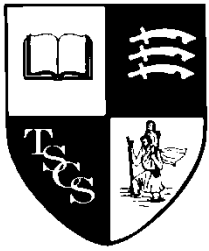


THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

SEN Trust Southend



Academy Trust - Special School

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SEN Information Report

Types of Special Educational Needs that the School Caters for

1. At this moment in time (September 2025) The St. Christopher School is catering for 271 pupils.

The nature of the special educational needs we cater for varies each year, but the makeup of this year consists of:

146 Primary/nursery aged children of whom:

- 99% are affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- 100% have some degree of learning difficulty (but not those pupils whose primary need is severe or complex and profound learning difficulties)
- 10% have moderate learning difficulties
- 1% have ADHD, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties who find concentration difficult and whose learning is affected by this.
- 60% of pupils are affected by Global Development Delay (GDD)

The majority of pupils have a combination of these difficulties rather than just one type of special need or diagnosis.

Secondary aged and 6th Form pupils have a recognised diagnosis of ASD or ADHD and a degree of learning difficulty which affects their ability to access the curriculum.

2. All pupils should have their special educational needs identified, recognised and assessments completed and carried out before they enter the school. Very occasionally, some pupils have started without a completed Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). We work with the Local Authority to complete the assessment. Sometimes their degree of special educational needs becomes apparent later due to the combination of difficulties. If there is a query as to the nature of a difficulty that requires further investigation then the school will contact parents/ carers and other professionals as necessary to complete any further assessments required. The school purchases time from an Educational Psychology service and uses this when it feels there may be an unmet need that has developed. We are also in close contact with medical services and will refer to them if necessary. This can be especially relevant for mental health issues that often manifest during adolescence.
3. All of our pupils have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). These set out clearly the nature of the provision needed for each pupil and how the school will meet this need. When considering the placement of a child into the school, full account of the provisions of the Education Health Care Plan will be reviewed as to whether the school believes they can meet the needs of the pupil and/or make reasonable adjustments to enable their needs to be met.



Learning Outside the Classroom

Evaluation Processes



Southend-on-Sea



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4. The school evaluates its effectiveness in the meeting of needs through various means:
- Progress against pupils personalised learning goals is measured and reported on termly through on online assessment tool, 'Evidence for Learning'. Teaching staff collate visual evidence along with professional judgement and commentary to share with parents and wider professionals.
 - Parents' views of overall progress are sought regularly through discussion, Individual Support Plan views, formal reviews of progress at parents open evenings, review of progress discussions at annual review meetings, computer based views shared through the use of 'Evidence for Learning'. Parents are able to give the information formally and informally and this covers the softer aspects of progress which are not always able to be measured in formal situations.
5. Ofsted inspects the school every 4 years to test the effectiveness of the provision and to see that pupils are being taught well to make the best possible outcomes for them. The latest inspection of the school was in April 2024 where the school was judged as 'Good' [Ofsted report](#)
6. The formulation of the SEN Trust Southend is providing on-going evaluation as to the overall effectiveness of all of the schools in the Trust. The reports and visits cover a number of areas and will be a part of the Trust Board monitoring and evaluation of the schools and the Trust as a whole.
7. The main Local Authority placing pupils in the school is Southend on Sea and they monitor the effectiveness of the school's provision through feedback from parents and the information given to them in the review of EHCP's and how well pupils are meeting their annual and Key Stage targets.
8. Local Governors of the school regularly review and receive reports from the school as to its effectiveness in meeting pupils' special educational needs. They also regularly visit the school and see for themselves how the school meets the needs of the pupils. They then report to the full Local Governing Body on the effectiveness of the provision.

The School's Approach to Teaching

9. The school's approach to teaching pupils with special education needs varies according to the needs of each group. We try to place pupils in the most appropriate teaching group to meet their particular special educational needs. This varies year on year according to the mixture of pupils within the school at that time. There is no prescribed teaching methodology, but all staff have to plan, deliver and assess all areas of the curriculum. There is a 3 year plan of topic coverage so that if a pupil stays in the same class for more than 1 year they will have a different learning experience the following year and not repeat the same topics. The curriculum is designed to offer a full coverage of all important aspects of development both academic, social and emotional in nature. The aim is to enable pupils to make as much progress as possible and to prepare them for the next stage of their education wherever this may be.

The curriculum is kept broad and balanced to enable all aspects of learning to take place. We focus on 'learning powers' to build in both emotional and learning resilience.

We make full use of the local environment, including outdoor learning activities. Primary aged pupils are able to make use of the specialist facilities, staffing and resources of the secondary department and so have access to a full sized sports hall, specialist cookery room, swimming pool, music and art facilities.

10. In the school year 2024/25 there are 146 early years and primary aged pupil groups.
- 3 classes will be for those with more severe needs within ASD – early years/reception and Key Stage 1 and 2 and a mixed Key Stage 1 & 2 group.
 - 3 nurture classes of Key Stage 2 pupils who mostly have more severe learning difficulties and require a multi-sensory learning environment.
 - 3 early years/Key Stage 1 classes of pupils who have a mixture of needs.

- 5 Key Stage 2 classes of pupils with a mixture of special educational needs. These pupils are groups around their chronological age and abilities both academic and social.
- All primary class groups are up to 12 pupils or less according to the needs of the group. Pathway groups are 8, Blended 9 and Core 11.

- 11.** In the secondary part of the school there are 7 Key Stage 3 teaching groups, and 4 Key Stage 4 teaching groups. It is not exclusively so. Groups are mixed year groups and mainly within their own key stage, but this can overlap according to the needs of the pupils.

There are 2 groups who spend more time with their group tutor and move between other staff for some of their lessons. Other groups move between a number of specialist teaching staff all day. There are also 5 specialist Key Stage 3/4 Autism resource bases where pupils with severe ASD and learning difficulties are taught in specialist classes to suit their needs.

The secondary curriculum follows the national curriculum mostly, but is more practical in nature and broken into smaller steps. Pupils continue to focus on the development of good social and communication skills as their basic entitlement. Pupils in Key Stage 4 follow external examination courses at various levels according to their abilities and needs each year. Courses include GCSEs, OCR, Foundation and Entry level courses and ASDAN qualifications in various subjects. Pupils also take part in Duke of Edinburgh in Key Stages 4 and 5 and the Arts Award. Other courses validated by external awarding bodies are considered each year. Key Stage 5 pupils also access range of external qualifications.

If a pupil is able, willing and wishes to access local mainstream school provision for certain subjects, this is negotiated individually for the pupil(s) concerned with families and the pupil, and school concerned, and access conditions.

- 12.** Our curriculum model sets out our principles of overall development for our pupils. Our vision for the school shows how we are concerned to develop the overall child in all aspects. There are a number of specialist teaching areas, these include:

- Full sized sports hall for PE lessons.
- Specialist Cookery room where all groups are taught cookery and life skills in small groups – up to 6 pupils.
- Communication and Interaction Centre – a series of individual therapy type rooms, a multi-sensory room and occupational/physio room integrating sensory needs.
- Swimming pool – for use of small groups mostly primary aged.
- Outdoor garden and wildlife space.
- Business and Enterprise centre for all pupils to access and further develop life and social skills in a more 'work related' environment.
- Full sized working greenhouse where all pupils access facilities and take part in planting, growing and plant care.

Curriculum Model

All of our pupils are on a learning journey. For many children, one of the biggest journey's they embark upon is that within their schooling. It is therefore fundamental that this is carefully considered. The curriculum at The St Christopher school comprises of three routes; core, blended and pathway.

Building a holistic understanding of our pupils and their individual needs, whilst creating a positive, supportive environment for all pupils is paramount, in order to ensure our curriculum is engaging, inspiring and preparing pupils beyond their school career.

Ensuring pupils have access to high-quality teaching which is functional, meaningful and relevant is essential, whilst complementing this with a therapeutic approach to ensure our pupils are regulated and ready to learn.

We work effectively with colleagues in school such as our Speech and Language Therapy team help, to ensure that we elements are embedded naturally within our curriculum and that these resources are effectively; supporting our pupils at every opportunity.

We continually evaluate our curriculum to ensure that this remains relevant and meaningful for our pupils as they move through the school.

Curriculum routes are not permanent meaning that pupils can move across to a new route if it is appropriate.

The three curriculum routes are explained in below:

Pathway Route

The Pathway route is designed for pupils with more severe learning needs who require a highly individualised and structured approach. This route operates in smaller groups of up to 8 pupils, reflecting the intensive support needed. The curriculum focuses on semi-formal learning within a more 'relaxed' space, where pupils come together for structured activities but generally work individually with dedicated staff members for specific goal-based tasks.

The Pathway route emphasises core subjects taught specifically, including English, maths and science, alongside life skills development. There's a strong focus on sensory applications within the curriculum, including the use of real sensory room time, and access to specialist facilities like rocking chairs and sensory equipment. Assessment follows the MAPP-based system (Managing and Assessing Pupil Progress), which tracks and monitors individual pupil progress. Pupils on this route may also access ASDAN qualifications and work experience opportunities as appropriate to their developmental level.

Blended Route

The Blended route combines elements of both the Core and Pathway approaches, creating a flexible learning environment that can adapt to varying needs within the same cohort. Groups are typically limited to 10 pupils, allowing for more personalised attention whilst maintaining some collaborative learning opportunities.

This route uses elements of both core and pathway curriculum principles, deemed appropriate for pupils' age and stage of development. Within the secondary department, some 'blended' classes access specialist maths and English groups to help integrate and ensure curriculum access according to their specific learning requirements. The approach incorporates a mixture of formal and semi-formal learning styles, changing according to the specific content within the group of pupils each year.

Pupils on the Blended route benefit from some blended classes accessing secondary-level specialist resources and may share some similarities with both pathway curriculum approaches depending on their individual development. There's flexibility for pupils to access a variety of ability levels within the class, with some core classes potentially sharing some learning experiences with blended curriculum pupils.

Core Route

The Core route represents the most academically focused pathway, designed for pupils who can access formal learning within a traditional small classroom environment. Groups are larger at up to 12 pupils, reflecting pupils' ability to learn alongside peers more independently.

This route follows a formal learning style within a traditional small classroom setting, with pupils generally working at desks. The curriculum is more closely aligned with the National Curriculum and is adapted to be more accessible whilst maintaining academic rigour. Pupils access a full variety of curriculum subjects, and life skills opportunities are linked to specific key lessons or through subject-specific learning.

Secondary pupils on the Core route can access group work facilitated and supported by adults, generally working with 3 pupils to one adult ratio. The route includes opportunities for some work experience and possible work placement opportunities within a work placement context. Assessment includes a variety of Entry Level Qualifications, GCSEs, ASDAN, and Duke of Edinburgh programmes according to individual abilities and interests.

Flexibility and Movement

Importantly, the school emphasises that curriculum routes are not permanent fixtures. Pupils can move between routes if it becomes appropriate for their changing needs and development. This flexibility ensures that the educational approach remains responsive to each pupil's evolving requirements and capabilities, maintaining the school's commitment to personalised learning for all pupils with special educational needs.

Our curriculum offers opportunities for learning in a wide variety of areas, at an appropriate level, depending on the pupils' age and ability and their pathway through school. We continue to focus on our 'Learning Powers' throughout the curriculum to develop an individual's ability to reflect on their learning and build a wider range of skills to enable and encourage them to succeed. You can see the Learning Powers 'line' runs through the centre of the map.

All possible efforts are made to reduce the barriers to learning which are presented through varying levels of complex learning difficulty, autism, ADHD, challenging behaviour and speech and language difficulties.

The Curriculum also includes:

- Curriculum – including access to all the curriculum subjects, where appropriate and relevant
- Family Support – including preparation for transition and outside support
- Learning Environment – including opportunity for learning outside the classroom
- Life Skills – including work readiness and enterprise skills
- Assessment
- Learning Powers

These areas focus on all aspects of learning, including play, practical experiences, offsite activities and involvement with key adults and peers.

The 'Learning Powers' that all staff encourage the pupils to think about are:

- Trying something new and being curious
- Making good choices and following instructions
- Working with friends and having a go
- Enjoying learning and not giving up
- Making links and knowing my next steps

Staff continue to incorporate specialist approaches to support pupils in achieving their curriculum targets which can include; access to mentoring, 1:1 support, alternative communication systems such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Systems), Proloquo2go, Attention Autism, Intensive Interaction, Objects of Reference, Makaton, structured teaching approaches and Positive Handling Strategies which allow pupils to manage their own behaviour where possible.

Our curriculum is designed to constantly evolve, ensuring the needs of the pupils and the skills of our staff are the motivation for everything we do.

We now have 3 distinctive curriculum routes: Pathway, blended and core. More information can be found [here](#).

Additional Support from Within the School

- 13. Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs)** – 2 SALTs work for the school providing individual, small group advice and support in the areas of developing language across all areas. The SALTs are funded from within the school's budget and are employed directly by the school to meet the needs of our

pupils only. SALTs work very closely with all school staff, providing advice and support across all areas of communication. Our SALTs are supported by a team of 3 Speech and Language Therapy Assistants (SALTAs)

They have various specialist areas of knowledge such as the development of feeding routines for those pupils who find eating a variety of food difficult, the use of augmented communication devices such as iPads using speech synthesis programmes, the use of PECS, colourful semantics and Makaton signing – all according to need. They also provide training and ongoing support and advice for all classroom staff.

Our **Counsellor** can provide specialist counselling, advice and support to a minority of individual pupils referred by school staff who need short term support in emotional and behavioural issues. However this is usually more 'mentoring' for our pupils.

Other members of our **Pastoral and Wellbeing Team** provide support on an individual basis for those pupils who need some time to discuss issues or additional support in lessons to remain on track and access the curriculum due to particular short term difficulties. The system of referral to additional support for emotional and social development is through this team of staff. All staff are aware of the need to support the emotional and social development of all pupils and see it as a major part of our work. However, some pupils require additional specialist input at times.

Specific **reading support** - a teacher has additional qualifications and experience in dealing with specific reading difficulties such as dyslexia and provides advice, support and individual programmes as necessary. This is additional and different from the specific teaching and reading support available to all pupils.

Additional fitness and health monitoring is available from the school first aid person and the programmes for additional fitness from PE staff to help pupils overcome fitness and obesity issues.

Additional Support and Access to Outside Services

14. The school liaises very closely with the Emotional, Wellbeing & Mental Health team and supports a number of students and families who are having difficulties coping with their disability in the home situation. Joint behavioural and emotional programmes are worked on with families and all concerned.

The LA designated Consultant Paediatrician runs their monitoring clinic for pupils at this school. We facilitate medicals for pupils helping to monitor the effects of any interventions.

We have regular contact with the Children and Disabilities Team of Social Care, based at The Lighthouse Centre and liaise with them regarding any issues where additional support is required or requested by families.

Respite care and after school clubs are run by the school. There is a regular programme of after school clubs that pupils can access and there is extended after school care 3 nights a week 3.00pm-6.00pm for families of pupils who require it. A programme of nights available is sent home to families at the beginning of each half term to book places. The school also facilitates the management of Christopher's Cottage, a specialist SEN 6 bed respite care unit on the school grounds. Young people aged 5-19 who are given access to respite provision through Social Care can stay a variety of lengths of time according to their need and arrangements.

School holiday clubs are run every school holiday (except Christmas) 4 days a week. These are either sports activities in the Sports Hall (Chris Cross) or SNAC club which is for those who need more intensive staff support (2:1). (SNAC club is only available to pupils at our school.)

Specialist Training and Expertise of Staff

15. There are a number of areas of specialist expertise amongst the school staff. All staff are encouraged and expected to take part in additional training each year. **All classroom based staff** take part in Therapeutic Thinking on positive interventions for behaviour management to safely diffuse situations and manage the behaviour of some very challenging pupils and situations. We also have 7 members of staff who are Therapeutic Thinking trainers. Speech and Language Therapists hold specialist qualifications and continue to update their skills in accordance with their requirements. They are specifically trained in Intensive Interaction, PECS, Colourful Semantics, Makaton, and other techniques such as the use of the iPad to aid communication.

All teaching staff are encouraged to complete further advanced recognised qualifications in areas of special educational needs and are supported in doing so. These could be Masters Degrees in Autism, Dyslexia, Management, ADHD and behavioural interventions, counselling etc. according to interest and the needs of the school.

Other school staff are also encouraged to undertake specialist qualifications in a variety of areas, ranging from improving GCSE English and Maths grades, Open University Degrees, counselling qualifications, Makaton, play therapy, etc.

If there is an unmet need that we feel we could benefit from training in, then we will do our best to acquire it from outside sources if it felt to be essential to meeting the needs of the current pupils. We cannot meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs within the area and do not feel it is right to try and do so. We have first aid training and will administer oral medication or emergency medication that we are trained for. From September 2020 we now have a shared specialist nurse who works part time at the school. Appointments can be made to discuss medical issues.

Parents and Children Consultation and Communication

16. We hold a series of regular reviews of the work within the school to meet the special educational needs of each pupil. Parents are sent home an Individual Support Plan (previously Individual Educational Plan IEP) each term, which sets out the short term targets/outcomes for each child and emphasises the short term objectives. Parents/carers are invited to discuss this plan each term.

Pupils with severe communication difficulties have a daily home-school liaison book which allows school and home to communicate every day about everyday matters of significance and daily occurrences.

Annual reviews / meetings about progress are arranged regarding the outline of provision and need from the EHCP. Parents/carers and children, where appropriate, are invited to attend the meetings. Reports of progress are discussed at the meeting as well as views as to the next steps in learning and longer term views as to possible routes for life after school.

Parent open days and evenings are held regularly. There is usually an open day for parents/families in the summer holidays which is open to all families, but is especially useful to families and children new to the school to enable them to get to know the layout of the school and be around school staff in the holidays.

Primary parent/family consultation evenings are held towards the end of October, beginning of November each year so that families can see how a child has settled into the new school year and the work completed since September can be seen. Further consultation evenings are held in Spring Term. Parents/families are encouraged to contact the school via telephone or e-mail if there is a particular issue which needs to be discussed.

A detailed annual report of progress is sent home to every family during the summer holidays so that a full picture of the work of the year can be seen and the progress made.

Tapestry is an on-line, web based system which all primary groups use to enable parents and families to see annotated photographs and videos the work of the children in school. Parents can also upload

photos and videos so that school staff can see the children in their environment outside of school. We also use Class Dojo for liaising with parents and carers.

Parents are asked to give their views about the work of the school via a yearly questionnaire. The results are published in the school. Parent View on Ofsted's web-site is also available for those who wish to pass on their views to Ofsted.

Pupils are also asked their views regularly. They complete work on their views of progress regularly including setting their own targets and reviewing them with staff in lessons, and in tutor time. There is an annual questionnaire to children which seeks their views and is published each year.

Secondary aged pupils complete a 1 to 1 tutor interview each term about their progress and views of the school. They also complete a pupil view sheet towards their annual review report. They have time to reflect and predict on their own progress for the year. There is a School Council and Learning Council which have representatives from each class and school house present to put forward school views to the management and governors and their views have been acted upon to change/improve facilities in the school.

Governors regularly review the work of the school and report back to the full Governing Body. Any complaints about the work of the school can be made in writing to the Chair of Governors who will respond accordingly in a timely manner. Our Complaints Policy can be viewed at:

https://thestchristopherschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/mat_complaints_policy_mar21.pdf

Transferring Between Phases in Education – Support for Families

17. Pupils transferring into the school are supported by an initial visit by school staff who meet the parent/carer and child if possible. This is to gather information about the child's likes/dislikes, concerns, worries, strengths and areas for development as well as to provide information about the school and initial practical details.

A social story/communication book is sent home to each new child which provides pictures and information about the school and the staff pupils will be working with.

A Family Open Day in the summer term allows families to visit the school informally to become familiar with the surroundings and their new classrooms. Once a child has started, a new parents open morning is held in the first half term to allow parents of new children a chance to ask further questions and get to know each other. This has had to be individual or virtual this year.

Information on movement between classes for the next academic year is sent home with the annual report together with the first names of the pupils in the class and photographs of the staff who will be working with the child. This allows the family and child to be prepared for changes for the following year. Social stories and picture books are used to help pupils for their transitions to the next class.

Parents of pupils in year 5 are encouraged to start looking at possible placements for the future. Even if a pupil fits the criteria for remaining within the school we encourage all parents to visit possible alternatives so that they are fully informed of choices. This is discussed in detail at the year 5 annual review so that there is plenty of time to think about alternatives. This is especially important for the families of pupils who do not fulfil the criteria for remaining in this school and thus will need to move on to another placement at the end of year 6.

If a pupil is moving to another school/educational setting, careful transition work is completed with the pupil and the family. During year 6, pupils are accompanied by our school staff to visit the new provision, are supported in their first visits and then slowly the support from our staff is withdrawn to enable them to make the transition as smooth as possible. A leavers' assembly enables all pupils to know they are transitioning from one provision to another, even if they are remaining within this

school. Those pupils who are remaining in this school spend time in transition into the secondary department having lessons with new staff and getting used to the new environment. Information about the pupils is given to the next setting, producing one page profiles of pupils as well as passing on further information on strategies that help and any further support that is needed.

Pupils in Years 10 – 14 are prepared for their next steps through a series of activities in school including work experience and formal lessons according to their individual needs. All pupils are encouraged to attend their EHC review meetings to discuss their future choices with staff, parents and a Local Authority Careers or Transitions Guidance team member. All local college open evenings and relevant careers/work fairs are advertised to pupils and parents, additionally representatives from SEEVIC and SEC are in attendance on Secondary Parents Evening. Pupils moving to SEEVIC, Lancaster or 16-19 Annex take part in transition visits and are supported by staff if needed.

- 18.** Further information about special educational provision is available from the Local Offer Page:

<https://livewellsouthend.com/>