

# **Information about Special Educational Needs**

**For Parents & Carers**

**At St Leonard's we:**

- **Pursue excellence in all and for all**
- **Take Christ as the model for life**
- **Strive to create community**

The SEN Department is staffed by the SENCO and two other classroom teachers, six Learning Support Assistants and a Transition Co-ordinator.

**St Leonard's Catholic School SENCO:**  
Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

Mr M Capper

☎ 0191 3848575

✉ [senco@st-leonards.durham.sch.uk](mailto:senco@st-leonards.durham.sch.uk)



**Our SEN Governor:**

Mr P Duffy

☎ 01913848575

✉ [HeadTeacher@st-leonards.durham.sch.uk](mailto:HeadTeacher@st-leonards.durham.sch.uk)



If you would like any independent support or advice about any aspect of your child's Special Educational Needs please contact the **Parent Partnership Service:**

☎ 0191 5873541

✉ [elaine.chandler@durham.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.chandler@durham.gov.uk)

## Contents

<b>What are Special Educational Needs? (SEN)</b>	Page 1
<b>How do schools help children with Special Educational Needs?</b>	Page 2
<b>What does the SENCO do?</b>	Page 3
<b>How are Special Educational Needs identified?</b>	Page 4
<b>What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?</b>	Page 5
<b>What is School Action?</b>	Page 6
<b>What is School Action Plus?</b>	Page 7
<b>What is Statutory Assessment / Statement?</b>	Page 8

## What are Special Educational Needs?

A special educational need can be a number of different things. For example, your child may be having problems with reading, maths or behaviour, which school can help by putting extra support in at school and by working in partnership with yourself.

It may also be due to a disability which makes it harder for a child to use the same educational facilities that the school provides for the majority of children.

For some children this may be a temporary difficulty, while others may have a long term need for special help.

### Types of special educational needs can include:

- ❖ General Learning Difficulties – children whose learning progresses at a slower pace
- ❖ Speech and Language Difficulties
- ❖ Behavioural Difficulties
- ❖ Dyslexia (difficulties with reading, writing and spelling)
- ❖ Dyspraxia (problems with body movement and co-ordination, organisation)
- ❖ Dyscalculia (difficulties with number work)
- ❖ Autism
- ❖ ADD/ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- ❖ Downs Syndrome
- ❖ Cerebral Palsy
- ❖ Other Physical/Medical Needs

### Did you know?

At one point in their lives up to 20% of children/young people (1 in 5) need support for a Special Educational Need.

## How does St Leonard's help young people with Special Educational Needs?

Children learn and develop in different ways.

Teachers recognise this and use different teaching styles, resources and plan different levels of work in the classroom to cater for the various ways children learn. This is called **Quality First Teaching** and is something schools must provide for all children.

However, many children, at some time in their school life, need extra help.

### St Leonard's will:

- ❖ talk to parents/carers if we think their child has a special educational need and let them know what special help the school is giving.
- ❖ appoint a member of staff as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- ❖ have a written Special Educational Needs policy – a copy is available on request.
- ❖ take account of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice. This is advice given to schools by the government which outlines what schools should do to support pupils with SEN and gives recommendations for good practice

St Leonard's recognises that you know your child best and will consult with you throughout decision making processes.

## **What does the SENCO do?**

**SENCO = Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator**

### **If your child has Special Educational Needs the SENCO will:**

- ❖ ensure the right support is put in place for your child
- ❖ advise other teachers on how to help your child
- ❖ arrange training for staff so they understand your child's needs
- ❖ work with other professionals (if necessary) who may be able to help your child, e.g. speech and language therapist /medical professional/ educational psychologist
- ❖ work with you on a regular basis to talk with you about your child's needs and listen to any concerns you might have

## **How are Special Educational Needs Identified?**

**Many young people starting at St Leonard's may well have already been identified as having Special Educational Needs. Those needs may have been identified by:**

- ❖ you, as parent or carer;
- ❖ a primary school class teacher;
- ❖ a health visitor;
- ❖ another medical professional.

**If it seems that your child may have special educational needs, the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will assess:**

- ❖ what your child is good at and what they need help with;
- ❖ what your child would benefit from learning;
- ❖ how best to help your child learn.

Information about your child's targets and any extra support they receive at school may be recorded on an IEP (Individual Education Plan), Provision Map or similar.

**Children thought to have special educational needs will be placed on the school's special educational needs register and receive one of three levels of support:**

- ❶ School Action (see page 6);
- ❷ School Action Plus (see page 7);
- ❸ Statutory Assessment / Statement (see page 8).

The level of support received by pupils may change throughout their time at school. School staff will speak to you if they think this should happen and will ask you for your opinion about this.

## **What are IEPs and Provision Maps?**

Young people whose level of need means that they need provision which **is additional to and different from** provision available to all students may have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Provision Map.

Both documents will be available to school staff so that suitable learning opportunities and challenges may be offered.

St Leonard's will share copies of Individual Education Plans / Provision Maps with parents / carers.

## What is School Action?

School Action ("SA") is used when there is evidence that a child is not making progress at school and there is a need for action to be taken to meet learning difficulties. SA can include the involvement of extra teachers and may also require the use of different learning materials, special equipment or a different teaching strategy.

**If your child is on the School Action level of support these are some of the things you can expect from our St Leonard's:**

- ❖ your child's subject teachers will be exploring ways to support them in class such as:
  - changing the way lessons are planned and delivered
  - matching activities to the ability / need of your child (differentiation)
  - adapting learning materials such as worksheets, books and activities to suit your child's needs
- ❖ your child may have access to small group support;
- ❖ the teachers will work in partnership with the SENCO to find ways to support your child with their needs, including giving you ideas on how you can help your child at home;
- ❖ school staff should set targets for your child, which will be shared with you, either during Parents' Evening or a Review Meeting.

For many children this action will be enough to support your child with any difficulties and will help them make progress.

Where your child may need more help, the school and SENCO may suggest your child is moved onto **School Action Plus** ▶

## What is School Action Plus?

School Action Plus ("SA+") is used where School Action (SA) has not been able to help your child make adequate progress. At SA+ the school will seek external advice from the LA's support services, the local Health Authority or from Social Services.

### **If your child is receiving School Action Plus level of support these are some of the things you can expect from St Leonard's:**

- ❖ continuation of all help your child receives at School Action;
- ❖ teachers, teaching assistants and the SENCO will continue to work together to find ways to support your child in school;
- ❖ the school should seek additional advice from outside specialists such as health professionals, specialist teachers or educational psychologists who would:
  - carry out further assessment of your child's needs
  - provide advice to schools on how to best support your child
  - suggest resources that would help your child make progress
- ❖ you should receive copies of any planning to meet your child's needs (Individual Education Plan / Provision Map – see page 5);
- ❖ your views will be important in planning for your child's education. Progress will be reviewed regularly either at Parents' Evenings or during review meetings with the school SENCO.

This extra support may be enough to support your child with any difficulties sufficiently to ensure that progress can be made in school.

A very small number of children (about 2%) may need further support and the school may suggest applying for a

**Statutory Assessment** ►

## **What is a Statutory Assessment?**

**If your child's needs are very complex and/or severe the school may ask the Local Authority to carry out a Statutory Assessment:**

- ❖ This is a very detailed assessment of your child's needs. Parents or carers, the school and a range of professionals will all be asked to provide written reports.
- ❖ At the end of the assessment phase the Local Authority will consider these reports to help decide whether or not to issue a Statement of Special Educational Need for your child.
- ❖ As a parent/carer you also have the right to ask the Local Authority to carry out this assessment although it is usually best if you can do this with the support of the school.
- ❖ Statutory Assessment is only appropriate for a small number of children. Your school SENCO or the Parent Partnership Service will be able to advise you about this.

## **What is a Statement of Special Educational Need?**

If the Statutory Assessment shows that your child needs a Statement of Special Educational Need, a detailed individual plan will be produced advising the school as to what they must do to support your child.

**If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Need the school must:**

- ❖ hold an Annual Review Meeting to which you and other professionals must be invited.
- ❖ provide your child with the full range of support specified in their statement. This usually equates to additional support for at least 50% of the school week and may be group or individual support. (Schools organise this in different ways according to the needs of your child)

**We appreciate this is a very complicated process so please seek advice from Mr Capper our SENCO or your Parent Partnership Service.**

We hope this information has helped you to understand how St Leonard's Catholic School supports children with Special Educational Needs.

If you would like to talk to someone about your child's needs please contact the school.

If you are concerned that your child's Special Educational Needs aren't being met or your child is not making progress, please talk to Mr Capper about the support for your child.