



Hitchin Girls' School SEND Information Report

(School Offer September 2024)

1. How does the school know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

We use information gathered from previous schools, together with specialist reports and information from parents at transfer. On admission, students undertake baseline assessments and this information will be used to establish whether a pupil requires additional support. There is regular analysis of data throughout the school year which can highlight early areas of concern which might require intervention.

Additionally, staff are able to raise any cause for concern directly with Learning Support for advice and further investigation as appropriate. We are proud of the open dialogue we maintain with parents and students and therefore both parents and students are welcome to contact the SENCo, Mrs Laura Cole, or the Assistant SENCO, Miss Alison Lennon or email (admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk).

2. How will school staff support my child?

At Hitchin Girls' School, students' needs are best met through High Quality Teaching, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014. The school uses the graduated response approach to supporting learning needs. High quality teaching means that staff are adapting the teaching approaches in the classroom to meet specific needs. Teaching staff have training and guidance on specific strategies to support students with their learning. The SENCO, Assistant SENCO and Learning Support Assistants will support students with an EHCP or exceptional sensory/physical need, and provide strategies for identified SEND needs. Where necessary, the SENCO will seek advice from outside agencies or advisors, through County Support. Where appropriate, students will have a pupil passport written in conjunction with pupils and parents in order to ensure staff are aware of particular individual needs in more detail.

All students are supported by their Form Tutor and Head of Year. The Pastoral Team at HGS is well known to students and may be approached at breaks and lunchtime, if students need advice or wish to talk. A range of support exists for those where SEMH needs are presenting including, art therapy, counselling, peer mentors, ELSA mentor, health and well-being coaches and group support.

3. How will I know how my child is doing?

High Quality teaching and high aspirations for all ensure that all students are stretched and challenged. Students at HGS receive progress checks twice a year and a further end of year exams results report, which are sent out to parents. Parents will also have access to go4schools to check their child's progress on a more regular basis.

Baseline testing will take place to help establish any specific areas of need for students. If testing highlights an area of need, parents will be contacted and additional support may be offered.

If key subject reports show that a student is not making expected progress, teachers will review learning with the student. Contact may be made with parents and strategies will be suggested to help the student. Learning Support and Pastoral may be involved, depending on the need. Students on an EHCP will be involved in an annual review with parents and the SENCO. All parents/carers can contact the SENCO, Learning Support team, subject staff and Pastoral staff via the school email. Support may also be offered through the Thrive and Fly programme of additional English and Maths interventions.

4. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

At HGS we believe that lessons should be inclusive. Subject teachers address the needs of students through a cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2014. This means they understand students' diverse needs, plan appropriate curriculum lessons, teach in a way that enables differentiation and scaffolding according to the needs of the student and constantly review students' learning to ensure progress.

Students' needs are addressed through differentiated and adaptive approaches in lessons, the use of assistive technology, specialist support, adapted materials and group work delivered under the direction of the subject teacher. Some students are offered interventions by the Learning Support Department, for example reading support, mentoring, homework club, social communication/autism support, maths small group support, emotional/friendship skills group and dyslexia support. These are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ascertain the impact on student progress.

Provision is regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure it continues to meet the students emerging needs.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

Students have access to pastoral support via their Form Tutor, Head of Year and the Pastoral Team. Where necessary, we may refer to external agencies

through the Local Offer. All students with an EHCP, plus any other students who are identified as needing regular SEND support are allocated a key worker who will communicate with them at least termly to discuss and update provision based on pupil voice.

There are trained First Aid staff in the school who may work with individual students who have a medical condition. All staff are made aware of medical information for students they teach, where it is necessary for them to be informed.

All staff at the school have up-to-date safeguarding training. There is a designated team for safeguarding procedures, under the guidance of the Head Teacher.

Staff are also trained in Mental Health First Aid and weekly well-being sessions take place during registration time.

There is a student well-being section on the school website which provides a range of resources for parents/carers and students. It is also possible to access the Headstrong well-being sessions which form part of the personal development programme from this section.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

Expertise at the school is increased through staff training. We are able to access a number of specialists through the local DSPL (Delivering Specialist Provision Locally) and the Local Authority including: Integrated Services for Learning (Educational Psychology when an EHC needs assessment is being completed, Communication and Autism, Physical and Sensory impairment - including the Visual and Hearing specialist support teachers).

We liaise with and accommodate Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy as part of joint working practices with health professionals. Additionally, we have access to Outreach support from the North Herts Education Support Centre, Woolgrove School, NESSIE and the school nurse. We also work closely with the Child Development Centre, Step 2, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and the Positive behaviour, Autism, Learning Disability and Mental Health Service (PALMS). We refer for support for bereavement, medical, emotional health or other services identified on an individual basis.

If additional, funded provision is required, we apply for local higher needs funding in order to access more bespoke provision such as Tune in to Autism or Learning to Listen.

7. What training have the staff, supporting children and young people with SEND, had or are having?

The teaching staff participate in regular continued professional development to ensure that their knowledge and expertise is up to date. Staff within the Learning Support Department regularly attend training courses. Following a course, they will share this training with the rest of the department and other staff to address specific needs. All teaching staff receive regular on-going training and advice from the Learning Support Department to develop their practice to further support students in the classroom. There are weekly training briefings on a Friday which allow a range of teaching and learning (including SEND support) strategies to be discussed and updated. Any training is also shared through our weekly inclusion bulletin. Mrs Cole has completed and passed the National SENCO Award.

Our Local DSPL network organises regular training in all aspects of additional needs and staff are supported to attend these as appropriate.

8. How will you help me to support my child's learning?

There are regular Parents' Consultation Evenings throughout the school year. The SENCO will be available by appointment at each of these. Subject staff will contact parents if there is anything that can be done at home to support the students with their learning. Some web-based interventions are offered and parents are notified if these can be continued at home. Parents/carers can also receive support to understand how to use technology such as Read and Write which can also be used for homework.

Parents/ carers are able to request a meeting with the SENCO or Assistant SENCO at any time. The Pastoral and Teaching staff are happy to provide additional advice and support on request. The Learning Support Team will also work with you if a Pupil Passport would be beneficial to ensure everyone has shared information about students.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's education?

The school runs regular parent information events to advise of key milestones in a young person's school career. Dates are available on the school website and parents/carers receive written invitations.

The SENCO, subject staff, pastoral support staff, form tutors and heads of year will contact parents/carers if there are concerns about a student's learning or well-being. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns about their child's education.

If your child has a pupil passport, this will be written in conjunction with your child and as appropriate, with parent/carers. This will be available on

go4schools to view and will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure the provisions remain appropriate.

Parent trustees take a full part in the governance of the school and the Trustee board receive regular SEND reports. A regular questionnaire to parents enables the school to understand the views of parents and to take these into account in decision making.

10. How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

All activities, including trips and clubs, are inclusive. A representative group of students forms the student leadership team. Their views are most important and they take a full part in school life. Students with SEND needs are always represented in student groups and during pupil voice activities. Club and trip registers are completed to ensure that students with SEND are participating. When adaptations need to be considered, staff will liaise with the Learning Support department in order to ensure this occurs to meet individual needs.

11. How accessible is the school environment?

Access arrangements are supported within school. Assistive technology or practical assistance is made available according to need.

Due to the age and design of the school, the buildings are not fully accessible to students with long-term mobility difficulties. Where possible, the school will make reasonable adjustments if students on roll has a temporary need. Lifts have been fitted in the newer parts of the school and can be used by students as necessary. Timetable adaptations are made as appropriate to ensure students are on the ground floor as required if there are mobility issues. The school also uses an AV1 robot if a student is unable to physically get into a classroom for a temporary medical reason.

There is also a dedicated Learning and Pastoral Hub when students need time outside of the classroom to regulate or speak to an adult.

12. Who can I contact for further information?

The School Administrative Team are able to respond to general enquires. The SENCo, Mrs Laura Cole and Assistant SENCo, Miss Alison Lennon, are available to respond to enquiries or concerns in relation to additional needs as are the Pastoral Team led by Mrs Tara Batt-Corcoran. Contact with any of these teams is initially through ***admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk***.

13. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

HGS works extensively with primary feeder schools. Staff speak with all year 6 teachers and also primary SENCOs as required to pass on information directly. On Secondary Transfer Day in July, Y6 students will spend a day at HGS and parents are invited for the evening. Additional visits may be arranged for individual students, particularly if they have an EHCP. Pupil passports for all EHCP students, plus any others where reports are received prior to starting at HGS. The first few days for Y7 at HGS involve induction and orientation activities and these are supported by the Learning Support department. As part of the transition process, parents/carers will be invited to attend a transition evening to meet key staff in July and an information evening at the end of the induction week.

If a student transfers from or to another secondary school, there will be an exchange of information and transfer arrangements are agreed. Students transferring to HGS in the Sixth Form have induction days and taster lessons. Information is shared with other schools within the consortium if a student has lessons at one of the other consortium schools.

We work closely with the careers service and FE colleges such as North Herts College and Shuttleworth College to ensure students' needs are met when they start college courses, post 16. The Sixth Form team works closely with students prior to transfer to university and the SENCO will provide information and support to the disability support team at chosen universities if needed.

14. How are the school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

There are various funding options available when an intervention is required to address a specific educational need or an exceptional need. Students with an EHCP are prioritised with support in order to meet the provision identified. Students with a physical or sensory disability may also receive practical support and adapted resources, assistive technology etc. If additional support is required, the SENCO will work with parents to write for local higher needs funding as appropriate. This is an external panel who decide whether it is appropriate to grant the requested funding.

The Learning Support department will help facilitate access arrangements for students in exams.

15. How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

We aim to give students the support they need to become resilient, independent learners to allow them to move onto the next steps as

independent young people or adults. Support in school is allocated and monitored on a needs basis by the SENCO. As a school, we value the sharing of information with all teaching and support staff in decisions about appropriate interventions.

16. What support do you provide for children and young people with Autism/Social Communication Difficulties?

The SENCo, Mrs Cole, and Deputy SENCo, Miss Lennon, are the Autism leads within the School. As a school, we provide students with a diagnosis of Autism or students that manifest social communication difficulties, with a range of reasonable adjustments. We offer students a quiet, safe space in Learning Support and Pastoral hub before, during and after school hours and in class strategies such as time out cards, pupil passports, and where possible, seating arrangements which are considerate of their sensory issues. Students are assigned a Key Worker LSA to meet with on a regular basis to discuss any positives, areas of concern or to support the development of social skills. Communication skills are also practised and supported during Take a Break Club (lunchtimes) and positive behaviours are reinforced during a social skills programme, which include the use of social stories. At the Hitchin Girls' School, we pride ourselves on our flexible and caring approach and see our students as individuals.

17. How can I find information about the local authority's Local Offer of services and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disability?

The Local Offer can be found at [Hertfordshire Local Offer](#)