



## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY (SEND) POLICY

Date ratified: Sep 2024	
Period: Sep 2024 to Sep 2025	
Headteacher: 	Lynsay Falkingham
Chair of Governors Signature: 	Briony Alder
Review Annually Date: Sep 2025	

### Introduction

The Staff and Governors of Lanterns Nursery School and Extended Services are committed to providing a welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. This policy contains details of how we provide for these children within the nursery school.

### Key Principles

Lanterns aims to provide a happy and stimulating environment in which all children can play and learn, developing confidence, independence and a positive attitude to learning.

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum Guidance and following our school curriculum aims as set out in 'The curriculum at Lanterns nursery school'.

We aim to provide the children who attend Lanterns with an equal opportunity to participate in the life of the school, accessing all of our services irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special educational need, disability, gender or ability.

We support children with special educational needs in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015 and have due regard for the Equality Act 2010.

Partnership with parents is central to our work at Lanterns; we believe that the child's parent/carer is their key educator and carer. To promote the wellbeing and development of children we work alongside parents, supporting them in their role

### Services

Lanterns Nursery School comprises of the Maintained Nursery School and the Extended Services which provides services for young children and families. The Nursery School is commissioned to provide SEND hub provision for 36 children with significant Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (see Appendix 1 for more details).

Lanterns Nursery School provides services for pre-school children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families. These services are coordinated by the Special

Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) for Lanterns Nursery School: **Helen Woodhall** and are detailed in Appendix 1.

### **How do staff know if children need extra help with learning and development?**

We believe that it is important that children who are experiencing barriers to learning and participation or who need extra support with their learning have their needs identified quickly and receive appropriate support.

Children who have been referred to the Nursery School for resourced provision have already been identified as having special educational needs. Before the child joins the nursery, key staff will carry out a home visit to find out as much as they can about the child's particular strengths, needs, likes and dislikes, ways of communicating etc. and work with the child's parents/ carers to plan for the child's transition into nursery school. We work closely with parents and the therapy services (Speech and Language, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy) to make sure that appropriate support is available right from the start.

For all children, staff are keen to work with parents to support early learning and development. All children usually have a home visit before they start to make sure we share as much information as possible. If as a parent, you are concerned about your child's development at any time, please talk to your child's key person, Senior Early Years Practitioner in your child's class, SENDCo or Headteacher. We need to know of any concerns so that we can support you and your child as soon as possible.

As children settle into their sessions, staff make observations and assessments about the child's development. If staff feel that a child might need some extra help they will discuss this with parents/carers and together plan any actions that would be useful.

### **Our approach to planning for children who need extra support**

Staff working with children in the Nursery School observe all of the children and assess where they are in their learning. Sometimes we use specialised assessment tools such as Solent Developmental checklist or the Wellcomm Speech and Language Toolkit to give us some more information about a child's strengths and needs. Staff meet with parents to share their observations and plan next steps in children's learning.

All children who come to Lanterns with identified special educational needs have an initial review meeting towards the end of their first term. The meeting is held with parents, class staff, the SENDCo or Assistant SENDCo and professionals involved with the child where possible. We discuss how the child has settled into nursery, their strengths/likes and the strategies that have been put in place to support the child. There is also discussion about the areas where the child may need more support.

At the initial review meeting we talk to parents about their priorities for their child's learning and development and the child's therapists recommend areas to focus on. We then identify specific objectives to be met over the next term and describe the strategies that will be used to support the child. These are called the child's 'Individual Education Plans' (IEP's) and are recorded and uploaded to Tapestry by their key person. The targets are reviewed formally every term but may be informally reviewed more frequently according to the needs and progress of the child. The SENDCo, Assistant SENDCo, class senior and/or key person will liaise with the child's therapists to ensure that any advice is incorporated into the child's plan. Parents can access a copy of the IEP through the child's online journal (Tapestry).

Nursery practitioners regularly review children's progress and frequently identify that some children need a little extra help or encouragement in different areas at some time in their development. This is good everyday practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, if either parents or staff feel that a child needs additional support, we talk to parents and plan together the next steps for the child. The plan will be recorded by the Senior Early Years Practitioner (SEYP) or key person in the child's online learning journal.

### **How will staff support children and help them to access the curriculum?**

We believe that children learn most effectively through play-based activities, which allow children to develop their interests. We recognise that children's learning styles and pace of learning are individual. We plan an indoor and outdoor learning environment which is accessible to every child, responds to the diversity of individual developmental starting points presented by the children and is resourced to cover all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

On a weekly basis, staff meet to discuss short-term plans informed through the children's developmental needs and interests, working towards 'Lanterns curriculum aims'. At this point, care is taken to ensure that all activities are planned to meet the needs of a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities.

Adult led, direct teaching activities are differentiated in response to our observations of need across the class. Staff are skilled at adapting activities to match the developmental needs of the children.

Every child that attends Lanterns has a key person. The relationship between the child and key person is key to support all their areas of learning - that adult will build a trusting, respectful relationship with the child and their family, enabling us to promote and support social and emotional development.

The key person will ensure that children work on the specific targets set in the 'Next steps' on a regular basis throughout the week. This may be done in a variety of ways: through accessing specific play experiences in the nursery, through attending a particular group or through individual or small group work.

Our Assistant SENDCo will also work with certain children once or twice a week either individually or in a small group.

Some children may need a high level of adult support during their session because their needs are more complex, usually these are children who are unable to access the curriculum without support. The key person remains responsible for coordinating their key child's provision but other members of the class team will also support the child.

Our provision contains the following elements that enable us to respond effectively to individual needs and support children's access to the curriculum:

- An approach that recognises and uses children's strengths to develop their skills
- A high staff-child ratio and key person system
- Makaton signing environment to support early communication skills
- Use of visual support cues such as objects, photographs and symbols to support expressive language and comprehension
- Language Groups to develop listening and attention skills, understanding and expressive language
- Differentiated story groups - stories matched to children's level of language development (these will start after a period of settling in)

- Individual planning which identifies specific targets and activities according to the child's needs
- Individual work or support from key members of staff where appropriate
- Sensory room with a range of light equipment
- Soft play room with ball-pool and space for safe climbing and gross motor play
- Structured physical play activities to support children with physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes

We have three different class groups in the nursery school. Bumblebees is a class for our youngest learners; children start at the age of 2. Butterflies is a class for 3 and 4 year old children. Grasshopper's is a class which meets the needs of children with autism or significant social communication difficulties from the age of 2 years 9 months. This class is staffed at a higher adult: child ratio. It provides a highly structured session using specific strategies and a low distraction environment.

Each class is led by a SEYP, who has an overview of the learning of all the children in the class. This is overseen and monitored by the SENDCo/Class teacher and the Headteacher.

The Headteacher and SENDCo monitor all children's development and progress termly through pupil progress meeting with the child's key person. Any barriers to learning are explored and actions for identification and support are put in place.

### **Behaviour support**

At Lanterns Nursery School, we follow the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) programme, working on developing children's recognition and expression of emotions and feelings. We send a leaflet home during the autumn term to explain what we do and we are able to give additional information to parents who ask.

We recognise that young children are still learning to manage their feelings and behaviour. Some children may experience challenges around the behaviours they use at home or school. Parents and staff will talk about behaviour that is causing concern and jointly plan how to support the child. This may include a Behaviour Support Plan which will set out specific strategies for everyone to follow.

### **Medical Needs**

Some of the children who attend our nursery have medical needs and require specific care from adults working with them. These children have an Individual Health Care Plan which ensures that staff members have received appropriate training to support their medical needs and administer any necessary medication.

### **Seeking support from other professionals**

We believe that it is very important to work in partnership with other professionals to ensure that children and families receive coordinated support from everybody involved with a child. We are fortunate that the following agencies are involved on a regular basis:

- Physiotherapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

We also work closely with:

- Consultant Paediatricians
- Educational Psychology Service
- The Portage Service
- Specialist Teacher Advisors

- Health Visitors
- Community Nursing Team

For some children it may be necessary to discuss with parents the involvement of other agencies such as Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychology or Advisory Teachers. Referrals are always discussed with parents so that they can give their permission for the referrals to be made.

The Headteacher, SENDCo/Class teacher, Assistant SENDCo meet termly with our Special Needs Officer and a member of the Educational Psychology Service. Some children who attend the nursery may need a more detailed assessment of their needs to take place before they go to school resulting in an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). Discussion at this termly meeting helps us to share information regarding children who may have a request made for this assessment and work with the local authority to inform the future education of children.

The school also has a service level agreement with the Educational Psychology service. This means that we can ask for advice when we need some more help to understand a child's needs and to identify the best way to support them.

### **Liaison with parents**

School staff talk to parents every day at the start and end of sessions. If parents would like a more detailed conversation we arrange informal meetings as quickly as is practical. We aim to offer parents of children who attend the nursery on SEND hub places a formal review meeting on a 6 monthly basis where possible.

Children who see our Assistant SENDCo will receive updates through the child's online learning journal. We are also happy to keep in contact with parents by phone or by email.

Parents are welcome to come in and observe their children during group sessions (e.g. language group) and individual speech and language sessions and to work alongside our practitioners.

The child's key person will record observations/photos of the child on their online learning journal 'Tapestry' and set IEP's on a termly basis. Parents can access this journal online and can contribute by adding in their own observations of progress and 'wow' moments. We also use Tapestry to share top tips and useful strategies with parents and carers. We will share a half termly newsletter specifically for parents of children with SEND that contains useful information on a variety of topics.

### **Transition to school**

We recognise that transition to school is a potentially anxious time for the child and their family when the child needs extra support and so we do all that we can to make it as smooth as possible. For all children with SEND, we talk to parents about what their needs are likely to be when they reach school age. We are happy to discuss what to look for when applying for a school place.

We work closely with the Educational Psychology Service and Special Educational Needs Officer for our area in planning for the needs of children starting school at a termly meeting.

During the summer term we will arrange a meeting with parents, nursery staff, the receiving school and any professionals involved (e.g. Speech and Language Therapist) to share progress, strategies and the support needed to help the transition to school. This may be in the

form of a Transition Partnership Agreement (TPA) with the school that forms a basis for their work with your child.

For some children with complex needs, transition to school may involve requesting support through an Education, Health and Care Assessment and Plan. This may be because they will require a very high level of support within mainstream school or because there is agreement that specialist provision may be appropriate.

Where possible, primary school staff visit children at Lanterns during the summer term. This means that children can get to know their teachers and the teachers can see what they can do at nursery. We aim to share as much practical information as possible so that the children can continue to be supported by successful strategies in their new school.

### **Accessibility**

Lanterns Nursery School was purpose built in 2005. The building is accessible by wheelchair users. Some doors are secure for safety and safeguarding issues but there are clear procedures to support visitors who are wheelchair users where needed.

The inside and outside areas have been designed with a wide range of disabled children in mind.

The children's toilet facilities are designed for a range of needs (including an adjustable changing table and washing facilities).

There is an adult accessible toilet.

There are dedicated disabled parking bays.

Specialist equipment such as chairs, standing frames and walkers are provided via the therapy services in liaison with parents and nursery staff

Lanterns Nursery School promotes a communication friendly environment. Makaton signs and symbols are used with all children throughout the school.

There is a sensory room and large soft play room and access to quiet rooms for specific groups and therapies.

More detail is available in our Accessibility Statement. Disability, Equality and Diversity forms part of our School Improvement Plan which is monitored by The Governing Body to ensure that any issues that arise are addressed.

### **Staff development**

Lanterns Nursery School has a firm commitment to training and supporting staff in their work with children with special needs and disabilities. We have a core of very experienced staff who have a range of training and skills in working with children with SEND. We have access to in house training provided by our own staff and therapy colleagues. This provides a framework for the induction and training of new staff and the ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all staff.

The school also plans for five days of professional development per year. This training reflects the current needs identified in the School Development Plan. At least one day is used for training in an area of SEND.

Lanterns Nursery School staff access a variety of external training courses to ensure that our approaches and strategies are current. We consistently monitor and evaluate our practice to ensure that staff are skilled, knowledgeable and that children are supported to develop in the best way for them as an individual.

**Staff Qualifications:**

Lanterns Nursery School staffing includes 2 qualified teachers and a range of qualified Senior and Early Years Practitioners. The majority of staff are trained to L3 and some hold Level 4, 5, 6 qualifications. The majority of staff all have additional training and experience of working with children with SEND in an inclusive setting. There is an expectation that all new staff will engage in training to develop their knowledge and skill in the area of SEND.

We are supported by colleagues from the Health Service who have relevant qualifications and experience in paediatrics (Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy).

**Links with other schools, pre-schools, and the community**

Lanterns Nursery School works closely with other schools, early year's settings, special schools and voluntary agencies within the local community for the benefit of the children and the development of the staff team. We act as a source of advice and support to other practitioners to enable and empower them to meet the needs of children who need extra support within other settings. We promote the work of our school within the local community in order to further develop positive attitudes towards children and adults with SEND.

**Storing and managing information**

Children who receive provision that is additional to and different from that typically provided are included on the school's SEN support register. Parents are informed of the provision their children are receiving.

Information reports from other professionals and internal reports and documents are stored within a pupil file kept in a locked filing cabinet. All records are transferred as hard copies to receiving schools when the child transfers to their next school. Records are also held electronically on the school's secure system and transferred to the SEN department and other professionals i.e. Educational Psychologists via the HCC secure system. Copies of the SEN registers and a summary of the child's provision and progress is retained by the school until the child's 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday when it will then be destroyed.

For further information please refer to the schools data protection policy.

**Monitoring quality of provision**

The quality of inclusive practice is monitored by the Senior Leadership of the school and Class Teacher/Senior Early Years Practitioners through learning walks and lesson observations. The Headteacher monitors delivery of the Lanterns Nursery Schools Curriculum and quality of teaching through performance management.

The SENDCo is responsible for monitoring the provision and progress of children identified by the school as having special educational needs.

The Governing Body for the school are actively involved in the provision for children and families. They ensure the school is promoting and maintaining a high quality of teaching and learning for all children. They also monitor the school's approach to Disability, Equality and Diversity to ensure that we respond to the needs of children and families. There is a Governor responsible for SEND who has a role in ensuring that the school meets the needs of children with SEND.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy will be reviewed annually.

**Who can I talk to if I need more information?**

All staff are happy to talk to parents about how we work together to support a child and family. Parents may want to start by talking to someone they see regularly such as your child's key

person or Senior Early Years Practitioner. If they are not able to answer your questions they will try to find someone who can.

There is a clear process for complaints which can be found on our website or by asking at reception.

If you would like to discuss the needs of your child, or any aspect of the Nursery School or Extended Services, please talk to Lynsay or Helen:

Lynsay Falkingham: Headteacher (01962 860393)

Helen Woodhall: SENDCo/Class Teacher (01962 860393)

You may want to talk to:

Briony Alder: Chair of Governors (01962 860393) Chloe East: Governor responsible for SEND (01962 860393)

## **Appendix 1: Services provided for pre-school children with special educational needs and/or disabilities at Lanterns Nursery and Extended Services**

### **Lanterns Nursery School**

The nursery provides an inclusive school environment. Currently there are 3 classes within the nursery: one offering a total of 40 places per session for 3 and 4 year olds, one offering 16 places per session for 2 year olds (this class may grow as the year progresses or we may open another class dependent on numbers of children) and a class offering 6 places per session for children with social communication difficulties/ autism. 36 places at Lanterns are SEND hub for referred children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

SEND hub places are offered to children with a wide range of needs including physical difficulties, autism spectrum condition, speech and language difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and developmental delay. Community places are available to children, who live in the Winchester area, from the term after their second birthday. SEND hub places are offered to children with SEND, from 2 years 9 months, according to availability. SEND hub places are for 15 hours a week. We work closely with parents to ensure that attendance patterns support individual children's needs and development and where possible support parents with their requirements and specific circumstances.

Referral for SEND hub provision is through the West Hants Pre-school Advisory Group (WHPAG). Referrals are made by professionals working with the family such as Health Visitors, Paediatricians, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, etc. The panel assesses the level of need, availability of places and whether Lanterns is the closest SEND hub to the child's home address. The panel usually meets once per term.

Within the nursery school, support for children with SEND is coordinated by the SENDCo. We have support from Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Specialist Teacher Advisors, Educational Psychology, and Consultant Paediatricians.

### **Bumblebees (provision for 2 year olds)**

The Nursery School has provision for children between two and three years old. We accommodate both parent funded places and places for children whose families are eligible for two year old funding.

**Thomas Outreach Programme (TOP):** Thomas Outreach Programme provides support for children with social communication difficulties / autism, initially at home and local pre-school,

and then into their local mainstream school. Referral forms are available from the SENDCo and TOP worker.

**Early Bird Course:** This is a course for parents who have children under five with autism spectrum condition. The course aims to run once a year. Applications are made as part of an information session held prior to the course starting.

**SOS (Share Our Strategies) Support group:** A parent support group for families with young children with autistic spectrum condition, which meets half termly. The programme of topics are relevant to parents in the group.

**The Portage Rainbow Group:** This is a group that is run by the Portage service. It is a weekly support group for parents with children with additional needs and is offered to families on the Portage waiting list. The group is run weekly in term time. You can request more information from **Laura Murtha** on **07873703137**.