

Dear Parents and Carers,

Supporting children with SEND: our shared approach

We are committed to helping every child at Barham feel supported, included and able to thrive. I would like to explain how we organise support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and recognise the considerable work of our SENCO, Mrs Anderson.

Mrs Anderson works exceptionally hard to support children, families and colleagues. Much of this work happens behind the scenes: advising teachers, coordinating provision, managing referrals, gathering evidence, liaising with external professionals and overseeing targeted interventions. She is also involved in Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) review meetings and plans provision for children accessing the Nest Nurture Provision. Her care and commitment make a significant contribution to our school.

The demands of this role have grown considerably. Almost 40 children now receive SEN Support or have an EHCP, and we are monitoring a growing number of other children whose needs may require additional support. These changes come alongside financial pressures and stretched staffing. Schools and families locally and nationally are also navigating increased demand for SEND support, delays in assessments and access to specialist services, and pressure on local authority resources.

Every teacher is a teacher of SEND. Your child's class teacher is therefore your first point of contact for all questions or concerns about their learning, additional needs and day-to-day support.

Class teachers know your child's classroom experience and are responsible for planning, providing and reviewing their support. They lead the **assess, plan, do and review** cycle, working with you and seeking advice from Mrs Anderson as needed. Please contact your child's teacher through the school office at office@barham.kent.sch.uk, including your child's name and class.

Mrs Anderson supports and advises teachers and maintains oversight of SEND provision across the school. Where concerns require her involvement, the class teacher will liaise with her and agree the next steps. She may also work directly with families where emerging or significant needs require this.

It is neither possible nor necessary for Mrs Anderson to attend every meeting about a child with SEND. Her attendance is prioritised according to need and the purpose of the meeting, including her involvement in EHCP reviews. A meeting led by your child's teacher is an important part of our SEND provision, with Mrs Anderson's advice and oversight available to support it.

Our governors recognise that Mrs Anderson needs protected time to fulfil the breadth of her role effectively. This includes time to support inclusive teaching, review provision, work with professionals and complete essential planning and documentation. Protecting this time benefits children throughout the school.

The SEND Code of Practice makes clear that class teachers remain responsible for the progress and development of the children in their class, including those with SEND. It also states that SENCOs should have sufficient time and resources to carry out their responsibilities. Our approach reflects these expectations.

Despite significant budget pressures, we continue to invest in support. We have established two nurture provisions, restructured staffing to provide two academic tutors delivering targeted programmes under Mrs Anderson's direction, trained an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), and currently fund a weekly play therapist. Staff have also generously given their own time to prepare our nurture spaces, for which I am very grateful.

However, budget reductions meant losing three teaching assistants at the end of last summer, and KS2 classes no longer routinely have additional adults available in the afternoons. Applications for additional funding through our Community of Schools, comprising 13 primary and secondary schools, are considered against limited funds, and approval is not guaranteed.

We understand that concerns about your child can be worrying, particularly when you are waiting for assessments or specialist advice. Please continue to share those concerns with us through your child's class teacher. We ask for your understanding that staff time must be carefully balanced across teaching, direct support, planning and meetings.

A kind and respectful partnership between home and school helps us sustain the care children deserve. Protecting staff wellbeing and keeping workloads manageable are essential to this. Thank you for supporting our staff, recognising Mrs Anderson's hard work and working alongside us to help every child thrive.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jo Duhig
Headteacher



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