



NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

SEND Information Report 2024-25

1. What are the kinds of special educational needs for which provision is made at the school?

Nottingham Free School is a secondary school that aims to be as inclusive as possible and works to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their specific needs, make the best possible progress in school. The needs generally fall into one of the following categories; Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties and Sensory and Physical. For the current cohorts we have experienced support staff who provide individual, small group and whole class support. Teaching staff practise high quality teaching and differentiation as a first response to ensure all individual students' needs are met.

The percentage of students at SEND support without EHCP, is 12.0% at Nottingham Free School. The National average is 13.6%. An additional 1% of pupils are in receipt of the highest level of support with an EHCP. The National average is 4.8%.

The SEND code of Practice identifies the areas of need being:

- Learning difficulties that stem from cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction difficulties including those pupils with ASD
- Sensory and physical difficulties
- Social, emotional and mental health needs

The full SEN needs in the Academy are Communication and Interaction difficulties (6.5%), Cognition and Learning (6.3%) Social and Emotional Health (6.3%), Sensory and Physical difficulties (2.4%)

Total number of students on roll	
	KS3/4 602
	KS5 76
Number of students with EHCPs	6
Number of students identified as SEN Support	75 (3)
Number of students with an identified need	141 (6)
Communication and Interaction	28(39)
Cognition and Learning	18(44)
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	14(42)
Sensory and Physical	5(15)

2. What are the school's policies for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs?

At Nottingham Free School children are identified as having SEND (special educational needs or disabilities) through a variety of ways including the following:-

- Liaison with primary school
- Child performing significantly below age expected levels despite intervention
- Concerns and information raised by parents/carers and the pupil
- Concerns and information raised by class teachers or support staff

Where a pupil is not making expected progress, teachers, the SENDCO / Deputy SENDCo (special educational needs and disabilities coordinator) and parents/carers collaborate on

problem solving, planning, support and teaching strategies for individual pupils. External agencies may be involved to support this process.

On entry to Nottingham Free School all students will be assessed using a series of curriculum baseline tests and a reading age assessment. If deemed necessary this can lead to a more detailed assessment which will inform teaching strategies.

If you think your child may have special educational needs firstly contact your child's tutor or head of year. They will then support and signpost which can include support from external agencies as well as support in school from the Learning Support Team.

3. What are the school's policies for making provision for pupils with special educational needs whether or not pupils have EHC Plans?

(a) How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its provision for such pupils?

At Nottingham Free School we regularly monitor the effectiveness of the provision through provision mapping, tracking progress and pupil progress meetings. Class teachers and the Learning Support Team conduct ongoing assessments. We also meet regularly with parents and children at our student review days, parent evenings and planned review meetings with parents and outside agencies.

(b) What are the school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs?

Nottingham Free School staff make ongoing assessments throughout the year, with achievement coordinators, pastoral leaders, curriculum leaders Deputy SENDCO and SENDCO, regularly tracking pupil progress. Feedback on pupil progress is via termly data reports, parent's evenings and student review days. Parents can contact either the tutor or Deputy SENDCO at any time to discuss their child's progress.

(c) What is the school's approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs?

Every effort will be made to educate pupils with SEND alongside their peers in a mainstream classroom setting. If the teaching of a pupil with SEND alongside their peers is not possible, then the SENDCO will consult with the child's parents for other flexible arrangements to be made. Within class, the child's subject teacher will take steps to provide differentiated learning opportunities that will aid the pupil's academic progression. The SENDCO will be consulted as needed for support and advice and may wish to observe the pupil in class. Parents will be informed fully of every stage of their child's development and the circumstances under which they are being monitored. They are encouraged to share information and knowledge with the school.

In order for staff to provide quality teaching for all students they must be appropriately trained. Teaching and support staff are provided with relevant training in all four areas of the Code of Practice. In addition to this, staff are informed of all relevant information and support strategies to effectively teach individual students with SEND. Outside agencies also provide training for a key group of staff when a student requires this.

(d) How does the school adapt the curriculum and learning environment for pupils with special educational needs?

All students in Nottingham Free School are placed into appropriate classes according to their profile on entry. All teachers are expected to differentiate their teaching to match individual needs within each lesson. Further strategies to ensure children can access the curriculum include:

- Keeping staff fully informed of the special educational needs of any pupils in their charge including sharing progress reports, medical reports and teacher feedback.
- Providing regular CPDL opportunities for staff in all departments on the subject of SEND and SEND teaching. School staff are then able to keep up to date with teaching methods aiding the progress of all pupils including those with SEND.
- Using in-class provisions and TA support effectively to ensure that the curriculum is differentiated where necessary.
- Implementing Individual access arrangements for informal assessments and external examinations.

(e) What additional support for learning is available to pupils with special educational needs?

Where it is determined that a pupil does have SEND, parents will be formally advised of this and the decision will be added to the pupil's records. The aim of formally identifying a pupil with SEND is to help school ensure that effective provision is put in place and so remove barriers to learning. The support provided consists of a four – part process:

- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

This is an ongoing cycle to enable the provision to be refined and revised as the understanding of the needs of the pupil grows. This cycle enables the identification of those interventions which are the most effective in supporting the pupil to achieve good progress and outcomes.

Assess

This involves clearly analysing the pupil's needs using the class teacher's assessment and experience of working with the pupil, details of previous progress and attainment, comparisons with peers and national data, as well as the views and experience of parents. The pupil's views and where relevant, advice from external support services will also be considered. Any parental concerns will be noted and compared with the school's information and assessment data on how the pupil is progressing. This analysis will require regular review to ensure that support and intervention is matched to need, that barriers to learning are clearly identified and being overcome and that the interventions being used are developing and evolving as required. Where external support staff are already involved their work will help inform the assessment of need. Where they are not involved they may be contacted, if this is felt to be appropriate, following discussion and agreement from parents.

Plan

Planning will involve consultation between the teacher, SENDCO / Deputy SENDCO and parents to agree the adjustments, interventions and support that are required; the impact on progress, development and or behaviour that is expected and a clear date for review. Parental involvement may be sought, where appropriate, to reinforce or contribute to progress at home. All those working with the pupil, including support staff will be informed of their individual needs, the support that is being provided, any particular teaching strategies/approaches that are being employed and the outcomes that are being sought.

Do

The class teacher remains responsible for working with the child on a day-to-day basis. They will retain responsibility even where the interventions may involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the main class teacher. They will work closely with teaching assistants and /or relevant specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and links with classroom teaching. Support with further assessment of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses, problem solving and advising of the implementation of effective support will be provided by the SENDCO / Deputy SENCo.

Review

Reviews will be undertaken in line with agreed dates. The review process will evaluate the impact and quality of the support and interventions. It will also take account of the views of the pupil and their parents. The class teacher, in conjunction with the SENDCO / Deputy SENCo will revise the support and outcomes based on the pupil's progress and development making any necessary amendments going forward, in consultation with parents and the pupil. Parents will be provided with clear information about the impact of support to enable them to be involved in planning the next steps. If a child has lifelong or significant difficulties they may undergo a Statutory Assessment Process which is usually requested by the school but can be requested by a parent. This will occur where the complexity of need or a lack of clarity around the needs of the child are such that a multi-agency approach to assessing that need, to planning provision and identifying resources, is required. The decision to make a referral for an Education, Health and Care Plan will be taken at a progress review. The application for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans will combine information from a variety of sources including:

- Parents
- Teachers
- SENDCO / Deputy SENCo
- Social Care
- Health professionals

Information will be gathered relating to the current provision provided, action points that have been taken, and the preliminary outcomes of targets set. A decision will be made by a group of people from education, health and social care about whether or the child is eligible for an EHC Plan. Parents have the right to appeal against a decision not to initiate a statutory assessment which may lead to an EHC Plan.

The school has links with external support services in order to fully support our SEND pupils and aid school inclusion. The following services will be involved as and when is necessary:

- School nurse
- Community Paediatrician
- Psychiatric services
- Occupational Health
- Physiotherapy
- Parent Partnership
- Early Help Unit
- Educational Welfare Support Service (EWO)
- Schools and Families Support Services
- Behaviour Support Team
- Autism Team

- Learning Support Team
- Sensory and Physical Team
- Community Educational Psychology Service

(f) How does the school enable pupils with special educational needs to engage in the activities of the school (including physical activities) together with children who do not have special educational needs?

All children, regardless of need, are encouraged to get involved with activities outside the classroom, including school trips. Students at Nottingham Free School in Key Stage 3 and 4 attend enrichment activities of their choice and are supported as necessary. Reasonable adjustments are also made to ensure children can fully participate in all school visits including work. This may involve additional TA support or alternative arrangements to support their involvement.

(g) What support is available for improving the emotional, mental and social development of pupils with special educational needs?

Nottingham Free School's pastoral system is organised in to year teams which consists of a Heads of Year and a team of tutors. The pastoral team holds regular meetings when pastoral issues are discussed. As part of the pastoral curriculum, pupils attend morning tutor sessions for registration and take part in activities including those designed to develop positive mental health.

We try to support the emotional and social development of all our pupils, including those with SEND. A programme of social and emotional education through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is taught weekly which covers a range of issues including mental and physical health.

However, for those children who find aspects of this difficult we offer an in-school Student Welfare Support system, alongside supported lunchtime and break times. If further social/emotional support is required, this can be arranged through the Student Welfare Officer, Head of Year or SENDCO / Deputy SENDCO and may take the form of discussions with school staff or a referral for counselling by an outside agency. Where appropriate, we work with parents to get support from external agencies, including the Supporting Families, Targeted Support or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Two of our teaching assistants are trained as an ELSA. ELSAs are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants who have received additional training from educational psychologists and from whom they receive ongoing supervision following training. Their role is to support young people in school to understand and manage their own emotions whilst respecting the feelings of those around them.

4. What is the name and contact details of the SEND co-ordinator?

Staff expertise and who parents can contact for further information:

An on –going programme of training is in place to ensure that all teachers and support staff have appropriate skills and knowledge to support provision for students with SEND.

Training has been facilitated by Teachers of the Visually impaired, Police, National Autistic Society, the Behaviour Support Team, Travel training, Local Authority Autism Team and Educational Psychologist.

Our SENDCO actively engages in a range of opportunities to share best practice and keep abreast of current local and national initiatives and policy to support students with SEND.

Teaching staff seek support and guidance from the SENDCo, Deputy SENDCo and Learning Support team as required.

The academy also seeks advice and guidance from the local authority and other relevant agencies to help school staff meet the needs of your child to review, evaluate and develop provision for students who have the most complex needs.

We have staff with specialised expertise, qualifications and experience including:

Ms T Marks – the SENDCo at the Nottingham Free School is a qualified secondary teacher with a background in supporting SEND students. She has taught Primary and Secondary in a Special Needs school, been a Specialist Teacher for Autism and SENDCo in a Secondary school for over 9 years. She completed the following qualifications: National SENCo Award, Masters in Special and Inclusive Education and Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements.

She can be contacted by telephone at school on 0115 896 4949 or by email:

tmarks@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

Mrs N Bee – The Deputy SENDCo at the Nottingham Free School is a qualified HLTA, Exams Assessor and has achieved the Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements. She has experience of being an early years SENCo as well as 5 years' experience as an Assistant SENDCo in a Secondary setting.

Teaching Assistants with specialist qualifications in supporting students with autism such as the Autism Education Trust's 'Leading Good Autism Practice'

A set team trained annually in de-escalation and positive intervention techniques.

Ms H Simpson – SEND Governor

5. Information about the expertise and training of staff in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and about how specialist expertise will be secured.

The SENDCO attends all relevant, up to date training (including statutory national qualifications) on a regular basis. All Teaching Assistants attend in school continuing professional Learning sessions (CPDL) and individual CPDL is encouraged. As a whole staff we have regular training and updates of SEND issues. There are a number of additional resources in school to provide further strategies for teaching children with SEND which are available to all staff. The SENDCO will attend all relevant Local Authority training. The Educational Psychology Service and other City SEN teams also provide training for staff on issues relevant to the school cohort. The SENDCO will also attend the Nova Education Trust, SENDCO network meetings.

6. How are equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs secured?

Pupils with significant SEND will have access to Element 1 and 2 of a school's budget (up to £6,000 per year). Element 2 funding is a notional SEN budget allocated by a formula funded based on prior attainment and is not allocated to specific pupils.

Some pupils with SEND may access additional funding through the Higher Level Needs (HLN) Funding Panel at Nottingham City Council. In order to access this funding the SENDCO will write a bid in conjunction with class teachers, support staff and with the agreement of a member of SEND support services. Every effort will be made to secure additional funding from

the HLN bidding process and other agencies should this be considered necessary. We work together with the other schools within our education trust to support the training needs of staff. The schools in the trust also support each other with specialist knowledge and joint training. The SENDCO and the Head of School allocate the funding in the best way they believe necessary to support individual children's needs. This may include:

- Small group teaching of English and Maths
- Teaching assistant support within the classroom as part of a small group
- Teaching assistant support outside the classroom as part of a small group
- Teaching assistant support on a one to one basis in the classroom
- Teaching assistant support on a one to one basis outside the classroom
- Assistive technology and specialist resources
- Software
- Intervention packages
- Staff training
- Specialist bought in staff e.g. counsellors, educational psychology services, SEN support teams, specialist tutors

The entrance to the main school building has an accessible approach and doors suitable for wheelchair access. The building is on two floors with a lift enabling full access to all rooms on both floors. Disabled toilets are available on both floors. Disabled parking is provided and the outside space is fully accessible.

7. What are the arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs about, and involving such parents in, the education of their child?

Parents/carers are invited to review meetings, parent information evenings and to contribute to the information shared with staff on their child. Information on support agencies, including Ask Us Nottinghamshire, is available from the SENDCO. Parents are also made aware of the SENDCO during the transition process for pupils in year 6. Parents can contact their child's tutor via email or by phoning or emailing the school office. Parents are kept up to date with their child's progress through parent's evenings, reviews meetings, student review days and progress reports three times a year. In cases where more frequent regular contact with parents is necessary, this will be arranged based on the individual pupil's needs. If an assessment or referral indicates that a pupil has additional learning needs the parents and the pupil will always be consulted with regards to future provision. Parents are invited to attend meetings with external agencies regarding their child, and are kept up to date and consulted on any points of action drawn up in regards to the provision for their child.

8. What are the arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education?

We value and celebrate children being able to express their views on all aspects of school life. This is usually carried out through the School Council, which has an open forum for any issues or viewpoints to be raised. If your child is on SEN Support or has an EHC Plan, then their views will be obtained before or during any meetings and will form part of the review process.

9. What arrangements are made by the governing body relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of pupils with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school?

If a parent or carer has any concerns or complaints regarding the care or welfare of their child, an appointment can be made by them to speak to the SENDCo, who will try to resolve any difficulties and also be able to advise on formal procedures for complaint. The Head Teacher and senior leadership team will aim to resolve any complaints as soon as possible. A copy of the school complaints policy is available on the school website.

10. How does the governing body involve other bodies, including health and social services bodies, local authority support services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and in supporting the families of such pupils?

The school continues to build strong working relationships and links with external support services in order to fully support our SEND pupils, aid school inclusion and provide support for parents. The following services can be involved as and when it is necessary:

- Schools and Families Support Services
- Sensory Impaired Support
- Educational Psychology Service
- School nurse / Health Visitor
- Community Paediatrician
- Behaviour Support Team
- Autism Team
- Learning Support Team
- Sensory and Physical Team
- Community Educational Psychology Service
- Occupational Health/Physiotherapy
- Parent Partnership
- Targeted Support
- CAMHS

11. The contact details of support services for the parents of pupils with special educational needs, including those for arrangements made in accordance with section 32.

The SENDCO can signpost organisations and services that provide additional support and can be contacted by phone or email. Organisations and agencies that may offer additional support to parents may be mentioned at termly review meetings. Occasionally courses/events for parents may be sent directly to parents by letter or electronically if school thinks it may be of relevance or interest.

12. What are the school's arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs in a transfer between phases of education or in preparation for adulthood and independent living?

Transition to secondary school is supported by close liaison between Nottingham Free School staff including the SENDCO /Deputy SENDCo and primary school colleagues. A variety of transition events allow children time to meet staff, see the building and become accustomed to a different learning environment. Additional transition visits are arranged as needed for those students who require more time. These may include visits for short periods during lessons and break times or further discussions with members of staff. In preparation for Post16 education, students will have a careers interview and support with applications to college, apprenticeships etc. Students in yr11 or 13 with an EHCP will have an early review to aid their transition and allow the SEN Team to support consultations with providers.

13. Where is the local authority's local offer published?

More information on what is available to children with SEN and their parents/carers in Nottinghamshire can be found on the Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City Local Offer websites:

<https://www.asklion.co.uk/kb5/nottingham/directory/localoffer.page?directorychannel=7>

<https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/localoffer.page?newdirectorychannel=9>

Review date for SEND Information Report:

Friday, 27th September 2025

Ratified by the Head of School and SEND Governor