



# The ARK Pre-School

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

*Updated July 2011*

In welcoming children with special needs, The Pre-school is responding to our belief that every child has equal value. We serve the children of the group in the following ways:

- We value all children equally and according to our Equalities Policy.
- We recognise that children develop at different rates and different stages.
- The educational aims for children with difficulties and disabilities are the same, therefore our curriculum is differentiated to account for the needs of all children within the group.
- We ensure that staff resources are allocated according to the needs of children and their place on the Special Needs Register.
- We effectively communicate with the parents\* of children who may have special educational needs and welcome their full involvement.
- Planning is undertaken collaboratively so activities and their targets are appropriately organised and implemented for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- Key-workers record on progress by using Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and liaise with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to ensure that progress is appropriate and activities modified and developed as necessary.

### AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To offer a broad and balanced curriculum with as much access to the EYFS as possible.
- To ensure that all the children with SEN engage in all activities and are fully included.
- To ensure the needs and progress of children who have SEN are monitored by our group's SENCO.
- To develop a support system and strategies that enables the SENCO to work with the whole setting team to work effectively with children and their parents.
- To adopt a positive approach, building on children's strengths and taking into account their wishes in the light of their age and understanding.

\* Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

\*\* where parents are referred to in this and other policies, this also includes carers, child minders etc.)

- To involve parents/carers – working in partnership with them, recognising and acknowledging their expertise.
- To ensure roles and responsibilities are explicit with regard to the Code of Practice – i.e. Manager, SENCO, staff, parents, outside agencies and children themselves.
- To work in partnership with outside agencies in order to ensure best practice and meet the needs of children, enabling early identification and to facilitate early intervention.
- To operate a system of observation and record keeping, in conjunction with parents, enabling us to monitor children’s needs and progress on an individual basis.
- Self help, independence skills, gross and fine motor development.
- Knowledge of self and the environment, and early numeracy and literacy skills.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Ark Pre-school has regard for the DFES SEN Code of Practice and the statutory requirements for all Early Years providers.

With regard to children with SEN, DFES states (Education Act 1996, Section 312): “A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.”

A child has a learning difficulty if they:

- a) Have a significant greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b) Have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority.
- c) Is under five and falls within the definition at (a) or (b) or would so do if special educational provision was not made for the child.

A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.

Special educational provision means:

- a) For a child of two or over, educational provision is additional to or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the child’s age in maintained schools, other than special schools, in the area.
- b) Sensitivity will be given to children whose mother tongue is not English. We draw on the knowledge and expertise of the Pre-school SEAL advisor where and when necessary to meet the needs of these children.

## PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The SENCO for the Pre-school is: **Pamela Willemse** (She is responsible for the day to day management of the SEN policy), with Angela Dyer as Trainee SENCO

The SENCO:

- Ensures liaison between parents/carers and other professionals for children with SEN.
- Advises and supports other practitioners in the setting.
- Ensures IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) are in place.
- Ensures information about SEN children is collected, recorded and updated.
- Takes a lead in assessing children's strengths and weaknesses.
- In discussion with colleagues, plans for the future support of the child.
- Monitors and reviews action taken.
- Ensures appropriate records are kept.
- Ensures parent/carers are kept informed of the action taken to help the child and the outcome of the action.

Our area SENCO (from the Pre-school SEN service, Jeanne Saunders Centre) is Teresa Darby (She supports the SENCO and the Pre-school in achieving best practice in the area of SEN within the Pre-school).

The Pre-school operates a key-worker system in order to best meet the needs of individual children. Our key-worker system ensures that each adult is especially responsible for and close to up to eight children each day so each child receives plenty of adult time and attention. The key-worker also ensures planning is differentiated to meet the needs of children within his/her group, developing the curriculum to account for the needs of each child within the group and recording observations and assessments appropriately for the SEN file.

The SENCO is responsible for writing the IEPs and setting appropriate targets with the support of the key-worker and in conjunction with parents/carers. They also ensure that if necessary a behaviour management plan is written and put into place where a child's behaviour poses a risk to themselves or others in the Pre-school.

As part of their responsibilities parents/carers are encouraged to keep staff informed about issues that may affect their child.

## PROCESS FOR IDENTIFICATION

This follows a graduated approach as required by the 2001 SEN Code of Practice (see SEN tool kit) ie, initial concerns, EYA (Early Years Action), EYA+, Statement Assessment.

- By daily observations and recording, by individual staff members/key-workers about the children for whom they have responsibility, areas of development which may be delayed.

- By parents/carers expressing concern about their child's development and being given an opportunity to discuss how the staff can best support their child and the process that support will take.
- By taking account of needs identified by other professionals and working partnerships with these professionals and parents/carers to meet the child's need.
- Where concerns are raised by other staff members, highlight concerns about a child at a staff meeting.
- Where a child expresses their own concerns about not being able to achieve in particular areas.
- Where records from previous settings indicate a child has experienced a special educational need.
- Identification of SEN is an ongoing flexible procedure, which can be undertaken when a child's needs become apparent.

## PLANNING

- The SENCO will discuss the child's needs with the parent/carer and with permission put the child on the Special Needs Register.
- The area SENCO will be notified by the SENCO, of the Pre-school's concerns and a decision made about whether a child is at Early Years Action or Early Years Action Plus Stage of the Code of Practice.
- The curriculum will be differentiated to accommodate the child's needs.
- Individual key-workers in liaison with the SENCO will devise an IEP.
- IEP targets will be written in conjunction with parents/carers to monitor the child's rate of progress. These IEPs will provide opportunities to work on a daily basis to support areas of need and evaluate progress against targets set.
- IEP targets will be assessed weekly and reviewed termly.
- Where parents do not give permission for intervention the Pre-school will continue to sensitively support the child while maintaining an open relationship with parents.
- A decision will be made by the SENCO and the Area SENCO as to when a child is to come off the SEN register or moved onto Early Years Action Plus or the statementing process with parents permission.
- On transfer to schools the relevant SEN transfer forms will be completed and sent on before half term of the Summer term, so future planning can take place to meet the child's needs. Current IEPs will also be sent on in June/July of the year prior to the child starting school in September.

## RESOURCING

- The Pre-school releases the SENCO for 1 hour a week to devote to SEN work.
- Training in SEN is prioritised by the Pre-school. All staff are expected to attend basic Code of Practice initial training after which SENCO staff are then prioritised for additional training as it may arise.
- The SENCO will be given time at each staff meeting to provide in service training for other staff. Topics for training will be established with the Manager and with advice from the Area SENCO.
- Equipment is reviewed each term and more often if necessary to ensure that it is adequate to meet the needs of all children.
- The Pre-school allocates funds towards the purchase of additional equipment as necessary.
- The Pre-school has disabled access to main rooms and access to lift if necessary to upstairs toilet.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

At The Pre-school we recognise that parents know their children best and have a critical role to play in their child's education. We believe parents should be treated as partners able and empowered to:

- Play an active role in their child's education by having an opportunity to express their opinions and having their opinions valued.
- Have their child's difficulties identified early with appropriate intervention to meet those needs.
- Have a real say in how their child is educated by being consulted on IEP targets and being fully informed of their child's progress.
- Have access to information, advice and support during their child's assessment and any related decision-making process about intervention and support.
- Have their child's strengths recognised as well as any additional need.

In order to communicate most effectively with parents we:

- Maintain a positive and supportive attitude to our parents at all times.
- Ensure the SEN policy is available to all parents.
- Make available information on the Pre-school SEN Service, Amaze and other related community organisations.

- Set meeting times with parents/carers whose children are on the SEN register, giving them an opportunity to discuss their child's progress on a regular basis, including termly when IEP targets are set or reviewed.
- Provide the opportunity of a home/school book when that is appropriate.
- Ensure that parents are aware of any procedures that may be involved in the SEN process and are given any documents prepared by the Pre-school in advance of any meeting that may be held.
- Inform parents at all stages of intervention.

## **EVALUATING SUCCESS**

IEP targets are reviewed at least once a term in consultation with key-worker, SENCO and Area SENCO and parents to ensure they are appropriate.

## **CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS/FURTHER ADVICE**

- Any concerns/complaints will be investigated by the SENCO/Manager.
- If necessary they will be forwarded to the Area SENCO or Pre-school Committee.
- Independent advice and support is available from Amaze Tel: 01273 772289.
- The Disability Discrimination Act states: From Sept 2002, it has been unlawful to discriminate against disabled children in the provision of any service a) to treat a disabled child less favourably b) not to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children.
- The Disability Rights Commission (Tel: 0845 7622633) provides a range of information and guidance on the Disability Discrimination Act. This organisation would be able to advise if the concern relates to an issue of the possible discrimination of a disabled child.