

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Intent

- St Nicholas' school motto is 'Learning Together' which encompasses the collaborative approach to helping our special pupils achieve their full potential, regardless of their ability.
- The curriculum offered to pupils is broad and balanced. Allowing the EYFS curriculum to be used in all KS1 Classes mean that more children reach their ELGs by the end of Year 2.
- Lessons are planned well to take account of pupils' differing abilities. Planning also ensures lessons include robust support for the development of pupils' reading, writing, communication, mathematical skills and social skills.
- Planning is tailored to support specific needs, ensuring pupils with the greatest needs are making progress.
- Schemes of Work are coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning. Curriculum co-ordinators have written their schemes of work ensuring that content is consistent with requirements of the new National Curriculum, including the Early year curriculum.
- Staff have high but realistic expectations of the children, encouraging them to reach their potential.
- The curriculum allows our children to have daily learning experiences that enable them to be equipped with the skills, resilience and life experiences to become healthy, active and respectful learners.

Implementation

- Teachers work well as a year group to plan their medium term planning. Teachers also complete weekly plans adapting activities appropriate to their class, drawing on a wide range of expertise and ideas.
- Teaching Assistants contribute well to learning. Ongoing training and strong partnerships with teachers has enabled some more experienced teaching assistants to lead learning activities.
- Methods of teaching are creative, adaptable and flexible. Contexts for learning are well considered so that they are meaningful to pupils and are linked to pupil interests.
- Alternative teaching approaches such as TEACCH or Attention Autism, have proved successful in allowing some of our sensory and non-verbal learners to access the curriculum. Individual strategies have been further developed for the most challenging pupils e.g. Zone of regulation or sensory strategies to reduce level of stimulation.
- Teachers support reading through identifying early reading behaviours and then progress onto reading through matching symbols, phonics and sight word reading schemes and then progression onto the Accelerated Reading Scheme.
- Communication strategies such as signing, PECs, Colourful Semantics and visual timetables are used to support the teaching in lessons throughout the school allowing for commonality. The teaching of Mathematics is supported with the use of Numicon and tactile objects.
- Specialist communication work is provided to targeted groups of children, delivered by teachers and TAs trained in a range of specialist approaches.
- Teachers have developed creative ways to help pupils understand their Pupil Passport targets in class, and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Placement of increasingly complex pupils has required development of more sensory approaches in some classes, and development of a more systematic approach to behaviour plans including risk assessments.
- The school also adopts a Rights Respecting ethos where every child is valued and their views are heard.

Impact

- Teachers create an environment where, not only do the pupils learn, but are also allowed to challenge and explore their learning in a safe and supportive environment. Pupils demonstrate their resilience and often strive to improve on what they can and cannot do.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to share their work with peers, staff and visitors. It is obvious during monitoring that children are engaged in their learning.
- Parents inform us that their children are happy in school and the vast majority are pleased with their progress, according to our parent survey. During lockdown, our remote lessons were attended by a majority of our children and their families. Parents reported that they enjoyed watching how their children learn and how we engage them as a school.
- Pupils are positive about their achievements and those of their peers. This is evident at our weekly 'Star of the week' assemblies and House Point assemblies.
- Evidence from teacher assessment shows that each child makes good progress from their relatively low baselines.
- Progress in core subjects varies across the Key Stages—this is related to the development profile of pupils particularly communication and social needs.
- Pupil progress is closely tracked—small steps in learning are recorded and used towards termly tracking of pupils against Early Learning Goals in Key Stage 1 and a tailored tracking system based on 'bridging levels' and national curriculum expectations from Year 2. This is backed up by moderation in school and with other schools in core subjects.
- The school has also developed its own Assessment system for Personal, Social and Emotional Development, which is where some of our learners make the best progress.
- Pupils make good progress towards or achieve personalised targets agreed with parents termly and at the Annual review of the EHCP. These are often linked to core subjects, communication and independent skills to support readiness for the next phase of education.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Continue to improve communication skills by ensuring a consistency of approach in all classes and increasing personalisation of provision matches individual learning needs and outcomes set out in EHCPs.
- Ensure that staff are using the range of communication strategies effectively to support not only children's understanding of instructions and routines but also of vocabulary used within the curriculum.
- Embed the Schemes of work written and continually adapt them to suit the changing needs of our children.
- Ensure that our curriculum is culturally competent.

SELF EVALUATION SUMMARY

Revised September 2021



- Total Pupils on roll Sept 2021— 221 Agreed pupil number with LA =225
- Free school meals = 36.65%
- Attendance (Academic year 2020-2021) = 91.1%
- 0 pupils in care(↓).
- 53% pupils have English as a first language.
- Remaining 47% pupils have 30 different home languages.
- Needs profile (approx) 39% ASD, 50 % MLD, 65% Speech and Language Difficulties, 5% Down Syndrome and 7% SLD as primary need.

EFFECTIVENESS of LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The Head Teacher is new to the role (September 2021). She is supported by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable SLT team and Governing Body. She also had an effective and thorough handover with the previous head.
- Performance Management processes for both teachers and non-teaching staff remains in place and is a robust process. Objectives for staff link directly to school improvement actions whilst also developing their own CPD. This ensures that the quality of teaching across the school is at least good and any areas for development are addressed promptly through whole school training or targeted support plans.
- Model of distributed leadership continues to be in place with all experienced teachers undertaking leadership responsibility for a curriculum area and the performance management of support staff.
- Curriculum co-ordinators have developed schemes of work to support planning. Action plans are updated yearly and they are increasingly involved in overseeing their curriculum areas. The focus for this year will be on the monitoring of their subject area.
- A regular programme of monitoring including focussed learning walks and monitoring of pupil progress ensures that any areas of underperformance are identified quickly with targeted support and greater frequency of monitoring in place to address any emerging issues.
- At the end of her term, one of the parent governors became an associative governor which means her expertise will continue to be invaluable to the school. The new parent governor role will be advertised after the new reception children start.
- The School Leaders and Governing Body share and demonstrate a clear school ethos and vision, created and adopted by all.
- Committed and passionate leadership results in a powerful ethos that places 'Learning Together' at the heart of what the school does. Rigorous systems ensure all pupils make the best possible progress. Pupils are prepared well to move onto Secondary School.
- Governors attend training set aside for their own development and skills base. Have opportunities to update their knowledge, skills and understanding in agreed areas relating to the school's work.
- Demand for places is very high; school leaders spend a significant amount of time visiting pupils in settings to determine suitability and prioritise pupils for a limited number of places.
- All senior leaders are involved in the Performance Management of Teachers and trained to observe lessons. Lesson observations are generally carried out jointly with another member of SLT
- There has been a further increase in staff in September 2021 due to 2 new additional classes. A successful recruitment period was help during the summer term with 2 news teachers and 5 new teaching Assistants employed.

What does the school need to do to improve further.

- Involve curriculum co-ordinators more in the monitoring of their areas. Regular release from class will support this.
- Reintroduce monitoring and observation cycle including Governors coming into school to spend time in classes.
- Develop middle management roles for teaching staff.

SAFEGUARDING and ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- A strong culture of Safeguarding is established in the school with a clear system of reporting and recording ensuring the safety of all students and members of the school community. Safeguarding is tracked using My Concern software package.
- Safeguarding measures including staff training are taken very seriously, and developmentally appropriate curriculum activities ensure pupils understand risks.
- Procedures ensuring the welfare, care, health & safety of the pupils, including Child Protection are very good. Governors audit safeguarding and review the Child Protection Policy annually. Regular updates of the Single Central Register are completed by the SBM and monitored by the Safeguarding Governor.
- Therapists at the school meet with the Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher at termly multidisciplinary meetings to agree support strategies for pupils causing concern. Late in the summer term an MDT meeting is held just for the new starters so that the school can put support systems in place for children.
- The school has invested in further support for pupils by providing an in-house Speech and Language Therapist, play therapist, music therapist, in-house Occupational Therapist and Family Liaison Officer. The school has a good relationship with CAMHS and Social Care.
- Additional support and training is provided by NHS Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapist and EP which has a positive impact on the quality of provision.
- The Community Paediatrician is available regularly for medicals and to consult with and support parents. A school nurse is available for consultation with staff and to support parents.
- A number of staff have been trained in PECS level 1 which will enable the school to focus on using PECS within the classroom and curriculum more effectively. One of the SLT members is a accredited Makaton tutor and staff and parent courses are held throughout the year.

What does the school needs to do further?

- To further explore additional therapists that can be used within school e.g. Drama Therapy
- Continue to strengthen the relationship with social care.
- Monitoring of PECs use in the classroom by setting up team teaching with SENCO and teachers.

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

- Pupils are enthusiastic, engaged in lessons and display excellent attitudes to learning because of high expectations, a clear approach to behaviour management, a very well matched curriculum and a caring ethos
- Staff know the pupils' individual needs and abilities very well and use this knowledge to adopt and refine daily teaching to support good progress.
- Parents and other visitors to the school comment on the calm, happy environment.
- Parents are supported and encouraged to be involved in their child's learning.
- The school runs successful Parent coffee mornings which includes workshops and outside speakers. These groups are generally well attended and provide additional support mechanisms between parents. These have had to be suspended during COVID but will reinstated this year.
- Two member have staff have been trained in delivering training in the PROACT SCIPr approach and will deliver training to staff in groups of up to 12 over the coming year. This approach aims to focus on analysing behaviour through functional assessments to understand the purpose of the behaviour and then implement proactive approaches to avoid Behaviours of Concern and improve quality of life.
- Three members of staff are also trained Mental Health First Aiders.
- Attendance of pupils is monitored and discussed with parents and the attached Family Liaison Officer who will make home visits if necessary.
- Parents report that pupils are very keen to come to school.
- St Nicholas works closely in partnership with and other schools and organisations to enhance and enrich learning opportunities. This includes Croydon Drop-In, CAMHS, Nordoff Robins and music and theatre groups.
- The school works closely with local services to identify and meet wider needs of pupils and their families.
- Speech & Language and Occupational Therapists are effectively integrated into the provision at the school and have also provide training for staff in specific areas, e.g. sensory processing, emotional regulation, communication strategies as well as individual support. However provision has been reduced as the school has expanded.
- The Zones of regulation were introduced into each class last year and these have been successful in allowing children and staff to discuss their emotions and ways to regulate them.
- Weekly Star of the Week' Assemblies and House Point Assemblies focus on achievement and behaviour provide feedback to pupils and reinforce expectations of outstanding behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the range of therapy support available to pupils
- Further develop the training of staff in dealing with behaviour, due to the increasing complexity of needs, using the PROACT SCIPr approach.
- Re-establish the mental First Aiders to better support the mental health and wellbeing of the staff.