers and teachers to review support arrangements. The review will consider the pupil's progress towards their personalised outcomes and decide if any refinements and changes are needed. It will provide the opportunity for each party to discuss what is going well and what needs to change for the pupil. It will also identify the responsibilities of the Academy, the parent, and the student. There will be times when additional review meetings are arranged if this is thought necessary.

If there are continuing concerns about a student's progress or if the student continues to have attainment levels that are well below expected levels for pupils of that age, the SENCo, in consultation with teachers and parents/ carers, may arrange for further assessment and/ or intervention. This may include a review of all prior data, more detailed assessments and a parental consultation with the SENCo. It may include advice from external agencies, such as the Educational Psychologist, the Speech and Language Therapist or Fusion.

6. The Information Report

Oasis Watermead publishes details of its SEND support through an Information Report. This can be found on the Academy website, is updated annually, and includes information about:

- The name and contact details of the SENCo
- Staff expertise and how we train staff who support students with SEND
- The categories of SEND that Watermead provides for and the approach to learning and teaching
- The Academy policies linked to the identification and assessment of SEND
- How the curriculum is adapted according to need
- How Academy provision is monitored and evaluated
- Arrangements of how parents/ carers and students are consulted throughout the identification, assessment, and provision process/ stages
- How students' progress is assessed
- How students are prepared for Transition to other schools or for adult life
- What support there is for improving emotional and social development
- How inclusion is promoted within the Academy
- How outside agencies are used, including health and social care and voluntary or charity organisations
- Where to find information about the Local Offer and SENDIAS.

7. The Local Offer

OCL Academies collaborate with local authorities to support students in their care. The Information Report forms part of this support. The Local Offer is designed to give clear, comprehensive and accessible information about SEND provision in the local area and how to access it. It should reflect and be responsive to local needs, involving young people with SEND in its provision and review. The link to the Local Offer for Watermead is below:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/local-offer>

8. Accessibility

Watermead produces an Accessibility Plan to work towards improvements in accessibility, in compliance with the Equality Act (2010). The plan outlines how the Academy aims to:

- Increase the extent to which students with disabilities can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment of the Academy to enable students with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improve the availability of accessible information to students with disabilities and their parents/ carers

In addition, any child with a disability that requires additional support to leave the building during an evacuation will have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan, written with parents/ carers and professionals as relevant. This plan is reviewed annually.

OCL Property and Estates are responsible for ensuring that all Academy buildings comply with the Equality Act (2010), specifically, ensuring that buildings are safe and accessible to those with physical needs.

9. Supporting Students with Medical Needs

In line with section 100 of the Children and Families Act (2014) and the guidance in 'Supporting students at school with medical conditions' (December, 2015), OCL Academies will make arrangements so that students with medical conditions are properly supported to ensure that they have full access to education, including Academy trips and physical education.

Individual Healthcare Plans should be completed to ensure that Academies effectively support students with medical conditions.

Academy leaders should ensure that the OCL Medicines in School Policy is adhered to so that students always remain safe.

10. Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

The SENCo plays an essential role in SEND provision and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the SEND Policy. This involves working with the Academy Principal, staff, parents/ carers, and other agencies to determine the strategic development of this policy. The main responsibilities of the SENCo are:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEND Policy, focusing on high aspirations, and improving outcomes
- Delivering an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for SEND students and their families
- Staff development on SEND matters
- Responding to changes in SEND Policy, locally and nationally
- Ensuring annual reviews of children with EHCPs are conducted accurately
- Liaising with external agencies, including Health and Social Services
- Liaising with the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children
- Liaising with other providers regarding transitional arrangements

-
- Liaising with parents/ carers
- Working with senior leaders within the Academy to ensure compliance with the Equality Act (2010)
- Providing advice on the financial resources required to effectively support SEND students
- Arranging assessments for Access Arrangements for Examinations
- Analysing Academy performance data that impacts on improved outcomes for SEND students
- Ensure that the SEND Register is up to date
- Undertake regular reviews of the overall effectiveness of interventions employed in the Academy for SEND students
- Stay aware of latest changes and updates to SEND practice nationally and of the latest approaches to SEND support and intervention
- Quality assure the effectiveness of staff about SEND, including all TAs

11. Role of Regional Directors (RDs), Principal and Monitoring Standards Team

The Regional Director (RD) must have a thorough understanding of both the SEND Policy and practice in the Academies in their region:

- Ensuring that the admissions criteria does not discriminate against students with SEND
- Ensuring that provision of a high standard is made for students with SEND
- Ensuring that students with SEND can be involved in Academy activities
- Having regard for the ' (January, 2015) when carrying out these responsibilities
- Ensuring Academies report to parents/ carers on the Academy's SEND Policy, which can be accessed through the Academy website, including the allocation of resources from the Academy delegated/ devolved budget via letters/ emails and meetings
- Reviewing the SEND Information Report on an annual basis to ensure it remains an accurate description of the provision available within the Academy

The Principal should work closely with the Academy's SENCo. Academy management structures must enable the SENCo's functions to be carried out effectively. The Principal should keep the Regional Director up to date with changes to SEND provision, as well as the progress made by students with SEND.

The OCL Monitoring Standards Team will review the SEND provision in Academies as part of their monitoring work each year. Any areas for improvement will be agreed with the Principal and shared with the Regional Director so that rapid improvement can be made.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND Provision

OCL SEND provision is monitored through:

- Regular visits by the Monitoring Standards Team and the Regional Director
- Academy self-evaluation using the OCL review format
- Focused SEND reviews commissioned by Regional Directors

Where provision in SEND is not yet good enough, if there are changes in SEND leadership, or to support the ongoing professional of staff, Academies may be given support through Regional Improvement Networks, the OCL Best Practice Directory, National Lead Practitioners or the OCL SEND Strategy Group.

13. Training

Where a SENCo appointed after 1st September 2008 has not previously been the SENCo at that or any other relevant school for a total period of more than twelve months, they must achieve the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination within 3 years of appointment.

Academies must ensure that their SENCo undertakes regular training. SENCos will provide leadership and professional guidance to colleagues and will work closely with staff, parents and carers and other agencies to ensure that children with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching, make at least good progress and achieve good outcomes.

The OCL Strategy Group, the Regional Improvement Networks and OCL SEND conferences ensure that SENCos within OCL share best practice and are kept up to date in their knowledge and skills.

14. Arrangements for Complaints

OCL aims to work with students and their families to ensure they achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes. However, where issues emerge, Academies have clear procedures in place to allow parents/ carers to voice concerns about any aspect of their child's provision. OCL expect parents to raise matters through the relevant complaints procedure. The contact details of the appropriate/ specific members of staff should be available to parents/ carers through the SEND Information Report should they need to contact the Academy for any reason. If the concerns centre around SEND provision, the first person to contact is the SENCo.

If parents/ carers are dissatisfied with the response from the Academy or OCL, they may raise the issue with the Education & Skills Funding Agency and/ or lodge a claim for disability discrimination against the Academy with the SEN & Disability Tribunal. Please note that complaints and/ or appeals relating to Statutory Assessments or EHCPs should be made against the relevant local authority and not the Academy or OCL.

15. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually. The next review will be September 2024.