

AXE VALLEY ACADEMY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY



approved by The Local Governing Body on: 25th June 2019

Next review date: June 2020

Axe Valley Academy

Special Educational Needs Policy

General Information

Axe Valley Academy is comprehensive, which means that it admits pupils of all abilities without selection. Amongst those admitted are pupils who have special needs or a disability including some children who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The school does not have a 'Special Unit' and is adapted to cater for those who have disabilities. The school does not select by ability in anyway.

The school's policy is to meet SEND in various ways:

- One of our main aims is to enable pupils with special educational needs to take a full part in the life of the school. The school is proud of its success in further and higher education and employment. Children with special needs are not separated in any way from the rest of the school: they are in mixed ability tutor groups and for most practical subjects like PE, Art and Technology.
- The school employs specialist, trained experienced staff and has a well-resourced learning support department.
- Although they will spend much of their time in mainstream teaching groups, some children may be withdrawn from some classes for individual or small group tuition to meet their specific needs.
- Most teaching groups are setted by ability in the subject and the sets that include more children with learning difficulties may have fewer children to allow for greater support.
- A wide definition of SEND is used, and with the help of the Learning Support Department and specialists from with other teaching areas, help is not only available to children with statements/EHCPs or of low academic ability. Other pupils with particular needs can be supported where this is appropriate, for example, help with dyslexia, physical difficulties, emotional difficulties, medical conditions and difficulties with sight and hearing.

Special Needs Staff

The Learning Support Department is led by an Assistant SENCO who is assisted by a specialist Inclusion teacher. The school also employs Teaching Assistants. All teachers in other departments also have a responsibility to meet the needs of pupils with SEND in their own subject areas. The school employs the services of an Educational Psychologist as necessary. There is also a Governor who reports to the Governing Body on Special Needs. They visit the school regularly to consult with staff and keep the Governors informed of any matters relating to special needs. Many staff have attended appropriate courses and have extended their skills, particularly in the development of information technology as an aid to learning. There is an ongoing programme of training to update all teachers about matters relevant to their teaching.

Identification

There are well-established links with primary schools and discussions about pupils with SEND take place before they join the school. We have a thorough transition process. Many of the primary schools maintain contact with the SENDCO throughout the school year. The SENDCO attends the EHCP Reviews of pupils who will transfer to Axe Valley Academy as they arise during year 6. During the summer term the SENDCO visits all the primary schools that will have pupils with special needs transferring to Axe Valley Academy in September. In this way the SENDCO has already met the children and often their parents as well as gathering useful information. Children who are particularly vulnerable will often have a transition plan which involves additional visits to the school. The school also responds to evidence from standard tests and from concerns expressed by pupils, teachers and parents. Assessments are made internally and by the Educational Psychologist.

Assessment and Provision

The school uses the model for the assessment and provision of special needs teaching as recommended by the Code of Practice.

Support will be provided at 3 levels:

1. The Watchlist

The school has a register of pupils about whom there is general concern related to a special educational need. The register lists the child's name and the nature of the problem. The register is reviewed and updated annually or more frequently if required.

2. SEND Support (SS)

Where it is thought that any child requires additional or different provision, a Plan will be written. The plan will outline the way the child is being helped. The plans will be reviewed and parents and the child will be invited to contribute their thoughts.

3. Educational, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

If a child's needs are such that they might need an EHCP then an application will be made to the 0-25 team at County Hall, Devon. An application for an EHCP can be made by a parent or the school. If an EHCP is issued it will list in detail the difficulties the child encounters and the measures the school must take to provide for the child. The EHCP will be reviewed annually. In addition a special review takes place in Year 9. This review also involves the Careers service and will result in a plan being put in place to ensure a proper transition from school to college or workplace.

Curriculum and Classroom Organisation

Support may be provided in four ways:

1. By keeping some teaching groups to a small size so that more help can be given to individuals.
2. By withdrawing some pupils from particular lessons so that they may receive individual or small group tuition.
3. By giving support to individuals in a normal lesson by providing a teaching assistant who can give particular help.
4. By making provision, when necessary via the schools "Hub".

Children with Special Needs are not separated in any way from the rest of the school: they are in mixed ability tutor groups and most practical subjects such as PE, Art and Technology are also taught in mixed ability groups. The setting of other subjects allows all children to be taught at an appropriate level.

All children follow the National Curriculum although some adjustments may be made to accommodate a particular special educational need. The school has a Hub which is permanently staffed by a high level teaching assistant. The Hub is managed by an assistant who is in charge of inclusion. It aims to create an educational setting for students who might need an alternative to academic options in Years 9, 10 and 11 to help reintegrate students who have long term absences and also as an alternative to fixed term exclusion. The school also provides a range of extra-curricular activities which give opportunities for success and leadership irrespective of a child's ability or learning difficulties

Evaluation

The schools policy is judged by the progress made by individuals: all pupils with EHCPs are regularly assessed as required by law. Other pupils whose needs have been identified are also carefully monitored. If at any time a pupil is extracted from mainstream lessons to improve their literacy skills their reading and spelling age will be tested at the beginning and the end of the period of extraction so we can measure the effect of the intervention.

All the staff report regularly on every pupil's progress as required by the schools assessment policy and other difficulties may be identified as a result. A very important aspect is the social adjustment of SEND pupils. Failure to make progress and frustration are common causes of anti-social behaviour and truancy and this is an immediate concern of the team of pastoral staff. This can be as true for the most able as well as the less academically able. Success in obtaining qualifications such as GCSE, and other national awards are an important indicator of the effectiveness of the policy and it is expected that progress in National Curriculum levels and tests is also an important indicator. The value added statistics at GCSE level show that students with special educational needs are improving across all measures in line with the significant improvements made in progress for all students in the academy. In the past few years there has been a very pleasing list of former students who received help for various special education needs when they joined the academy and have since gone on to achieve degrees and other high level qualifications. One of the key measures of the success of the academy's policy is that the vast majority of those students who had SEND in their first few years at school are able to follow their chosen careers without assistance once they have left school.

Complaints about SEND provision

Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the Assistant SENCO or the Headteacher if necessary. The school has a curriculum complaints procedure approved by the Secretary of State and copies of it are available on request. In addition the Education Authority also has a system to allow parents to appeal regarding its responsibilities and there are further rights of appeal, finally an independent tribunal.

Links with parents and with other bodies

The school has well-established systems for informing parents about their children's progress and those with SEND are included with them. Parents receive reports and are encouraged to attend Parents Evenings: if required they may visit the school to discuss their children with pastoral staff or subject teachers. Children with SEND will in addition, have reviews, statutory in the case of those with EHCPs. Parents are always invited to such reviews and encouraged to express their views on the interventions and support provided.

The school has access to the services of an Educational Psychologist. Other specialist help may be obtained where appropriate, for example there is South West Autism, Communication and Interaction Team, Speech and Language Advisor, ICT Advisor, Occupational Therapist. For those with physical disabilities there is access to a ranges of services, some educational, some through the Health Authority and voluntary groups. Several different agencies may be consulted in deciding the best way to help a child including, for example, social services the family doctor and the mental health service.

The school is able to offer support to students until the end of Year 11 when there are a variety of options available depending on ability and careers intentions. Most stay in further education at least for another year and it is one of the objectives of the Special Educational Needs policy that they should be well prepared for the transition. Careers advice is available for all, and pupils with a special educational need will have additional time with the school's Career advisor. Under the revised code of practice, support is available for young people with special needs or a disability until the age of 25 if in full time education. Work experience is compulsory for all students: the school has very good links with employers who are both sympathetic and competent in helping pupils who may have SEND. There is very strong liason with the colleges and information is given so that provision may be made.

The school successfully encompasses those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have experienced problems in other secondary schools. Often those who transfer with considerable problems from feeder schools respond well to the atmosphere and care that is provided by the staff.

