



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

SEND Report 2024/2025



SEND Report - 2024

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St Thomas More RC School, Blaydon – SEN Information Report 2024-2025

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St Thomas More Catholic School, Blaydon (part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust) is a maintained mainstream school for students from the ages of 11 to 18 years. The school caters for students with a range of additional educational needs.

As part of the Children and Families Act 2014, all schools are required to provide a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information Report to parents. This report details how the school can support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and should be read in conjunction with the SEND Policy.

At St Thomas More Catholic School, we support and value the abilities of all our students. It is our duty to provide equal opportunities for every person in our care, and a safe and fully equipped learning environment which caters to the needs of every child as an individual. We are committed to inclusion within the school curriculum and participation in all aspects of school life. We pay close regard to the key principles of inclusive education:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to students' diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.
- Raising awareness of additional needs and creating an inclusive learning environment throughout St Thomas More Catholic School.

Admission arrangements for students with SEND

St Thomas More Catholic School caters for students of all abilities, including those with identified learning difficulties and disabilities. If you would like your child to attend St Thomas More Catholic School, you should discuss the suitability of St Thomas More Catholic School as a secondary placement with their current school and participate in a review with any professionals who work with your child. At the review meeting, should your child already be placed on the SEND Register, yourself and the professionals involved will discuss possible next steps or you may wish to contact the SEN department of your local authority. They will then advise you on what steps should be taken. The local authority will signpost parents to schools that can meet the needs of their child.

Parents/carers are welcome to visit St Thomas More Catholic School, and this is especially important before making a decision about a placement. If you make a decision about the school you would like your child to attend, you should inform the Local Authority of your first choice of school. Once the placement is agreed, we will work with you to support your child during the transition period.

For further information, please visit our School Admissions Policy and SEND policy located on our website.

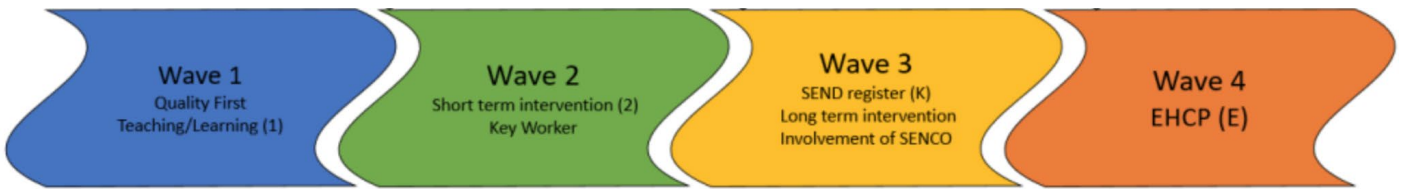


Further advice and information is available from Mrs A White SENDCo on (0191) 499 0111 or by e-mail at alwhite@stm.bwcet.com or email admissions@stthomasmore.org.uk

The kinds of special educational needs for which provision is made at the school

St Thomas More is a mainstream school catering for students of all abilities in Years 7 to 13, including those with identified learning difficulties who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and those who are on their school's special needs register at times transfer. St Thomas More Catholic School currently provides support for students with a great range of special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities including physical disability, autism, speech and language and syndication needs, specific learning difficulties (dyspraxia, dyslexia etc), global moderate learning difficulties, visual and hearing impairments and social and emotional needs. We believe in the potential of all our students and we strive to ensure that every student is successful in achieving their own personal goals.

At St Thomas More Catholic School we utilise a 4 Wave system of provision for students with SEND. The rationale for this is that the vast majority of students with additional needs can effectively be supported by Quality First Teaching (QFT) with reasonable adjustments to their provision in lessons and/or across the school site. We refer to this as Wave 1.



This inclusive approach is designed to support needs (diagnosed and undiagnosed) at the earliest possible opportunity and ensure that the limited resources available, for targeted intervention (Wave 2) and intense support (Wave 3), are able to be effectively deployed and monitored.

The nature of a wave system is that students can, and should, move up and down levels of provision according to their needs at any given time. Our ultimate intention is to identify needs, put effective provision in place and monitor progress to ensure that all young people are accessing the broadest and most balanced curriculum.

Identification and assessment of students with special educational needs

The school SEND policy and the arrangements to support students with SEN are fully compliant with the regulations of the 2014 Children and Families Act , the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years, June 2014 and the March 2023 , SEND , Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, Right Support, Right Place, Right Time. The SEND policy is available on the school's website.

All students follow a broad balanced curriculum that is appropriate to their age and stage of development which is personalised to take into account their needs and abilities.

Identification of new students transferring from primary school is through routine data collection, school visits, primary schools, outside agencies, parents/carers transition meetings, taster days, on a transitional enrichment day , Key Stage 2 SATs and Cognitive ability test (CAT) scores.

Within the first month at STM, all Year 7s are screened for reading ability. These tests are analysed by the



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Learning Support department and the results are used with existing information, including Key Stage 2 data, to inform support arrangements. All students with a reading age of more than two years behind their chronological age will be offered and encouraged with parental permission to attend intervention programmes (currently Read, Write, Inc-Phonics) run by literacy specialists. Students who display anomalies between reading, spelling and cognitive ability will also be investigated irrespective of whether they are 2 years behind their chronological age.

The School is aware that needs may change over time and that additional needs may be identified in the context of a secondary school which did not present themselves in the much smaller setting of a primary school.

Concerns about a student having SEND can be raised by any member of staff, any parent/carer or students themselves. Any concerns regarding students with special educational needs are made directly to the SENDCo. An initial analysis will be made and, if required, may lead to further specialist assessment before a decision regarding additional support is made. The students will be added to the schools SEND register and parents/carers/staff will be fully informed of any decisions made.

Assessment is a continuing process that can identify students who may have special educational needs. This is closely monitored. The school will measure children's progress by referring to:

- Baseline reading ,spelling , comprehension and numeracy assessments , depending on area of need.
- Modular tests in all subject areas.
- Evidence from teacher and Learning Support Assistant observation and assessment.
- Their performance compared to peers who have a similar prior attainment
- Their progress against target grades.
- Standardised screening or assessment tools.
- Books and homework.

Provision for students with special educational needs (whether or not they have a EHC plan)

Provision for students with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole. In addition to the governing body, the school's Head Teacher, SENDCo, Learning Support Department and all other members of staff have important responsibilities.

All teachers are teachers of students with special educational needs and every teacher is responsible for 'adapting teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students' (Teachers' Standards 2012).

Teaching such students is a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response. Central to the work of every class and every subject is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation that takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the students. The majority of students will learn and progress within these arrangements. However, for students with special educational needs, there may be a need to provide an enhanced level of provision should they have a significant gap to their peers in one of the 4 broad areas of need.

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Physical/Sensory
- Social, Emotional, Mental Health

Our classroom teachers are responsible for SEND provision within the classroom and for providing Wave 1 - Quality First Teaching. This is the first and most important step in providing an appropriately differentiated, personalised and inclusive curriculum, and ensuring each child is recognised as an individual. We ensure that



students with additional needs are supported through targeted use of Reasonable Adjustments to support curriculum access, reduced class sizes, additional and/or different teaching and learning approaches as well as intervention strategies. Class teachers retain responsibility for the progress of individuals and are at the centre of planning SEND provision with the SENDCo and any specialist staff involved with the child or young person.

Effectiveness of the school's provision for SEND students is evaluated through:

- Use of modular assessment data, lesson observations, case studies, book scrutiny, staff liaison and marking to measure progress in the classroom.
- Senior leadership (SLT) monitoring and evaluation procedures across all departments.
- Department annual review.
- Department development plans.
- Weekly department meeting.
- Discussion with teachers.
- Discussion with students.
- Parental consultation and feedback.

Assessing and reviewing the progress of students with special educational needs

- Progress is closely monitored through the school's modular tests in all subject areas. Teacher assessments for students in KS3 and KS4 are available following each modular test. For students with SEND, these are analysed and should further intervention be required this will be addressed and typically students would be moved to Wave 2 - Short Term Intervention. Students will transition down the SEND Register if significant progress is being made. Any students failing to make expected progress will be discussed in the Learning Support Department meetings and intervention sessions/support agreed-upon on an individual basis.
- At St Thomas More Catholic School all students on the SEND Register (Waves 1 - 4) are formally discussed and reviewed at the end of each term by the SENDCo and Deputy Headteacher (Quality of Education). This process enables students' placement on the register to be fluid and based on progress/regression in relation to the broad areas of need. Additional support can be allocated or withdrawn based on individual circumstances. Any student movement across the SEND Register will be shared systematically with staff and parents at this point. Where a student is believed to require transitioning to/from Wave 3 (SENK) parents will be formally consulted in line with the Graduated Approach.
- All students' progress is continuously monitored by teaching staff across all departments using their monitoring systems, classwork and homework.
- Modular reports are produced at every modular test.
- Additional termly SEND Parents evenings/consultations are held for those students on Wave 3 and 4 of the SEND Register. This provides parents/carers a formal Interim Review opportunity to meet the SENDCo and review students' SMART targets associated with their SEN Action Plans.
- Before the commencement of the Autumn Term, parents/carers of all Year 7 Wave 4 (EHCP) students on the register are contacted via phone to discuss any further transition support prior to the end of the summer holidays. A further check is then made during the first half-term of Year 7 to check how their son/daughter has settled and whether there is anything else they would like to bring up.
- The Learning Support Department is available by telephone (0191) 499 0111 or e-mail STM-SEND@STM.BWCET.COM
- Annual Reviews of Education Health Care Plans (EHC plans) are calendared in accordance with Local Authority allocation. Parents, carers and professionals are invited to attend the Annual Review meeting to discuss progress and to be involved in target setting and agreeing upon appropriate intervention strategies to help the students both in school and at home. All relevant teaching staff are asked for feedback on the students which is sent out to parents before the review. Every student is offered the



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opportunity to express their opinion and views are taken into consideration. Students are encouraged to contribute, where possible, in the decision-making process including setting targets.

- St Thomas More Catholic School operates a House system and all students are assigned to a House. Heads of House oversee the pastoral care of students in school and may invite parents to attend meetings in school to discuss the progress of their child. Whenever necessary, the a member of the SEN department be in attendance at such meetings

Approach to teaching students with special educational needs

- All students are taught in mainstream classes, however the size of lower attaining classes, which might include students identified as having SEND, are deliberately reduced in terms of student to teacher ratio to support Quality First Teaching.
- All subject teachers differentiate work to match the needs of all students in their class in order to enable them to access the curriculum more successfully. They employ a range of creative strategies to engage learners in all areas of the curriculum.
- When a student has been identified as having SEND, we will take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective specialist provision in place. Recommendations and strategies to enable access to the curriculum are made by the SENDCo.
- Information on individual students and their individual needs is systematically provided to staff by the Learning Support Department in the form of Pupil Profiles which is accessed directly from the St Thomas More Catholic School's SEND Register.
- A range of literacy, numeracy and social interventions.

Adaptation of the curriculum and learning environment for students with special educational needs

Teaching - differentiation of resources and learning materials by the subject teacher with the support from the SENDCo/LSAs where needed.

In-class support - a team of LSAs offer in-class support to identified students or groups of students across the range of subjects and abilities.

One-to-one and small group intervention - literacy, numeracy and social intervention programmes designed to support students attainment are specifically aimed at students who are working significantly below the expected level based on their KS2 starting point.

Specialist equipment – any appropriate specialist equipment may be provided for the students for example, handwriting pen, sloping writing board etc.

Assistive technology - Accessed through the relevant agency, students in school with a hearing impairment that impacts on day to day life and education have equipment such as microphones and transmitters. Students with a visual impairment may have access to an iPad, Pebble viewer, reading pen etc.

Physical environments - the school is an older building and does have some accessibility restrictions however the



school will do everything in its power to allow equal access. Accessible toilets are available across the school building. Lifts are available to allow access to each floor in new and updated areas of the school. There remains one older block where this is not possible.

Additional support available to students with special educational needs

- Provision is allocated according to need and follows the 'Assess Plan Do and Review' process laid down in the revised Code of Practice 2014.
- In-class support.
- Reading/spelling/maths/social skills intervention sessions.
- Daily small group or 1:1 reading programmes
- Specific learning difficulties intervention (individual and group).
- Handwriting interventions.
- ASD specific groups and mentoring.
- Lunchtime clubs - such as lego therapy and somatic quieting.
- After school Be Active club to encourage social interaction and exercise.
- Residential stay - specifically for students involved with the Learning Support Department.
- Well-staffed LS homework club - available Tuesdays and Thursdays after-school.
- Assistance during public exams - access arrangements/exam concessions applied for. Parents and students are made fully aware of any arrangements in place.
- Internal assessments - teaching staff have the flexibility to make arrangements as appropriate to students in their classes sitting modular tests, the Learning Support Department will help out whenever possible.
- LSA availability before school to help with difficulties and organisational skills
- Outside Agencies -the SEN team has close links with outside agencies such as the Educational Psychology Service, the authorities HINT and LINT teams including Speech-Language, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment and Autism etc.
- 1 to 1 before school (sight words, telling the time, reading , regulation, organisation, help with work).
- Mobility.

Further in school support available for improving the social and emotional development of students with special educational needs comes from:

- The pastoral team made up of Tutors, Deputy Head of House, Head of House and Assistant Head for Pastoral
- Specialist Support Assistant (Autism)
- School Counsellor
- Peer Mentors
- Sixth Form Mentors
- Education Welfare Officer
- School First Aider

Referrals can be made to these agencies as and when the need arises:

- Educational Psychology (EP)
- Children and Young People's Service (CYPS)
- Emotional Well-Being Team (EWT)
- Speech and Language Therapy Service (SALT)
- The Disabled Children Team



- High Intensity and Low Intensity Needs Team (HINT and LINT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- School Nurse Service
- Social Services

All staff have completed the schools safeguarding and child protection training. To continue professional development, teaching staff, the SENDCo, Deputy SENDCo or SEND manager and/or LSAs attend additional training depending on the subject and areas of responsibility. The SENDCo also provides training for CPD.

Arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about and involving such parents in the education of their child

Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling children and young people with SEND to achieve their potential. The school recognises that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents of children with special educational needs will be encouraged to play an active and valued role in their child's education. Parents and carers will be regularly updated on their child's progress within school, and information on their child's SEND progress. Parents and carers can request a meeting at any time and have direct access to the SEN team via telephone, email or making an appointment at reception.

Arrangements for consulting students with special educational needs about and involving them in their education

Young people with special educational needs often have a unique knowledge of their own needs. Their views about what sort of help they would like to assist them to make the most of their education will be elicited. They will be encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes and contribute to the assessment of their needs, the review and transition processes.

- Students' views are gathered for all reviews, Education Health Care Plan or otherwise.
- Students regularly work with their tutors to review progress across subject areas and to set targets.
- After every modular test there is a Review Week when students work with their subject teachers, tutors and LSAs to discuss performance and progress and to set targets.
- Students accessing intervention are routinely consulted at the start, during and at the end of intervention.

Transition Arrangements

Transition is carefully planned. In order to ensure successful transition from primary school, across the key stages and onto post 16 provision, the students and parents/carers will be fully involved in the planning for the transfer to the new setting. Key information about SEN provision will be shared with the next school /setting through the review process.

The SENDCo and/or Transition Lead visits all primary feeder schools, and where there are those with particular Special Needs, meetings can be arranged with their existing teachers and parents to facilitate a smooth transition. Additional transition visits are organised for small groups/individuals to familiarise students with the buildings, routines, school lunch hall, staff etc to help reduce anxieties. For those in Key Stage 4, visits are organised to Newcastle and Gateshead Colleges and meetings set up with a member of the Early Help Hub and/or our own school careers advisor. For those completing their studies, the Head of House/ Key Stage 4 Lead, Sixth Form Tutors and the Head of Sixth Form work closely with the SENDCo and Early Help Hub (formerly Connexions) to ensure the correct provision is made.



In the event of a complaint from parents/carers of students with special educational needs concerning provision made at school

- The first point of contact would normally be the student's Head of House or SENDCo.
- Initially an attempt will be made to resolve a complaint about SEN provision at school level. If the complaint is unresolved, then the person making the complaint is advised of their rights under section 23 of the Education reform Act to make a complaint. The governing body will consider the complaint, after which, if necessary the LA will become involved. School will inform parents/carers of the local authorities commissioned independent disagreement resolution service.
- Parents/carers can get support from Gateshead Special Educational Needs Information Advice Service

Gateshead's Local Offer

<https://gateshead-localoffer.org/>

Gateshead Special Educational Needs Information Advice Service (SENDIAS)

<https://www.barnardosendiass.org.uk/gateshead-sendiass/>