

# The Ambleside Centre

## Special Educational Needs Policy



*'Children have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty, which calls for Special Needs Provisions to be made for them'*

**SEN code of Practice 1:3**

### The Ambleside Centre's Aims

- To welcome children with special educational needs as part of our community and to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to engage in the curriculum.
- To provide a curriculum which celebrates individual differences and meets the individual learning needs of all the children, taking account of different interests and learning styles.
- To develop practices and procedures which aim to ensure that all children's special educational needs are identified and assessed and the curriculum planned to meet their needs. If additional specialist advice and support would benefit a child, the appropriate professionals from agencies external to the setting will be contacted.
- To work in true partnership with parents/carers, valuing their views and contributions and keeping them fully involved in their child's education.
- To support all families using the centre.
- To involve the child in decision-making about their special educational provision.
- To actively support the development of multi-disciplinary practice, led by the needs of individual children.
- To take a lead in the development of the local authority's integrated approach to education, health and social care.

### Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

There is a named Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (known as SENCO) who is responsible for co-ordinating the day-to-day provision of education for children with special educational needs. That person must be trained and have the appropriate qualification for the role of SENCO.

## **Arrangements for Co-ordinating Special Educational Needs Provisions**

The SENCO, Head Teacher, teaching and non-teaching staff are all involved in:-

- Establishing an individual tracking record for children with SEN.
- Liaising about children's SEN, decision making about extra support or additional specialist resources for children with SEN.
- Agreeing strategies and plans for meeting children's SEN.
- Meeting and communicating with parents of children with SEN.
- Liaison with outside agencies.
- Using the 'SEN indicators' (appendix 1) to aid the monitoring of children who may have SEN.
- Supporting staff and developing their expertise in working with children with speech, language and communication difficulties.

This work is overseen and co-ordinated by the Head of Centre/SENCO or their deputy.

There is a room available for use by professionals that includes child friendly resources for the examination/assessment of children.

## **Admissions**

Children with identified special educational needs, at any level, are admitted to the centre at the time most appropriate for them. The decision is made in consultation with parents and other relevant professionals.

## **Special Resources**

The centre is the Authority's designated resource for the hearing-impaired.

- Members of staff have British Sign Language qualifications.
- A teacher of the deaf regularly works at the school.
- Staff have knowledge of Makaton.
- The nursery for 3-5 year olds is acoustically treated to facilitate hearing.

### ***What if I am concerned about my child's speech or communication?***

A speech and language therapist offers weekly drop-in sessions in the Family Room at the Centre. Please speak to reception staff to find out the dates and times.

If staff felt that it would be helpful for the speech and language therapist to take a closer look at any child's communication, they may suggest that you attend the drop-in clinic. If you are concerned about your child's speech, language or communication, please speak to your child's keyworker.

Please look out for information about speech, language and communication topics that the speech and language therapist puts in the reception area.

## **Facilities**

The centre is accessible to wheelchair users.

Nappy changing facilities are available for any child that needs them.

Equipment for physical development has been specifically selected so that disabled children and those children with a cochlear implant can use it. The building has been acoustically treated to benefit hearing-impaired children.

The learning environment has equipment and toys that are easily accessible to all children. Different curriculum areas and equipment are clearly labelled in many different ways, including Makaton signs.

Facilities for disabled children include a toilet and shower accessible to wheelchair users, and an electronically controlled table to be used for changing nappies etc.

Laundry facilities are available.

Pictures and photographs, mainly including MAKATON signs, are used to illustrate the daily routine, which is consistent.

Children plan their work time using pictures and photographs to help them.

Staff draw-up personal plans for each child, which reflect their individual interests and learning style.

Information for parents can be provided in alternate forms, e.g. tape, large print and language translations as required.

Home School liaison books are used as a communication tool for children with limited communication skills.

## **Financial and other resource allocation**

A teacher of the deaf and a specialist speech and language therapist work at the centre to help support children with a hearing impairment. They work in partnership with Centre Staff to deliver this support.

Alterations to the building and specialist equipment that aid learning for hearing impaired and/or disabled children are provided using the Access Fund.

Other professionals support the work of the centre when requested through Request for Service and school Planning meetings. The behaviour and emotional support team may be used to support individual needs at the centre or at home.

The Early Years Special Needs Service liaises with the centre when children transfer from their service to the centre.

The Centre is able to apply for Early Years Inclusion Subsidy funding to help towards providing additional support for children who are undergoing assessment and require extra adult support during sessions.

## **Identification of and planning for children with Special Educational Needs**

Parents are encouraged to share information about their child's needs from the very first point of contact, and continuously throughout their child's time at the centre.

The centre has very close working relationships with other professionals involved with children prior to entry to the centre. E.g. health visitors, speech and language therapists and the Early Years Special Needs Service. A multi professional neighbourhood team is based at the centre and use the centre to see children, work with parents or meet with other professionals.

Staff make careful observations and assessments of children's learning on a daily basis, and share any concerns with the SENCO.

Wokingham Local Authority has produced guidance about indicators of special educational need in the early years and these are used to identify children who may require additional support.

Individual Early Years Educational Plans (EYIP) are drawn up, in partnership with parents, for children if progress in learning suggests the need for smaller steps and specific support.

Termly meetings are used to plan the support offered to a child with special educational needs, which may include the involvement of other professionals. These meetings are attended by the educational psychologist, members of the behaviour & emotional support team and the SENCO. Parents are informed that a meeting is taking place and the outcome is shared.

Additional support for families with children who may have Special Educational Needs is provided by our staff who work very closely with nursery keyworkers.

## **Curriculum Access**

The curriculum is planned to meet the whole range of children's individual needs. This is done by allowing time for children to choose their own activities and time for adults to lead planned activities. Children are encouraged to participate in these activities at their own level.

During child initiated activities, children take increasing responsibility for planning, undertaking & evaluating their own learning. Adults support and develop their thinking using the child's chosen learning style and interests.

'Next steps' are identified for all children on an individual basis following close observations and interaction with children in their self chosen activities. For some children an EYIP breaks those 'next steps' into much smaller steps.

## **Inclusion**

The Ambleside Centre celebrates the unique quality that each family displays and aims to meet the needs of all children in an inclusive environment.

## **SEN Complaints**

These will be dealt with using the general complaints procedure of the Governing body.

## **Staff training for SEN**

The centre is committed to providing in-service training in the area of SEN, and ensuring that staff have opportunities to attend SEN training outside of the centre.

## **Parent Partnership**

For most children, attending the Centre marks an important early step towards becoming independent. It is often a first step for parents too, who are now entrusting adult professionals with some responsibility for their child, outside of the home. It is vital that a real working partnership exists between parents and staff and that this partnership is maintained.

Centre staff have expertise about children's learning and parents are experts about their child. Every opportunity is used to encourage parents, to indicate their needs. Their help is enlisted for staff to 'tune in' to the interests and needs of their child.

Visits to the centre by parents are encouraged at registration, before entry and throughout the child's time at the centre.

Staff share and request information from parents during home visits before the child starts and, informally, at the beginning & end of every session. Any concern is shared at the earliest stage.

Children's records, which include staff observations and assessments of the child, are available for parents at any time and every encouragement is given to parents to contribute to them, with support for children to continue their learning at home. The decision to write an Individual Education Plan for a child, or to involve outside agencies, or to start specific support strategies is always made with parents.

Parents are encouraged to use the Parent Partnership Service, which is an independent service offering support to parents of children with a suspected special need. Introductions can be made by the school if required.

## **The role of the Governing Body**

The governors are responsible for:

Ensuring that a high standard of provision is made for SEN children and that these children are fully involved in the Centre's activities.

Monitoring that the SEN policy is implemented and that the SEN code of practice is followed.

## **Links with other Establishments**

Close links are maintained with local pre-school groups that children may have attended before starting at The Ambleside Centre at an individual level and through cluster groups. These same links exist with receiving primary schools, which are maintained by regular staff visits. Transition arrangements for children with SEN are tailored to meet individual needs.