Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

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Key References: In addition to this policy Cobham Montessori School takes due regard for, and refers to, any additional details found in the following publications, to the extent applicable to Independent Schools:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
SEND Code of Practice, January 2015 (DFE-00205-2013)

We comply with the SEND Code of Practice for all children who are in receipt of Early Years Funding. Other than where a child has an Education and Health Care Plan, Surrey County Council provides support for children with SEND predominantly through Ordinarily Available Provision in its maintained schools, and access to Surrey Local Offer support for older children (of school age) who do not attend a maintained school is severely limited. Therefore, in relation to school-age children, we comply with the requirements of the Equality Act and to the SEND Code of Practice as far as it applies to independent schools, making reasonable adjustments to our operations to serve the needs of individual children.

For further information please refer to our full policy list for related policies.

1.0 Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of pupils at Cobham Montessori School who require additional support and/or have Special Educational Needs or Disability.

The policy should be read in conjunction with those for the Curriculum as well as the Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy as these form an integral statement of the principles underpinning all the work of the school.

Reference should also be made to the Equality Policy and the Accessibility Plan.

1.1 Subject Definition

Special Educational Needs are defined as those of children who have significantly greater difficulty than the majority of their peer group and are unable to avail themselves fully of the curriculum or make use of educational facilities because of physical, emotional, behavioural or cognitive difficulties.

It is recognised that all pupils have individual needs, and many may need some form of learning support at some time during their time at Cobham Montessori School. The vast majority of these needs can be met within the environment of the classroom through our individualised approach to planning and assessment.

A programme of work for pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disability is an educational provision which is additional to, or different from that for other children of their age.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

Our aims are to:

- Apply a whole school policy to meet each child's individual needs.
- Identify all children who need special consideration to support their physical, social, emotional or cognitive development.
- Endeavour to provide appropriate support to allow full access to the School Curriculum by providing different levels of intervention to match the child's level of need.
- Endeavour to ensure that these children are fully integrated into all activities of the school and that all staff are aware of their needs.
- Ensure that parents are involved in partnership, as appropriate.

3.0 Policy for Learning Support, Special educational Needs and Disability

Cobham Montessori School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We have a clear approach to identifying pupils who may experience difficulty with their learning; this forms part of the school's overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all our pupils. In the earlier time in the Children's House, we assess the children using the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS):

- Communication and Language (prime area)
- Physical Development (prime area)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (prime area)
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

In the later Children's House and Elementary class we use a variety of formative and summative assessments to identify potential learning difficulties and pupils who have SEND.

Procedure for Identifying and supporting children with a learning difficulty and/or a Special Education Need or Disability:

At Cobham Montessori School, we have a graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils who may have a learning difficulty. Montessori pedagogy is rooted in a continuous cycle of observation, planning, delivery and review which closely correlates with, the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' model as advocated in the Code of Practice 2015. As this approach is embedded in our practice for all children, typically we will not prepare a separate Individual Support Plan unless we are acting on advice from external professionals.

3.1 Areas of Need

Children and young people can have a wide range of different needs. For the purpose of identifying what action the school needs to take we use the following four broad areas of needs identified in the Code of Practice. However, we acknowledge that individual children often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time:

- Communication and interaction – this includes speech language and communication needs (SLCN) either on its own or in conjunction with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).
- Cognition and learning – this includes moderate learning difficulties (MLD) severe learning difficulties (SLD) through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). This area also includes specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia (developmental coordination disorder).
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties – this includes and range of social and emotional difficulties.
- Sensory and/or physical needs – this includes disabilities that may be age related and change over time such as vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI), or multi-Sensory impairment (MSI).

Where the lead teacher in collaboration with the SENDCO identifies that a child may have SEND, the parents are involved in discussing the child's needs as soon as possible.

3.2 English as an Additional Language

Cobham Montessori School recognises that the identification and assessment of the SEN and disabilities of children whose first language is not English requires particular care. Each child must be assessed within the context of his or her home culture and community. Cobham Montessori School will make full use of local sources of advice relevant to specific ethnic groups, drawing on community liaison arrangements wherever they exist.

Lack of competence in English will not be equated with learning difficulties. At the same time, when children who have English as an additional language make slow progress, it should not be assumed that their language status is the only reason; they may also have learning difficulties.

Cobham Montessori School will look carefully at all aspects of a child's performance to establish whether the difficulties they have in the school are due to limitations in their English language or arise from special educational needs.

4.0 Early Identification, Monitoring and Assessment

Identification of a child's need can be made by a number of people, for example a GP, health visitor, speech therapist, educational psychologist, pre-school counsellor, Lead teacher or parent. The child's own experiences are listened to and inform the identification process.

Cobham Montessori School recognises the importance of early identification, assessment and provision for any child who may have special educational needs. The earlier action is taken, the more responsive a child is likely to be. Early intervention is also likely to be less disruptive to the child's learning and social experience within the school.

Assessment is not a single event, but it is a continuing process. If a child's difficulties prove to be transient, the child will subsequently be able to progress without additional support. If a child's

difficulties prove less responsive to the school's provision, an early start will be made in considering additional help the child may need.

To help identify children who may have special educational needs, Cobham Montessori School will measure children's progress by referring to:

- their development as monitored by the lead teacher as part of ongoing observation and assessment
- social/behavioural observations as monitored by the lead teacher and other team members
- their progress in literacy and numeracy
- their performance against the level descriptions within the EYFS at 2 (two year check) and 5 years (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile)
- selective standardised testing
- results of SNAP assessments for Specific Learning Difficulties, Maths or Behaviour

A child's progress is monitored by the lead teacher and informs future personalised provision within the wider community of children. Progress is reviewed at the same intervals as for the rest of the class and a decision made about whether the child is making satisfactory progress at this level of intervention. The school uses the definitions of less than expected progress as suggested in the SEND Code of Practice, that is, progress which:

- 'is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- widens the attainment gap'.

It is important to note that we are concerned with progress, rather than absolute levels of attainment. A child's current level of achievement may lag peers due to a delayed starting point but if satisfactory progress is being made, then we do not consider this to be a special educational need as long as we have a reasonable expectation that the child will continue to make good progress and, in most cases, reach age-appropriate expectations by the end of their time in our school.

Informal discussions and weekly team meetings are held to address teachers' concerns with regard to specific children. This may result in an informal soft targets being put in place which will be monitored by the lead teacher for effectiveness; such targets will form part of the normal cycle of planning and monitoring and are not separately documented. Meetings are held each term with parents and communication with parents whose children are having additional help will be made through these meetings.

4.1 Targeted Support

Where a child continues to fall behind the expected levels, the lead guides will seek further advice from within school (e.g. the SENDCo or Head of School). With parental consent, specialist advice from professionals outside Cobham Montessori School including the Local Authority (LA) may also be sought.

(see https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/local-offer

Again, parents are fully consulted; where appropriate they may be asked to fund appropriate assessment and 1:1 support for children who do not qualify for access to Surrey Local Offer support services.

External advice will be incorporated in a targeted Individual Support Plan (ISP) to support the child, involving the Lead Guide and other relevant professionals. As ISP will not be prepared solely for academic targets if such planning is already covered by our Transparent Classroom recording process.

4.2 Specialist Support

If the child continues to make less than the expected progress despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to the child's particular area/s of need, we may liaise with parents and seek to involve appropriate specialists (e.g. health visitors, speech and language therapists, occupational health therapists, educational psychologists or specialist teachers) who may be able to identify appropriate strategies, equipment, programmes or other interventions to enable the child to make progress towards the desired learning and development outcomes. The decision to involve specialists will be taken following consultation with the pupil's parents. Again, parents may be asked to fund external professionals' assessments. Parents will also be given details of how to access support for Special Education Needs and Disability through the Local Authority (LA) Local Offer (see above).

We also work with the Local Authorities to seek funding for individual support staff for those children that require it during the Early Years.

4.3 Education, Health and Care needs assessment (EHC)

Where, despite relevant and purposeful actions having been taken to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child, that child has not made the expected progress, we will consider completing an Education, Health and Care needs assessment:

https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/local-offer

Parents should be aware than reports from external professionals may be required to elicit a positive response to a needs assessment request.

Educational, Health Care Plans (EHCP)

Once an EHCP has been set up, it is the responsibility of Surrey Local Authority (LA) to review it. Parents should also be aware that an EHCP will usually name a Surrey maintained school to meet the child's needs. However, should the child remain at Cobham Montessori School, it is our policy to make sure, as much as possible, that the review takes place at the correct time and to co-operate with the LA in the review process.

We will endeavour to continue support the child as long as we have the appropriate resources and facilities to provide them with the support they require and we believe it is in the best interest of the child and of the school community for them to remain at Cobham Montessori School.

Where, in our judgement, any of these conditions no longer apply, we reserve the right to withdraw a place at the school. In such circumstances, we will use our reasonable endeavours to support parents in finding alternative arrangements.

5.0 Record Keeping

Detailed records are also held for all pupils as they progress throughout the school. These records are always available to the child's parents.

6.0 Responsibilities

The Lead Guides and the SENDCo are jointly responsible for the identification and assessment of children with SEND, and for the subsequent provision of an appropriate Individual Support Plan (ISP) if this is appropriate. Their responsibilities are to liaise with staff, external agencies including Early Years advisors, parents and the Local Education Authority (LEA) in the case of pupils with an Educational and Health Care Plan for Learning Support, (EHCP)

The SENDCO also

- oversees the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy

- co-ordinates the provision for children with SEND
- advises on the graduated approach to providing SEND support
- ensures resources are available to meet pupils' needs effectively
- supports lead teachers in their discussions with parents of children with SEND, liaising with the parents directly when appropriate
- liaises with other early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies
- liaises with the LA to update and revise developments in SEND education and inclusion.
- is available a key point of contact with external agencies
- liaises with potential next providers of education to ensure a child and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- ensures that the records of all children with SEND are up to date.

All teaching staff share the responsibility of meeting an individual's special needs and are aware of the school's procedures for identifying, assessing and making pro-vision for these pupils.

All teaching staff are expected to:

- Provide a stimulating programme of study which is individualised and designed to enable all children to reach their potential.
- Recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child according to age and aptitude.
- Work closely with the SENDCo, particularly in the initial identification of needs and early provision for pupils with SEND.
- Attend regular meetings with the SENDCo to produce targets for ISP's and complete referral forms if needed;
- Carry out work directed by the SENDCO
- Ensure that colleagues are aware of children's needs
- Attend appropriate training.

7.0 Provision of curriculum access and integration includes:

- Teaching pupils who require learning support or pupils with SEND primarily within the class situation, respecting the fact that children have different educational and behavioural needs, require different strategies for learning and teaching approaches and acquire information at different rates.
- Ensuring that all pupils with SEND join in all the activities of the school (as far as this is practical).
- Provide a continuum of intervention according to ISPs.

Where appropriate this may involve:

- The provision of mechanical aids to support learning.
- Adaptation of the material presented to others
- The provision of an Individual Support Plan (ISP) or a Behaviour Management Plan, which embraces learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Periodic withdrawal either individually or as part of a group.

7.1 Staff Training

SEND and inclusion training, where necessary, is provided through staff meetings by the SENDCo and by specialist services.

There is a commitment by the school to gain expertise in all relevant areas of SEND. Staff have access to and are encouraged to partake in SEND training as part of their CPD.

SEND staff training includes:

- Attending appropriate courses and conferences as they arise.

- Other teachers and Assistants attending SEND courses which interest them and have a particular bearing on children they are supporting.
- Regular staff meetings are held and address SEND issues.
- INSET for all staff and 1:1 support as required.

Use of outside facilities includes:

- Multiagency links with those giving support in meeting the needs of specific children
- Family Counselling Service
- Children's Services
- Social Services
- Paediatric Services
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Educational Psychologist
- Local Authority (LA)
- Early Help Assessment (EHA)

Partnerships with parents includes:

- Ensuring that parents are aware of the school's arrangements for SEND, including the opportunities for meetings between parents and teachers.

Liaison with other schools includes:

- Contacting previous or receiving schools for children with SEND to ensure all records are known, thus the process of transition is smooth. Cobham Montessori School is always willing to be consulted by receiving schools at any point after a child has transferred.

7.2 Resources

The requirements of most children with SEND can be met through the use of the general resources available, but there are some which may have to be purchased specifically.