

*Stepgates Community School*  
*Learning and Growing Together*



# Specialist Centre for Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

## *Information for Parents*

The SLCN Specialist Centre is a specialist provision for twenty children with Statements of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan for specific language impairment and communication disorders. We have places for ten children at Early Years Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 and ten children at Key Stage 2, enabling us to cater for the primary phase of your child's education.

This booklet will introduce you and your child to the 'Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Specialist Centre' at Stepgates Community School.

We hope the information in this booklet is helpful. Please visit our website for further information: [www.stepgatesschool.co.uk](http://www.stepgatesschool.co.uk) or contact us if you have any further queries:

e-mail: [info@stepgates.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@stepgates.surrey.sch.uk)

Tel: 01932 563022

## **Inclusion**

Our school ethos is founded on a policy of inclusion in all aspects of school life. We promote equality of access for all our children to the National Curriculum, after school clubs, visits and residential trips.

## **Aims**

We aim to ensure that all children in the Specialist Centre:

- are an integral part of the life at Stepgates Community School;
- have access to the curriculum in small teaching groups and in mainstream class with support;
- have access to weekly speech and language therapy;
- have access to a range of specialist resources such as computer programs and daily visual timetables.

The children are placed in mainstream classes and are withdrawn for specialist teaching in small groups and for Speech and Language Therapy. The long term aim of the Specialist Centre is to enable children to access mainstream classes with decreasing levels of support.



## **Specialist Centre Staff**

We have two teachers who provide specialist teaching in Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2.

We have two Speech and Language Therapists and one Speech and Language Therapy Assistant who work on-site, and are employed by Virgincare Paediatric Therapies. The therapy team may provide individual or group sessions, depending on the needs of the children. The team also work closely with class teachers and Learning Support Assistants, and support access to the curriculum by working on curriculum related language and concepts. Functional communication skills and social skills are also a focus.

Our Special Needs Support Assistants provide support to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 & 2. We also have a Learning Support Assistant who follows a detailed programme for children who have specific occupational therapy needs.

## **Individual Education Plan or Support Plans**

Your child's statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan identifies specific objectives, which are broken down into termly targets on their Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or Support Plan. Children's progress is monitored and targets are updated on a termly basis. All professionals and outside agencies involved with your child will contribute to their Individual Educational Plan / Support Plan. IEP's/Support Plans are shared with parents / carers, as well as all staff involved, ensuring a consistent approach to meeting the children's needs.

## **Annual Review Meetings**

Review meetings are held twice a year until your child is five and once a year thereafter. You will be invited to join all the staff working with your child, including outside agencies, to discuss his/her progress. Written reports are submitted and your comments are valued. These meetings are the forum for any change in provision to be recommended and future targets are set.

## Parent Consultation Meetings

As well as the Annual Review meetings, you will be invited to attend the termly consultation meetings with the Specialist Centre staff and mainstream teachers involved with your child. Annual Records of Achievement (End of Year Reports) are provided at the end of each academic year.

In addition we are happy to make an appointment at any time to discuss any queries or concerns that may arise.

## Speech and Language Therapy Provision

All children in the Centre have specific Speech and Language therapy targets which are evaluated termly, and are incorporated into their IEP or Support Plan. Children in the Specialist Centre may receive individual sessions of Speech and Language Therapy. The number of sessions provided depends on each child's individual needs. In addition, each child may attend group sessions. Each session aims to develop different skills. The groups that run may include:-

### *Phonological Awareness Group*

- Awareness of patterns in words (e.g. syllables)
- Awareness of rhyme
- Awareness of letter sounds in words

### *Narrative Group*

- Sequencing skills
- Story telling skills
- Questioning skills

### *Attention and Listening Group / Time to Talk Group*

- Listening and attention skills
- Eye contact
- Social skills

### *Early Language Group*

- Understanding basic concepts such as size, colour, position, action words
- Using themed vocabulary linked to lessons in class

### *Pre-teaching vocabulary group*

- This group aims to pre-teach children the vocabulary and concepts that they are going to need to know for their mainstream subjects e.g. maths or science, to help them access the information in class.

## The Makaton Vocabulary

The Specialist Centre and most mainstream staff are familiar with some Makaton signing vocabulary. Some children may benefit from the regular use of signs and symbols as an aid to speech and understanding. Depending on a child's individual needs, Makaton may be used to help generate the development of language. Makaton signing is also an enriching and valued form of communication for all mainstream children too. Each year centre staff offer sessions to parents in which we share the signs we are learning in class. Refer to [www.Makaton.org](http://www.Makaton.org) for further information.



## Planning and Differentiation of Tasks



Specialist Centre staff attend planning meetings with mainstream teachers. Tasks are planned at different levels to ensure they are achievable by all children. This 'differentiation' of tasks is a vital factor in ensuring equality of access to the National Curriculum for all children.

## Forest School



As part of the curriculum we are fortunate in being able to offer Forest School sessions to our Centre children. Forest School is an exciting way forward in environmental education, which brings children into regular and repeated contact with their local outdoor environment. The Forest School initiative in the UK has developed from the Scandinavian model of outdoor play and learning. Children visit an outdoor setting on a weekly basis and as the

weeks progress the children become familiar with their outdoor space, the safe routines of Forest School, and the possibilities open to them. They are encouraged to initiate their own play and develop ideas at their own pace.

## Horse riding

Our Centre children benefit from horse riding sessions through Riding for the Disabled at Laris Farm, Chobham. The children enjoy the physical exercise and the opportunities to build their confidence and use of language.

## End of Key Stage Tasks and Tests

Progress of those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assessed at the end of their Reception year through the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.



All children undertake these statutory assessments at the end of the Key Stages 1 & 2 (i.e. end of Year 2 & 6).

The tasks and tests can be modified for Statemented children, or children with an Education, Health and Care Plan. More time can be allowed and special arrangements made at the discretion of the Specialist Centre staff and the Head Teacher. Every effort is made to ensure that the experience is as stress free as possible for your child. Children often report that they feel a sense of achievement when it is all over!

## Secondary Placement

At the Annual Review Meeting in Year 5 your child's needs for secondary provision will be discussed. Recommendations reflecting parental and professional opinions are made to the Local Education Authority in the Annual Review Summary. Before the move, in Year 6, there is close liaison between the Specialist Centre and the receiving school to ensure a smooth transition.