

SEN Report 2023 / 2024

(Review date September 2024)

About our school

Dorothy Stringer is a lively, vibrant and happy comprehensive school where it is safe to learn and where everyone can play their full part both inside and outside the classroom. We have approximately 1680 students and have high expectations and are ambitious for all of them. At Dorothy Stringer we have an uncompromising commitment to what is best for our students. Students will need the learning skills, character and attributes that will prepare them for any challenge and set them up for their adult lives.

We work to ensure that all students will achieve their full academic potential and challenge them to maximise their achievement in any community that promotes enjoyment in learning. We are proud of the opportunities we offer outside the classroom in areas such as sport, performance, creativity and service.

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

- Amaze
- BHISS - Brighton & Hove Inclusion Support Service
- Careers advisor
- Part-time Schools mental health service primary mental health worker
- DASH worker
- Diabetes Outreach service
- EOTAS (Medical needs tuition service)
- EMAS (Ethnic Minority Achievement Service)
- Fostering / Adoption Team (attachment)
- Front Door for Families
- Learning Mentors
- Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Adviser
- Occupational Therapy

- **Oncology Outreach Service**
- **'One Youth' Mentoring**
- **RU-ok? (Youth Offending Service)**
- **School Nurse Service**
- **Seaside View Child Development Centre**
- **SNAP**
- **Specialist Literacy Teacher (AMBDA accredited)**
- **Speech and Language Service (Therapists and Specialist Language teachers)**
- **Social Services**

How do we identify if a child / young person requires additional help?

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), Inclusion Coordinator (INCo) and some of our pastoral staff visit every primary school that are sending children to us with any identified additional needs. During these meetings, a picture of the support and provision your child has received and information regarding how to enable access to learning are shared to inform our support for children starting at our school in Year 7. This information is shared with all teachers via our provision map so they are able to plan effectively to support and enable your child to learn alongside their friends and peers.

This support will vary from replicating and continuing the style and type of support your child received at their previous school, to a reduction in support due to the progress your child has made. In addition to this information sharing, and to make sure we have up to date information for all new students, we also undertake a thorough screening assessment in both reading, writing and spelling to identify any literacy needs they may have. This takes place during the first half term of Year 7 and the data and information help us plan our literacy / specific learning difficulty / cognition and learning interventions from November onwards.

During the first half term, all staff working with Year 7 are encouraged to share any additional observations or assessments that will help us more effectively meet the needs of your child in their time at our school. We will inform you of the type of support your child will receive, the review points for this and information regarding any outside agency or colleagues that help support the school support their child.

What can you do if you think your child may have Special Educational Needs?

All staff working alongside your child work closely together and with the SENCo / INCo and the support department. If you have any concerns or worries about your child in a specific subject area or otherwise, you are encouraged to contact us so we can reassure you and ensure we are meeting your child's needs as effectively as possible. Most of the time this information will be able to come direct to you from the subject teachers, Form Tutor or Head of Year but if this isn't the case you will be referred to the support department. Sometimes we might identify an additional need not known about in primary school and if this is the case we will tell you and together we will look at the best options for your child

What training and experience have the staff supporting children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities had or are having?

The teaching and support staff have regular training and updates on many areas to help us support your child as effectively as possible. We regularly receive updates and sessions from the local authority Sensory Needs, BHISS and Educational Psychology services alongside sessions in-house led by our SENCo, INCo and/or Specialist Literacy Teacher to support the specific needs of some of our students. We are open and welcome to the local authority support services advice and review our support in light of their recommendations.

We have an effective induction process for teaching assistants so that new staff better understand the ethos of the school and how we offer effective and appropriate support for students that require this. Some staff attend external courses to make sure that we have the required expertise to meet the needs of our students and our Specialist Literacy teacher, who is AMBDA accredited, has successfully completed a Masters level qualification to ensure our understanding of best practice in Sp.Ld (Dyslexia) is up to date and deliverable across the school.

Accessibility of our school

- Accessible toilets
- Accessible changing facilities
- Lift and wheelchair ramps/lifts

- Ramp

We can provide a full curriculum to all students due to wheelchair access ramps and lifts in many of our teaching blocks. We have a newly accessible science teaching room in a block close to our science block due to access difficulties (specifically stair access) to all science classroom floors.

How do staff support my child / children at our school?

We are an inclusive school with a commitment to meeting the needs of all our students. All teachers understand and undertake quality first teaching whilst the SENCo and INCo oversee the design and delivery of any additional support your child might receive, either in class or in individual / small group interventions by specialist teachers and support staff. This support is in addition to the learning in the classroom and is different from the type of support that subject teachers are able to deliver in classrooms.

These programmes are intended to help your child make progress towards their age-related targets and expectations and are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective and are meeting your child's specific needs. This is important so that if a support programme is not making the impact we would expect we can re-assess your child's needs and make sure a revised programme is delivered as quickly as possible. These programmes range from precise and focused literacy programmes, overseen and managed by our specialist literacy teacher, to social skills groups, social and emotional development projects alongside support for speech and language, Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and other specific programmes.

The support your child receives from our colleagues from Local Authority agencies is reviewed at regular meetings to ensure the desired outcomes are being met. Each term you will receive a learning progress report from your child's teachers and if your child requires additional provision this will be available to you via our provision map on the SIMs Learning gateway (SLG). Other bespoke support plans are shared with you and staff via your child's provision map and regularly reviewed to ensure it is meeting your child's needs. All teachers in the school have access to the same information made available to parents / carers via the provision map regarding the classroom strategies, current intervention and the type and frequency of support your child receives so that they know who to liaise with from the support department.

How does the school match the curriculum to my child's needs?

Each teacher is responsible for making sure the work they set is right for the students they teach. In some subjects from Year 8, your child is taught in broad ability groups that enable staff to better meet the specific needs of your child. Occasionally these teaching groups will have more than one teacher in them, be a smaller group or have a support staff member working alongside students. If students have complex or different learning needs we frequently run professional development sessions for staff so that they are aware of these and can make appropriate modifications to their lessons, sometimes with the help from the learning support staff. This support can also come from the Educational Psychology service, BHISS and other services to ensure that the curriculum offered is appropriate.

How will I know how my child is doing at school?

During the year there are opportunities for you to meet staff at Parent's Evening which follow termly Learning Progress Reports on your child's progress. The SENCo and INCo will be at these evenings so you can talk about the additional support and help your child has been receiving. In addition to this you can use the SLG to see the progress your child is making at any time during the academic year. Within this learning gateway, we share with staff and parents/carers the provision map for students which included classroom strategies, information about interventions a student is involved with additional reports and documents that support the education and other possible additional provision a student might require.

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

If you would like to talk to or meet the SENCo / INCo or other support staff you can e-mail or telephone to make an appointment to discuss your child's progress and support; you do not need to wait for a Parents Evening'. In addition to this, if we want to ask you for more information about your child we will contact you by e-mail or telephone.

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

Your child's wellbeing is very important to all staff at Dorothy Stringer and there are many things we do to help and support our students. We offer targeted learning support both in-class and in small or individual sessions across including specific literacy, social communication and speech and language programmes and interventions. Our support department are there to support students in their learning and to help and manage their behaviour, anxiety and other things that make school challenging. Alongside our pastoral system, we have a team of learning mentors within the support department who are there to ensure your child feels, safe, listened to and offer practical solutions to worries or concerns they may have. The Support Department offers safe and calm spaces at break and lunchtimes, managed by staff, for those students who might benefit from this. Sometimes there are situations that are new for both us and your child and we make every effort to find a solution with both you and your child's help.

How will you prepare and support my child with transitions?

The school works closely with the schools and colleges your child has come from and is about to move on to. SEN/D handover meetings take place between the SENCos and additional transition visits and arrangements are put in place, when necessary, to support children moving from their current school to Dorothy Stringer. General pastoral transition arrangements and information is organised by our Head of Lower School and the pastoral leads in year 7 who meet every student in their primary and junior school before the end of the summer term. During these meetings, they discuss your child's strengths and ways they might need supporting with their class teacher and this information is shared with all staff who will be teaching your child in Year 7 and onwards. Every new year 7 contributes towards this information by completing a student passport which is shared with their teachers.

Where possible we try to make sure that your child will have at least one friend in their new tutor group and this is helped through your completion of forms sent from Dorothy Stringer to you during the summer term. Sometimes 'best-friends' are not the best learning partners but we will listen to your child's previous schools advice and consider this carefully when organising tutor groups. In Year 10 and 11 our PSHE and citizenship lessons help prepare your child for the next stage in their education and these are supported by Parent's Evening and meetings including our partner sixth form and further education colleges.

Our careers officer supports and offer guidance to those students unsure of what their next steps in education or training might be. The schools and colleges in Brighton and Hove work closely together to make sure that no young person by the end of Year 11 can't move onto a new setting for learning, training or apprenticeship. This is called the Brighton and Hove guarantee.

How are resources allocated and matched to my child's special educational or additional needs?

The school receives its SEN/D budget from the Local Authority. We review this annually and regularly spend additional money to support our students in all year groups. The funding is there to ensure we meet the aims set out in our SEN/D policy and the SEN code of practice and is spent in line with these policies.

How are decisions made about what type and how much support my child will receive?

There is not one way that support for your child is decided as every child and their needs are different. The support and provision we design and deliver for your child are based on many pieces of information and guidance from staff within the school and sometimes from outside agencies. Support provision is regularly reviewed to make sure that it is having the right impact and whether it needs to be increased, decreased or maintained. The decisions, when support is reviewed, are helped by conversations with you, your child, subject teachers or colleagues from outside who might have new and updated information.

Sometimes we will need to consult other professionals to find the best support and advice to give you and your child if we don't have the expertise or experience in the school. This will sometimes involve lots of different professionals and in these cases we will call a meeting to which you will be invited so that everybody can share their advice. Sometimes your child might require a particular type of support and there might be a waiting list for this. Although we would prefer nobody had to wait for support this is occasionally unavoidable and if this is the case we will keep you updated as to the expected time the support will start for your child.

Some Parents and carers sometimes choose to have their child assessed by a private educational psychologist. To ensure equitable provision for all our students, we are happy to read and discuss the report's findings but any 'diagnosis' needs to be made by local authority professionals and any changes to additional support will be decided by the school's assessment of the child's needs and not solely based on the report's recommendations. Through the local authority we are provided with clear guidance of how to provide a diagnosis of Sp.LD (Dyslexia).

How are we as parents/carers involved in the school?

The first point of contact would be with either your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. If you have a particular concern about your child's additional need or disability the best person to contact is the SENCo / INCo as appropriate. E-mail addresses and contact telephone numbers are available via our school website. Sometimes we will be unable to come straight to the telephone but we will endeavour to contact you within 48 hours. To support parents and carers we are planning to start a focus group for those parents/carers of students with additional needs to hear your views and ideas in how we can continue to develop and improve our support for our students.

Who to contact

For any queries or concerns about anything to do with your child's learning, behavioural or emotional needs that may be having an effect upon your child, please speak to your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance. These staff may arrange a further meeting with the SENCo or INCo to discuss issues and plan to resolve them.

If you have any concerns or complaints about additional support and provision for your child, please contact Paul Watson, Rob Allen or Matt Hillier, Head Teacher. The governor for SEND can be contacted via the Clerk to Governors or Headteacher's PA (01273 852222).
