

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

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Substantive changes since last review:	N/A	

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Acorn AP values the abilities and achievements of all its students and is committed to providing the best possible environment for learning for each student. For those with additional needs, Acorn AP seeks to provide help and support and make available a range of provision encouraging these students to make progress and achieve success. Our aim is to prepare our students for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in the wider world.

This policy links to: Accessibility Policy; Admissions Policy; EAL Policy; Curriculum Policy; Reasonable Adjustment Policy and the SEND information Report.

Definition of SEN¹

Students have special education needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Students have a learning difficulty if they:

Have a significant greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.

Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of education facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority.

Pupils must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Special education provision means:

For students of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for students of their age in school maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area.

Learning difficulties are themselves identified within the areas of:

- Cognition and Learning;
- Communications and Interaction;
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Sensory and/or Physical.

¹ Education Act 1996

Admissions and Equal Opportunities

Admission to an Acorn centre is not based on any prior learning or attainment, nor is it limited to any specific requirements other than age. Acorn AP expects to admit students from a range of backgrounds, with a range of special educational needs alongside students without any recognised specific needs. However, Acorn AP does recognise that there are limitations to the quality of provision it could offer to students with some severe difficulties. For this reason, Acorn AP will not usually admit an individual with a Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD), or a Multi-sensory Impairment (MSI). Where the appropriate support and infrastructure is in place, Acorn AP will seek to admit learners with the following learning difficulties: Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD); Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD); Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH); Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN); Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD); Visual Impairment (VI); Hearing Impairment (HI); and Physical Disability (PD).

Signposting

In any instances where the Acorn Centre is unable to fulfil the specific needs of a young person, Acorn AP will seek to signpost to other local provision that may be suitable. This could include signposting to another Acorn Centre where the physical environment and/or staff qualifications and experience are better placed to respond to the needs of a particular individual.

Aims

Acorn AP will:

- Offer access for all students to a broad, balanced and relevant education that is differentiated to meet individual strengths and needs. Where it is required that students access the National Curriculum, Acorn AP will work with referring schools/agencies to provide this.
- Provide help and support for students across the spectrum of SEN in order to maximise their potential.
- Encourage students to be active participants in their learning, expressing their views and to be involved in the cyclical process of target setting and review.
- Help all students with learning difficulties develop functional literacy and numeracy skills.
- Help those with physical and psychological difficulties, by promoting skills which will assist in their development.
- Ensure that all staff see themselves as teachers of students with special educational needs, recognising that they play a primary role in registering concerns, providing appropriately differentiated tasks, learning resources and opportunities.
- Work in partnership with commissioners, parents and carers and a range of other agencies in setting high expectations and supporting the achievements of all students.

More Able Learners

More Able Learners students often have other learning needs, whether specific or

behavioural, meaning they are often disinclined or unable to perform to their maximum potential, sometimes resulting in exclusion.

Examples may include:

- Good verbal skills often with extensive appropriate vocabulary, but poor writing skills.
- High achievement in one area only.
- Ability to achieve above the average peer, but due to low motivation is not currently achieving.
- Good academic ability but poor interpersonal skills.

One of Acorn AP's primary aims is to 'address the individual social, emotional and learning needs of young people and develop their self-esteem' therefore this includes those students who are identified as being More Able Learners.

Responsibilities

- The Head of Centre along with Acorn Directors have overall responsibility for the centre's general policy and approach to meeting students' special educational needs and will oversee provision.
- The Senior Leaders and Head of Centre will undertake responsibility for implementation of the policy.
- The role of 'SENCo' will be taken by the Head of Centre. They are responsible for developing effective ways of overcoming barriers to learning and ensuring that teaching is at least 'good' and effective.
- All teachers are teachers of students with SEN and have responsibility for them; the SENCo provides help and advice to support colleagues in these whole staff responsibilities.
- All staff are expected to set effective targets for students which will be monitored by the SENCo.
- The SENCo will ensure that all staff liaise with parents/carers and other professionals regarding the specified needs of individual students. This will include overseeing the collection and recording of data and the use of IEPs or ILPS.
- At the end of the student's programme the Head of Centre will ensure that a smooth transition takes place and that all relevant information is communicated effectively.
- All students within the Acorn community are encouraged to support; value and help each other, thus playing their part in the inclusion of all.

Provision

During the referral process, the individual needs of all pupils will be identified through the initial interview and through the exchange of information with the referrer and others involved with the student. The Head of Centre will discuss with the referrer, parent/carers, student and any other relevant agencies the exact day-to-day impact of the needs identified.

Using information gathered through this process and through initial assessments, Acorn AP

will work with the student, referrer, parent/carer and other relevant agencies to draw up an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that sets out how the curriculum will be tailored to meet the academic and social, emotional, moral and spiritual needs of the student.

Students will be supported in a variety of ways, through:

- Support in class through use of additional staff and/or volunteers;
- Individual or small group teaching with learning mentors and/or volunteers;
- Personalised learning programme;
- Work with learning support services and other outside professionals;
- 1:1 reading practice with staff or volunteers;
- Break time support to meet social needs;
- Withdrawal from an appropriate part of the timetable for individual programmes;
- Help with study skills;
- Reasonable adjustments in exams if eligible under exam board criteria, e.g. additional time, readers, prompters, separate invigilation;
- Adaptions to the physical environment.

Individual Learning Plans (ILP)

Strategies for students' progress will be recorded in an ILP containing information on:

- Short term targets
- Teaching strategies
- Provision made
- Date for review
- Success and/or exit criteria
- The outcomes recorded at review.

The ILP will record only that which is different from or additional to the normal differentiated curriculum and will concentrate on three or four individual targets that closely match the student's needs.

Where a student has a Statement of special educational needs, or individual Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP Plan), special consideration will be given to the special educational provision considered necessary to meet the learner's needs set out within it. Acorn AP will need to liaise and plan carefully with the referrer to ensure that these requirements are being met. Students with a Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCPP) will have short term targets set for them, which have been established after consultation with parents/carers, referrers, and student based on the targets identified in the statement or EHCP Plan. These targets and identified interventions will be set out in the ILP and be implemented by staff in the normal classroom setting as far as possible.

Accessibility

Acorn AP has a written accessibility plan which demonstrates the centre's desire to engage with as many young people as is reasonable for their best education and welfare at the centre. The '3 Year Plan' sets out the response to issues raised in a number of checks made regarding access to premises for students, staff and visitors and to pupils' access to teaching and learning. Areas identified as requiring immediate or short-term attention

are also addressed in the centre 'Action Plan'.

The 3-year plan outlines the steps Acorn AP will take to continually review and improve on the provision it makes in the following 3 years, to allow all users to access and use the centre comfortably and safely.

Additional support

The Acorn Centre intentionally operates with small groups of students and high staff/student ratios. This facilitates a level of care and support that is much higher than in mainstream education. Where appropriate, Acorn AP is able to work in a 1:1 ratio with individual students, responding to their needs as they arise. Where further support is required, Acorn AP can sometimes access additional resources which could include the use of an interpreter or signer or someone with specific expertise to respond to the needs of the individual. Within the wider Acorn AP network of centres, specific members of staff are specialists in a range of SEN and can offer support and training to staff across all centres.

Review and/or Panel Meetings

Pupil progress is monitored and evaluated regularly as part of normal subject assessment and target-setting arrangements. Reviews of progress are discussed with parents/carers on an on-going basis and in the review meeting. Acorn AP is committed to working in partnership with commissioners and where appropriate, other agencies involved with the young person. The Head of Centre or other designated member of staff will, wherever possible, attend and input into a meeting where the progress of the young person is discussed, e.g. multi-agency panel, statement or EHCP Plan reviews. At all times, students are expected to take part in discussing their needs and progress and the provision to meet them, from informal discussions to annual reviews.

Monitoring and evaluation

Provision is regularly reviewed by gathering information from staff, students, parents/carers and commissioners. Raising achievement and attainment of all students will be monitored and evaluated through:

- External inspections
- Centre reviews
- Academic results for SEN students
- Tracking progress for SEN students
- All on-going assessment data for SEN students
- Feedback from Parent/carers, students, staff and commissioners

Partnerships

Acorn AP recognises the important contribution that external support services make in assisting to identify, assess and provide for SEN students. Most of the students come to Acorn AP with a team of professionals already engaged in their programme. When a pupil is identified as having difficulties that have not previously been recognised,

we will contact the commissioner and set up appropriate assessment whether with CAMHS, an Educational Psychologist, a dyslexia specialist and any other appropriate agency, and encourage that a Early Help Assessment is undertaken.

Staff in-service training (INSET)

Where applicable, staff can access relevant training taking into account centre priorities as well as personal professional development.