

SEND Parent Newsletter

December 2023



External SEND Review

On 1st November, Nicola Green (Academy Advisor) carried out an external review of SEN across our schools. Her main recommendations were:

- Only children who have an EHCP or are seen by external agencies to be on the SEN register and have a **pupil profile** which is shared 3 times per year with parents
- Other children are on the Close Monitoring list (overseen by the SENCo) and have a **pupil passport**
- SENDCo to hold a whole school provision map on Excel as we are moving away from using the Edukey software at The Batt to store our SEN paperwork and bringing it more in line with that at St Mary's.
- Slots for all parents at future parent evenings will be 10 minutes and SENCo will be available in the hall for parents who may have any queries following their teacher appointment
- **Get the parent working party up and running**
- Set up a specific criteria for access to The Hive at The Batt (more on this in a later newsletter)
- Think about how best to track progress for children who cannot engage with the National Curriculum (investigate alternative assessment/tracking procedures)
- **Get the parent newsletter up and running**
- SENDCo to send out an updated staff questionnaire to elicit training needs

We have started to put the recommendations highlighted in green in place. We will update you on the progress towards the other recommendations in future newsletters.

SEN Register

Following guidance from the External Review and shared with the Lead Ofsted Inspector during the recent inspection at The Batt, changes have been made to the SEN register at both schools:

Pupil profiles will be created for children who have an EHCP, for whom school will be applying for an EHCP and for children who receive reports from external agencies (eg. Speech & Language therapists, Educational Psychologist, SENSS Communication & Interaction team, SENSS Complex Needs team, SENSS Physical Disability team, Physio, SENSS Hearing Impairment team).

Pupil profiles will have targets on them which are pulled from the EHCP outcomes or from recommendations in the external agency professionals' reports.

Children with a pupil profile will be on the school's SEN register.

Pupil passports will be created for children who are being 'closely monitored'. These may be children who are having interventions to support their learning/social skills and those whose needs can be met through universal provision by school and/or generalised advice/strategies from external agencies

Pupil passports will contain information about the child's strengths and needs and the universal strategies and reasonable adjustments in place to support those needs. Any interventions they are part of will also be indicated on the passport.

Children with pupil passports will not be on the statutory SEN register, but will be closely monitored and, if it is deemed that their changing needs require support from an external agency, they may move to the SEN register. The SENCo will still have an overview of these children and progress will be monitored through a meeting with the teachers every long term.

Parent Working Party

The first meeting of the SEN Parent Working Party took place last week. This group will meet once every short term. Topics discussed included:

- School creating a flow chart to show points of contact, which external teams support which area of need and what is available in school and out of school to support children and parents. This will take a little while to put together but will hopefully a draft copy will be available for the next Working Party meeting.
- Transition. School will be talking at a staff meeting in the Spring term about transition and what it will look like for all year groups in Term 6.
- Helpful information to be on the pupil profiles and passports
- Updating the draft SEN handbook for parents
- Lunchtime provision
- School shared a draft copy of this newsletter

An email address will be set up next term which parents of SEN children will be able to use to share general queries and concerns with the Working Party who, in turn, will bring them to meetings. More information about this will be sent out in January.

Coffee mornings

We are proposing holding coffee mornings once a short term and will be inviting external professionals to come in and do a short presentation then be available for questions. Please can you email Tracy on tholme@thebattschool.org.uk to let her know which areas of need you would be interested in learning about, and she will try to contact the relevant professional to come in. We will try to alternate the venue for these between schools.



Funding

At the Parent Forum meeting in November, Debbie talked about funding as we feel it is important that parents understand the funding situation in Oxfordshire schools.

Children on the SEND register do not attract any additional funding unless we make a specific application for temporary additional funding or apply for an EHCP.

When a school applies for an EHCP, they have to prove to the Local Authority that they are already putting in £6000 worth of adult support for a child (the local authority measure this as being equivalent to 15 hours per week). This comes from the school's budget.

If the EHCP is approved, schools generally receive £5085 from County (equivalent to 10 hours of support). The average cost of an adult in school (with on-costs) is £15,600 so in reality, school contributes £10,515 of funding per EHCP. We currently have 18 children with an EHCP across the two schools. At The Batt this is equivalent to 4.6% of our children, nearly twice the national average 2.5% of children with an EHCP in a mainstream primary setting.

We are of course happy to provide all we can to meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners but are always seeking ways to use budgets in smarter and more effective ways, alongside seeking funding from other pots to help too.

Additional Adult Support

In the 'olden days', when school was in receipt of additional funding to support a child, an easy option was to pair them with an adult. Often this meant just one Teaching Assistant working full time with one child – a situation which is now often referred to as a 'velcro adult'. Research has shown that this way of supporting a child is not beneficial as it does not encourage independence and resilience. You can see an overview of the current thinking [here](#). It is worth noting that secondary schools hardly have any teaching assistants (the Witney secondaries have between 2 and 5 for the whole school), hence the need to encourage as much independence as possible for pupils in primary schools.

At The Batt and St Mary's, we encourage a 'team around a child' which means that, on any day, a number of adults, including their class teacher will be working with a child, and this will usually be in small groups rather than 1:1 – this approach ensure children receive support when they need it but still develop their resilience and independence and don't become reliant on just one adult.

Interventions in school

We use many interventions at both schools. These may be 'off the shelf' ones or may be bespoke for a certain group of children. We will use these newsletters to tell you more about some of the interventions we use.

Fresh Start

This intervention is used in the Upper Juniors and supports children's reading, writing and spelling. It is a small group intervention run by a TA and takes place every day. Children work through modules using workbooks to scaffold their learning. Each session runs through the



same routine: revising phonics sounds, reading the text in the booklet then doing some set activities which are the same in each module so over the week children will do: proof reading, a spelling activity, working out the 'best friends' in given graphemes and retelling the module's story using picture prompts and a word bank. Baseline assessments in reading and spelling ages are completed at the beginning and end of each long term and progress is also tracked through the data that teachers enter onto our Target Tracker system in December, March and June.

Toe By Toe

This intervention has been used in school for many years to support children's reading. It mainly takes place in the Lower Juniors. It may not look like the most exciting intervention, but we always get good results from with children making great progress. This intervention is 1:1 and takes place 3-4 times per week for around 12 minutes each time. Children work through a book which comprises of phonic sounds and linked sentences. They have to say each sound correctly three times on separate days before moving on. Progress is tracked through a termly assessment which gives us a reading age and through the Target Tracker data put in by teachers in December, March and June.



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Acronyms

The world of SEN is full of acronyms (SEN being one of them!). Here are a few to start you off. We will cover others in subsequent newsletters.

SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
EHCP	Educational Health & Care Plan
CAMHS	Child and Adult Mental Health Services
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SaLT	Speech & Language Therapy/Therapist
EP	Educational Psychologist
SENSS	Special Educational Needs Support Service

Meet adults working for your children

In this section of the newsletter, we will tell you more about the adults who are working in the background to support your children. Tracy and Debbie are up first.

Tracy Holme

I have been a teacher for 30 years and have been at The Batt since 2002, teaching Year 2, then Year 4 and working on SLT until 2013. I became SENCo in 2017, gaining my NASENCo qualification in 2018 (a legal requirement) and took up the same role at St Mary's from September 2021. My office is at the back of the school in the 1928 headteacher's room. I have two boys who have both been through The Batt. One is still in Year 6 and the other is now at Wood Green, where I am also a Governor. I work at school Tuesday to Friday and spend my Mondays running OCC's SENCo Helpdesk which was set up in February to support SENCos across the County.



When I am not chauffeuring my boys to various clubs, I love reading, singing with my choir group, anything Jane Austen, doing jigsaw puzzles (but I'm very fussy about which ones!), playing Beatles' songs slowly on the piano and, inexplicably, am also currently loving watching Hallmark Christmas films on Channel 5!

Debbie Secull



I have been working in education for over 30 years, beginning my career teaching English and history at secondary and then taking on a wide range of roles including adult basic skills tutor, family literacy co-ordinator and primary teacher before taking up my first headship in 2015. These varied roles have really taught me that it is the primary phase of education where the real 'magic' happens and that poor primary experiences can impact forever on future outcomes. My approach to teaching has always been holistic and child centred – recognising behaviour as communication and that we can only meet educational needs when children feel confident and secure within a setting. I also have a special interest in ASD and specific literacy difficulties (dyslexia) and have undertaken professional development and roles linked to these specialisms in the past.

When not in school I enjoy my family, including my two adult daughters (who are also currently involved in education), and love to be outside and enjoying the countryside – especially the South West. I love reading, theatre, music and art and also like to run (slowly) and play the saxophone (badly)!