



Vallis First School 'Local Offer': A Parental Guide for parents seeking support for their child with special needs at Vallis First School:

Here are some answers to typical questions that parents may ask about a school when they are seeking support for their child. We hope you find this guide helpful.

1. Who is planning the education programme for my child? Who is working with my child? What is their role?

1. The class teacher has overall responsibility for every child in their class. Specific interventions are overseen by the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), and usually run by Teaching Assistants (TAs) TAs report to teachers and the SENCo on the progress children are making.

2. What should I do if I think my child needs help?

2. Talk to your child's class teacher if your child appears to be making little progress, or seems to have mismatched skills (may be verbally very knowledgeable, but can't transfer to paper for example), this could show a need for intervention or support. The teacher will work with your child to find out where they are having difficulties.

3. How will school support my child?

3. Firstly, the class teacher will differentiate and target specific areas for the child, and monitor closely. The child will have access to in class resources such as word mats, numicon and phonics mats. If the child is still not meeting the targets, a more specific intervention may then be put in place by the Key Stage Co-ordinator in the first instance and if a child still does not achieve their targets then the SENCo will co-ordinate an individualised programme of support.



4. What is differentiation and how does the school approach it?

4. Differentiation is the process of taking a specific skill, and creating an activity that fits a child's current level, with an achievable amount of challenge built in. This will involve several levels across the class, and is done through careful planning in year group teams. Some children may require a specific activity of their own.

5. How does the school measure my child's progress?

5. Every child is given an aspirational target at the beginning of the year, including children with SEN. Children who are following specific interventions have their achievement measured at the beginning of the intervention, and then again at the end to see how much progress has been made. This is in conjunction with half termly teacher assessments by looking at the work done over the period, and assessed writing or maths tasks at the end of a theme.

6. What opportunities will I have to discuss my child's progress?

6. All parents are invited to parents' evenings twice a year, and are also given a detailed report every year. Children with high level needs are invited to an annual review each year which is run by the SENCo with input from class teachers and TAs that work with the child. Parents would normally meet informally in between the Annual Reviews either with the class teacher or the SENCO as appropriate. If at any time a parent wishes to discuss their child's progress, they are welcome to make an appointment to mutually suit school and parent. This could be with the class teacher, the SENCo, or both.



7. What support is there for my child's overall well-being, medical and pastoral needs?



7. If a child comes into school with a specific medical need, the staff working with that child are given appropriate training to support the child. There are personal care facilities and a motorised bed to prevent lifting in the disabled toilet area. Plans are created with parents to support staff and these are followed for children with diabetes/epilepsy/nut allergies. If children have severe food allergies they may need to eat with a small group of children whose lunches will not trigger an allergic reaction. Medications are administered by specific staff who may need to be trained eg epi pens, insulin. Inhalers and epipens are stored in class and administered by classroom or lunchtime staff as appropriate. Teachers try to create a supportive and caring environment in their classes and staff are watchful for children who may be withdrawn or tearful and need someone to chat to. Nurture provision is in place to support children with on-going social and emotional difficulties. Children whose behaviour puts them at risk from exclusion are discussed at the Frome Behaviour Panel, which has the power to issue further support if required. Parents of children with these difficulties are given the opportunity to work with the Parent and Family Support Advisor (PFSA) and the 'Parents as teachers' (PAT) worker.

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

8. If a child with a specific need comes into the school, or a specific need is diagnosed during a child's time at Vallis, we are able to access professional support. This may be through Visual Support teachers, Hearing Support teachers, the Physical and Medical Support team, or the Autism Outreach team. We also have an allocated Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist to whom we can make specific referrals. If we feel a child needs support from an Educational Psychologist or Learning Support, we are able to request involvement through our consultation meetings which happen twice a year. We also access the PFSA, and as required work with outreach workers from our local Special School. We run Forest School and Nurture provision.

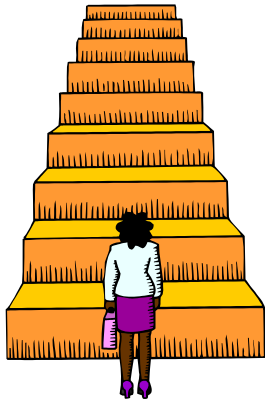
9. What training have the staff had to support children with SEN or disabilities?

9. Key staff have been trained in some areas and all staff in other areas. This includes Diabetes, Autism, Signing using Somerset Total Communication, British Sign Language level 1, Attachment and Emotional Nurture Support and Behavioural support (TEAMTEACH).



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

10. Each child's needs are looked at individually, and trips are adapted to suit the majority. A risk assessment may be carried out to see if the child will be safe and enjoy accessing the trip. Parents will be involved in these discussions. If a child has a specific need that cannot be accommodated easily, then parents may be asked to support them during the trip, or a trained member of staff may accompany them on a one to one basis.



11. How accessible is the school? What adaptations have been made?

11. Our school is on a difficult, hilly and restricted site with several flights of stairs internally and externally and no space to accommodate ramps. We have external wheelchair access to the School Hall, disabled toilet, KS1 classes and the School Office. Adaptations have included: low level hand rails on internal staircases, a disabled toilet with motorised lifting table and nappy changing facilities on the ground floor.

12. How does the school prepare my child for school, and for changes in school?

12. Children with high level needs are inducted into school with a School Entry Plan meeting which involves all professionals currently working with the child, and all those planned to work with them. This is then reviewed in their first term in Reception. If a child joins us during the school year, then meetings are held with the previous school (if possible), and paper work is sent to accompany the child. This will detail previous support given to that child, and the SENCo and Headteacher will arrange appropriate support in conjunction with parents. When children move on during their school time, paperwork will be sent on, and meetings held if possible. At the end of Year 4 the SENCo and teachers meet with middle school staff to discuss children's needs and to develop a School Entry Plan for high need pupils where necessary. Paperwork is shared with middle school staff and vulnerable children are given extra opportunities to visit their new schools.

13. How is the school's special needs budget allocated?

13. Our SEN budget allocation for 2014-15 was about £140,000. This figure fluctuates year on year, dependent on the needs of the children in the school. The budget has been supplemented from other sources to ensure the needs of the children are met. The majority of our SEN budget is spent on staffing to support special needs children, with a small contingency for required resources such as specialist equipment for disabilities or learning needs. Children with high needs are allocated an individual budget, which is usually spent on staff to support them, or to enable them to integrate into a mainstream class.

14. Who should I contact for further information?

14. Please telephone the school on: 01373 462657 and ask to speak to the Special Needs Co-ordinator: Tracy Massey or the Headteacher: Naomi Pauley

