

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 SEND panel. It will be reviewed and revised where necessary and at least annually.
3. Current Department for Education (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 inter-related 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.
6. In a school with post-16 provision, there is no assumption that the young person will continue on the roll 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 SEND panel with multi-professional membership considers individual children or young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) 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 SEND panels are available in a separate 'Terms of reference' document. Children and young people will only be admitted to special schools if they have an 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 EHCP (see purpose of the annual review as set out in the Code of Practice). As part of the annual review process the details of the child or young person's current placement can be considered and parents/ young people may wish to consider 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 there has been a significant change in need, 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 school. On occasions, individual programmes may involve time spent in another type of 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 SAMS 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 EHCP. 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.

15. Following an annual review, the SEND panel could be asked to consider movement to another Peterborough special school or, in exceptional cases, to an out of city special 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 levels/bands, 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. Levels/bands 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.
18. Key information about day-to-day functioning will also be available in the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycles. There could also be 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 Service (YOS).

Peterborough Special Schools:

- A. Marshfields
- B. Heltwate
- C. Lime Academy Orton
- D. Medeshamstede Academy
- E. NeneGate

A. Marshfields School

Age range	7-19	Type of need	LD	Funded places (as of December 2024)	191
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Children and young people will be attaining at a low academic level, either because of a 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 presentation.

Children and young people placed in this type of school will therefore have a primary need in cognition and learning. There will usually be associated secondary needs, such as social 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:

Typical levels of triangulated functioning:

- An overall cognitive profile at or below 2nd percentile
- Attainment in the core subjects will be significantly below chronological age expectations (at least four years behind, but no more than 6 years below their peers)
- For Year 3 children, they will be independently functioning below pre-key-stage standard 3 (working within the EYFS curriculum) significantly below half chronological age, for example, children 'by the end of Y2, children will be working within 30-36m range
- For Year 4 children, they will be independently functioning below pre-key-stage standard 4 significantly below half chronological age within cognition & learning, for example by the end of year 3 children will be working within 36-42m range
- At the Year 5 Annual Review, Teacher Assessment will be predominantly between within pre-key stage Standard 3 and within pre-key-stage Standard 5 children will be working at or below year 1 age related national curriculum expectations and/or standardised attainment assessments and cognitive ability at or below 2nd percentile
- For Key Stage 3/4 children attainment in the core subjects will be significantly below chronological age expectations (between four and six years behind their peers) standardised attainment assessments and cognitive ability at or below 2nd percentile
- Post 16 students will be working at Entry level 1-2

In addition to the above, 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. Some will also have additional needs, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia or Dyspraxia. A few may present with behaviours associated with severe mental health difficulties – including depression, self-harm, dependency on mood enhancing medication

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

B. Heltwate School

Age range	4-18	Type of need	SLD, Autism with SLD	Funded places (as of December 2024)	210
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Children and young people will be operating in the severe learning difficulties (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.

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

Typical levels of triangulated functioning:

- Overall cognitive profile at or below 1st percentile
- Children in the nursery and EYFS Reception aged children will be functioning considerably below half their chronological age in most areas of development. Reception aged Children would typically be working within the 12-18 month range of development in most areas. They may have an inconsistent developmental profile.
- For Key Stage One, children will be functioning considerably below half their chronological age in most areas of development, children would be typically working at 16-26 month range, and be predominantly in the Engagement model.
- For Key Stage Two, children will be functioning considerably below half their chronological age in most areas of development, children would be typically working at 20 months of age when coming into KS2 and be working up to 50 months developmentally by the end of KS2.
- At the Year 5 Annual Review, Teacher Assessment will be predominantly show that pupils are working with 30-50months. and within pre-key-stage Standard 3

- For secondary-age children and young people up to the end of Year 11, attainment in core subjects will predominantly be considerably below half their chronological age in most areas of development, including core subjects, children would be typically working at 40-60 months/working within the Year 1 age related expectations, as they approach Year 11.
- Post 16 students will be working at Pre Entry/Entry Level 1 and be working below Yr 1 Age Related Expectations.

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

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Condition
- Significant difficulties with communication (expressive and/or receptive language)
- Severe sensory impairment
- Difficulties with appropriate social interaction and understanding
- Associated behaviours that challenge
- Limited self-help skills and awareness of danger
- Difficulties with attention and engagement
- Reliant on adults for activities
- Reliant on adults for travel community access, transitions and all aspects of self-help skills
- Related physical difficulties
- 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. Some will also have additional needs, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia or Dyspraxia. A few may present with behaviours associated with severe mental health difficulties – including depression, self-harm, dependency on mood enhancing medication

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 may be limited.

C. Lime Academy Orton

DFE age range	2-19	Type of need	PMLD, SLD and Autism with SLD/PMLD	Funded places (as of December 2024)	153
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Children and young people will be operating in the SLD or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) cognitive range as described below. They will typically have a life-long and complex learning disability which may require a multi-disciplinary service response and their ability to make progress will be severely limited across all areas of development.

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

- SLD.
- PMLD.
- Severe ASD.

- Highly significant difficulties with communication (expressive and/or receptive language).
- Complex sensory impairment.

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

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

Secondary needs may include:

- Related physical difficulties including those with complex and severe needs.
- Related medical difficulties including those with life-limiting conditions.
- Severe fine and gross motor difficulties.
- Severe Multi-sensory impairment.
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

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

Typical levels of triangulated functioning:

- Where there has been standardised testing of cognitive functioning, children and young people will be assessed as being below the 1st percentile.
- For primary-age children, attainments in the core subjects will be predominantly working within an engagement model, or the early stages of an EYFS curriculum.
- For secondary-age young people, attainments in the core subjects will be predominantly working within pre-key stage standard 2 or below.
- Pupils with PMLD are likely to be working within an engagement model throughout their school career.
- Children in the nursery and EYFS age range will be functioning significantly below their chronological age in most areas of development. Reception aged children would typically be working in the birth to 12-month range of development in most areas. They may have an inconsistent developmental profile.

Children and young people will require a highly differentiated and personalised curriculum to meet their complex profile of need. Their capacity to participate in opportunities for independent learning will be limited.

They may have a severe impairment caused by injury, illness, a congenital condition or genetic disorder that causes a severe 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.

The majority of children and young people will 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.

A few children and young people 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. Medeshamstede Academy

DFE age range	4-16	Type of need	ASD	Funded places (as of December 2024)	117
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Children and young people will have a diagnosis of ASD that has over time, significantly impacted on effective learning across the full curriculum.

Although, ASD will be the main presenting need, children and young people may also present with other associated learning needs. They will have impaired social interaction, communication and emotional dysregulation, as well as complex sensory, medical or physical needs.

Children and young people may present with behaviours associated with severe mental health difficulties – including depression, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), severe anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders and dependency on mood enhancing medication.

Characteristics exhibited by the children and young people may include:

- Significant and prolonged difficulties with social interaction and behaviour.
- Severe rigidity of thinking with associated behavioural outcomes.
- Extreme lack of tolerance to changes in routine and structure.
- Highly obsessional behaviour and routines which impact on the ability to access the curriculum.
- Atypical sensory profile preventing access to the curriculum.
- Extreme reliance on adult support to structure activities in order to engage successfully in classroom and group activities.

Comprehensive evidence that ASD has negatively impacted upon attainment and social interaction over a period of time, despite prolonged focused interventions, informed by external specialist professionals. It is evident that the lack of progress is indicative that the child or young person requires a specialist facility over and above that normally available in a mainstream school without an ASD resource.

E. NeneGate School

DFE age range	8-16	Type of need	Social, emotional and mental health	Funded places (as of December 2024)	65
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Children and young people will have severe Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties. They will exhibit a range of extreme behaviours which, through their nature, persistence, severity and abnormality have a cumulative negative effect upon their emotional well-being and mental health. The impact of those behaviours will have had a severe and measurable negative effect upon a child and young person's attainment and / or their access to learning. There will be extensive evidence that sustained interventions, informed by external specialist professionals, have been unable to bring about a positive change.

The assessment range for the children and young people's academic ability will be wide, as will their functioning range - covering a cognitive and curriculum span from low ability to gifted and talented.

Many children and young people will have conduct disorder, or associated secondary needs. Some will have medically diagnosed conditions that relate to their difficulties such as ADHD or relevant mental health diagnosed. Some pupils will present with behaviours associated with significant mental health difficulties – including psychological trauma, depression, ASD, FASD, OCD, severe anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders and dependency on mood enhancing medication.

Indicators of need will include some of the following:

- Routinely severe anti-social and unco-operative.
- Long-standing indifferent or erratic response to discipline.
- Significantly delayed / immature social skills.
- Long-standing inability to form positive relationships (peer/peer and/or peer/adult).
- Negative social communication skills, including poor social use of language and limited capacity or desire to follow the conventions of social behaviour.
- Entrenched lack of social conscience.
- Distorted 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 negative 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 extreme and challenging behaviour in some of the ways outlined below:

- Persistent and sustained 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.
- Persistent and sustained 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.