



Leigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

September 2026

To be reviewed September 2027

This policy explains how our school identifies and supports children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It is for pupils, families, staff, governors and partner services. The school's SEND information report gives current contacts and practical arrangements.

Mission Statement

At Leigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School, we promote a life-long love of learning. Through enriching, exciting learning opportunities and a creative curriculum, children are given the foundations to flourish. Our Christian values are at the heart of our school and provide us with a culture of happiness, respect and trust.

We aim to promote a sense of belonging within a warm, nurturing environment where children feel safe and valued. We celebrate cultural diversity and believe that every child should have the opportunity to be the best that they can be.

Through our encouragement of good manners, kindness and friendship we aim to ensure our children display the values of good citizenship. We hope to instil in our children an 'I can' attitude and to provide our children with the tools to succeed in an ever changing world.

Our School Bible Verse from Colossians 2 Verses 6 and 7

"As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so continue to live in him. Keep your roots deep in him and have your lives built on him. Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught. And always be thankful."

Our School's Christian Vision

At Leigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School, our vision is to be a flourishing Christian community where everyone is inspired to learn, believe in their potential and achieve all they are called to be.

Rooted in the love and grace of God, revealed through Jesus Christ and inspired by Colossians 2:6–7, we seek to ensure that every member of our school family is “rooted and built up in Him”, growing in faith, wisdom and character.

Guided by our Christian values of friendship, respect and kindness, we aspire to nurture a community where love shapes relationships, everyone is valued and each person knows they belong. We aim to inspire hope, encourage resilience and develop courageous learners who face challenges with confidence, perseverance and an ‘I can’ attitude.

Our commitment

Our Christian values and mission, Inspire, Believe, Achieve, shape a nurturing school where every child belongs, learns and flourishes. We listen to children and families, identify barriers early and provide ambitious teaching, access and support so pupils can participate alongside their peers.

We want children to know the adults who support them, to feel safe asking for help and to be recognised for their strengths as well as their needs. We work with families as partners: their knowledge of their child helps us understand what works at home and school, and we explain decisions openly and kindly.

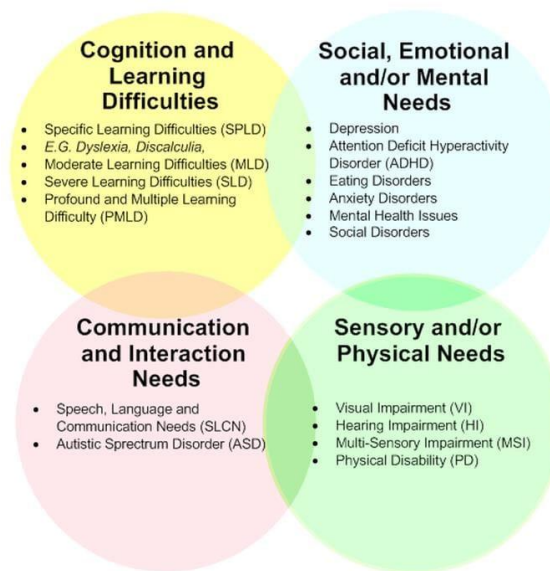
We offer support from the earliest point at which a need or barrier becomes apparent. Accurate, early identification matters because a child’s presenting difficulty may have more than one cause, and the right help depends on understanding their strengths, circumstances and underlying needs. Staff listen to the child and family, observe across school life, consider assessment evidence and seek advice where appropriate. We put helpful adjustments in place promptly, check whether they make a difference and refine support before difficulties become entrenched. Early intervention is purposeful and proportionate; we do not wait for a diagnosis before acting or assume that one approach will suit every child.

Our approach reflects the Greater Manchester Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision (GM OAIP), Wigan version, and Wigan’s Additional Practice Toolkit (APT). The 2026 white paper Every Child Achieving and Thriving reinforces our commitment to inclusion, early support and family partnership. Its proposed tiers and digital Individual Support Plans are not current statutory duties; we will revise this policy as legislation and statutory guidance change.

Law and definitions

We follow the Children and Families Act 2014, Equality Act 2010, Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and statutory SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015). We also consider statutory guidance on medical conditions and the school's safeguarding, accessibility, admissions, behaviour and complaints policies.

A child has special educational needs when a learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision: provision additional to or different from that generally made for others of the same age. The four broad areas are communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; and sensory and/or physical needs. Needs may overlap and change. Disability does not automatically mean SEN, and reasonable adjustments apply whether or not a pupil is on the SEN register. English as an additional language or disadvantage alone does not establish SEN.



This SEND policy should be read alongside the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Accessibility Plan. Together, these documents guide how we keep children safe, remove barriers to participation, support wellbeing and health, and respond consistently to each child's needs. Where a child needs coordinated support, staff apply the relevant policies together and discuss practical arrangements with the child and family.

Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice

Every class teacher is responsible for the progress of pupils in their class, including when teaching assistants or specialists help. High quality teaching is our first response. In line with Greater Manchester Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice, staff use and review:

- Clear routines, strong relationships, explicit vocabulary teaching and manageable instructions checked for understanding.
- Accessible teaching through modelling, scaffolds, visual supports, practical resources and flexible ways to show learning, while maintaining ambitious goals.
- Communication friendly and sensory aware environments, appropriate seating, movement opportunities, assistive tools and reasonable adjustments.
- Planned support for transitions and unstructured times, positive regulation and wellbeing, and access to the curriculum, trips and clubs.

- Teaching assistants deployed purposefully to build independence and connect intervention work with classroom learning.

We consider attainment, progress, attendance, participation and pupil experience together. A diagnosis is not required before support or reasonable adjustments begin.

A relationship based approach

Positive, dependable relationships are the foundation of our SEND practice. Staff take time to learn each child's interests, communication preferences, strengths and signs of need. A familiar adult checks in when needed, prepares the child for changes and helps them reconnect with learning after a difficult moment. We seek to understand what a child's behaviour may communicate about an unmet need, while maintaining clear, kind boundaries and safeguarding everyone.

Adults use calm language, predictable routines and co-regulation before expecting a child to manage a difficult feeling alone. We notice and celebrate small steps, protect dignity and avoid unnecessary public attention to a child's difficulties. Where support involves time away from class, we explain its purpose, keep it proportionate and help the child stay connected to friends and classroom learning. Staff consider the child's account alongside the family's perspective and adjust an approach when it is needed.

The Inclusion Team

Several staff in the school have designated responsibility for aspects of inclusion:

- Head Teacher – Sarah Watson
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) – Sarah Watson (KS1), Olivia McMillan (KS2)
- Early Years SEND Lead – Samantha Pickles
- SEND Governor – Allan Marsh

The Role of the Headteacher

- the daily management of all aspects of the school's work, including provision for SEN children and the involvement of the pupil and their parents/carers
- to work closely with the SENCO to ensure strategic decisions take note of SEN
- to ensure that the governing body are kept fully informed about SEN and any reforms
- to ensure that the school's improvement plan include a SEN and inclusion priority
- to have regular meetings with SENCO to be informed of the progress of the children with SEN and updates regarding SEN issues

The Role of the SENCO

- Support the Headteacher in the day to day operation of the school's SEND policy and help co-ordinate the provision for SEND pupils.
- Work closely with teachers and teaching assistants to help determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision within the whole context of our school improvement plan.
- Liaise with parents of children with SEN.

- Liaise with external agencies including Wigan Education authority's support and educational psychology services, health and social services and voluntary bodies and ensure that relevant background information about individual children with SEND is collected, recorded and up dated.
- Co-ordinating and developing school bases strategies for the identification and review of children with SEN.
- Overseeing the records of all children with SEN.
- Monitoring the progress of children on the School's SEN register.
- Contributing to the in-service training of staff.
- Carry out the referral procedures to the Local Authority to request an Education, Health and Care plan when it is considered that a pupil with SEN will require significant support and has followed the graduated response.
- To meet at least termly with each teacher to review and revise children with SEN in his/her class.

Class Teachers

All class teachers have responsibility for:

- Ensuring children with SEND benefit from Quality First Teaching.
- Planning for and teaching the range of pupils within their class effectively across the curriculum areas.
- Identifying a child with SEND.
- Keeping parents informed of their child's progress, any concerns, and action to be taken.
- Attending meetings with parents, as and when appropriate.
- Informing colleagues and those concerned with the child of any information imparted by parents/guardians pertaining to the child's progress.
- Liaising with the SENCO, teaching assistants, (TAs), pupils and parents in writing individual education plans for key children (PLPs) (Children at AS will not be given PLPs because teacher's planning adequately details how quality first teaching will provide adaptation and learning matched to the child's needs.
- Liaising with TAs and managing TAs to make best use of the resources available in class to support SEND pupils.
- Allocating TA time (if appropriate) above the normal classroom provision, to provide for children with SEN in their class.

Teaching Assistants

TAs have the responsibility for:

- Assisting the class teacher in the implementation of lesson plans.
- Assisting the class teacher in the implementation of Pupil Learning Plans and programmes from external professionals.
- Supporting the effective delivery of an adapted/ scaffolded/differentiated/personalised curriculum and learning experiences.

Parents

We believe that the partnership between school and parents is important in enabling children with SEND to achieve their potential. Parents hold key information and have a critical role to play in their child's education. Parents are encouraged to become involved and account is taken of their wishes, feelings and perspectives on their child's development.

- The school has a positive attitude towards parents and will acknowledge and draw on parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their child.
- The school will tell parents when they first identify that a child has SEND and will explain the purpose of any intervention or programme of action.
- The school ensures that parents understand procedures and have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the SEND framework.
- The school recognises the personal and emotional investment of parents and tries to be aware of their feelings.
- The school respects the differing needs of parents themselves such as a disability or communication barriers.
- The school respects the validity of differing perspectives and seeks constructive ways of reconciling different viewpoints.
- The school gives parent access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making processes about special educational provision.

Parents have a responsibility to:

- Inform the school about who has parental responsibility for a child.
- To communicate regularly with the school and alert us to any concerns they have about their child's learning or provision.

Wigan SEND Team

- The SEND Team has responsibility to:
- Delegate appropriate additional funds to enable schools to meet SEND
- Administer formal assessment procedures
- Arrange for the parents of any child in their area with SEND to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to those needs
- Take appropriate steps to make parent partnership services known to parents, head teachers, school and others they consider appropriate.

Pupils

"Children, who are capable of forming views, have a right to receive and make known information, to express their opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the children should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the child."

(The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Children at our school should feel confident that they will be listened to and that their view will be valued. Pupils with SEND will (where possible):

- Participate in the decision making processes that occur in their education, including the setting of learning targets.
- Contribute to I.E.Ps and carry out reviews.
- Be encouraged to share in the recording process and in monitoring and evaluating their own performance.

The school recognises the need to give children a voice and encourage them to make decisions without overburdening them with decision making procedures (where they have insufficient experience and knowledge to make appropriate judgements without additional support).

Identification and SEN support

Parents, pupils, teachers and professionals can raise concerns. The teacher and SENCO listen to the child and family, examine strengths, barriers, work and assessments, and review teaching and access. We consider relevant health, language, attendance and circumstances. If special educational provision is needed, we inform parents and record SEN support.

We use the Code's graduated approach: assess needs and starting points with the child and family; plan specific outcomes, provision, responsibilities and a review date; do the agreed teaching and support, overseen by the class teacher; review progress, experience and impact, then continue, refine, increase or cease provision. We record decisions and use a pupil learning or individual support plan where useful. Plans are proportionate to need; a diagnosis or named plan is not a precondition for SEN support.

We normally review support at least termly and meet the parents of pupils receiving SEN support at least three times a year, as the Code sets out. The pupil's views and preferred communication method inform each review.



What families can expect

If you are concerned about your child, please speak to the class teacher. You do not need to wait for a diagnosis or an appointment with another service. We will listen, share what we have noticed, discuss your child's strengths and agree what to try next. If concerns continue, the teacher involves the SENCO. We explain whether your child is receiving SEN support, what provision is being made, how progress will be judged and when we will meet again.

A plan may describe a small number of clear outcomes, the approaches adults will use, any specialist advice and what the child and family say helps. Parents receive an opportunity to contribute to reviews and discuss changes. Some needs can be met through ordinary classroom practice without a child being recorded as receiving SEN support; we still monitor how those adjustments work. If SEN support is appropriate, the school tells parents and maintains a record. Families can ask for information in an accessible format or request a meeting when a concern arises between planned reviews.

How we understand and assess needs

Before entry, staff seek information from families and early years settings where relevant. In school, teachers use observation, discussion, work, curriculum assessments and progress over time. We ask where and when learning feels easier or harder, including lessons, playtimes, lunch, journeys around school and trips. We distinguish an underlying need from how it first presents: for example, distress or withdrawal may call for a closer look at communication, learning, sensory experience, relationships or health. We consider the whole child, including attendance, wellbeing and circumstances, without treating any single factor as a diagnosis.

The four broad areas help us organise advice, not place a child in a fixed category. A child may need support in more than one area. Where a hearing, vision, health or communication concern is relevant, we discuss suitable routes to advice with the family. We do not delay classroom support while waiting for an outside assessment.

Wigan additional practice and specialist input

Where effective ordinarily available practice is insufficient, the teacher and SENCO use Wigan's APT to select targeted strategies across the four broad areas. Examples include focused language work and visual or alternative communication; structured literacy or numeracy teaching; a trusted adult and planned regulation strategies; or a sensory audit, movement breaks and specialist access equipment. We match support to the child and evaluate its effect rather than apply a fixed package.

With families, we may seek advice from Wigan education support, educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, health or social care. We implement relevant advice and coordinate help across services. A specialist referral, diagnosis or prolonged unsuccessful intervention is not an absolute prerequisite to requesting an EHC needs assessment.

Examples of support across the four areas

Communication and interaction: staff may allow extra processing time, use clear language and visual schedules, pre-teach vocabulary, model conversation or use communication aids. A child may need support to understand social situations or a quieter, less demanding way to contribute. We listen to how the child communicates, including gesture, symbols or writing, and seek speech and language advice when appropriate.

Cognition and learning: staff may break complex tasks into steps, revisit learning frequently, use practical resources and explicitly teach reading, writing or number skills. Targeted sessions have a defined purpose and are checked for impact. We keep pupils involved in the wider curriculum and ensure that support does not become a ceiling on ambition.

Social, emotional and mental health: staff prioritise attuned relationships, predictable routines, emotional literacy and safe ways to seek help. We look beneath behaviour, consider relationships and possible unmet learning or communication needs, and plan with the family and child. Where appropriate, a trusted adult, nurture or pastoral support, restorative conversations or specialist advice may help. We respond to safeguarding concerns through the safeguarding policy.

Sensory and/or physical needs: staff consider access to rooms, teaching materials, movement and personal care, as well as light, sound, seating and busy transitions. Adjustments may include assistive technology, adapted resources, planned breaks or specialist equipment and advice. We consult the child and family about what is comfortable and useful; a sensory strategy is not imposed simply because it appears in a toolkit.

Education Health and Care Plans

A parent or the school may request an EHC needs assessment from Wigan Council. The legal test for assessment is whether the child has or may have SEN and whether it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made through an EHC plan. We provide evidence and support the child and family to participate. The local authority decides whether to assess and issue a plan; parents may challenge certain decisions.

For pupils with an EHC plan, we work with the local authority and family to secure specified educational provision, monitor progress and participate in the statutory annual review. We hold additional school reviews where needed. The local authority is responsible for the plan and statutory review decisions.

An EHC plan describes assessed needs, outcomes and the provision required. At annual review, we gather the pupil's and family's views, share progress and consider whether outcomes or provision should change. The review meeting makes recommendations; Wigan Council makes the formal decision about maintaining, amending or ceasing the plan. Families can ask us to explain the process and where to obtain independent advice.

Participation equality and transitions

We make reasonable adjustments, plan for medical and personal care needs with relevant professionals, address bullying and barriers to attendance, and provide accessible ways for children and families to share views. We plan moves into Reception, between classes and to secondary school with families and receiving settings. Additional visits, visual information, one page profiles, shared strategies and coordinated meetings may help. We follow statutory transition arrangements for EHC plans and share information lawfully.

Joining school and moving on

For children joining Leigh St Mary's in Reception Class, in the Summer Term before your child starts school, your child's new class teacher will gather information about your child through visits to nurseries and through home visits. A huge emphasis is placed upon all children making a successful start to primary school and there are many events arranged in the summer term to help your child get to know Leigh St Mary's. These events include three 'Get Set for School' sessions and a teddy bear summer project. A child who needs more preparation may benefit from extra visits, photographs, a simple visual story or an agreed settling plan.

When a pupil joins from another school, we seek useful records, speak with the previous setting and family and plan any immediate adjustments. When a pupil moves class, teachers share what has worked, what has been difficult and the child's own preferences. Before secondary transfer, we coordinate with the receiving school and family. Enhanced transition can include visits at quieter times, meeting key adults, a one page profile, pupil passport, visual information, shared assessments and agreed plans. We ask the child what would make the move feel manageable and review the arrangement after transition.

Enhanced Transition:

For children with special educational needs, enhanced transition packages may need to be arranged. These will be personalised to individual needs at the time of transition. Where children in Year 6 have Education Health and Care Plans, meetings will be held with the Local Authority to help families determine the best high school choice for their child.

Possible transition support may include:

- Visits to the new environment

- Meeting the new teacher and support staff
- Carrying out transition activities such as a day in the new class or a meet the new teacher activities
- Teachers and support staff transition meetings
- Opportunities to meet new parents
- Creating Pupil Passports
- Creating One Page Profiles
- Sharing examples of pupils' work
- Sharing assessment data
- Sharing knowledge of successful interventions
- Sharing Personal Learning Plans (PLPs), Individual Behaviour Plans (IBPs), Positive Handling Plans (PHPs), Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs), Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- Sharing knowledge of external agency involvement
- Creating social stories for individual pupils with more complex needs

Belonging throughout school life

Our aim is meaningful participation in lessons, worship, play, visits, clubs and the wider life of our school. Staff plan accessibility and reasonable adjustments in advance, discuss risks proportionately and work with families and professionals when support is needed. Pupils with medical conditions are supported under individual healthcare arrangements where appropriate. We do not assume that SEND requires a reduced timetable or withdrawal from ordinary school life. Any attendance concern prompts a supportive conversation about barriers and suitable help.

Admissions and accessibility

We welcome applications from children with SEND and follow our published admissions arrangements. We do not refuse a child because they have SEN or a disability, and we work with families and the local authority to plan appropriate access and support. Where an EHC plan names the school, the statutory admissions arrangements for that plan apply. Families can find information about physical accessibility and planned improvements in the school's accessibility plan. We consider access to teaching, communication, premises and activities for each child rather than assuming that one adjustment will suit all.

Children and families as partners

Children are helped to express views in a way that works for them: conversation, drawing, symbols, a one page profile, observations or supported communication. We explain plans in language they can understand and ask what helps them feel safe, included and ready to learn. Their views carry weight according to their age and understanding; adults remain responsible for decisions and do not place an unfair burden on a child.

Parents and carers know their child across settings and over time. We invite their account of strengths, routines, interests, distress, helpful strategies and hopes for the future. We share information about progress and any concern promptly, explain professional advice and record differences of view respectfully. Families can tell us about changes in health or circumstances that may affect learning, although they are not expected to diagnose a need or provide specialist provision themselves.

Working with services and the local authority

Where several services are involved, the SENCO helps staff and families understand who is doing what and how advice fits together. With appropriate information sharing, we may work with Wigan Council services, the Targeted Education Support Service, educational psychology, specialist sensory support, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, school nursing, social care or voluntary organisations. The choice depends on the child's needs and service criteria. We discuss casework referrals with families and explain what information will be shared, subject to safeguarding duties.

Wigan Council makes decisions on EHC needs assessments and plans and publishes the Wigan Local Offer. Parents may approach the local authority directly about an assessment. Wigan SENDIASS offers impartial information and advice to children and families; support from that service is separate from the school. We can help families find these services and understand letters or meetings.

Who does what

- The governing body sets the approach, oversees compliance, resources and impact, and designates a SEND governor.
- The headteacher leads implementation, staffing, development and reporting to governors.
- The SENCO coordinates provision and records, advises staff, works with families and agencies, and supports transitions.
- Class teachers identify needs, adapt teaching, lead assess plan do review, communicate with families and oversee additional adults.
- Teaching assistants implement agreed support under teacher direction, report observations and promote independence.
- Pupils and families share strengths, concerns and priorities and participate in decisions and reviews.

Information concerns and review

The school's SEND information report and Wigan Local Offer give current provision, contacts and services. Families may first speak with the class teacher or SENCO, then the headteacher, and use the school complaints procedure if unresolved. Wigan SENDIASS provides impartial information and support. Governors review this policy annually and sooner if law or guidance changes; leaders evaluate feedback, access, attendance, progress, provision and staff development.

Staff development records and oversight

The SENCO helps staff translate the GM OAIP and Wigan APT into classroom decisions and identifies training needs with leaders. Teachers and teaching assistants plan together, share relevant professional advice and review whether support builds learning and independence. Information about a child is handled confidentially and shared with staff who need it to provide safe, effective support, in line with the school's data protection arrangements.

Leaders and governors evaluate the quality of teaching and additional support through pupil and family views, participation, progress, attendance, transitions and review records. We ask whether strategies improved the child's experience and outcomes, rather than counting referrals or regarding movement to an EHC plan as a failure. The school uses delegated resources to meet needs and discusses additional provision with the local authority when appropriate.

How we judge whether this policy is working

We look for children who feel they belong and can describe adults who listen to them; families who understand provision and have a genuine voice in reviews; staff who make effective adjustments and use specialist advice; and pupils who make meaningful progress toward agreed outcomes, including independence, communication, wellbeing and participation as well as academic learning. The SENCO and leaders check records, review the impact of interventions, hear pupil and parent feedback and report themes to governors. If support is not working, we revisit the assessment and plan rather than simply repeat the same intervention.

Sources

SEND Code of Practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

GM Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision, Wigan version, 8 November 2024; Wigan Additional Practice Toolkit

DfE, Every Child Achieving and Thriving, 23 February 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-achieving-and-thriving>

House of Commons Library, Schools White Paper 2026 SEND Reform, 1 September 2026: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-10550/CBP-10550.pdf>