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Special Educational Needs  
& Disabilities

A large, stylized orange human figure with arms outstretched, set against a dark blue background that occupies the bottom half of the page.

# SEN Information Report 2020/21

## **Introduction**

The SEN Information Report is a requirement for schools and was introduced in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Section 6.79 of this document sets out the information which must be included in the report, as well as saying it should be updated annually and be written in clear and straightforward language.

### **What kind of Special Educational Needs do we provide for?**

Students at Catcote Academy have a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities, as well as lots of strengths and abilities. All students have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

The SEND Code of Practice provides guidance to schools on how to implement the law. It groups needs in different areas:

- Communicating and interacting
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

We have an Admissions Policy which uses similar categories to set out the different kinds of needs that we can meet at the Academy. Students must have a moderate, severe or profound learning difficulty and may have additional difficulties including:

- Autism spectrum disorders
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Physical disabilities

The full Admissions Policy is available to read on our website. Students will often have needs in more than one of the categories listed above so it is difficult to provide a list of every kind of need covered. We consider every admissions request on a case by case basis during our monthly Admissions Panel meetings.

### **Our arrangements for consulting and involving parents**

We provide a range of opportunities for parents to be involved in decision-making and have their voice heard in the running of the Academy. We value the opinions of parents and carers and operate an 'open door' policy for contact with the school, as well as sending out questionnaires regularly.

We encourage all parents to have a close working relationship with the school, particularly with their child's pastoral teacher, our SENCo and EHC Co-ordinator and our Student and Family Support Officer. We use home-school books and the Class Dojo app to foster good communication and invite parents in to school for special events e.g. Fairtrade Tea Party, Summer Fun Day, Sports Day. Our staff are available to listen to any concerns that parents have and work with them to make sure their

child gets the most from their time at the Academy. There are regular 'Catch up and Coffee' sessions and this group is used to further consult with parents and organise social events.

Parents are invited to their child's Annual Review meeting, as well as other meetings that are held for individual students. We ask parents to complete a written views form as part of this process, or they can provide their views verbally during the meeting.

Our Parents and Friends group is a registered charity which raises funds to contribute towards enrichment activities for students. All parents are invited to join and the group meets regularly. Funds raised have supported class trips, discos and the purchase of specialist equipment.

### **Our arrangements for consulting and involving young people**

We have a student council for the Academy which meets every term. There are two representatives from each class, who are elected by their peers. The student council considers whole school issues and ideas from each class. Items discussed and acted on include the purchase of equipment for the playground and school buses arriving late.

We use a student review booklet or views sheet to ensure that students' views are included in their Annual Review meeting. This is particularly useful for students who do not want to attend the meeting as well as those who aren't able to express themselves fully. The information contained in these booklets is used to form part of their EHC Plan and makes sure that students' voice is heard, including about their hopes and dreams for the future.

### **Our arrangements for assessing and reviewing children and young people's progress towards outcomes**

Every student at the Academy has an Outcomes Plan which contains short and medium term outcomes that students work towards throughout the year. These plans are updated and evaluated at the end of each term and focus on the areas to be developed, such as communication and self-help skills as well as core subjects.

We use BSquared Progression Steps or Mapping and Assessing Personal Progress to break down curriculum targets into smaller personalised steps for each of our students. This allows us to track progress in lots of detail and provide parents with a more holistic assessment of their child's progress. This system is updated regularly so we always know where each student is working, allowing the curriculum to be tailored to their needs. You can read more about this in the Teaching and Learning Policy on our website.

We hold an Annual Review meeting for every student which focuses on progress and achievement during the previous year. Along with parents, we invite any other

professionals to attend and contribute to this meeting so that we can discuss ways to work more holistically and integrate provision. The Annual Review also considers the effectiveness of the provision made for an individual student and whether it should continue on an ongoing basis or be amended.

### **Our arrangements for supporting transition**

It is important to us that every student joining the Academy feels confident and knowledgeable about their move.

The vast majority of our students transfer to Catcote at the start of Year 7 and we provide a wide range of transition activities with our partner primary schools to enable all students to get to know Catcote Academy staff and explore our exciting school facilities. This programme also gives staff from both settings the opportunity to work together; learning from each other to develop educational experiences and help make the transition as smooth as possible.

When students join us at other times, we plan a transition programme to meet their individual needs. This might involve spending time in one of our classes, visits from staff to them in their current school or taster sessions of their chosen course. We gather as much information as possible before students start attending the Academy to ensure that they are supported effectively. Our staff attend meetings, make visits to other schools and liaise with parents to ensure that the process goes smoothly.

### **Our arrangements for supporting young people to prepare for adulthood**

The Academy subscribes to the vision for high aspirations and expectations set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015 and work to realise it for all our students. The Code of Practice states that Local Authorities, education providers and their partners should work together to help young people to realise their ambitions in relation to successful preparation for adulthood, including:

- Higher education and/or employment
- Independent living
- Participating in society
- Being as healthy as possible in adult life.

We run an extensive careers and work experience programme and have participated in the 'Careers at Every Level' Programme which provided careers coaching training for our staff. We are extremely proud to have achieved the Quality in Careers Standard and to have fulfilled the requirements for all 8 Gatsby benchmarks. As our students grow older and mature there are opportunities for them to participate in work experience, both within and external to the Academy. We also run a Supported Internship Programme to support our young people into employment.

### **Our approach to teaching**

We are committed to providing a friendly atmosphere where students can fulfil their potential, grow in confidence and, above all, be happy. We achieve this by employing excellent teachers and support staff who help students to develop both academically and socially. We encourage students to develop and express their opinions in a constructive and positive manner.

Our ultimate aim is to prepare all our students for a smooth transition into their adult life, increasing their understanding of their environment and ultimately the wider world. This focus begins during the early phases of their learning experiences and continues to develop with greater emphasis through the 14-19 curriculum.

Classes are organised primarily according to need, followed by students' ability and age. Some classes follow a curriculum specifically designed to meet their needs e.g. SCERTS for autism and a semi-formal curriculum for those with severe and profound learning difficulties. We personalize every student's curriculum according to their individual needs and, as students get older, provide opportunities to develop independent living and work-related learning skills.

### **How we adapt the curriculum and learning environment**

The curriculum is designed to address our students' individual needs and offer a broad and balanced range of subjects, alongside opportunities for enrichment, experiential and work-related learning.

Our curriculum is based on pathways that support students' progression to adulthood and develop aspirations for employment and independent living.

### **How accessible are the Academy's facilities?**

The Academy building is fully accessible to students and visitors with disabilities, including ramps and handrails. There is a disabled toilet in the reception area and changing facilities for students who require this support. There are two disabled parking bays in the car park.

In addition, the school is equipped with specialist equipment including ceiling track hoists, Jacuzzi for hydrotherapy and a trampoline which provides rebound therapy. We are proactive in our approach to identifying students who may require specialist equipment and work closely with physiotherapy and occupational therapy services to ensure timely assessment and intervention.

Individual students' disabilities are considered in conjunction with their special educational needs to ensure their full access to the curriculum.

### **The expertise and training of staff**

We place a great emphasis on staff development at Catcote Academy and have a well established programme of professional development and progression for staff. There is a high proportion of teaching staff who have completed their training whilst employed by the Academy, giving them a huge depth of experience in meeting students' special educational needs. This also ensures that our students are taught and supported by staff who know them very well and understand how to help them make progress in the curriculum.

Our staff have completed training in a range of special educational needs, teaching strategies and subject-specific skills.

### **How we evaluate the effectiveness of provision**

We have several mechanisms to ensure that the effectiveness of all provision within the Academy is continuously reviewed and evaluated, including through individual students' Annual Reviews, monitoring of teaching and learning and priorities identified in the School Development Plan.

### **Our support for improving emotional and social development**

At Catcote Academy we know that our students' progress and wellbeing go hand in hand. We want to make sure we are supporting everyone in the best possible way so we have a range of help available.

We have a number of non-teaching pastoral staff who work across the age range to support individual students at different stages in their education. This includes individual and group work around specific issues, such as e-safety and puberty, and 1:1 mentoring and support.

All of our staff have received Thrive training and training about attachment, trauma and emotional regulation.

### **How we involve other agencies**

We draw on the expertise and knowledge of a range of external partners in order to support students' learning and progress. We use their advice and recommendations to problem solve and support students more effectively. Our partners include:

#### **Educational Psychology**

Educational Psychologists work with children and young people aged up to 19 years and with their teachers, parents (and other carers) and other professionals involved e.g. doctors, social workers. Educational Psychologists work to find solutions to difficulties children and young people may be experiencing. This might be difficulties with learning, social and emotional development or behavior. Sometimes they work directly with children and young people, and sometimes they work only with the adults in the children's lives.

In addition to the support that we might receive through statutory arrangements, we purchase additional, specialist support from The Psychology Team in Hartlepool which is targeted towards social and emotional difficulties.

### **Occupational Therapy**

Occupational therapy (OT) helps children to participate in daily activities. These activities may be personal care tasks (such as dressing, toileting or feeding), work and play tasks (such as activities carried out at pre-school, school or college) and/or leisure activities. These are 'occupational performance' tasks.

Occupational therapists work with the child, parents and teachers to find solutions to minimise the difficulties children face, helping them get the most from life. Students at Catcote receive support for mobility and posture management from the Paediatric Occupational Therapy team at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. The team can recommend things like seating and moving and handling equipment.

We also purchase additional support from Smart Occupational Therapy and a member of their team is based in the school for one day per week. This is mainly focused on supporting our students' sensory needs.

If we think that your child would benefit from working with an Occupational Therapist we will contact you to discuss this, before completing a referral form.

### **Speech and Language Therapy**

Speech and language therapists (SLTs) help children to communicate. This means they can help with different skills: to make someone easier to understand, help them communicate with others and to understand what others say to them. They can work with schools and settings or parents to help them to support children and young people's communication skills. SLTs can also provide training and strategies for other people to use.

We will always ask for your permission before we make a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy team.

### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

Children, young people and their families can be offered support by CAMHS if they are experiencing difficulties with their behaviour or emotions, or are finding it hard to cope with life in the family, at school or in the wider world.

Hartlepool's CAMHS team is based at Dover House and provides a range of support following referral. We will always ask for your permission to make a referral to this service.

**Our arrangements for handling complaints**

Complaints usually arise when a parent or carer is unhappy with the way a young person has been treated, or with the way they have been treated by the school. Our Complaints Procedure ensures that every complaint is dealt with fairly and consistently.

It is in everyone's interests that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. All staff need to know the procedures that follow, and the part that they may play in them.