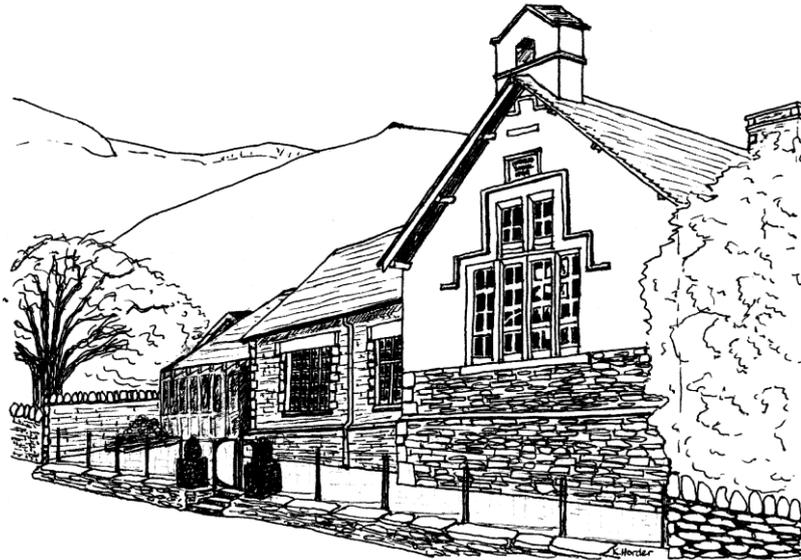


Threlkeld C of E Primary School



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

National statistics tell us that on average 1 in 5 children will have Special Educational Needs at some point during their time at school. Therefore all parents need to know what this means to them and to their child.

We hope this leaflet will help to explain.

What are Special Educational Needs?

There are 4 main areas of Special Educational Needs (SEN) which could affect your child:

1. Communication and interaction

Your child may find it more difficult to communicate with others. They may have problems taking part in conversations, either because they find it difficult to understand what others say or because they have difficulties with making themselves understood.

2. Cognition and Learning

This is by far the most common reason within school. Difficulties may be specific for example your child may have a particular problem with reading or spelling, or they may be more general, where there are several areas of difficulty. Their needs may be quite minor, and after a short time of focused efforts, the problems may be overcome, or there may be problems that are longer term.

3. Social, mental and emotional health

Children who have difficulties with their emotional and social development may have immature social skills and find it difficult to make successful friendships. These difficulties may be displayed through your child becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as through displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour.

4. Sensory and or physical

There is a wide range of sensory and physical difficulties that affect children. This area includes children with visual or a hearing impairment or with a physical disability.

How is my child identified as having Special Educational Needs?

Depending on the need, they may be identified in different ways. If your child has a significant problem it may have been identified through medical checks or health visits before your child starts school. Other needs may be identified by yourself or by school staff in your child's first year at school, or needs may emerge later on in their education through formal and informal assessments and monitoring.

Teachers give children assessment tests of one form or another every year and these may show if any are beginning to struggle when compared with others in their year, particularly in the basic skills of Maths and English. If this is the case there are several 'catch up' programmes which teachers and teaching assistants can deliver to small groups of children with similar needs.

Remember, there will always be other children who have some problems-not just yours. But also remember that taking part in a 'catch up' programme does NOT guarantee that your child will catch up.

What Happens Next?

If teachers have identified a problem they will let you know through parent's evenings or an arranged meeting. Likewise, if you have any concerns, it is very important that you make an appointment to talk to your child's teacher. It will then be decided whether the situation needs further action at that point. If it does, then the problem will be referred to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who is Mrs Horne.

The school is very committed to the provision of support for SEN and we put a high priority to setting aside a proportion of our budget to provide Teaching Assistants and other forms of support. In certain cases funding may be provided by external agencies, but this is by no means a foregone conclusion.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

After talking with you, the class teacher and SENCO will draw up an Individual Education Plan for your child. This does not mean your child will be working on their own or doing different work to all the other children. It is a written sheet that documents any extra help they will receive. This may be working in a small group for a small part of the week, taking part in a catch-up programme or lessons designed to focus on a child's particular problem. Targets will be set for your child and also a review date. Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress at termly review meetings and also the regular Parent's Evening appointments.

If the targets set in their IEP are proving inappropriate, or concerns become greater despite well-founded support that is matched to the child's area of need, the school may involve specialists, including those from outside agencies (e.g. speech therapist, literacy specialist, educational psychologist). Parents will always be involved at this stage. Again targets and review dates will be set.

Education Health and Care Plan (EHC plan)

If it is considered that your child's needs cannot reasonably be provided from within the resources normally available to our school, a request for the local authority to assess the education, health and care needs of your child can be made. The drawing up of an Education, Health and Care plan will involve the child and their parents, plus professionals from Education, Health and Care. It must be noted that a statutory assessment of this kind will not always lead to an EHC plan being produced.

All children with SEN will be treated with great sensitivity. The school recognises the importance of promoting and maintaining a high self-esteem. The emphasis will always be in supporting the child so that they can be included with the rest of the class as much as possible. This is known as Inclusive Education. Parents will be kept informed at every stage and will be given advice on how they can help and encourage their child at home. If your child is having problems with homework, please contact the class teacher and explain what the problem is.

And finally...

Don't worry! If your child is identified as having Special Educational Needs they will not be the first or the last. There will be several other children in the school with similar problems.

Please keep in touch with us, and let us know if you have any concerns. Often we can quickly put your mind at rest. We are happy to receive feedback, comments and suggestions from parents in order to improve our provision further

Some very able children also have particular needs, and we make every effort to provide for them too.

We value all our children for their achievements and qualities, whatever their abilities.

NB If you have any further questions relating to Special Educational Needs please contact school for further assistance. A full copy of our SEN policy is available from school. Please contact the school secretary.