

ADMISSIONS GUIDANCE FOR PETERBOROUGH SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Introduction

1. This guidance has been developed by the Local Authority in partnership with special school head teachers. The guidance does not represent a blanket policy; it is a framework and basis for considering whether the special educational needs of an individual child or young person can be appropriately met in a particular special school. A principle of the guidance is that every case and request should be considered on individual merit and this guidance must not fetter discretion in terms of decision making.
2. The guidance will be used by the Local Authority's provision panel, when it has been agreed by key stakeholders, as a working document for the remainder of the 2015-16 academic year. It will be reviewed and revised where necessary during that period, with a view to finalising the guidance for the 2016-17 academic year.
3. Current DfE Annual School Census pupil categories will be used in this guidance to distinguish between types of need.

Placement of Children and Young People

4. Children and young people placed in special schools of whatever type are likely to have a significant and interrelated combination of needs. Peterborough special schools provide appropriate placements for children and young people with the most significant needs, who require a curriculum which is wrapped around them so that they can engage in learning. To achieve this engagement in learning, smaller class sizes and high levels of staffing and expertise throughout the school are often required.
5. At the margins there are overlaps between some Peterborough special schools, which can be seen in the descriptors for each school which follow. This overlap acknowledges the right of parents to express a choice for a type of school (including a mainstream school). Peterborough recognises the 'presumption' of mainstream outlined in the Code of Practice. However, for some children and young people the combination of their needs and current context suggests the appropriateness of a special school placement. In some cases this may be for a period of time or as a flexible joint placement arrangement. The panel will determine when a joint placement is appropriate and which school is the lead school, on whose roll the pupil will be placed. This
6. Where there is post-16 provision, the expectation is that the young person will continue on the role of the special school. For some pupils, there may be

appropriately bespoke programmes, involving attendance at another institution, as part of their transition from school into adulthood.

Placement Process

7. The Local Authority is responsible for the decision to place a child or young person in a special school. A provision panel with multi-professional membership considers individual children or young people with a statement or Education Health and Care Plan where a special school placement is requested and advises the Local Authority, as suggested by the 2014 SEND Code of Practice.
8. Full details about the operation of the provision panels are available in a separate 'Terms of reference' document (October 2015 (draft)). Children and young people will only be admitted to special schools if they have a statement or EHCP, or in exceptional cases as identified by the Code of Practice.

Review of Special School Placements

9. The annual review is the common way in which parents, schools and Local Authority can together review an individual child or young person's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in his or her plan or statement (see purpose of the annual review as set out in the Code of Practice). As part of the annual review the details of the child or young person's current placement will be discussed and parents may wish to discuss the appropriateness of placement in a specialist provision.
10. For some children and young people following their annual review, a move to a different special school or to a mainstream school will be appropriate. Where the rate of progress is significantly greater than peers, then particular attention will be paid to the appropriateness of the placement at the next annual review meeting.
11. For other children and young people, it is appropriate for them to continue their education in the same special school. On occasions, individual programmes may involve time spent in another type of special school or a mainstream school. In these circumstances a dual placement can be established in the best interests of the child or young person and where both settings agree. If this kind of arrangement is sought, it must be agreed by the Local Authority and a lead school must be established.
12. It is important to note that consideration by the Local Authority of requests for specialist provision can only be made following informed expression of parental preference. Schools/ settings may wish to contact their named SEN Officer for advice if they anticipate that a change of placement may be considered at the annual review.

Exit Guidance

13. Children and young people who are successful in a specialist setting may return to a mainstream setting at any time, following appropriate review of their statement of

SEN. However it is especially important to consider mainstream options at times of transition, e.g. transfer between primary and secondary phases.

14. The key to a successful placement back in mainstream is that it meets the hopes and aspirations of the child or young person and that all parties are committed to making the mainstream placement work. Dual placements or structured trials in mainstream schools are one way of testing out the potential of children and young people to operate successfully in that environment. Children and young people will be able to leave a special school placement when they are securely able to:

- Make positive choices more frequently.
- Operate in various social contexts.
- Cope with different situations and make independent transition successfully (e.g. from smaller to larger groups).
- Overcome resistance to and fear of learning.
- Maintain workable relationships with adults.

15. Following an annual review, the panel could be asked to consider movement to another Peterborough special school or, in exceptional cases, to an out of city special school placement. If a child or young person is out of school, or at risk of being so, then the pupil referral unit service would be involved, as with a mainstream school placement.

Using this Guidance

16. There is a separate section for each special school in this document. Levels and descriptors used in the following sections for each school are provided as **guidance** for making the decision about whether a child or young person would be appropriately placed in that special school. Reference is made to national curriculum levels, percentile assessments and other measures which might be available for a pupil, but one or more of these will not always be present in the documentation.

17. National curriculum levels will not be used nationally from 2016-17 academic year. References to the national 'beyond levels' framework being introduced, and stage equivalents, will be added to the document where appropriate. It is likely that more detail will be available for the summer term 2016 review of this document when more is known about national and local Peterborough arrangements.

18. Levels obtained where children and young people have been supported, in line with the testing support arrangements published each year, can be used appropriately to assess a child or young person's potential and curriculum entitlement. Whilst every attempt must be made to present a full picture, it is not expected that these should be the only measures. Where evidence is incomplete or contradictory, further information or scrutiny may be requested by the panel before a decision is made.

19. Key information about day-to-day functioning will also be available in behaviour logs. There could also reports for the panel to consider from the virtual school which in

Peterborough oversees the education of children looked after, the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and youth offending team (YOT).

Peterborough Special Schools

- A. Marshfields
- B. Heltwate
- C. Phoenix
- D. City of Peterborough Academy Special School (CoPASS)
- E. NeneGate

A. Marshfields School

DFE age range	11-19	DFE designation	MLD
Funded places 2015-16	189	Type of need	MLD

Children and young people will be attaining at a low academic level, either because of a global learning difficulty or because of the impact of specific conditions (e.g. autism or a speech and language disorder) on their functioning. The impact on functioning could be in terms of academic and/or social communication and interaction or behaviour.

Children and young people placed in this type of school will therefore have a primary need in the areas of moderate learning difficulties (MLD). There will usually be associated secondary needs, such as behavioural and emotional or physical and sensory difficulties including autism and/or communication difficulties.

The following sections give a **guide** to the typical level of functioning which would make a child or young person suitable for placement at Marshfields.

Please note that National Curriculum levels for children and young people being placed at secondary transfer refer to teacher assessments in Yr5 because these will feature in the annual review report used to inform the decision about secondary transfer placement. It is expected that some children and young people will be attaining higher levels by the time of secondary transfer.

Typical levels of functioning:

- Overall cognitive profile at or below 2nd percentile.
- National Curriculum attainment levels **predominantly** in the range P7 to L1 as recorded in the Yr5 annual review documentation (with the majority of children and young people attaining between Levels P8 and L2 as they move through school).

Children and young people may also exhibit one or more of the additional secondary needs listed below. This is not intended as an exhaustive list but as a general indicator of the usual profile of need.

- Diagnosis of autism or multidisciplinary assessment of characteristics universally accepted as falling within the autism spectrum.

- Evidence of significant and prolonged difficulties in social communication and interaction.
- Expressive and/or receptive language at or below 2nd percentile (a speech and language disorder).
- Medical issues that may require daily supervision and potential intervention.
- Many children and young people will demonstrate a combination of the secondary areas of need above. Some will also have additional needs, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia or Dyspraxia.

Children and young people will require a differentiated and often personalised curriculum to meet their profile of need. Children and young people will have access to a range of accreditation appropriate to their ability and the progress they have made in the school.

B. Heltwate School

DFE age range	4-18	DFE designation	MLD, SLD
Funded places 2015-16	161	Type of need	SLD, autism

Children and young people will be operating in the SLD cognitive range, as described below, and their ability to make progress will be limited across all areas of development. They may have a life-long learning disability which requires a multi-disciplinary service response.

Children and young people will have significant impairments which may include some or all of the following:

- Severe learning difficulties
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- Significant difficulties with communication (expressive and/or receptive language)
- Sensory impairment.

This may manifest itself in some or all of the following:

- Difficulties with appropriate social interaction and understanding
- Associated challenging behaviour
- Limited self-help skills and awareness of danger
- Reliant on adults for activities, and travel dependent.

Associated secondary needs may include:

- Related physical difficulties
- Related medical difficulties
- Fine and gross motor difficulties
- Hearing or visual impairment
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Sensory integration difficulties.

Where there has been standardised testing of cognitive functioning, children and young people will be assessed as being at or below the 1st percentile. For primary-age children, National Curriculum attainment levels will predominantly be in the range P5 to P8 (principally in PSHE, English and Maths). For secondary-age young people up to the end of year 11,

National Curriculum attainment levels will predominantly be in the range P6 to L1 (principally in PSHE, English and Maths).

Pre-school age children will be functioning at significantly below their chronological age, i.e. below half their chronological age in most areas of development. They may have an inconsistent development profile.

Children and young people will require a differentiated and personalised curriculum to meet their significant profile of need. The opportunities for independent learning and activities may be limited.

C. Phoenix School

DFE age range	2-19	DFE designation	SLD, PMLD
Funded places 2015-16	152	Type of need	SLD, PMLD, autism + SLD

Children and young people will be operating in the SLD cognitive range as described below, and their ability to make progress will be limited across all areas of development. They will typically have a life-long learning disability which may require a multi-disciplinary service response.

Children and young people will have significant and multiple impairments which may include some or all of the following:

- Severe learning difficulties.
- Profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Autistic spectrum disorders.
- Significant difficulties with communication (expressive and/or receptive language).
- Sensory impairment.

This may manifest itself in some or all of the following:

- Considerable difficulties with appropriate social interaction and understanding.
- Associated challenging behaviour.
- Limited self-help skills and awareness of danger.
- Predominantly dependent on adults for personal care skills.
- Reliant on adults for activities, and travel dependent.

Associated secondary needs may include:

- Related physical difficulties including those with significant and severe needs.
- Related medical difficulties including those with life-limiting conditions.
- Fine and gross motor difficulties.
- Multi-sensory impairment.
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Sensory integration difficulties.

Where there has been standardised testing of cognitive functioning, children and young people will be assessed as being at or below the 1st percentile. For primary-age children,

National Curriculum attainment levels will predominantly be in the range P1 to P5 (principally in PSHE, English and Maths). For secondary-age young people, National Curriculum attainment levels will predominantly be in the range P1 to P7 (principally in PSHE, English and Maths). Pupils with PMLD are likely to be working within the range P1-P3 throughout their school career.

Pre-school age children will be functioning at significantly below their chronological age, i.e. below half their chronological age in most areas of development. They may have an inconsistent development profile.

Children and young people will require a highly differentiated and personalised curriculum to meet their significant profile of need. The opportunities for independent learning and activities will be limited.

They may have an impairment caused by injury, illness, a congenital condition or genetic disorder that causes a loss of or difference in physiological or psychological function. They may have little control over their physical functioning or an additional neurological impairment such as epilepsy, and their impairment may have a profound effect upon their ability to access learning and on their attainment and achievement at school.

Some children and young people may require the use of alternative or augmentative approaches and aids to support their communication. Some children and young people may have difficulties with swallowing, feeding and drinking, and may require a gastrostomy tube to enable their nutritional needs to be met. They may also have significant health needs which require regular or continuous medical intervention.

Children and young people may require a wide variety of specialist equipment in order to access learning and to support the development of their learning and of their physical and communication skills.

D. City of Peterborough Academy Special School (CoPASS), a free school

DFE age range	4-18	DFE designation	ASD
Funded places 2015-16	81	Type of need	Autism

Children and young people will display characteristics of autism which evidence (based upon assess/ plan/ do/ review) indicates has significantly impeded effective learning over a period of time.

Autism will be the main presenting need but children and young people may also present with other associated or secondary learning needs. They may also have minor physical needs and/or mental health difficulties.

Characteristics should include:

- Significant and prolonged difficulties in social interaction and limited interpretation of social cues.
- Regular rigidity of thinking and behaviour.

- Extreme lack of tolerance to changes in routine and structure.
- Preoccupation with solitary play which prevents engagement with others.
- Unusually focussed special interests which may become obsessional.
- High level of difficulty in following instructions and maintaining attention to tasks.
- Atypical sensory profile.
- Extreme reliance on adult support to structure activities in order to engage successfully in normal classroom and group activities.
- A variable and inconsistent cognitive profile.
- Clear evidence that autism has impacted upon attainment over a period of time.

Evidence over time indicates that children or young people require specialist support and the availability of a specialist facility over and above that normally available in a mainstream school without an autism spectrum resource.

The child and young person's cognitive ability will be within the mainstream range (e.g. above the 2nd centile in overall tests of cognitive ability). The profile will often be described as 'high-functioning autism'. The child or young person will have the potential to work towards age-related national benchmarks and expectations.

The implications of ASC may include:

- Finding social interaction confusing or threatening and thus causing a tendency to withdraw from social encounters.
- Failure to appreciate the purpose of language and communication and an innate inability to express wants and needs to others either verbally or by gesture.
- Inability to understand gestures, facial expression, social signalling through eye-pointing, body postures and communicative distances thus severely limiting the understanding of others' intentions and feelings.
- Problems in sharing joint attention with others and an associated problem in understanding shared and separate perspectives on the world.
- Lack of incidental or spontaneous learning and an associated difficulty in applying previously learned skills in novel situations, different location or without the presence of known adult or familiar cues.
- Inflexible patterns of behaviour and an over reliance on regular routines which if interrupted may result in confusion or distress.
- Limited or no control over channelling of attention which may be either totally unfocussed resulting in an inability to filter out redundant information or alternatively so tightly locked to a task or sensation that all other stimulus is blocked out.
- Problems with sensory modulation giving rise to adverse reaction in the presence of certain sounds, sights (colours, space, movement in visual field) and touches.

E. NeneGate School

DFE age range	10-16	DFE designation	SEMH
Funded places 2015-16	54	Type of need	Social, emotional and mental health

Children and young people placed at NeneGate will primarily have behaviour difficulties caused by disrupted/ unusual emotional or social development. They will exhibit a range of anti-social behaviours which, through their nature, persistence, severity and abnormality, have a cumulative negative effect upon their emotional well-being. The

impact of those behaviours will have had a severe and measurable effect upon a child and young person's learning. There will be evidence that sustained interventions from specialised agencies will have been unable to bring about a positive change (assess/ plan/ do/ review).

Children and young people's ability range will be wide, as will their functioning range, covering a cognitive span from low ability to gifted and talented. Many children and young people will have conduct disorder, specific mental health issues or associated secondary needs. Some will have diagnosed conditions that relate to their difficulties like ADHD.

Children and young people may have experienced significant social issues; for example, disrupted home and personal life is a significant contributory factor in many cases, with adult responses reinforcing inappropriate behaviours. Poor behaviour may be a result of abuse, neglect or psychological trauma. Many children and young people may be known to the social care services and / or CAMHS. Children and young people may also demonstrate a sudden and catastrophic deterioration in behaviour that does not respond to appropriate specialist intervention.

Children and young people with a diagnosis of ASD who require this provision are unlikely to have autism as their main presenting need, but this additional or associated need will mean that their combination of difficulties presents as a complex profile of overlapping, co-morbid needs.

Children and young people's difficulties are likely to be an amalgamation of the three broad categories: social, emotional and mental health. Children and young people may exhibit behaviours in one or more of the three categories. There is no particular number of indicators which mean this provision is required if met: some children and young people may exhibit just a few to a very significant and severe extent, whilst others will meet a large number with varying intensity. In all cases there will be a pronounced and measurable impact upon children and young people's learning and attainment, with children and young people achieving considerably below their potential in most areas of the curriculum.

Indicators of need will include some of the following:

- Routinely anti-social and unco-operative.
- Long-standing indifferent or erratic response to discipline.
- Significantly delayed / immature social skills.
- Long-standing inability to form relationships (peer/peer and/or peer/adult).
- Very poor social communication skills, including social use of language and the conventions of social behaviour.
- Entrenched lack of social conscience or a sense of inner justice.
- Persistent lack of basic hygiene and/or sense of personal safety.
- Persistent low self-esteem and poor self-image.
- Extreme lack of empathy and respect for the needs and rights, feelings and emotions of others, including inappropriate emotional responses and actions in a given situation.
- Regular self-harming and/or obsessional behaviour, including eating disorders or difficulties.

- Severe depression and/or suicidal attitudes.
- Extremes of emotions or withdrawal behaviour.
- Entrenched inability to trust others and/or lack of resilience.

These needs will present as challenging behaviour in some of the ways outlined below:

- Persistent challenging of authority.
- Regular and sustained aggression or threat of aggression towards others, including violence and assault.
- Expressed desire to harm others for reasons of self-esteem and/or status, including through psychological intimidation or bullying behaviour.
- Behaviours which seek to exploit weaknesses in others and to control situations, including regular use of targeted and abusive language.
- Persistent inability to manage own anger.
- Active and sustained resistance to new ideas and concepts.
- Severe and regular damage to property.
- Refusal to engage with learning.
- Non-compliance with requests, rules and routines.
- Extreme hyperactivity and inability to concentrate.
- Long-standing difficulties in collaborative and independent working.
- Highly inappropriate sexualised behaviour, including a preoccupation with sexualised matters and language.