



Whitefield

School

Special Educational Needs Policy

Whitefield School

Reviewed: October 2025

Due for Review: September 2026



Table of Contents

1.	Identifying Individual Needs.....	1
2.	Core Provision.....	1
2.1.	The Learning Environment.....	1
2.2.	Classrooms.....	2
2.3.	Curriculum.....	3
2.3.1.	Whitefield School -The Curriculum Pathways.....	3
2.4.	Teaching approaches and strategies.....	5
2.5.	Staffing.....	5
2.6.	Partnership working.....	6
3.	Supporting Individual Learner.....	6
4.	Supporting Children and Young People with Medical Conditions.....	7
5.	Working with Parents.....	8
6.	Staff Training and Professional Development.....	8
7.	Monitoring and evaluation.....	9
8.	Roles and responsibilities.....	10
9.	Storing and Managing Information.....	10
10.	Responding to Complaints.....	10



1. Identifying Individual Needs

Whitefield School caters for children and young people aged between 3 and 19 with a range of Special Educational Needs.

Whitefield School provides a specialist education for children and young people with autism, speech language and communication difficulties, severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some have a hearing or vision impairment alongside learning difficulties.

Most children and young people who join one of the schools already have an Education, Health and Care Plan which describes Special Educational Needs in one of the areas in which the school specialises. A few children and young people join one of the schools for a short period so that their needs can be assessed.

The schools will make their own detailed assessment of what the child or young person can do and the areas where they need support. This assessment will be discussed with parents at a meeting in the first term. Class teachers assess achievement and progress in all lessons and complete detailed records which are used to identify any further needs and to identify the next steps for learning. Parents are invited to two meetings each year to discuss their child's progress. Education, Health and Care Plans are reviewed every year, taking account of the assessment made throughout the year.

Parents who think that Whitefield School may be the right place for their child are welcome to make an informal visit. If they then decide that they would like their child to attend our school, they need to ask their local authority to make an official referral. There is a link to the Admissions Process on the school website for further information.

2. Core Provision

Whitefield School is committed to making outstanding provision for all children and young people placed in its schools. In doing so it takes account of the learning environment, the curriculum and teaching approaches, staffing and partnership working as set out below.

2.1. The Learning Environment

Whitefield School works to create an environment where children and young people can be themselves and enjoy learning. Achievement is consistently celebrated through positive comments, rewards and certificates. Displays in classrooms and around the schools recognise achievement and progress.

All adults seek to build strong relationships with the children and young people in their care and to create a safe and nurturing ethos, including promoting pupil voice which informs both learning and work experiences.

Children and young people are supported to recognise and celebrate diversity.

Within this environment children and young people are supported to build confidence and self-esteem and to make progress in every aspect of learning from their individual starting points. Children and young people at Whitefield School who are significantly medically vulnerable and thus not able to physically be in school are supported through the satellite, Evergreen, class to develop their skills and learning at home.



The school uses its funding efficiently to provide outstanding facilities in terms of buildings and resources to deliver the curriculum through specialist teaching areas, developing provision for ICT and classroom equipment.

Whitefield School has benefitted from improvements to its hydrotherapy pool, playgrounds and soft play area and the installation of new sensory rooms and the creation of 'safe spaces' for children and young people who feel anxious or overwhelmed.

2.2. Classrooms

Our classroom environments should be a welcoming environment which enables our pupils to make progress. We do this by;

- Having a welcoming and calm classroom
- Using symbols and clearly labelled resources
- Reducing clutter and unnecessary sensory distractions
- Ensuring communication aids are always available
- Sharing visual timetables
- Following guidance from SALT, OT and PBS team

For autistic pupils particularly, the SPELL framework is useful. SPELL is the National Autistic Society's framework for understanding and responding to the needs of autistic children and adults. It focuses on five principles that have been identified as vital elements of good practice when working with autistic people, and emphasises ways to change the environment and our approaches to meet the specific needs of each person.

The SPELL framework recognises the individual and unique needs of each child and adult and emphasises that planning and intervention be organised on this basis. The SPELL framework can be used with all autistic people, regardless of age or level of support needs.

SPELL stands for:

- Structure
- Positive (approaches and expectations)
- Empathy
- Low arousal
- Links

Class planning should guide and underpin classroom practice. Each half term overviews for all pathways are distributed and a teachers meeting is dedicated to working together to brainstorm and plan. Class planning is personalised to the class and whilst ideas and strategies should be shared between classes, we expect each class to have their own planning to reflect their needs.

From the Year 9 Annual Review the school plans for the next stage and outcomes are set in Preparation for Adulthood. Some pupils may access formal qualifications and accreditation through ASDAN or Entry Levels/Functional Skills.

Personal Learning Goals (PLGs) are set for all students. Personalised teaching and learning is assessed against these personal learning goals (PLGs) using measuring and assessing pupil progress ([MAPP](#)) for subject-based and developing independence learners, or engagement indicators ([EI](#)) for engagement curriculum learners. PLGs and progress are also considered in relation to co-produced EHCP and annual review outcomes, as well as multi-disciplinary team (MDT) input.



Evidence towards assessment is captured primarily through Evidence for Learning (E4L) software stored on a secure cloud network accessible via school ipad and desktop. The evidence includes photographs, video, written observation, and indicators of change. Evidence can be directly linked to personal learning goals (PLGs).

Curriculum Pathway Leads (CPLs) work with teachers to ensure that Personal Learning Goals (PLGs) are challenging and accurately pitched. Their role includes supporting teachers in providing high-quality teaching and learning through pathway collaboration, accountability dialogues and evaluations.

2.3. Curriculum

We aspire to provide personalised, meaningful and evidence-informed learning for every pupil. We believe in continually reflecting on and developing our practice, recognising that improving pedagogy is an ongoing journey. We aim to use a range of strategies, including visual and multi-sensory approaches, to create supportive, engaging environments where pupils can achieve their individual goals and make real progress.

The curriculum at WFS is personalised and delivered through Curriculum Pathways. This allows the development of appropriately targeted, motivating and stimulating teaching and learning. A more detailed overview of the pathways is provided to staff to aid effective planning.

We know that each of our pupils makes progress at their own rate. We measure this by observing Small Steps for Learning. We record evidence of pupils achieving their small steps on Evidence for Learning. We can also use small steps for learning for target setting for annual reviews and PCLPs.

2.3.1. Whitefield School -The Curriculum Pathways

Whitefield School's curriculum is built around five pathways designed to support different groups of our children and young people. Children in the Early Years (other than those with profound and multiple learning difficulties) follow the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage, adapted for their needs. Other children and young people follow one of the school pathways:

Early Years Foundation Stage children aged 3 -4 follow the EYFS curriculum. Through a combination of structured free-flow play, whole class teaching and practical experiences, pupils learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, communication and interaction, books, equipment and activities.

Reaching Out – Children and young people at very early levels of development follow a sensory curriculum which helps them to become more aware of themselves and the world around them and to build positive relationships with other people. Children and young people who are part of our Evergreen Satellite provision are accessing the sensory curriculum from home.

Stepping On – Children and young people learn through play, exploration, practical activities and community involvement. This curriculum pathway helps them to develop communication skills, key skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT, to live and work as part of a community and to practise the skills which will help them be more independent in adult life. Young people in Key Stage 3 and 4 work towards accredited awards from ASDAN.

Stepping On Sensory – Children and young people learn through early exploration, sensory stimulation and play. We embed sensory integration and processing across all learning as we know this provides an important function for meaningful engagement. This curriculum pathway helps children and young people



to develop communication skills, and to practise the skills which will help them be more independent in adult life.

Climbing Up – Children and young people follow a modified version of the National Curriculum with additional areas as appropriate to their SEND. They may complete qualifications at GCSE or Entry Level and/or follow accredited vocational courses.

Key areas which underpin the curriculum are:

- the development of effective communication with other people in school, home and community through a range of systems - speech, sign, gestures, symbols, objects, pictures and photos, the use of technology and direct communication
- the development of reading and phonics
- the development of functional skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT
- the use of sign language, auditory training and other specialist approaches for hearing impaired children
- the development of strategies for social behaviour and working alongside other people
- the development of strategies to support mental health and emotional wellbeing e.g. self-expression, sensory regulation, understanding emotions
- the development of physical skills for functional movement, life skills and sport
- the development of independence skills including mobility and orientation skills for children and young people with vision impairment
- the development of life skills on site and in the community
- experiences and provision in the area of expressive arts of a rich variety which can be enjoyed at all levels
- opportunities for inclusion within and beyond the Trust schools
- enriched extracurricular activities with access to a range of experiences including clubs before or after school and befriending in the community

The School works to prepare young people for the future through the above curriculum and through:

- working with Project Search, an employment-based route available to some young people at the end of their time in school, teaching job skills and providing career opportunities then supporting students in the workplace
- vocational courses in local colleges, work experience in the community, with charitable organisations and within the Trust
- mini-enterprise projects
- identifying appropriate routes to examinations and accreditation
- supporting children and young people to be as independent and self-reliant as possible and to take responsibility within school
- working with young people and their parents to identify the activities which they will enjoy once they have left school and to find placements which will provide the right care and occupation and further and higher education where appropriate.

Teachers and members of the Family Support Teams work with young people and their parents and with professionals from the local authority to plan for adulthood.



2.4. Teaching approaches and strategies

Within Whitefield School class groups are small (typically between 6 and 12 children or young people depending on their needs). Each class teacher works with one or more support assistants. Teachers and support assistants are trained to use a range of teaching approaches. Key approaches are:

- Total Communication, where children and young people are supported to develop effective communication through speech, sign, gestures, symbols, objects, pictures, braille and photos, the use of technology and direct communication
- precision teaching, which involves specific, targeted teaching of key skills. learning objectives are broken into small steps and each small step is celebrated.
- mastery curriculum, where children are building new knowledge on solid foundations through thematic units
- specific interventions for English and maths such as Read Write Inc and Numicon where children are developing their reading and numeracy skills through a structured, consistent approach tailored to their individual needs
- the sensory curriculum, where children and young people learn to use their senses and to explore the world through direct experience
- functional learning, where key skills including mobility and orientations skills and independent living skills are taught in the context of activities on site or in the community which are meaningful to the children and young people concerned
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) where behaviour is seen as a form of communication. Adults interpret what the child or young pupil's behaviour is telling them and work to avoid reaching a situation where the child or young person feels anxious, angry or distressed. Children and young people are helped to understand boundaries and to express their needs.
- learning through play and practical activities, where children and young people are supported to learn 'hands on' in contexts which are interesting and meaningful to them
- intensive interaction, where children and young people learn fundamental communication skills with individual support
- attention autism, where children are developing their listening and joint attention skills
- small group and individual work which enables children and young people to focus on new learning with close support from an adult and in a way that is highly tailored to individual needs. this may take place within the classroom as part of a class lesson or may involve working away from the classroom.

2.5. Staffing

Whitefield School is committed to recruiting the highest quality staff with the values, attitudes and skills which will enable them to provide an outstanding education. It funds professional development so that staff are well equipped for their roles.

The School maintains positive staff: pupil ratios to meet the needs of children and young people. Every effort is made to provide consistency and continuity of staffing so that the children and young people can establish strong and positive relationships.

Staff in the school:

- are committed to their role
- are committed to keeping children and young people safe
- have high expectations of all children and young people within the schools



- listen to what children and young people are saying, however they express themselves, act as their advocates and support those who can to advocate for themselves
- provide a high level of care
- undertake training and other types of professional development to improve skills and expertise
- work together to share expertise and ideas
- work in partnership with parents and other professionals maintain high standards of professional conduct

2.6. **Partnership working**

Whitefield School recognises the benefits of a team approach. As well as the crucial partnership with parents and make every effort to build strong partnerships with other professionals.

Speech and Language Therapists and physiotherapists employed by the local Healthcare Trust come into the schools to assess children and young people, advise staff and design programmes which are carried out in class.

The School employs its own music therapists and 'buys in' additional speech and language therapy, peripatetic music teachers and occupational therapy as appropriate. Where specialist assessment is needed, the Trust will purchase this from external providers.

The School works with other mainstream and special schools and colleges to provide inclusion programmes and to enhance the curriculum as necessary.

The School also works with other groups such as artists and sporting organisations to provide a rich experience beyond the classroom.

3. **Supporting Individual Learner**

Teachers within Whitefield School personalise the curriculum to meet individual needs so that all children and young people are able to take part in activities which challenge them and ensure that they make progress. We aim to provide enjoyable, high-quality holistic learning opportunities through:

- providing a curriculum and enrichment so our children and young people gain knowledge and skills to meet their needs alongside developing their love of learning;
- placing strong emphasis on language, communication, personal and social development;
- providing positive approaches to behaviour and therapeutic support that enables the children and young peoples' access to learning and quality of life;
- nurturing and celebrating each child and young person's individual abilities and talents;

We pride ourselves in acting as strong advocates for special needs, positively influencing education policy and practices through:

- Championing the valuable contribution people with special needs make to society
- Empowering our young people to be advocates for their abilities and talents



- Sharing our specialist expertise through our outreach services, contributing to national policy, other schools, trusts and organisations including the Police, transport operators and employers.

In planning the curriculum, teachers take account of each child or young person's developmental level, sensory and physical needs, the nature of their communication and the kind of activities to which they respond.

Personal targets are identified for all children and young people so that they can work on the knowledge, skills and activities which are most relevant or important for them. Children and young people who are able to do so will identify their own personal targets.

Children and young people with significant medical needs are supported to gain full access to the curriculum and take part in activities with the rest of their class.

Staff build a detailed knowledge of the children and young people with whom they work and adapt activities for them and record key information in comprehensive assessment and progress files.

Children and young people benefit from activities beyond the classroom including after school clubs, befriending, work experience, sport and the expressive arts. These are chosen to meet individual needs.

The schools arrange inclusion programmes into other schools and colleges which provide access to different subjects, broaden experience and give opportunities to work and play alongside other children and young people.

4. Supporting Children and Young People with Medical Conditions

Whitefield School is able to admit children and young people with medical conditions.

Whitefield School has full time nursing support with two or more nurses on site at all times. Nursing staff are responsible for case management, setting up clinics and providing healthcare advice. Specific school staff are trained to administer and record medication during the school days. All schools have first aiders.

When a child or young person with medical needs is offered a place, their needs are discussed with the Special School Nursing Team who may carry out a nursing assessment. The Nursing Team and school staff will work together to put a plan in place so that the medical needs are met.

Pupils who have complex and significant learning needs and/or may be at the end of their lives, who cannot attend school regularly for medical reasons are part of the Evergreen class and are supported to learn at home.

School staff may undertake training relating to individual medical conditions (e.g. how to respond to seizures or how to support children and young people with asthma). A small number of pupils require 1:1 support from people other than school staff in respect of significant medical needs. Teachers plan to include children and young people with medical conditions in all aspects of the curriculum, adapting lessons as necessary as part of individual planning.



5. Working with Parents

Whitefield School believes strongly that children and young people are happiest and make the best progress when parents and school work together and maintain strong channels of communication. To this end the School employs specialist staff within the Family Support Team; however, it is the responsibility of all staff to work in partnership with parents.

The school seeks to work with parents in order to:

- establish communication between home and school
- identify shared priorities and educational goals for school and home
- work with parents in planning for the future
- share key information about individual needs and strengths
- enable them to meet the professionals working with their children
- provide specialist training (e.g. Early Bird courses and Healthy Minds)
- provide practical and emotional support for parents on an individual basis
- assist parents to build networks and support one another
- encourage parents to join in class activities and special events
- meet the cultural and religious needs of all children and young people

Where necessary, the school will arrange an interpreter so that parents can take a full part in meetings and workshops.

6. Staff Training and Professional Development

Whitefield School has high aspirations for all its staff and therefore seeks to provide the highest quality of specialist professional development so that all staff, whether classroom based, school leaders or members of the admin, site and finance teams, can develop their knowledge and expertise within individual areas of specialism. This increases job satisfaction for staff and contributes to outstanding provision for children and young people.

The range of opportunities for professional development is matched to staff roles and career stages.

- Staff new to the School follow an induction programme which includes training in curriculum, Positive Behaviour Support, moving and handling, safeguarding and communication, strategies and source of support
- Classroom Support Staff follow a performance development cycle which supports and enables opportunities to plan career pathways and professional development. Continuing professional development includes refresher training in key areas, information on teaching strategies and the curriculum and opportunities to share good practice.
- All staff who work directly with children and young people have regular accredited training in PBS.
- Teachers have annual appraisal meetings and other staff agree targets for their professional development annually
- The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through a regular programme of learning walks followed by developmental feedback.
- Staff who are not class based also attend training which is relevant to their roles



7. Monitoring and evaluation

Class teams monitor the progress and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care on a daily basis. A home-school book is used to share information unless parents are in contact with the school team in other ways. Achievement and progress is recorded in detailed files and reported to parents in an annual report and informally during review meetings at other times in the year.

The Senior Leadership Team evaluate achievement and progress across the school by reviewing the records of individual children and young people and by monitoring the outcomes of assessment. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through lesson observation and informal visits to classes and through reviewing records.

Other data which is used to monitor the wellbeing of children and young people within the School includes safeguarding notes, attendance levels, records of challenging behaviour and accident reports.

Class teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Teams will also follow up any information from parents which suggests that a child or young person is not making sufficient progress or is not happy in school.

Every year parents, children and young people are asked to complete surveys to show whether they are satisfied with what the school has to offer. The information given is followed up by the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff have the opportunity to share their views through the staff appraisal process, through staff meetings and focus groups and through the 'Every Child Matters' teams which discuss key issues for the schools including the School Improvement Plans.

Summaries of all the above information are shared with Trustees to support them in evaluating the schools.

8. Roles and responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team monitors the quality of education in a number of ways including reviewing achievement and progress, reviewing the School Improvement Plans and discussing the curriculum offered within the Trust.

The **Principal and Senior Leadership Team** is responsible for the development of the Whitefield School, for supporting its staff and for 'quality assuring' the services offered to children and young people. They are also responsible for monitoring a high standard of teaching and learning, monitoring practice and making sure that individual needs are met.

Teachers are responsible for planning to meet the needs of the children and young people whom they teach, for assessing progress and liaising with other professionals to ensure that all children and young people in the class make as much progress as they can.



Classroom Support Staff work as part of the team to help the children and young people enjoy learning, achieve outstanding progress and develop self-confidence and a sense of wellbeing. All members of the team are expected to act as advocates for children and young people so that their voices are heard clearly.

All members of the school communities are expected to work in the best interests of the children and young people in their schools, using resources wisely and providing the highest quality support for children, young people and families. They are expected to take advantage of opportunities for professional development and to use their growing skills within their roles in school.

9. Storing and Managing Information

Whitefield School collects and uses personal information about children and young people in order to provide a high standard of education and care which is matched to individual needs. Every effort is made to ensure that information is stored safely and only shared with people who need to know it. Where information is stored electronically it is protected by passwords. Staff are expected to maintain confidentiality.

10. Responding to Complaints

If parents have any concerns about the quality of teaching, learning and progress or any other aspect of their children's experience within Whitefield School they should approach the class teacher or a leader in the first instance. The Family Support Team will help them to arrange a meeting if needed. Most concerns and complaints can be dealt with at this level.

If parents feel that the issue has not been fully dealt with, they should write to the Principal of the school or ask for a meeting. They will make every effort to find a way forward.

If parents continue to have concerns and wish to take the matter further, they should make a written complaint and send it to the Whitefield School address. They will investigate the issue and meet parents to share her findings and work towards a resolution.