



## **Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy**

The Montessori approach understands that the development of each child is unique. Our Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy 'follows the child' (Montessori) by responding to children's different needs at all stages of their development. We aim to assist children within the nursery to achieve to the best of their ability in all areas of the curriculum and in all areas of their development, and to be inclusive.

### **Defining Special Needs**

Children have special educational needs if they have a *learning difficulty* that calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them.

Children have a *learning difficulty* if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- Have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in the nursery

Children are not 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.

'Oaklea' Montessori Nursery has regard to the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice** when carrying out its duties towards all pupils with special educational needs.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage (Revised)**

A quality early years' experience provides children with a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. Key to this is partnership with parents in enabling children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) to achieve their potential.

*The Learning & Development Requirements:*

- '...to promote the learning & development of all children in their care. (EYFS1.1)
- '(to support children in) the three prime areas: communication & language, physical development & personal social & emotional development. (EYFS 1:4)
- 'providers must also support children in four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened & applied' (EYFS 1.5)
- 'practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests & stage of development of each child in their care and must use this information to plan a challenging & enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning & development.' (EYFS 1.11)

- 'If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners must consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. They should link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.'. (EYFS 1:12)

#### *Assessment:*

- Parents &/or carers should be kept up to date with their child's progress & development. Practitioners should address any learning & development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, & any relevant professionals' (EYFS 2.3)
- 'This progress check must identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning & development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals' (EYFS 2.4)
- 'The (written) summary must highlight: areas where the child's progress is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed; & focus particularly on any areas where there is concern that a child may have developmental delay (which may indicate a special need or disability) It must describe the activities & strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns'. (EYFS 2.5)

### **Effective Practices**

#### **All Staff**

- If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners must consider whether a child may have SEND which requires additional support. They should talk with and help families to access relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs & disability is a matter for the whole staff team: manager, room leaders, SENCo & all practitioners.
- The four broad areas of SEND are:
  - Communication and interaction
  - Cognition and learning
  - Social, emotional and mental health
  - Sensory and/or physical needs

- Staff should communicate information which will secure continuity of experience for the child between rooms and between settings.
- All staff work with all children and inform 'next steps' planning through observation & assessment. The 3 I's (Intent, Implement and Impact) are used as a planning tool.
- A child's key person, through observation & assessment should refer any areas of concern to the SENCo, initially.
- The key person (with the support of the SENCo, if required) involves parents in implementing a joint learning approach at home & at 'Oaklea'.
- 'Oaklea' nursery will adopt a graduated response, recognising that there is a continuum of special educational needs. (Assess, plan, do, review).

### **SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)**

- The designated persons for Special Educational Needs and Disability are Miriam Saxon (Ramsey) – Lead, Kerry Halls (St John's), and Marie Zoulova (New Town).

The SENCo will:

- have responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the settings SEND Policy.
- co-ordinate provision for children with special educational needs and disability.
- liaise with the parents of children with special educational needs and disability, along with the child's key person
- oversee the records of all children with special educational needs and disability
- obtain parental consent to liaise with outside agencies
- be supported by their local 'Inclusion Partner'.
- liaise with external agencies, including speech & language therapy, psychology services, health & social services & voluntary bodies. Arrange Team Around the Child meetings
- set up a One Plan - to include: short-term aspirations, (3 or 4 targets); teaching strategies to be used; the provision to be put in place; when the plan is to be reviewed; outcomes to be recorded when the One Plan is reviewed; One Plan and One Page Profile to be reviewed at least once a term.

### **Parents**

- All parents of children, regardless of a child's Special Educational Needs and Disability, will be treated as partners and supported to play an active & valued role in their child's education.
- 'Oaklea' Montessori CIC recognises that parents hold key information and have knowledge & experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them.

- Parents are invited to share their knowledge & understanding of their child's natural inclinations & schemas with staff and the key person.
- When a place is offered, parents are invited to grant permission for *Oaklea Montessori* to share relevant information with relevant professionals to support their child's learning and progression.

### **Children**

- The views of the child will be sought, where possible, and the child will be encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes & contribute to the assessment of their own needs. This is often demonstrated by the child as they select their own interest based activities.
- Observations of children's natural inclinations & schemas will enable the adult to listen to the child, in order to plan & provide suitable experiences both at home and at nursery.

### **Monitoring Arrangements: Graduated Approach**

#### **Assess:**

- Initial identification of possible special educational needs and disability
- Gathering information on the child through observation and recording
- Key person consulting the child's parents for their views with the support of the SENCo, in order to analyse the child's needs.
- The triggers for intervention through *SEND support* could be the practitioner's or parent's concern about a child who despite receiving appropriate early education experiences:
  - makes little or no progress, even when teaching approaches are particularly targeted to improve the child's identified area of weakness
  - continues working at levels significantly below those expected for children of a similar age in certain areas
  - presents persistent emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the setting
  - has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of personal aids and equipment
  - has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and requires specific individual interventions in order to access learning
- Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress, with the parent's agreement, more specialist assessment may be called for from other professional agencies.

#### **Plan:**

- in consultation with the parents, and taking into account the views of the child, the outcomes they are seeking and the interventions and

support to be put into place are put into a 'One Plan', with clear achievable tasks and strategies stated, for use at Oaklea and at home

- the One Plan is regularly reviewed and discussed with parents /child, to ensure progress towards the desired outcomes

**Do:**

- the child's key person, practitioners and the SenCo are all responsible for overseeing the implementation and review of the plan.

**Review:**

- the impact of the support on the child's progress should be regularly reviewed and discussed with the parents. Changes to the agreed outcomes and provision should be agreed.
- Consideration of whether an Education and Health Care (EHC) Plan is required, will also be part of these discussions, if the need arises. This is likely to occur in the Autumn term before the child starts school.

The SENCo takes the lead responsibility for assessing a child's learning difficulty & planning, monitoring & reviewing the special educational provision, working with the key person (SEND support)

**Statutory time scale for Educational Health Care (EHC) needs assessment and EHC plan development**

- Request for assessment for a child is brought to the Local Authority's (LA's) attention. The LA decides whether to conduct an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment and notifies the parent of their decision to conduct an assessment within 6 weeks. (Yes or No).
- LA gathers information for EHC assessment and decides whether EHC plan is needed. (Yes or No). Organisations asked to submit information to support assessment, must comply within 6 weeks
  - If 'yes', the LA sends the draft plan by week 16 to the parents of the child and the parents have 15 calendar days to comment and express their opinion.
  - If 'no' the LA notifies the parents of the child, who then have a right to appeal the decision if they do not agree.
- If plan accepted by the parents, the LA must consult the governing body of the proposed educational institution before naming them in the plan. The educational institution should respond within 15 calendar days.
- Following consultation with the parents, the draft plan is amended where needed and issued.
- The maximum time for the whole process to be completed is 20 weeks
- The EHC plan must be reviewed at least every 12 months, and parents must be invited to this. (Annual Review)

## Legislation:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years: Chapter 5 Early Years Providers and Chapter 9: Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans
- Childcare Act
- EYFS (Learning and Development Requirements) Order
- EYFS (Welfare Requirements) Regulations
- The Children and Families Act: sections 29, 34, 35, 64, 66, 68, 69, 100
- Education Act. (Legal test for an EHC Plan remains the same as for the old 'Statement of Special Educational Needs')
- Equality Act
- Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage (2021).

## Useful websites:

- Essex Local Offer: [www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk)
- Oaklea Montessori CIC Local Offer [www.oakleamontessori.co.uk](http://www.oakleamontessori.co.uk)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Support Services: <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendias>
- Talk Listen Cuddle: <https://www.tlc-essex.info/>
- ICAN – Help children communicate: <https://ican.org.uk/>
- Essex Family Wellbeing Hub: <https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/>
- Makaton: <https://www.makaton.org/>