

St Mary's School and College, Bexhill - SEN Information Report

1. What types of Special Educational Needs do you cater for and how is support provided?

St Mary's School and College, Bexhill is a residential, non-maintained, special school and college for pupils and students with SEN. Many of our pupils and students have speech, language and communication difficulties. Some also have moderate learning difficulties. A large number of our pupils and students are autistic or have associated speech, language and interaction difficulties, which impact on their learning. Some of our pupils and students have more severe learning difficulties and others may have associated social, emotional or mental health needs. Often our pupils and students experience a number of different difficulties, which means that their needs are described as complex.

Pupils and students on roll at St Mary's School and College, Bexhill have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) describing their individual needs. The plan is used to help identify appropriate support to meet their needs. The plan is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to reflect the pupils'/students' needs and to support their progress at school. This means the pupil/student and his or her parents/carers are fully involved in decisions about their education. Children who do not have statements or EHCPs are not usually eligible for placement at St Mary's School and College, Bexhill.

All pupils and students have an individualised communication passport, care plan, therapy goals, and if the pupil/student is residential, living skills goals. Additionally, some pupils and students also have sensory diet programmes, meal time information sheets and health care plans. These documents collectively describe the ways in which a pupil/student is supported to meet their needs and their targets for the term. Therapy goals are reviewed three times a year, and reported at the pupil's/students' annual review. All documentation is created and reviewed in collaboration with the pupil/student, parents/carers and relevant external professionals.

Although individual plans are reviewed regularly throughout the school year, parents and carers can contact the school at any point to discuss the support their child receives. There are also two formal opportunities during the year to discuss progress and development with the class teacher and therapy staff. In addition to this, a third formal meeting happens where parents and carers can discuss their child's progress at their child's annual review. We understand that pupils' and students' needs can change for many different reasons and individual plans can be updated throughout the year, following review. Support and intervention is provided by a team of trained teachers, teaching assistants, therapists, therapy assistants and for residential pupils, residential staff. The range and level of support needed by a pupil/student will vary according to their identified needs. Therefore, support is targeted for specific individuals or groups and reviewed using the monitoring systems of the school and college.

2. How do school staff support learning and how is the curriculum matched to individual needs?

Pupils and students at St Mary's School and College, Bexhill have access to an engaging, challenging, broad and relevant curriculum which is based on the National Curriculum. Work is differentiated to meet each pupils'/students' needs and learning is enriched through use of school resources, including the extensive facilities on site, use of IT and visits within the local area. Lessons are planned to include frequent opportunities to learn and practise functional skills. Our therapists support pupils and students in class and individually or in small groups. Regular assessments ensure that lessons both build on what pupils and students can do and further develop their learning. The school and college are well resourced in IT and other specialist equipment including, for example, height adjustable desks and specialist seating to support access to learning across the curriculum.

Teachers are supported by a team of teaching assistants and they work in partnership with our team of therapists and therapy assistants and for residential pupils and students, our residential staff. In some cases, a teaching assistant, teacher, therapist or class group will be identified in order to provide specific individual or small group support or intervention. In many cases we would plan to deliver additional support in class, thereby minimising the need for pupils and students to come out of a lesson to receive support. Where it is appropriate to do this, we aim to avoid core learning time for withdrawal. The form tutor/therapist will discuss the additional intervention with parents and carers at consultations, annual review, or when therapy goals are reviewed. Intervention may also be provided when there is a significant change in the pupils'/students' circumstances, or if the pupil/student is not making sufficient progress in an identified area.

The progress, personal development and well-being of all pupils and students is regularly monitored. Pupils and students are set appropriate short-term and long-term targets in all curriculum areas and therapy provision, where applicable. Our school has effective systems in place to monitor progress of individuals and groups.

The governors of St Mary's School and College, Bexhill are regularly kept up to date with the school's and college's systems for monitoring progress, personal development and well-being and they are informed of current levels of pupil and student progress and attainment. The governors make visits to the school and college to see these systems in action and to help monitor the priorities for St Mary's School and College, Bexhill.

The school curriculum and schemes of work are differentiated to meet the needs of pupils working from P-Scales to National Curriculum expectations for Year 6 and beyond (P-Scales and Pre Key Stage standards are used where children are functioning below the level of the National Curriculum). Most pupils and students in our secondary and college provisions learn within this broad range, but if a pupil or student has a particular strength or areas where they are functioning at Key stage 3 or 4 levels, we will differentiate and adapt their programme according to their needs.

There is a personalised approach to learning throughout St Mary's School and College, Bexhill which supports all pupils and students to learn and be included at their own level. When approaching Key Stages 4 and 5, personalised options for qualifications and accreditations are made available that suit the needs and interests of pupils who will be thinking about choices of college and / or future training or employment opportunities; or next steps towards adulthood and life beyond St Mary's School and College, Bexhill.

3. How will I know how my child/young person is doing and how I can support their learning myself?

School and college staff work together with Parents and carers to ensure all parties have good information and the pupil's/student's needs are consistently met. In addition to the information provided earlier in this document, pupils' and students' progress and well-being are regularly tracked throughout the year at our multiagency progress meetings, this is to ensure any necessary support is timely and effective. Pupils and students have a home/school book, which is completed at least weekly. Parents and carers can arrange to speak to a teacher or therapist and their residential keyworker, if this is applicable.

Formal parent and carer consultations take place twice a year and a review of the EHCP occurs annually. These meetings give an opportunity for school and college staff and parents and carers to discuss the needs of their child and work together to ensure these needs are consistently met in all settings. The school and college are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure pupils and students reach their full potential. At annual review meetings, which are scheduled throughout the school year, parents and carers receive a summary of progress in all areas. Annual review reports include information

about progress against targets set and information about what the pupil/student needs to do next, in order to continue improving.

At the end of the year, all Parents and carers receive an annual report, which describes progress in all areas of learning and personal development.

Our staff provide support to parents and carers who want to aid their child's learning and development. This can include regular signing classes to support language development and communication, the provision of advice and support and sometimes resources to use at home and the opportunity to talk regularly with the key members of staff involved in supporting their child's learning and development. A number of resources are provided through our school website.

Parents and carers are supported to help their child learn at home through the setting of homework and access to a range of online programmes used in school and college. Regular newsletters provide parents and carers with information and photographs about school events and new initiatives.

4. What support can be provided for my child/young person to help with social communication, behaviour, health and personal development?

Small class groups and high staff to pupil/student ratio at St Mary's School and College, Bexhill ensure all pupils and students are well known to the adults supporting them. Pupils and students are well supported to develop effective and positive relationships with their peers and the staff, as well as our teachers and therapy staff, child and family intervention lead and Psychologist, who are very experienced and knowledgeable.

Break times and lunch times are structured to enable pupils and students to be supported in developing independent social and play skills and self-help skills. Lunchtimes also promote independence in eating and drinking as well as in social interaction. The residential houses also promote independence and personal development in a caring and supportive environment.

Pupils and students with medical needs are supported by trained staff. All staff receive training in working with pupils and students with a range of SEN. All staff are trained to meet the needs of pupils and students with speech, language and communication difficulties, autism and associated communication and learning difficulties.

There are high expectations that pupils and students will behave well towards each other and follow the school and college rules. A highly motivating reward system enables pupils and students to see that their hard work and good behaviour is recognised and appreciated, whatever their individual starting point. Support and consequences are in place for pupils and students who do not follow the rules and support for some is identified through an Emotional and Behaviour Support Plan (EBSP). In addition to the school and college rewards and consequences systems, some pupils and students may require individualised support and resources to manage their behaviours. The EBSP describes the specific triggers, approaches and strategies to support the pupil/student.

All staff are trained to manage behaviour that challenges and any incidents of such behaviour are reported and monitored by the senior leadership team.

The school and college are committed to ensuring a high level of pupil and student attendance, with attendance rewards given twice a year. Attendance is monitored termly and low attendance is analysed and, where appropriate, is supported, challenged and addressed. Support is provided to both parents and carers and pupils/students where appropriate. Holidays are not authorised during term time due to the impact this has on pupils' and students' learning.

A School Council meets every term and provides all pupils and students with a voice. Each residential house has termly meetings and an independent advocate, which visits termly. Pupils and students contribute towards their annual review and may attend in person where appropriate. PSHE lessons cover a range of topics and encourage pupils and students to discuss issues affecting them.

If a pupil or student is absent for a period due to illness, then depending on the circumstances, we will liaise with their family and plan to support their learning when they are able to.

5. Are school staff trained and do any specialist services / advisors help support with pupil and student learning or development?

The staff working within St Mary's School and College, Bexhill are themselves trained and/or experienced in supporting a wide range of SEND and especially so in the areas of speech, language and communication, autism and associated communication and interaction difficulties. Training is ongoing and ensures staff have the skills to meet the needs of all pupils and students. It includes training for improving teaching, effectiveness of learning support, autism and SEN, managing challenging behaviour, child protection etc.

Below is non-exhaustive list:

- Most staff are trained in working with pupils and students with ASD.
- Staff regularly renew training in behaviour management and there is a rolling programme for all staff in positive handling.
- All class based and residential support staff and some teachers are trained in first aid.
- All new teachers engage in a teacher induction programme.
- All staff have had training in Assessment for Learning and Support for Learning.
- Teaching Assistants receive training and support in effective Support for Learning.
- Most staff who teach in Key Stage 4 have attended exam provider courses.
- All staff have undertaken Prevent training.
- All staff receive regular child protection training, this includes e-safety training.
- All child-facing staff are trained in the administration of emergency medication and many in the safe storage and administration of regular medication
- All child-facing staff are trained in food hygiene
- Some staff have received PECS training (Picture Exchange Communication System) as appropriate
- All staff are trained in Signed Support English (SSE)

St Mary's School and College, Bexhill employs a School Nurse who is able to provide support, advice and guidance on all medical and health related matters.

6. Will my child/young person be able to participate in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

St Mary's School and College, Bexhill is committed to offering a wide range of activities and visits to stimulate and enrich learning. Our vision is centred on the promotion of independence and participation in the wider community; we aim to prepare all pupils and students to be ready for life beyond St Mary's School and College, Bexhill. All classes have regular opportunities to participate in learning outside the classroom and outside school and college. Parents and carers are asked to contribute towards the costs of some trips and activities, which are subsidised by the school and college, wherever possible. Teachers plan visits and activities that are challenging and appropriate for the pupils and students in their class. Parents and carers are informed about forthcoming trips and activities and are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have about their child's participation.

Residential visits are planned for older pupils and students and we are exploring how this offer could be extended across the school.

Residential pupils join local clubs and organisations and compete in various sporting activities locally, nationally and internationally

7. How accessible is the school and college?

St Mary's School and College, Bexhill has a large site, but has been adapted to take account of accessibility requirements. Buildings are wheelchair accessible and where there are more than single storey buildings, lifts are available.

All areas of the school and college are well maintained, well-lit and free from damage or clutter, making the environment comfortable to be in and predictable and safe for those with disability, SEN including ASD.

8. How do the school and college manage transitions either to new classes, or to a new setting / school / college or the next stage of education and life?

We recognize that any transitions, including starting a new school, a new key stage, a new class or a new provision, can often be very challenging for our pupils and students and sometimes also for their families. By listening to the parents/carers and their child together, we are able to provide the support needed to move to the next stage of their lives with the confidence that they are ready and equipped. We plan transitions carefully so that our pupils and students are as well-equipped and supported as possible for their next steps in education, training, employment, independence or onward placement. Transitions are planned on an individual basis to support each pupil/student and their family. Examples of our transition support include:

- Individual, planned, transition plans for pupils and students joining or leaving St Mary's School and College, Bexhill
- Our curriculum and support is designed to reflect the changes from primary school to secondary school and then to college.
- Pupils transitioning within school and between school and college participate in both planned taster visits and a full transition week, which includes opportunities to get to know the staff who will be working with them, experience their new timetables and any rooms or areas within the school or college that they are not yet familiar with, as well as take part in focused transition activities.
- Transition meetings and career support helps parents/carers and pupils/students to plan their destinations post St Mary's School and College, Bexhill. Many of our pupils and students go to further their education elsewhere and some move into residential environments with differing levels of support.

9. How does the school decide what type and how much support my child/young person will receive?

Support and intervention including therapeutic input is delivered in line with the provision detailed within the pupils'/students' EHCP.

Following entry into the school, a further baseline assessment is made and targets are identified including, where appropriate, residential goals. Parents and carers are involved in this process by sharing information with the school about their child's needs and agreeing to attend all parent/carer evenings and annual review meetings. Regular opportunities are planned for parents, carers and teachers and therapists to meet to discuss needs and progress.

Each pupil's and student's needs are assessed and progress is monitored. This is done through regular reviews of the effectiveness of the support provided through teacher assessments of progress in all curriculum areas and relevant therapy assessments. Each pupil's and student's progress is reviewed up to 3 times annually in our multi agency pupil/student progress meetings. Additional support will be identified and put in place when a need arises. Progress is tracked throughout the year and any lack of progress is reviewed. Additional support may be put in place, should this be necessary.

10. How can I get further information / What is the admissions process?

Any parent or carer wishing to explore the possibility of a place at the St Mary's School and College, Bexhill is welcome to arrange to visit by contacting the school or college and booking a meeting. Should a request for a placement be made, parents / carers will be invited to meet with the senior member of staff responsible for admissions to discuss the potential placement and the support the pupil/student may require. Parents/carers should also contact the SEN team at their Local Authority.

Further information can be found on our comprehensive school website, which includes key information, the school prospectus and key policies.

What to expect on a visit.

Parents / carers may decide to bring their child along on an initial visit. They will be met by the SENCO and Admissions Lead, who is a senior member of staff and who will accompany parents / carers during their visit. During the visit, parents / carers will have the opportunity to talk to a variety of staff and to see first-hand what the school and college can offer. Every visit will be different, depending on the individual circumstances.

What next?

After the visit, if it is appropriate, the Admissions Lead will discuss and arrange an assessment visit for the child. The arrangements for this type of visit will vary, depending on individual circumstances and taking into account information provided by both parents / carers and (where appropriate) the relevant Local Authority.

The Assessment Visit

The child will be placed in the most appropriate class and, if required as part of the assessment, a residential setting. During the day the child will follow the timetable for their identified group and attend all lessons. Their presentation will help inform everyone in their decision making. The school will be making assessments and gathering information to inform their decision in relation to how appropriate a placement at St Mary's School and College, Bexhill would be.

A decision based on the child's EHCP and any supporting reports, as well as the assessment visit will be made by the senior leadership team as to whether they think that St Mary's School and College, Bexhill can meet the needs of the child.

This decision is communicated to the parents/carers and where appropriate, the relevant Local Authority.

If the parents/carers wish to put forward St Mary's School and College, Bexhill as a placement, the Local Authority will need to make a decision as to whether they feel that the school is an appropriate placement. We are happy to offer information, advice and guidance to parents and carers throughout the process.