

## SEN INFORMATION REPORT

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## SEN Information Report

Great Torrington School is a mainstream school fully committed to becoming a truly learning-centred environment. We strive to nurture the individual talents of all our learners and prepare them for the challenges of our changing world.

Our vision focuses on three key words – dream, believe, achieve. Everyone should have their own dreams. They should believe in them self and be assured that others believe in them too and strive in a safe, secure environment to achieve all the qualifications and personal qualities they will need to fulfil their true potential.

In an environment of diminishing budgets and reduced resources we strive to be innovative in our approach, flexible in meeting the varied needs of all our learners and committed to working closely with parents, carers and the wider community. In particular, it is important to us to ensure that:

- All our students have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and are an integral part of the whole school community; we are an inclusive school
- All teaching is of the highest quality so that all our students are enabled to reach their full potential
- The needs of each individual are recognised and supported in a wide variety of ways to build confidence and self-esteem.
- Students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) are identified as early as possible and parents and carers are kept fully involved in that process
- All available resources are deployed to meet the specific needs of students with SEND.
- Close links are established with outside agencies to support all aspects of learning and care
- Our staff receive outstanding CPD which focuses on quality first teaching to address all our learners' individual needs.

## What are the kinds of SEN for which the school makes provision?

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2014 outlines 4 types of need:

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1. Communication and interaction
2. Cognition and learning
3. Social, emotional and mental health
4. Sensory and/or physical needs

If a student has SEND, their needs will fit into one or more of these categories.

## How does the school know if students need additional support with their learning?

Regular assessment helps us to identify pupils who are making less than expected progress for their age and circumstances. This may happen for many reasons, for example:

- Their progress is significantly slower than that of their peers from the same starting point
- They are unable to match their earlier rate of progress
- Their progress shows that the attainment gap between the student and their peers is widening.

Students do not always make progress in a steady pattern, so we look closely at other kinds of evidence too. This may involve:

- Liaison with their previous primary or secondary school
- Responding to concerns raised by parents or carers
- Acting on teacher concerns
- Liaison with outside agencies supporting an individual e.g. physicians, counsellors, educational psychologist.

## What should I do if I think my child has special educational needs?

Your first point of contact with the school will always be your child's tutor with whom you should be able to discuss your concerns. Should you need to speak to other members of staff, such as subject teachers, Head of House or the INCo (Individual Needs Co-ordinator, Mrs Helen Whiterod), the tutor will help you to arrange this.

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## How will the school support my child's learning?

Our first response to supporting pupils who are not making progress as we would have hoped is to ensure that high quality, differentiated teaching targets specific identified weaknesses. Subject teachers are responsible for the progress and development of students in their classes. They are trained to teach students with additional learning needs and are responsible for making the curriculum accessible to all. However, if the student continues to struggle, further assessments to ascertain whether the student has SEN will follow, following the 'Graduated Response' process of Assess, Plan, Do, Review.

The INCo is responsible for ensuring that:

- Teachers are fully informed to understand a student's specific needs and are trained to meet them, and regularly updated.
- Teachers are supported in planning to meet these needs through liaison with the Individual Needs team.
- The quality of the teaching of students with SEND and provision across the whole school is effectively managed

Additional support and interventions can take many forms and can be provided for the individual or for small groups of students according to need. It might include:

- Differentiation of work in the classroom
- Literacy support either 1:1 during daily 'Drop Everything and Read' time; paired reading at Morning Reading Club or through identified small group work following the 'Read Write Fresh Start' programme
- Timetabled lessons in literacy or numeracy
- 1:1 social skills intervention
- Personalised curriculum whereby a student may be referred to the schools 'Hardy Centre' to support their learning.
- Allocating a learning support assistant (LSA) to work within a classroom
- Involvement of outside agencies to support learning e.g. hearing impaired advisory teacher, autistic spectrum outreach service, counsellor, Educational Psychologist
- After school additional provision through the Learning Hub. Pupils will access support with homework; and reading.

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## How are the school governors involved and what are their responsibilities?

The governing body of the school have a duty to make sure that the school meets the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 2014. One of the governors is designated SEN Governor and acts as link between the school and the governing body.

## How will I know what help is being provided for my child?

Each year there is an opportunity for parents and carers to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. However, you can contact your child's tutor at any time if you have concerns.

When students are placed in intervention groups parents/ carers will be informed within the graduated response process; likewise when sufficient progress has been made. Letters, phone calls, congratulations cards and e mails are used regularly to keep parents and carers informed of progress.

## How will you help me to support my child's learning?

We believe that a positive working relationship between school and parents/carers is essential to a positive learning experience; we welcome regular contact with parents/carers.

Our open door approach means that parents and carers can make an appointment at any time to meet with a subject teacher, tutor or other teacher to discuss their child's progress. Contact can be made through the school office (01805 623531).

At specific times in the school year, reports are sent home to parents and carers and they are also invited into school to meet with their child's teachers. Together, we hope to provide a two-way process of information and support.

At important times in your child's education such transition from year 6 to year 7; the choice of options for KS 4 and post 16 transition, a programme of meetings and consultations is organised to which you are warmly invited.

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If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a statement of educational need there is a legal requirement to hold an annual review which will be organised by the INCo. All those involved in the education and care of your child – teachers, outside agencies and of course yourself – will be invited to attend.

## How will I know how well my child is doing?

All teachers, as part of their professional standards, monitor and review students' progress throughout the school year. At Great Torrington School, this is done in many ways including:

- Data collection from subject teachers to show how well individual students are making progress towards their end of year or GCSE targets. This rigorous system enables teachers to track progress very closely and arrange intervention programmes when necessary.
- Our school offers a variety of intervention programmes which are monitored by Heads of Department, Heads of Learning and/or INCo. Progress is regularly assessed to inform next step planning.
- INCo and Heads of Department meet regularly with the team of learning support assistants (LSAs) to discuss individual student progress, review strategies already employed and consider new initiatives.
- Professional development management systems ensure that all teachers work under named line managers and are set annual targets relating to their performance in fulfilling their role. Lesson observation forms an integral part of this process.
- Heads of Department, Heads of House and INCo all work in collaboration with the Deputy Head teacher who has overall responsibility for data management and who monitors the school's performance in line with other similar schools nationally.
- Every pupil has a reading age assessment carried out at the beginning of each academic year. These are published on every pupil's report and helps to identify pupils who may need additional support. In addition pupils in year 7 and year 9 will undergo a spelling assessment. New pupils entering the school during the year will carry out a reading age assessment on entry.
- The school operates a system of rewards and consequences. Rewards can be given for many reasons including engagement with learning, as well as a contribution to the life of the school. Parents can access their child's tally of rewards and/or sanctions daily using 'SIMS Parent' available via the GTS website.

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Where a student is identified as having SEN, a four step process will be implemented in line with the Code of Practice and the GTS Individual Needs Framework to ensure that barriers to learning are removed and effective provision is put in place. The needs of the student and the views of the parent or carer lie at the heart of this graduated process. Where assessment reveals a need (e.g. the student continues to make less than satisfactory progress), the subject teacher in consultation with parents, carers, INCo and outside agencies who may already be working with that student, will draw up a plan of action of support and/or intervention. It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to work with the student and assess the impact of the plan on a day-to-day basis (“do” stage). The overall impact of the plan will then be reviewed and the views of all involved (parents, carers, outside agencies, INCo etc.) will be considered. Either intervention will be considered no longer necessary or a revised plan will be created in the light of outcomes. Where a student with SEN has very specific and complex needs e.g. autistic spectrum, profound hearing loss etc, the school, led by the INCo, will work very closely with advisory teachers and specialist outside agencies to ensure that students make progress in line with expectations.

## How will the curriculum be matched to my child’s needs?

Each subject teacher is responsible for planning lessons which are accessible to and differentiated for each of the students in some lessons. Students are taught in mixed ability classes.

Teachers are expected to differentiate for all levels of ability across the broadest range from those with additional SEN to the most able.

Differentiation for those with SEN may take many forms, for example:

- Pre-tutoring of new, subject specific vocabulary
- Activities to meet all learning styles e.g. kinaesthetic, visual, auditory
- Regular revision of key concepts and opportunities for over learning
- Use of resources and texts at the appropriate reading level
- Planning with an LSA allocated to a class in order to simplify or “chunk” new learning into smaller, more accessible units

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- Use of additional or different apparatus or materials e.g. audio tapes to accompany texts
- Use of different coloured paper for photocopying or worksheets
- Different activities for homework

Differentiation forms an integral element of learning walks and lesson observations within the school. It is the Head of Department and INCo's responsibility to monitor differentiation.

In year 7 pupils follow a challenge based curriculum that combines all the key subjects required to create a broad curriculum with a strong focus on literacy. In year 8 pupils are taught in discrete subjects further developing the skills necessary to be ready for GCSE and level 2 vocational courses. In year 8 students are supported to make the wisest choices for their future learning through a guided choices pathways programme to prepare them for post 16 education and training. Whilst the majority of pupils follow GCSE courses, there are also opportunities to study a selection of DFE accredited vocational courses at level 1&2. We aim to work closely with parents, carers and students during the guided choices process to ensure that everyone is kept fully informed of the opportunities available and knows the qualifications and requirements for entry into post 16 courses.

## How is the decision made about the type and how much support my child will receive?

The provision of high quality teaching which takes account of students' differing needs is our priority. For those with more complex needs, a more personalised approach may be required for example, a reduced curriculum, alternative examination accreditation or access to support and advice from outside agencies.

Early identification of additional need, followed by regular review is essential. There are times when modification to teaching approaches, classroom organisation and the provision of different kinds of equipment or resources will suffice. The INCo and the senior leadership team working closely with subject teachers will offer advice, play a role in whole school planning of interventions and liaise with relevant outside agencies when necessary.

At all times, we aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to remove barriers to learning; for those pupils transitioning to our school it is advisable for the INCo to be involved in any meetings regarding the pupils needs and progress as early as possible.

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## What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

### Pastoral Care

We operate a vertical tutor group system which means that students are placed with others from all different year groups for their tutor group. This system promotes community cohesion, excellent communication across year groups and opportunities for mentoring and leadership. Older students are able to share their experiences with younger pupils who in turn can benefit from their advice and guidance. A student's tutor is the main point of contact for parents. All students on entry are allocated to one of four houses – Endurance, Endeavour, Discovery and Resolution. Siblings are usually automatically placed in the same house. Each house has a Head of Learning who oversees pastoral aspects and learning. Each house also has a pupil coach who acts as a link between student, home, teachers and Head of Learning. They work particularly closely with identified vulnerable members of each house but are accessible to all.

### Emotional and Social Well-being

Where a need is recognized for individual support regarding a pupils well being, through discussion and permission from parents pupils will access 1:1 or 1: small group work with an appointed LSA.

A counsellor is employed to work part-time with a small number of identified pupils.

The Hardy Centre within the school caters for the needs of all pupils; this may range from agreed timetabled support; a need to access the provision for a short term respite or a referral to access 1:1 support for the pupils social, emotional or mental health needs.

### Medical Care

If a student becomes unwell during the school day, there are clear procedures to follow laid down in their learning journal. They are expected to report to their pupil coach. If the student is too ill to stay in school, parents or carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child as soon as possible. In case of emergency, a small team of staff are trained in basic first aid.

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Medicines for students are managed via the medical room. If a student has to take medication during the school day, there are clear procedures to follow to ensure safety:

- All medicines are stored in the medical room and access is restricted to named members of staff only
- All medicine must be handed in to Reception by the parent or carer.
- The student's name and date of birth will be recorded alongside information concerning dosage, frequency etc.
- Students are expected to go at the arranged time (usually lunch time) to take their medication
- Each time medication is administered, the time, date and dosage are recorded.

### **Management of behaviour, avoiding exclusion, increasing attendance**

Our school ensures that exemplary behaviour, good learning outcomes, a positive attitude to homework, being 'ready to learn', showing commitment to the school (e.g. by taking on responsibilities, competing for the school in sport etc.) are all rewarded with positive points. Poor behaviour, however, can result in consequence points as well as detention, isolation and, in extreme cases, a fixed-term exclusion.

If a student's behaviour gives rise to concern, various strategies may be implemented including:

- Mentoring by teachers, pupil coach or Head of House to help develop skills for understanding and managing their emotional, social and mental health to support their learning in school
- Being placed on lesson report / monitoring card.
- Behaviour management plan drawn up by the school, student, parent or carer and other relevant outside agencies.
- Referral to outside agencies for specific support and guidance e.g. CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service), educational psychologist
- The school's educational welfare officer (EWO) will liaise between home and school when attendance or punctuality cause concern

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## What specialist sources and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

Mrs Helen Whiterod is the schools INCo. Through her role she works closely with all staff to ensure the teaching and learning being delivered is appropriate for all pupils. She closely assesses the need for support for pupils with additional needs, and manages a team of dedicated LSA's to ensure their deployment is best placed. This need is constantly assessed and pupil progress is carefully and regularly checked, and where necessary, provision is adapted. As part of her role, she liaises with many specialist services and experts to ensure that the provision for our students is both appropriate and specific to their particular needs. Amongst the many agencies with whom the school works regularly are:

- Babcock International – educational psychology service
- Integrated Children's Services, advisory teachers, SEN 0 – 25 team
- Health services – local GPs, school nurse, CAMHS (clinical psychologists and psychiatrists), occupational health, paediatric physiotherapists
- Social services – social workers, child protection team
- Outreach support from local special schools e.g. Lampard Community School

SEND training is an on-going part of professional development for all our staff. Whilst much of the training is delivered in-house, when opportunities become available, staff are encouraged to attend courses and, on their return, cascade to other colleagues. A regular programme of awareness training takes place to make sure that teachers and LSAs working with hearing impaired students, those on the autistic spectrum or who have medical conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy or severe allergies remain informed of their need.

At the start of a school year, the INCo makes sure that all staff are made aware of the specific needs of our new students.

A staff SEN handbook can be accessed at all times by teaching and support staff. In this document, the INCo has gathered all the information required to support our students with SEN – policies, individual pupil profiles highlighting areas of need and strategies for support, information on how to support pupils with particular difficulties and disabilities etc. This is regularly updated and new information is added if a student arrives with a specific need the school has not met before.

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There is an expectation that all staff will familiarise themselves with the document and use it often for reference. Likewise any relevant information is stored against the individual pupil on the SIMS registering system.

We truly believe that “all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs” as laid down in the Code of Practice.

## **How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?**

We work hard to ensure that all students with SEN engage in the activities of the school alongside their peers. We pride ourselves in being an inclusive school.

As an addition to the curriculum, many departments organise educational visits and trips to broaden the experience of our students. A risk assessment is always carried out in advance of any off-site activity to ensure that everyone’s health and safety will not be compromised. Where a pupil has specific difficulties or disabilities, home will be contacted to make certain that all reasonable adjustments and arrangements have been made.

An enrichment and intervention programme takes place for one hour each week as part of our curriculum. This opportunity is open to all our students. No student will be excluded from extra-curricular activities on the basis of SEN or Disability.

At lunchtimes, the teaching area known as HC5 is open to vulnerable students who may not wish to join their peers in other lunchtime activities and who prefer a quieter environment.

Students with SEND are encouraged to contribute to all aspects of school life, for example representing the school at sporting activities, serving as school leaders or subject ambassadors, showing visitors around the school and helping with enrichment activities for primary school pupils.

The views of all our students are highly valued and their opinions and contribution are sought in many areas of school life, as well as in their own learning.

School leaders and subject ambassadors meet regularly to discuss whole school or subject issues and are invited to put forward their ideas for consideration by senior staff.

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**Headteacher:** Tracey Amos BEd (Hons)

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Pupils with SEND form part of the pupil voice and are often asked to meet with prospective candidates for posts within the school or to act as guides for events held on the premises. We actively encourage everyone to participate in whole school initiatives, fund-raising events for charity, school productions and inter house competitions.

If your child has a statement of educational need, an EHCP (Education, Health and Social Care Plan) or is involved in an intervention programme, their views will always be sought at review meetings.

## How accessible is the school environment?

The core of the school was built in the 1930s before requirements for accessibility became law. However, in recent years we have been able to welcome disabled and wheelchair users and a programme of adaptation has been implemented. Almost all areas of the school are now accessible via lifts, ramps, new doorways etc.

There are three disabled toilets on the premises, as well as outside disabled changing facilities for sport at the back of the sports hall.

Disabled parking is available at the front of the school.

Our school is committed to making all reasonable adjustments to welcome disabled students and visitors.

## How are parents involved in the school? How can I get involved?

### Who can I contact for further information?

Parents are encouraged to support their child in all aspects of their learning and school life. Each year, parents' evenings and reports enable you to talk about and respond to your child's progress.

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For new prospective parents there is an open evening and open morning tours early in the autumn term but a visit can be organised at any time of year to suit individual families.

Where SEN intervention programmes are put in place, the views of parents and carers are actively sought at the planning and review stages.

Parents or carers of pupils with EHC plans or statements will be invited to review progress as necessary (ideally at least annually for EHC plans and statements). If your child does not have an EHC plan but you feel that their needs are serious and complex, as parents/carers you have the right to request consideration of an EHC plan through the local authority.

General enquiries regarding the school can be made via the main switchboard on 01805 623531 or by email to [admin@gts.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gts.devon.sch.uk). The receptionist will then put you in touch with the relevant personnel.

Parents and carers are most welcome to attend meetings of the Parents' Forum or seek election to the governing body when there are vacancies.

We are keen to invite you to pay an active role in the life of your school.

## How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school?

### Year 6/7 Transition

It is very important to us to ensure that all pupils are prepared as fully as possible for this exciting step in their education journey. We hope that, through our carefully planned learning and sporting activities programme during KS 1 and KS 2, most students will have already visited us and met some of our teachers, LSAs and students.

The INCo attends reviews for students with EHC Plans or Statements of Educational Need in years 5 and 6 so that longer-term planning for those with more complex needs can be commenced as early as possible. She will arrange a special transition package according to the needs of each individual.

In the summer term, all year 6 pupils will be visited in their primary school by the INCo, as well as year 7 students appointed to serve as

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transition leaders. Year 6 are then invited to spend a week in June/July with us. Two and a half days are spent at camp with other members of their prospective House enjoying adventure, team-building and social activities. The rest of the week is spent in school sampling a variety of lessons and getting a feel for their new surroundings.

Parents are invited to a new intake evening where staff talk about aspects of school life and parents have the opportunity to meet with their child's new tutor and Head of House. Under our vertical tutoring system, 4 – 6 new year 7 students join an existing group each year. Year 6 students are allocated to Houses and to tutor groups by the member of the senior leadership team responsible for transition, INCo and Heads of House.

### **Mid-term/year admission**

Students who join the school mid-way through a school year are invited with their parents to meet prior to entry with the member of the senior leadership team who handles admissions. Where a student has already been identified as having SEN, the INCo will also be invited to that meeting so that additional preparations can be made, support and/or interventions arranged and staff made aware of the individual's needs. Updated reading and spelling assessments will be undertaken on entry. Contact will also be made with the student's previous school so that data and files can be transferred as soon as possible.

On arrival a "buddy" will be appointed to show the new student around, take them to lessons and help to answer their initial questions and concerns.

### **Moving to another school**

We will endeavour to make sure that all relevant documentation, reports and information are sent off just as soon as we receive notification that a student is officially on role at a new school. Often a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Head of House will also contact the school and speak personally to their counterpart to ensure a smooth and informed transition.

### **Transition post 16**

During KS 4, students and their parents/carers are encouraged to attend the school's Future Opportunities evening where they can meet with a variety of representatives from tertiary colleges e.g. Petroc, Duchy College, Exeter College, Bideford College etc.

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Where students have SEND, data and information will, with the student's permission, be made available to the relevant tertiary provider on application to ensure a smooth transition and the provision of relevant support. Tertiary providers will also be invited to EHCP or transfer reviews in year 11; working alongside Careers South West to provide the best transition package appropriate to each individual pupil.

The SEN Information Report is published every September to reflect the provision at Great Torrington School. This is in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2014

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

and the Devon 'Local Offer'

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-local-offer>

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PGCert The National Award For Special Education Needs Coordination

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