

Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Report

September 2025

Welcome to Lanterns Nursery School!

At Lanterns, we believe every child is unique and full of potential. Whether your child is just starting their journey with us or you're exploring SEND support options, we're here to work alongside you every step of the way.

This report is designed to help you understand how we support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in our nursery. But more than that, it's about showing you how we create a nurturing, inclusive, and neuro-affirming environment where children feel safe, valued, and excited to learn.

We know that starting nursery can be a big step, for children and parents alike. That's why we take time to get to know each child's unique language, celebrate their strengths, and tailor our environment to meet their individual needs. Our experienced team works closely with families and professionals to ensure every child receives the care and encouragement they need to flourish.

If you have any questions, worries, or just want to chat about your child's development, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're always happy to talk.

Our School Environment

The nursery provides a purpose-built, inclusive environment. Currently, there are 4 classes within the nursery:

- **Caterpillars:** Our provision for our youngest learners, aged 8 months to 2 years (9 spaces).
- **Bumblebees:** A dedicated space for children aged 2 to 3 years (16–24 places dependent on demand).
- **Butterflies:** Our class for children aged 3 and 4 years (40 places).
- **Grasshoppers:** A specialist class within our SEND Hub for children with social communication profiles and neurodivergent identities, including autism. It offers a higher adult-to-child ratio and a highly structured, sensory-smart, low-distraction environment.

36 places at Lanterns are designated SEND Hub places for referred children. These places support children with a wide range of individual developmental pathways, including physical needs, neurodiversity, communication preferences, and complex learning profiles.

Referral and Coordination

Referral for SEND Hub support is through a Pre-school Advisory Group (PAG), involving professionals such as Health Visitors, Paediatricians, and Therapists. Within the nursery, support is coordinated by our SENDCo, Helen Woodhall.

We work as a multidisciplinary team, regularly welcoming:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Specialist Teacher Advisors
- Educational Psychology
- Consultant Paediatricians

How do we know if children need extra help?

For children referred for SEND Hub support, we meet with you before they start to understand their strengths, interests, sensory preferences, and ways of communicating.

For all children, we observe how they interact with the world. Our staff look beyond standard milestones to see each child's individual profile. If we notice a child would benefit from a different approach or tailored support to thrive, we connect with parents immediately. Together, we create a plan that honours their neurodiversity and provides the right environment for them to grow with confidence.

Our Approach to Tailored Learning and Support

Personalised Planning All children with SEND have an initial review meeting during their first term. We incorporate insights from therapists and families to identify meaningful goals that celebrate your child's strengths. These are recorded in a Personalised Learning Plan (formerly known as an IEP) within their online learning journal. These are reviewed termly.

Supporting Wellbeing and Co-regulation At Lanterns, we recognise that for neurodivergent children and those with complex needs, emotional wellbeing is deeply connected to sensory safety. While we use frameworks like PATHS and The Six Strands, we adapt these to be neuro-affirming.

We focus on co-regulation - our staff look for the "why" behind a child's distress, helping them find sensory tools or communication methods that feel safe for them. We celebrate all forms of communication and ensure our environment is a place where children feel "seen" and understood for who they are, rather than being asked to conform to a standard set of expectations.

Inclusive Provisions and Specialist Strategies

We use a range of evidence-based, affirming approaches:

- **Communication Supportive Environment:** Makaton signing and visual support cues (symbols, photos, objects) used throughout the school.
- **Strengths - Based Groups:** Language groups, differentiated story groups, and physical play activities to support motor skills.
- **Sensory Spaces:** A Sensory Room with light equipment and a Soft Play room for gross motor play and regulation.
- **Specialist Expertise:** Staff are skilled at adapting activities and experiences so that the curriculum wraps around the child.

Inclusion and Activities

- **SEND Hub hours and wraparound care:** SEND Hub places are funded for 15 hours per week. While our capacity to offer hours beyond this entitlement is limited, we are committed to working closely with you to consider your family's specific circumstances and what is best for your child's education and wellbeing. Any requests for additional hours are balanced carefully against our commitment to maintaining a high quality, safe, and inclusive learning environment for our entire school cohort.
- **Trips and Local Walks:** All outings are risk-assessed. We recognise that changes in routine can be challenging; we work with parents to decide how best to support a child's participation, always considering the child's best interests and sensory needs.

Parent Support and the SOS Group

We are committed to working in partnership with you. In addition to home visits and daily catch ups with your Key Person, we offer:

SOS (Share Our Strategies) Support Group This is a half termly parent and carer support group open to all families at Lanterns navigating the journey of raising a child with SEND. Whether your child has physical or medical needs, sensory processing differences, communication preferences, or complex learning profiles (such as PMLD), this group offers a safe space for connection. The sessions focus on sharing affirming strategies, celebrating our children's unique milestones, and providing mutual support.

Transition to School

We are committed to making sure that when your child leaves us, they have as smooth a transition to school as possible. We arrange summer term meetings with you and the receiving school to share the successful strategies and progress made at Lanterns. This often forms a Transition Partnership Agreement (TPA) to ensure your child's new environment is ready to welcome them and support their continued growth.

Helen Woodhall *Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo), April 2026*