

Special Educational Needs
At
Crossdale Primary School



A Parents' Guide

Your Questions Answered

What are Special Needs?

Special Needs means that a child is having problems with some areas of school life at the moment.

It may be that the child is finding learning difficult and needs to work at a slower pace. It may be that the child has an emotional or social problem, a behavioural problem or a physical disability. It may be that the work is not challenging enough and the child responds badly. Sometimes these difficulties last for only a short time and some continue through a child's school life.

What can we do to help?

Helping your child to make progress is a partnership between home and school. The government has given schools clear guidelines on how this help is given - the document is called the Code of Practice.

Several people may be involved in supporting your child:

The class teacher - he/she is the main link

The Special Needs Co-ordinator - *Mr Peter Cresswell*

SEN Manager - Mrs Rachel Cox

Teaching Assistant Team - *Mrs S Mellor, Mrs C Neale, Mrs J Champion, Miss N Spafford, Mrs H Lees and Mrs R Cox*

As Head Teacher, Mr Cresswell has overall responsibility for making sure that any special needs are identified and provided for.

What are the signs?

Parents should always inform school of any difficulties before the child enters school, so the appropriate support can be agreed or arranged.

Early signs of difficulties often appear through comments such as:

I couldn't do my work today

The work's too hard

I don't want to go to school

I don't like this book

It may be that these signs are shown at home and the parent begins to feel worried about progress at school. It may be that your child shows signs of being exceptionally able in a particular area of the curriculum. Although this area of special needs does not come within the guidelines of the Code of Practice, every effort will be made to provide appropriately challenging work.

It may be that the teacher becomes more aware that there are some areas the child is having difficulty with. This is the most important time for the teacher and parents to get together for an informal chat.

*Please don't leave a concern until it
becomes a problem.*

What happens next?

Under the revised Code of Practice guidelines there are 3 main stages

School Action (SA)

This is the stage when the teacher first has a concern. The class teacher will raise the concern with the parents and the SENCO. From this initial chat, it will be decided how the child can best be helped in school. Generally at this time, the child will be registered as receiving support of some kind. Usually at SA, the child's needs will be met by providing extra support in class through differentiated work and an Individual Provision Map. The Provision Map sets out small achievable steps specific to the child. Once a term, the parents and teacher will meet, possibly at parents open evening or after school, to discuss their progress and what happens next.

At this stage there are there are three possibilities:

- No more help is needed. Great! The child's name is taken off the register.
- Support needs to continue at this level.
- The child is still having difficulties even with the extra help. More specific help is needed. This means moving the child onto the next stage.

School Action Plus

Parents of children with special needs at Crossdale will be aware that over the last few years we have been accustomed to being able to access a wide range of support from outside agencies such as the Educational Psychology Service and the Inclusion Support Service. Following the recent cuts in funding, Nottinghamshire have withdrawn much of this support. We hope that the situation regarding support for children with SEN will become clearer as time goes on, but at the moment it seems that only children with extremely severe and complex needs will qualify for external support at this time.

For children at School Action Plus we will hold termly review meetings involving parents, class teacher, teaching assistants and outside agencies if involved.

Most children will remain at this stage and successfully meet the small individual targets that have been set. Individual Provision Maps are reviewed termly and new targets are set.

Statutory Assessment

The last stage in the Code of Practice is very rarely reached, as very few children need to receive this level of support. At this stage Nottinghamshire LA issues the child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Dyslexia

For a child to learn to read successfully they must learn about the way we use letters (and groups of letters) to represent the 42 most common sounds, or phonemes, in spoken language. Most children will need two or three years of teaching to allow them to get to grips with reading.

In common with other areas of learning, we expect that some children will find it fairly easy to become readers and some children will find it more difficult. This range of abilities means that some children will receive additional support during our structured phonics instruction. Depending on their needs, most children will receive intensive phonics instruction for the first 3 or 4 years of their time at Crossdale.

Despite this intensive phonics teaching some children will still find it very difficult to master the phonics skills they need to become fluent readers and accurate spellers. (*Spelling and reading can be thought of as very similar processes involving the encoding and decoding of sounds.*)

Recent scientific research into these children who find it difficult to become fluent readers and accurate spellers (despite effective teaching) suggests that there are some important differences in the way that their brains process language. These differences in processing mean that reading and spelling will always be more difficult for these children. Children, and adults, with these differences in processing and reading and spelling difficulties might be described as having dyslexia.

How you can find out more?

Please feel free to ask any member of the school staff if you would like information, or have any other concerns. Or alternatively you can make an appointment to see Mr Cresswell at any time.

Parent Advocates

If you would like an informal chat about any issues regarding special needs, our Parent Advocates, will be happy to talk to you. Please ask Rachel Cox for further details.

As you know we aim to work in partnership with you throughout your child's years in school.

We value your contribution and support and will do our best to keep you informed.

If you would like to refer to the SEN Code of Practice or the School's SEN policy please ask a member of staff.

SEN is monitored termly by Governors through the Head Teacher's report.

Parent Partnership Scheme

Nottinghamshire has an active Parent Group which supports parents of children with SEN. We have links with this service and they run 'drop in' sessions which are posted on our notice board.

Useful Information

Mr Cresswell, Head teacher, has overall responsibility for special needs provision within the school. He is the SENCO. Mrs Cox is the SEN Manager, which means that she deals with some of the administration and helps to co-ordinate our SEN provision.

Abbreviations often used

SEN - Special Educational Needs

SENCO - Special Needs Co-ordinator

TA - Teaching Assistant

CoP - Code of Practice

Ed. Psych. -Educational Psychologist

Useful Links

Directgov website pages for parents:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/index.htm>

Citizens Advice Bureau information:

http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/your_family/education/special_educational_needs.htm

Nottinghamshire County Council SEN guide:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/learningandwork/caringforchildren/sen.htm>