

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Report



Notre Dame Plymouth

Educating Head, Heart and Hands

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Dear Parents and Carers,

The aim of this information report is to explain how we implement our SEND policy. In other words, we want to show you how special educational needs support works in our school.

If you want to know more about our arrangements for SEND, please read our SEND policy or make contact with the school and we will arrange for our SENDCo, Clare Sampson, to meet with you and talk to you.

You can find it on our website, [Notre Dame School, CAST SEND Policy](#).

At Notre Dame School, we aim to ensure that all children are fully included in the life of our school and able to engage in the rich, exciting and rewarding opportunities we offer. We work hard to adapt our provision to enable every child to take part both inside the classroom and in the wider school environment. The information in this report helps to highlight how we do this.

Note: If there are any terms we've used in this information report that you're unsure of, you can look them up in the Glossary at the end of the report.

We look forward to working with you!





AREA OF NEED	CONDITION
Communication and interaction	Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
	Speech and language difficulties
Cognition and learning	Specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
	Moderate learning difficulties
	Severe learning difficulties
Social, emotional and mental health	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
	Attention deficit disorder (ADD)
Sensory and/or physical	Hearing impairments
	Visual impairment
	Multi-sensory impairment
	Physical impairment

2. Which staff will support my child, and what training have they had?

Our special educational needs co-ordinator, or SENDCO

Our SENDCO is **Mrs Clare Sampson**.

Mrs Sampson has 2 years experience in this role and worked as Deputy SENDCo for 3 years prior to this. Mrs Sampson also teaches History at Notre Dame alongside her role as SENDCO.

She achieved the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination in 2020.

She is allocated 4 days a week to manage SEN provision.

Assistant SENDCO

Our assistant SENCO is **Mrs Sophie Holmes**.

Mrs Holmes joined the team as Assistant SENDCO in September 2025 to lead our EDEN Base provision (internal Alternative Provision). Mrs Holmes also teaches RE at Notre Dame.

She achieved the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination in 2025.

Higher Level Teaching Assistants / SEND Year Leads

We have 2 full-time and 2 part-time HLTAs who work closely with the SENDCo to deliver student plans and interventions. These will normally be parents' first point of contact within the SEND team.

Mrs Catherine Fisher - SEND Lead for Years 10-13; including transition to post-16, teaches Life Skills at KS3 and Arts Award at KS4 as part of the Learn for Life Curriculum Pathway. Specialises in supporting students with Communication and Interaction needs.

Mrs Anita Shaw - SEND Lead for Years 8-9; teaches literacy and numeracy as part of the Learn for Life Curriculum Pathway.

Miss Cerys Godlington - SEND Lead for Year 7 and 1:1 student support

Mrs Vanda Sampson - Teaches Life Skills at KS3 as part of the Learn for Life Curriculum Pathway.

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs)

We have a team of Learning Support Assistants who are trained to deliver SEN provision; there is normally 1 LSA allocated to each year group.

We have Learning Support Assistants who are trained to deliver interventions such as Lego Therapy, Fresh Start Literacy programme, Maths interventions.

In the last academic year, LSAs have been trained in using the PACE approach and the role of the LSA in the classroom. We also have one LSA dedicated to supporting students with additional needs' mental health and wellbeing who is ELSA and STORM trained.

Subject Teachers

All of our teachers receive in-house SEN training, and are supported by the SENCO to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN.

External agencies and experts

Sometimes we need extra help to offer our pupils the support they need. Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our pupils with SEN and to support their families. These include:

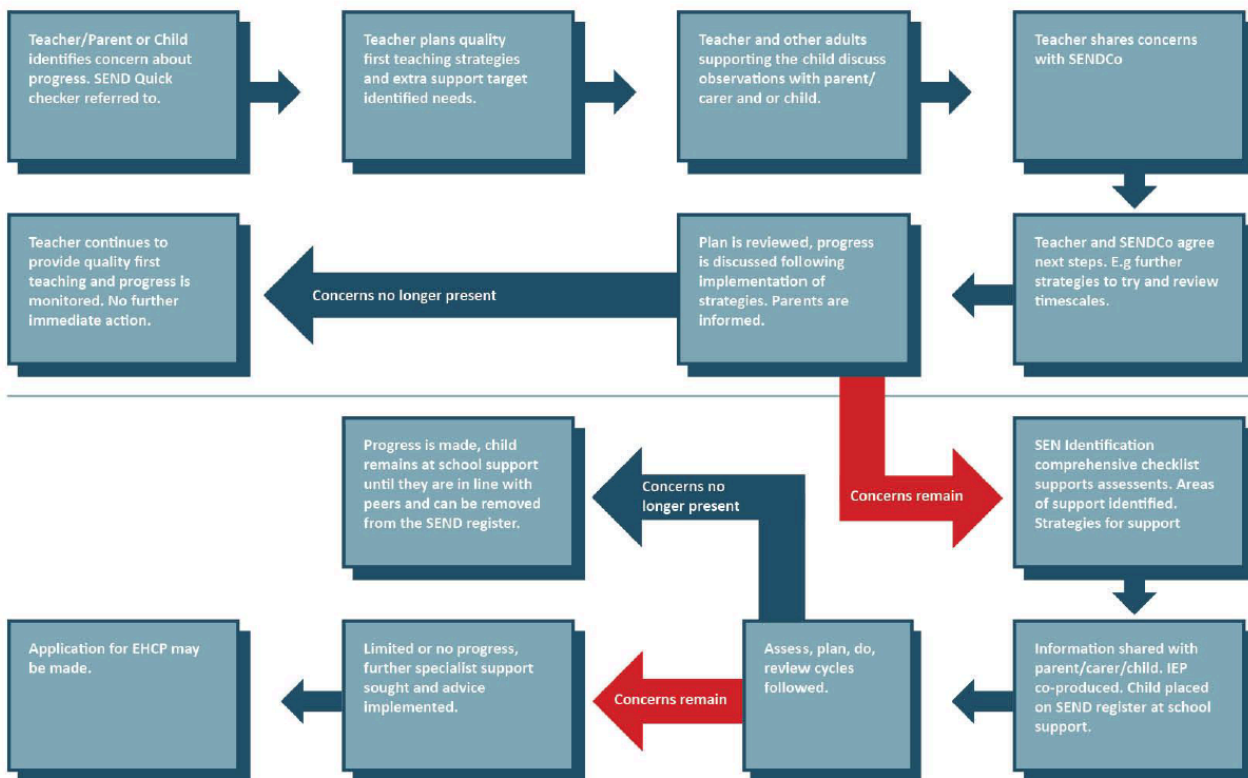
- Speech and language therapists
- Educational psychologists
- Occupational therapists
- GPs or paediatricians

- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Education welfare officers
- Social services and other local authority (LA)-provided support services
- Voluntary sector organisations

3. What should I do if I think my child has SEN?

At Notre Dame we follow the Plymouth CAST SEND Pathway. This follows a graduated approach to SEND.

Identification of Special Educational Needs - Pathway



If you think your child might have SEN, the first person you should tell is your child's tutor. Tutors can be contacted by email. We will discuss your concerns and try to get a better understanding of what your child's strengths and difficulties are.

Tutors may at this point discuss concerns with subject teachers and / or Head of Year. Together we will decide what outcomes to seek for your child and agree on next steps, which may include a referral to the SEND Department.

If we decide that your child needs SEN support, we will formally notify you in writing and your child will be added to the school's SEND register.

4. How will the school know if my child needs SEN support?

All our subject teachers, tutors and Heads of Year are aware of SEN and are on the lookout for any pupils who aren't making the expected level of progress in their schoolwork or socially.

If teachers notice that a pupil is falling behind, they try to find out if the pupil has any gaps in their learning. If they can find a gap, they will support the pupil to fill it. This may be by slightly adapting the way things are being taught, providing some additional short term support, additional teaching or working with you to support your child with some additional practice at home. Pupils who don't have SEN usually make progress quickly once the gap in their learning has been filled.

If the pupil is still struggling to make the expected progress, the tutor/teacher/Head of Year will talk to the SENCO, and will contact you to discuss the possibility that your child has SEN.

The SENDCO or SEND lead will observe the pupil and gather information from their teachers about the difficulties they are having. They will also compare your child's progress and development with their peers and available national data.

The SENCO or SEND Year Lead will ask for your opinion and speak to your child to get their input as well. They may also, where appropriate, ask for the opinion of external experts such as a speech and language therapist, an educational psychologist, or a paediatrician.

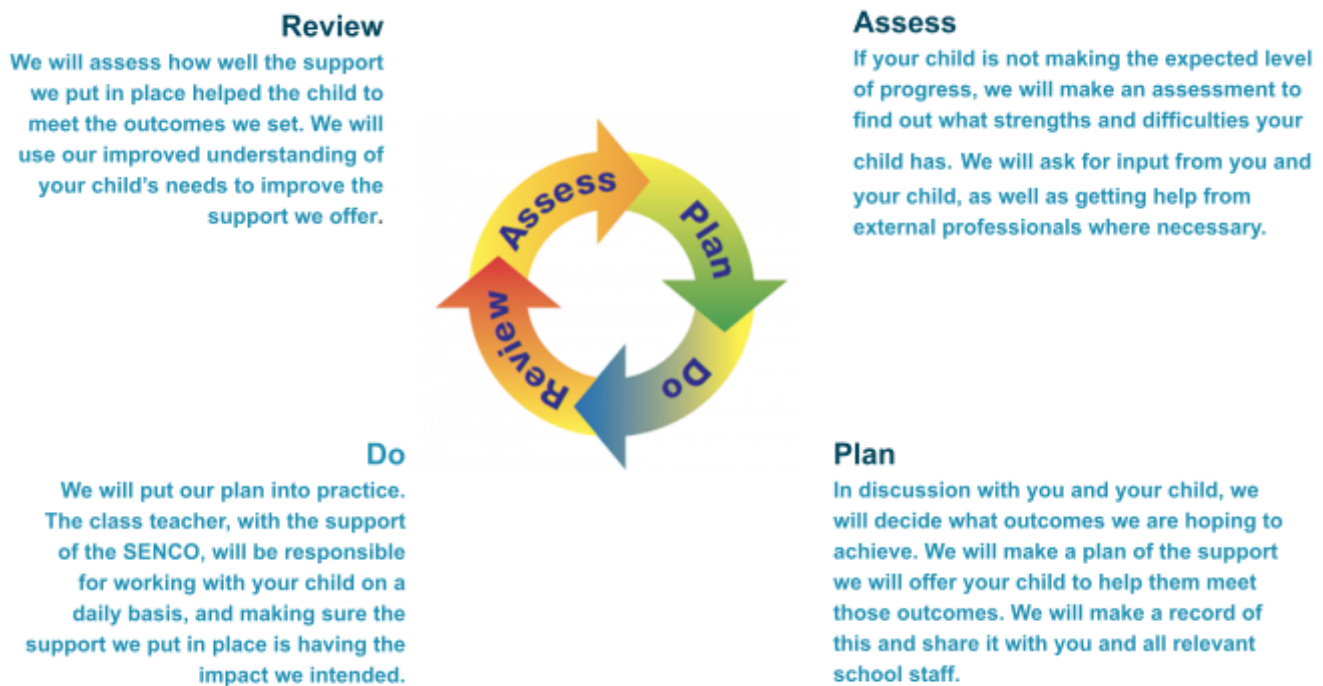
Based on all of this information, the SENCO will decide whether your child needs SEN support. You will be told the outcome of the decision in writing.

If your child does need SEN support, their name will be added to the school's SEND register, and the SENCO or SEND Year lead will work with you to create a passport for them.

5. How will the school measure my child's progress?

We will follow the 'graduated approach' to meeting your child's SEN needs.

The graduated approach is a 4-part cycle of **assess, plan, do, review**.



As a part of the planning stage of the graduated approach, we will set outcomes that we want to see your child achieve.

Whenever we run an intervention with your child, we will assess them before the intervention begins. This is known as a 'baseline assessment'. We do this so we can see how much impact the intervention has on your child's progress.

We will track your child's progress towards the outcomes we set over time and improve our offer as we learn what your child responds to best.

This process will be continual. If the review shows a pupil has made progress, they may no longer need the additional provision made through SEN support. For others, the cycle will continue and the school's targets, strategies and provisions will be revisited and refined.

6. How will I be involved in decisions made about my child's education?

The school provides progress reviews 3 times a year. You will also be invited to meet with subject teachers during the year to discuss progress. If your child has a SEND Support Plan, you will also be invited to review that with the SEND Year Lead twice a year.

- Set clear outcomes for your child's progress
- Review progress towards those outcomes
- Discuss the support we will put in place to help your child make that progress
- Identify what we will do, what we will ask you to do, and what we will ask your child to do

The SENCO may also attend these meetings to provide extra support.

We know that you're the expert when it comes to your child's needs and aspirations. So we want to make sure you have a full understanding of how we're trying to meet your child's needs, so that you can provide insight into what you think would work best for your child.

We also want to hear from you as much as possible so that we can build a better picture of how the SEN support we are providing is impacting your child outside of school.

If your child's needs or aspirations change at any time, please let us know right away so we can keep our provision as relevant as possible.

After any discussion we will make a record of any outcomes, actions and support that have been agreed. This record will be shared with all relevant staff, and you will be given a copy.

If you have concerns that arise between these meetings, please contact your child's tutor or the SEND Year lead.

7. How will my child be involved in decisions made about their education?

The level of involvement will depend on your child's age and level of competence. We recognise that no two children are the same, so we will decide on a case-by-case basis, with your input.

We may seek your child's views by asking them to:

- Attend meetings to discuss their progress and outcomes
- Prepare a presentation, written statement, video, drawing, etc.
- Discuss their views with a member of staff who can act as a representative during the meeting
- Complete a survey

8. How will the school adapt its teaching for my child?

Your child's teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class.

High-quality teaching is our first step in responding to your child's needs. We will make sure that your child has access to a broad and balanced curriculum in every year they are at our school.

We will adapt how we teach to suit the way the pupil works best. There is no '1 size fits all' approach to adapting the curriculum, we work on a case-by-case basis to make sure the adaptations we make are meaningful to your child. The SEND team will create a pupil passport for your child which advises their teachers on what adaptations they need within the classroom to access the curriculum.

These adaptations include:

- Adapting our curriculum to make sure all pupils are able to access it, for example, by grouping, 1-to-1 work, adapting the teaching style or content of the lesson, etc.
- Adapting our teaching, for example, giving longer processing times, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, reading instructions aloud, etc.
- Adapting our resources and staffing
- Using recommended aids, such as laptops, coloured overlays, visual timetables, larger font, etc.

- Learning Support Assistants can support students 1:1 basis with wellbeing and mental health needs (ELSA LSA) and deliver specific provisions identified within EHCPs.
- Learning Support Assistants will support pupils in small groups in a range of interventions which normally take place in tutor time.

AREA OF NEED	CONDITION	HOW WE SUPPORT THESE PUPILS
Communication and interaction	Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	Visual timetables Social stories Social Interaction intervention Lego Therapy In-house Alternative Provision: EDEN Base (10 places)
	Speech and language difficulties	Speech and language therapy
Cognition and learning	Specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia	Learn for Life Curriculum Pathway Fresh Start Literacy Programme Fix-it Reading intervention
	Moderate learning difficulties	Touch typing & IT skills intervention
	Severe learning difficulties	Maths intervention
Social, emotional and mental health	ADHD, ADD	Executive Function Intervention
	Adverse childhood experiences and/or mental health issues	ELSA LSA support Circle of Friends intervention Emotional Resilience Zones of Regulation In-house Alternative Provision: EDEN Base (10 places)
Sensory and/or physical	Hearing impairment	LSA Support
	Visual impairment	Touch typing and IT Skills
	Multi-sensory impairment	Access to quiet space / sensory room
	Physical impairment	Timetable/rooming adaptations

These interventions are part of our contribution to Plymouth's local offer.

9. How will the school evaluate whether the support in place is helping my child?

We will evaluate the effectiveness of provision for your child by:

- Reviewing their progress towards their goals in each SEND Support Plan review (x2 per year).
- Reviewing the impact of interventions at the end of each term.
- Pupil and parent voice
- Monitoring by the SENCO
- Using provision maps to measure progress
- Holding an annual review (if they have an education, health and care (EHC) plan)

10. How will the school resources be secured for my child?

It may be that your child's needs mean we need to secure:

- Extra equipment or facilities
- More teaching assistant hours
- Further training for our staff
- External specialist expertise

If that's the case, we will consult with external agencies to get recommendations on what will best help your child access their learning.

The school will cover up to £6,000 of any necessary costs. If funding is needed beyond this, we will seek it from our local authority. This will usually require applying to an Educational Health and Care Plan. This plan may include recommendations about the way in which any additional funding should be used. If the school needs to recruit additional staff, they will follow the Plymouth Cast recruitment policy. Approval for all posts must be sought from the Trust before the school can begin the recruitment process.

11. How will the school make sure my child is included in activities alongside pupils who don't have SEN?

All of our extra-curricular activities and school visits are available to all our pupils, including our before and after-school clubs.

All pupils are encouraged to go on our school trips, including our residential trips.

All pupils are encouraged to take part in sports day/school plays/special workshops.

No pupil is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability and we discuss with you any reasonable adjustments are needed to make sure they can be included.

12. How does the school make sure the admissions process is fair for pupils with SEN or a disability?

Our school follows the CAST admissions policy, which sets out exactly how every application is processed. Pupils with an EHCP are always given top priority by law, and the school must offer them a place if the school can meet the student's needs. This is determined through a consultation between the Local Authority and the school. For children with SEN or a disability but no EHCP, there is no separate priority category, and their applications are treated the same as all others using the criteria in the policy (for example: looked-after children, Catholic children, siblings).

To make sure admissions are fair, we follow the published CAST criteria closely and keep a clear, ordered list of applicants. This means all decisions are transparent and consistent.

13. How does the school support pupils with disabilities?

The school is aware of the access needs of disabled children on roll, and adaptations to the school are made accordingly. For more information please see the school's [Accessibility policy and Disability & Equality Policy/](#)

14. How will the school support my child's mental health, and emotional and social development?

All Schools within the Trust are working towards becoming Trauma Informed Schools and all adults have had training to help them recognise signs that children may be having difficulty socially, emotionally or mentally. Both the pastoral and SEND teams have key staff trained Trauma Informed Practice and PACE approaches.

We provide support for pupils to progress in their emotional and social development in the following ways:

- Pupils with SEN are encouraged to be part of the school council
- All pupils with SEN have a key worker who is their main point of contact within our team.
- We regularly survey all pupils at least once a year to seek their views about how well they are settled in school and how well they are connected to the adults and their peers.
- Pupils with SEN are also encouraged (and supported to attend) extra- curricular club to promote teamwork/building friendships
- Pupils with SEN have access to an ELSA trained LSA who can provide well-being and mental health support, which pupils are able to sign up to at the start of each day. We can also provide regular mentoring in six week blocks to pupils with SEN to help them identify barriers to learning and develop strategies to overcome their barriers.
- Pupils with complex needs or an EHCP have access to structured activities in the SEND Base at break and lunchtimes.
- We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying.

15. What support will be available for my child as they transition between classes or settings, or in preparing for adulthood?

Between years

To help pupils with SEN be prepared for a new school year we:

- Can provide picture profiles on new teachers
- Can support introductions to new teachers and classrooms
- Make adaptations to the rooming of classrooms to provide access for disabled pupils.

Between schools

When your child is moving on from our school, we will ask you and your child what information you want us to share with the new setting.

The Year 6 teacher and/or SENCo will upload information about a pupil's SEN needs to Plymouth's Transition Portal; it will then be downloaded and read by the SEND team at Notre Dame. If necessary following this, a meeting will be held between primary and secondary teachers/SENDcos, parents and the pupil.

Where possible pupils will visit Notre Dame on several occasions before joining, and in some cases, staff from the new school will visit your child in their current school (enhanced transition). These visits will involve observations of the student both in the classroom and a less structured environment e.g. break time. Pupils with a SEND Support Plan

or an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) will have a personalised transition program as well as accessing the main transition in place for all pupils joining the School in Year 7. Transition starts as early as possible in order to make the pupils as prepared as possible for September. In some cases transitions begin in year 5 to support the needs of pupils.

If a pupil has an EHCP a member of the Notre Dame SEND team can attend the Year 6 Annual Review and/or other SEN review meetings. In addition, where a pupil has an EHCP, the Local Authority will formally consult with Notre Dame to check we can meet the needs of the pupil and deliver the provisions listed in the EHCP.

A range of methods, suitable for your child, may be used to support them at the time of transition. For example, if your child would be helped by a book/social story to support them to understand moving on, it will be provided for them.

Moving to adulthood

We provide all our pupils with appropriate advice on paths into work or further education.

We work with the pupil to help them achieve their ambitions, which can include goals in higher education, employment, independent living and participation in society.

Within the SEND Team, there is a HLTA who supports those pupils with SEN who are moving onto college. This support takes various forms from supporting a pupil's understanding of available providers, helping pupils to complete application forms. In addition, some pupils following the Learn for Life Curriculum Pathway will be invited to attend visits to post-16 providers who have courses aimed at pupils with SEN.

16. What support is in place for looked-after and previously looked-after children with SEN?

Carole Slade, Assistant Headteacher (cslade@ndonline.org), will work with Clare Sampson, our SENCO, to make sure that all teachers understand how a looked-after or previously looked-after pupil's circumstances and their SEN might interact, and what the implications are for teaching and learning.

Children who are looked-after or previously looked-after will be supported much in the same way as any other child who has SEN. However, looked-after pupils will also have a personal education plan (PEP). We will make sure that the PEP and any SEN support plans or EHC plans are consistent and complement one another.

17. What should I do if I have a concern about my child's SEN support?

If you have concerns about the progress your child is making or the support they are receiving you should speak to your child's key worker (SEN Lead for their year group). They may suggest that you have a meeting with the SENDCo to discuss your concerns and work together to agree how to address these. If you are still concerned you should follow the school complaints procedure. You can find a copy of that [here](#).

18. What support is available for me and my family?

If you have questions about SEN, or are struggling to cope, please get in touch to let us know. We want to support you, your child and your family.

To see what support is available to you locally, have a look at Plymouth's local offer. Plymouth publishes information about the [local offer](#) on their website. Plymouth also has an inclusion website called [GATI](#) which contains a large range of information about local SEN services. If you have a Devon or Cornwall postcode, information about their local offer can be found here: [Devon](#) and [Cornwall](#).

Our local special educational needs and disabilities information, advice and support (SENDIAS) services are:

[Plymouth](#), [Devon](#) & [Cornwall](#).

Local services that offer information and support to families of children with SEN are:

[Livewell Neurodiversity Team](#) - helpful for families who are waiting for a diagnosis as well as families already with one.

[Plymouth Family Hubs](#) - offer a wide range of support both in person and online.

National charities that offer information and support to families of children with SEN are:

- [IPSEA](#)
- [SEND family support](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Family Action](#)
- [Special Needs Jungle](#)

19. Glossary

- **Access arrangements** – special arrangements to allow pupils with SEN to access assessments or exams
- **Annual review** – an annual meeting to review the provision in a pupil's EHC plan
- **Area of need** – the 4 areas of need describe different types of needs a pupil with SEN can have. The 4 areas are communication and interaction; cognition and learning; physical and/or sensory; and social, emotional and mental health needs
- **CAMHS** – child and adolescent mental health services
- **Differentiation** – When teachers adapt how they teach in response to a pupil's needs
- **EHCP needs assessment** – the needs assessment is the first step on the way to securing an EHC plan. The local authority will do an assessment to decide whether a child needs an EHC plan
- **EHC plan** – an education, health and care (EHC) plan is a legally-binding document that sets out a child's needs and the provision that will be put in place to meet their needs
- **First-tier tribunal / SEND tribunal** – a court where you can appeal against the local authority's decisions about EHC needs assessments or plans and against discrimination by a school or local authority due to SEN
- **Graduated approach** – an approach to providing SEN support in which the school provides support in successive cycles of assessing the pupil's needs, planning the provision, implementing the plan, and reviewing the impact of the action on the pupil
- **Intervention** – a short-term, targeted approach to teaching a pupil with a specific outcome in mind
- **Local offer** – information provided by the local authority that explains what services and support are on offer for pupils with SEN in the local area
- **LSA** - Learning Support Assistant, sometimes called a Teaching Assistant.
- **Outcome** – target for improvement for pupils with SEN. These targets don't necessarily have to be related to academic attainment
- **Reasonable adjustments** – changes that the school must make to remove or reduce any disadvantages caused by a child's disability
- **SENCO** – the special educational needs co-ordinator
- **SEN** – special educational needs
- **SEND** – special educational needs and disabilities
- **SEND Code of Practice** – the statutory guidance that schools must follow to support children with SEND
- **SEN information report** – a report that schools must publish on their website, that explains how the school supports pupils with SEN
- **SEN support** – special educational provision that meets the needs of pupils with SEN
- **Transition** – when a pupil moves between years, phases, schools or institutions or life stages

