



SEN Information Report

May 2025

Welcome to Merry Hill Infant and Nursery School's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Report. In 2015 a new Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities became law in England. It covers all schools and settings that cater for children and young people from 0 to 25.

A key part of this Code of Practice is to make it easier for parents and carers to have information about the SEND provision on offer in schools. Every school has been asked to write and publish information that explains how we identify and meet the needs of children with special educational needs or with disabilities.

The SEN Code of Practice (January 2015) defines Special educational needs (SEN) as the following:

"A child or young person has SEN if they have 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:

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

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is

'...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'.

This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition."

This report is updated annually following consultation with families of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. If, after reading this report, you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to email the school office on admin@merryhill.herts.sch.uk.

Merry Hill is a mainstream, inclusive community two form entry Infant School with a 60 place Nursery class (30 morning places and 30 afternoon places). We currently have 11.17% of pupils on our Inclusion Register

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

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We recognise that children can have special educational needs either throughout, or at any time, during their school journey. Therefore we constantly monitor pupil progress across the curriculum and particularly in Reading, Writing, Maths and Speaking and Listening. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the class teacher meet during the first half of each term to carry out a 'Health Check' when the progress of all vulnerable children is reviewed. Any children who are finding it challenging to make expected progress are also flagged up and appropriate interventions put in place. This group of staff meet again at the end of the term for Pupil Progress Meetings where attainment and progress is again reviewed. Where a child is found to be making less than expected progress or is attaining **significantly** below age-related expectations, discussions will then take place between the class teacher, SENCo and parents as to the particular needs of the child and strategies that can be put in place at school and at home to support them in a timely manner.

We also carefully observe children's social, emotional and mental health. Any concerns or significant change in any of these areas will be discussed with the class teacher, SENCo (Fay Summers) and the parents.

Any member of staff can raise concerns about a child. Moreover, parents are encouraged to discuss concerns that they may have about their child with the school. Staff/parents/carers then work in partnership with the class teacher and the SENCo to ensure every child receives the support they need to overcome any barriers and fulfil their potential at school. (See Flowchart Appendix A)

2. How will school support my child?

At Merry Hill we ensure all teachers deliver Quality First teaching, which is inclusive of the needs of all pupils. We do, of course, recognise that some children need additional support. Our aim, as far as possible, is to support student learning in the class room. However, at times, small group or 1:1 intervention will be needed.

Class teachers prepare lessons which are carefully planned to meet the needs of all children in their class. They may organise a class into small groups of learners with similar attainment to match teaching support to the groups' needs to maximise learning potential. Groups will be supported by a key adult, either the class teacher or learning support assistant (LSA), where appropriate, to foster effective, independent learning. Class teachers may liaise with the SENCo for additional advice or support. SEND provision, including interventions, is recorded. Progress is monitored closely to measure the impact of interventions. If school and parents agree that further advice is needed, a referral will be made to a specific outside agency such as the Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist or Specific Learning Difficulties Advisory Teacher. The Governor for SEND, April Campbell, works closely with the school to help monitor provision. The SENCo and Governor for SEND meet regularly to facilitate this process.

As a school we do not advocate allocating a pupil one to one support with a consistent learning support assistant. We acknowledge that this leads to over dependency on the adult. We value pupils developing relationships with all adults in their learning environment and this prevents any dysregulation if one significant adult is absent for any reason. In rare instances, where a child has a severe medical condition and requires a specialist trained member of staff, a specific adult may be allocated to a pupil. Where LSAs are working individually with lower attaining pupils the focus is on retaining access to high quality teaching, for example by delivering brief, but intensive, structured interventions. Following research reported in 'Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants,' (Education Endowment Foundation,2023) staffing is organised so that the pupils who need the most support have as much time with the teachers as others.

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3. How will I know how my child is doing?

We believe in working closely with parents/carers in sharing ideas and information to encourage children to aspire to achieve their best in their learning and develop healthy self-esteem.

If a child needs a more bespoke programme of support, targets may be recorded. These targets may be related to an area of the academic curriculum or to develop social or emotional skills. Their progress will be shared regularly with parents/carers and the child. Termly SEN target review meetings will be held with parents, the class teacher, SENCo and wherever possible outside agencies that may be involved to review previous targets and work together to set new ones.

In addition to these target setting meetings and formal parent/carer consultation evenings (Autumn & Spring Terms), information can be shared via email, telephone, and home/school liaison book or face to face meeting at any time (an appointment may be necessary).

All parents/carers will receive an end of year written report detailing their child's progress across the curriculum.

If your child is identified at any time throughout the year as not making progress, the school will set up a meeting to discuss this with you in more detail. This may involve: listening to any concerns you may have, planning any additional support your child may need, discussing with you any referrals to outside professionals to support your child.

Parents of students with an Education Health and Care Plan are invited to contribute to and attend the annual review meeting.

Parents may also make an after school appointment with the class teachers at any point during the year to discuss any concerns they may have. In addition, the SENCo operates an "Open Door" policy that allows parents to drop in at any time and speak to the SENCo if she is available.

4. How will the school's approach to teaching and learning be matched to my child's needs?

For a child who has been assessed as in need of SEND support, we follow a cycle of 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review.'

On a daily basis, teachers assess the learning of all pupils, and adjust their subsequent teaching accordingly. Children's needs are met by careful differentiation; for example, adjusting the teaching and learning styles, the structure of the lesson, the resources provided, the layout of the classroom, the pitch of activities, support from adults, pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts. ICT and visual support are regularly used.

There will be half termly pupil progress meetings, with the Head, Assistant Headteacher, SENCo and class teacher to see how a child is doing and make sure that the provision is making the intended impact on the child.

Termly meetings will be held with teachers, parents and the child (where appropriate) to review the child's progress over the preceding term, and plan provision for the term ahead. Targets are agreed for the subsequent term, in order to work towards the agreed desired outcomes for the child. The voice of the child and the parents are central to these meetings. Where appropriate, advice from external professionals will be sought and used to implement specific strategies or to access particular resources or equipment.

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The Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher(s) and SENCo discuss all the information they have about SEND in the school, including the children getting extra support already, the children needing extra support and the children who have been identified as not making as much progress as would be expected. From this information, they decide what resources/training and support is needed. The Governor for SEND is kept up to date with all decisions made.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

The well-being of all pupils is of primary concern at Merry Hill Infant School. We work very hard to develop children as well-rounded, happy, confident young people. We have many opportunities to celebrate children's achievements, including weekly Celebration Assemblies, and weekly Golden Time sessions. We take every opportunity to expose children to a broad range of life experiences, from sports events, activities in the school and school trips. We ensure that children feel safe by having visual timetables, clear routines, consistent expectations and regular adults in every class. Pupil voice is essential to all decision-making. We teach children to respect each other and their environment and to behave appropriately at all times. Pupils also contribute to this through the pupil councils; School Council, Eco Warriors and Digital Leaders. Mrs Fay Summers is the Mental Health Lead.

We strive to build positive relationships whereby parents, pupils and teachers can share ideas and information together to make school a safe and happy place for everyone. Children are supported with their social and emotional development throughout the school day through the curriculum and by following The Golden Rules. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) covers social, moral, cultural, and emotional aspects of learning and is an integral part of our curriculum. The Jigsaw PSHE scheme promotes well-being and mindfulness at its core.

Our Behaviour Policy (September 2024), which includes guidance on expectations and focuses on positive reinforcement and prosocial behaviours, is followed by all staff (the Behaviour Policy is available to view on the school website).

We regularly monitor attendance and take appropriate steps to encourage punctuality and prevent unauthorised absence.

The school ensures the safety of all children through a range of measures. These include:

- Strict disclosure checks for all staff and volunteers
- The school has 3 members of staff (Ms Adams, Mrs Ineson and Mrs Summers) trained as Designated Safeguarding Leads and a designated Safeguarding Governor
- All staff have regular Safeguarding training, in accordance with government legislation
- A clear whistle blowing policy

Merry Hill is welcoming and supportive of pupils with medical conditions. It provides children with medical conditions with the same opportunities and access to activities (both school based and out-of-school) as other pupils. Pupils with a medical need have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) to record the support they need around their medical condition. The IHP is developed with the pupil (where appropriate), parent/carer, Fay Summers (SENCo), specialist nurse (where appropriate) and relevant healthcare services. Further details on support for pupils with medical conditions can be found in our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy on the school website.

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6. What training have the staff, supporting children and young people with SEND, had or are having?

The staff in our school (Teachers and Learning Support Assistants) are continually receiving new and updated training to meet the needs of all our children and those with SEND. These include:

- Makaton sign language training for children with speech and language difficulties
- Wellcomms training to assess and support speech and language needs
- Attention Autism Bucket Training
- Sensory Room Training
- Visually impaired training
- Hearing impaired training
- Hertfordshire Autism Training
- Speech and language training from our link therapist
- SCERTS training for pupils with speech and language needs
- The SENCo has completed the SENCo Award Autumn 2021
- The SENCo has completed Autism Lead Training
- The SENCo attends termly cluster meetings with Local SENCos
- The SENCo attends County Briefings twice a year
- The SENCo attends annual refresher training for Therapeutic Approaches to Behaviour
- Virtual Schools Trauma and Attachment Training
- Working towards the Hertfordshire Shining Communication Award

Mrs Mitzman is trained in The Drawing and Talking Approach and is the Deputy Mental Health Lead.

Teaching staff refer to the SENCo initially and support is offered internally.

7. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

In the first instance, class teachers adapt learning in every lesson. This means that they plan particular questions and tasks for groups or individuals so that they are able to access the work at the level that is most appropriate for them. Following this pupils may take part in a 6 week intervention to boost progress and attainment.

If the internal support and interventions put in place fail to support a pupil's progress and the pupil is on the Inclusion list, the SENCo will refer the pupil to an external agency with the consent of parents/ carers. The agencies referred to include:

- NHS - Speech and Language Therapists/ Occupational Therapy/ School Nurse
- Speech, Language, Communication and Autism Team
- Early Years SEND advisory Service
- Behaviour Support – Chessbrook Educational Support Centre
- Moderate Learning Difficulties – Colnbrook School
- Physical and Neurological Impairment Team
- South West Herts Partnership Family Support Worker
- Hertfordshire's supporting smooth transitions resources

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Services such as CAMHs (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) can be accessed via the school nurse or GP.

If a child is assessed as having longer term special educational needs they will be entered onto the Inclusion register and will receive additional support. This support will be detailed termly on the pupil passports that are created with the child and the termly Assess, Plan Do, Review sheets that will be created through progress monitoring meetings with the parents, class teacher and SENCo team.

Team Around the Family (TAF) Meetings may be organised where involvement from a number of agencies is required.

Relevant parenting courses offered in the local area are emailed as they become available. You can also contact SENDIASS <https://www.hertssendiass.org.uk/home.aspx> for further Special Educational Needs Support and the Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) SEND advice line: Educational Psychology Contact line 01992 588574 and SEND Specialist Advice and Support Service 01442 453920.

8. How will the school help me support my child's learning?

At Merry Hill, we value communication and the sharing of ideas and information between home and school. There are regular opportunities to discuss your child's progress and how you can best support them at home. Termly SEN target setting meetings take place alongside formal parent/carers' consultation meetings in Autumn and Spring, with a final Open Evening in the Summer Term to view your child's current progress and achievements. Summer target review meetings for Year 2 pupils take place with the SENCo of Ashfield, our link Junior school, to support the transition to Key Stage 2 of our pupils with SEND.

We have 'New to Year' meetings at the start of each academic year to inform parents of the range of work that their children will be covering in the terms ahead. Parents are also encouraged to support their children with home learning activities and some literacy and maths homework is now available online.

Our SENCo can also support you with ideas and strategies or help you get in touch with external agencies. In addition to the formal meetings, you will be invited to a variety of parental workshops to enable a fuller understanding of how the particular area of the curriculum is explored and developed in school and how your child can be further supported at home. Relevant local courses on offer are signposted through Merry Hill Matters Newsletters, Blogs, DSPL9 Newsletter for parents or emailed directly to parents.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's education?

In addition to formal parent/carer consultation meetings, you can also discuss your child's education with their class teacher, SENCO, Assistant Headteacher(s) or Headteacher. If you need an appointment, this can be made through the school office.

For some pupils, a school/home liaison book may be used to enable regular information-sharing and updates between key school staff and parents/carers.

Where a child needs more focused, individualised differentiation, a Student Support Plan (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) or similar may be introduced to enable closer monitoring of small steps of progress. Ideas and information will be shared, reviewed and recorded through this planning each term. Advice from outside professionals will be included and followed in the plan where there is involvement.

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If your child's needs are significant, it may be appropriate to undertake a statutory assessment of his/her needs. During this process you will also be supported by the Hertfordshire SEND Team. They will ensure that you fully understand the process. The assessment may lead to the application and issue of an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

10. How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom?

Merry Hill is an inclusive school. We provide all pupils with equal opportunities to access the curriculum and life of the school. At Merry Hill, children have a wide range of extra-curricular activities to enjoy. Some clubs are run by school staff, some by external professionals, all with appropriate qualifications and DBS clearance. All children are encouraged to take advantage of these activities. Every effort will be made to reduce barriers to participation. We are committed to including students with SEND in activities outside of the classroom, including school trips, and to try to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate this. Risk assessments will be undertaken and reasonable adjustments considered to aid inclusion regardless of need or disability.

In some instances parents/carers may be asked to accompany their child on school trips.

In the event a pupil is unable to attend school, due to quarantine or school lockdown, such as COVID-19, remote learning is personalised for pupils with SEND. Tapestry and Seesaw are used as a learning platform for teachers to set specific tasks matched to needs and for pupils and parents to share responses to the work set. Physical packs of work are also made available and dropped off to pupil homes if necessary. Pupils with an EHCP are set home learning tasks linked to their planned outcomes and practical resources are made available as needed. Weekly phone calls from the teacher to the family ensure lines of communication are kept open and local support and resources are emailed to specific families by the SENCO.

11. How accessible is the school environment?

Merry Hill is subject to the general "Equality Duty" under the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to adapting our learning environment and teaching strategies as appropriate within budget constraints as recorded on our Accessibility Plan.

Specific resources such as adapted lunch trays and cutlery, adapted toilet seats, handrails, steps for sinks are provided following consultation with parents in order to make the environment more accessible. Placement of a pupil's work place or seating area is carefully considered to take into account any visual or auditory needs. Clear markings may be added to discriminate obstructions, such as pillars or the edge of steps for a pupil with a visual impairment.

We have a Sensory Room where any pupil can go with an adult if needing support to self regulate or as a sensory stimulus according to their needs. Every classroom has a Mindfulness Area containing sensory toys which all pupils have access to and can use when they need a calming space within their classroom.

We always recommend that parents make an appointment to visit our site to make their own assessment of suitability and discuss any specific requirements. We will also liaise with external professionals involved with your child to gain further advice on how we can make the learning environment accessible to all children.

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12. Who can I contact for further information?

Name and contact details of key people at Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery:

Ms Melissa Adams is the Headteacher.

Mrs Fay Summers is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and Assistant Headteacher.

Mrs Sarah Ineson is the Assistant Headteacher.

All of the above are contactable through the school:

Email: admin@merryhill.herts.sch.uk

Phone: 0208 950 2166

You can also contact SENDIASS <https://www.hertssendiass.org.uk/home.aspx> for further Special Educational Needs Support and the Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) SEND advice line: Educational Psychology Contact line 01992 588574 and SEND Specialist Advice and Support Service 01442 453920.

Complaints about provision for vulnerable children, those with SEN or who are disabled will normally be directed in the first instance to the class teacher, who should then refer them to the SENCo and Headteacher. If the complaint cannot be resolved through these channels there is a County Complaints procedure for SEND.

13. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school and transfer to a new school?

The school holds “Welcome” parent sessions at the start of each year to ensure parents have all the relevant information to support their children. If your child is starting in Nursery or Reception there will be stay and play sessions so your child has time to get used to their new setting. Nursery and Reception parents complete a questionnaire and have time to discuss this with the class teachers. Teachers in Key Stage 1 ensure a transition period takes place at the start of the Autumn term to help prepare the children for the expectations of their new year group.

Towards the end of Year 2, Merry Hill prepares all children for the move to Junior School. The SENCos at Merry Hill and Ashfield work extremely closely, and all relevant information will be passed to Ashfield during transition meetings in the Summer term. There will also be additional transition visits during the Summer term for any child who the schools feel may find the move particularly unsettling. If your child is not moving to Ashfield, the SENCo will liaise with your child’s new school to ensure a smooth transition takes place. SENCos will share information by telephone or face to face and arrange for a transition book or visit(s) to the new setting.

Parents of a child with SEND that are new to the school are invited to visit and meet the SENCO prior to the child starting at the school. The SENCO will request to join EHCP reviews in the summer term of a child who is at a different setting prior to them joining Merry Hill Infant and Nursery School. We may visit pre-school settings to observe provision already in place so that we can match this and provide a smooth transition.

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Transition booklets are made containing photos of key places and staff for pupils with SEN who are moving classrooms or schools. Additional transition visits are arranged for pupils with SEN moving to Ashfield, our link junior School.

14. How are the schools resources allocated and matched to the children's special educational needs?

The school receives a budget for SEND provision. This funding is used for the employment of support staff to assist children with SEND and to provide additional resources such as books, the upkeep of our Sensory Room, interventions, and any specialist equipment or training suggested by outside professionals, that may be required to aid learning beyond the resources commonly used by most other children. The school provides support for all pupils with SEND as the need arises. The school is able to apply for an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP) in consultation with the pupil's parents and Local High Needs Funding may be applied for in the interim.

15. How are decisions made about the range of support my child will receive?

The school may suggest that your child needs some individual support in school. The SENCo will help to identify the needs of each child and work with the class teacher to determine the level of support needed. We will tell you how the support will be used, what strategies will be put in place and how you can support your child. For children receiving SEN support, advice from external agencies may sometimes identify that an additional level of support is needed. This will be reviewed constantly and parents/carers will be part of the discussions. Your child might be identified as needing a particularly high level of support, with input needed from professional agencies outside the school. Following discussions with parents/carers and drawing on all available information, it may be decided to request an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan). The Local Authority will make a decision about whether your child's needs are complex enough to need an EHC plan. If your child is assessed as needing an EHC plan, the Local Authority will ask for further detailed reports on your child's needs from all the professionals involved before writing the EHC plan. The EHC plan will outline the support and strategies to be put in place as well as long and short term goals for your child.

A child with SEND will contribute to their Passport by sharing what works for them and the support they think they need to reach their targets. This is written onto their passport and shared with staff working with the child.

16. How can I find out about the local authority's local offer of services and provisions for children with SEND?

Parents can read about Hertfordshire's local offer at:

<http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/Local-Offer/The-Hertfordshire-Local-Offer.aspx>

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Identification of a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and process towards applying for education health needs assessment

Teachers meet with senior leadership team and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to discuss all pupil's academic, social, emotional and physical progress. The following flowchart sets out the steps involved in the process:

