



**SLADEWOOD**  
**ACADEMY**

# Sladewood Academy

## SEND INFORMATION REPORT

2024-2025

### SEND PROVIDED FOR:

Sladewood Academy is part of the SAND Academies Trust.

Sladewood Academy endeavours to meet the needs of students whose primary learning need has been identified as 'moderate and additional learning difficulties'. At Sladewood, all students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and identified SEND. This might include – but is not limited to - cognition and learning needs, communication and interaction needs, and/or social and emotional difficulties. This might also include specific diagnoses, including Autism Spectrum Conditions or medical needs. Each child's consultation for placement is considered on an individual basis.

### POLICIES FOR SEND

All students who attend Sladewood Academy have SEND. The curriculum is modified and differentiated to meet their individual needs. Sladewood provides small class sizes, of approximately 6-12 students. All classes have a teacher and, usually, two learning partners (LPs) to support teaching and learning across the class. Sladewood is committed to providing a range of interventions to support academic and holistic development. Further information can be found in our SEND Policy. Alternatively, please contact the school's Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Kathryn Baker, who oversees Inclusion at Sladewood.

### Involving parents/carers in their child's education

At Sladewood, we view parents/carers as partners in the education of their child. We recognise the impact that engagement from parents and carers can have on a child's attainment, both holistically and academically. In addition to an EHCP annual review meeting, we hold two Learning Conversation meetings during the academic year to discuss your child's progress. In addition to these more formal methods of communication, we use Class Dojo (a form of 'instant messenger'), regular phone calls, informal handovers and conversations, and letters to ensure regular home-school liaison.

### Arrangements for consulting young people with regards to their SEND

There are opportunities during both EHCP annual review meetings and Learning Conversation meetings for students to express their thoughts and opinions on their education. In cases whereby students are unable to do this, a member of school staff who knows the student well will provide their views. At Sladewood, we believe that it is important for students to be aware of their own personal targets and learning goals, including EHCP outcomes. This ensures that they understand

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the purpose of their education and the expectations of teaching and learning. Our approach to marking and feedback includes regular use of oral feedback to ensure students have the opportunity to comment on their achievement and discuss the next steps in their learning with teachers and/or LPs.

## **Assessing and reviewing students' progress towards targets and outcomes**

As mentioned above, students are encouraged to review their own successes and areas for development. This applies to both subject specific or curriculum-based targets, in addition to EHCP outcomes. During the marking process, school staff provide regular feedback to ensure that students understand their own next steps. Sladewood Academy believes that it is important for students to be able to give their opinions on their progress and what they would like to work towards. Students' progress is reviewed in conjunction with parents/carers too. Regular revisiting and reviewing of targets supports students to remain 'on track' to achieve the desired goal.

## **Arrangements for supporting students' transition between Phases of Education (including preparation for future education)**

In order to prepare students for upcoming transition between year groups/phases of education (e.g. from EYFS to Year 1, Year 1 to Year 2 etc), they have opportunity to take part in three 'moving up' transition days. This enables to student to meet their new teacher, LPs and, potentially, new peers. This is an important part of preparing students for the next academic year.

Children who will be new to Sladewood Academy are invited to join these transition days. However, we recognise that each child may need an individualised transition programme and we will work closely with families (and, where applicable, previous educational settings) to determine how best to support their child's transition to Sladewood Academy.

At the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6), we focus on preparing students for their next steps of their education. This may include transition days to their new setting, opportunities for staff to observe and meet the student at Sladewood, or other individualised approaches as required. Our aim is to ensure that all students feel as confident and prepared as possible for their 'next adventure' by equipping them with key skills and knowledge required for the transition. This approach also applies for any student who leaves Sladewood Academy, regardless of Key Stage or phase of education.

## **The approach to teaching children with SEND, including curriculum and environmental adaptations**

Sladewood Academy is a Special School. Therefore, all of the students enrolled at the setting have identified SEND. As mentioned previously, students are taught in small class groups. In order to ensure teaching and learning is as focused and effective as possible, students may be grouped

according to age or ability. All classes will have one teacher and, usually, two LPs. Where high-needs have been identified, a class may receive additional adult support (e.g. an additional LP). All classes follow a broad, balanced curriculum which is based upon the National Curriculum and adapted for measure of small-step progress. All classes promote a multi-sensory, hands-on approach to learning.

Sladewood recognises that, for many of our students, communication and interaction is a barrier to academic progress. In order to address this, Sladewood utilise a 'total communication' approach. Staff are trained in a variety of methods of communication and incorporate these into teaching and learning, including signing and use of pictorial/symbolised support. For more information, please refer to our SEND policy.

Sladewood Academy is a 'relational school' and our Relationship Policy ensures that our students develop an understanding of behaviour for learning. We use a 'restorative practice' approach which encourages children to work through any conflicts, mistakes, or incidents with a view to reflecting upon and learning from these. Our approach is to 'praise the positives' and to work through any 'negative' or challenging behaviours sensitively and privately. Emotional literacy and wellbeing is extremely important at Sladewood Academy. Students have access to emotionally-available adults, regular 'circles' and check-ins, THRIVE, trauma-informed staff, and the Zones of Regulation approach.

At Sladewood, students have access to interventions to support their academic and holistic progress. Students are assessed (as a 'whole child') each term. Doing so enables teachers and LPs to suggest which students may benefit from specific interventions at that particular stage of their education. All classes have access to support from our Inclusion team, including HLLPs. We value multi-agency working and have close links with a number of external professionals, including Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists etc. Staff are adept at recognising need for referral to additional services and will work closely with families to ensure this occurs at specific times of need for our students, as well as incorporating programmes of therapy into a student's schooling. In addition to services provided by the NHS, Sladewood has a Speech and Language Therapist who works at the school for 1.5 days per week. We regularly employ additional therapists (e.g. play, drama, music) to work with our students and two of our LPs are specifically employed to support students with aspects of mental wellbeing and inclusion, as well as provision of family support and mental needs support.

The school environment at Sladewood has been designed with the needs of our students at the forefront of this. It includes a number of specialist facilities, including outdoor learning areas, sensory spaces, quiet intervention rooms, and access to equipment for the development of fine and gross motor skills. Our playgrounds include equipment that is integral to the Outdoor Play And Learning scheme (OPAL) and our newly-installed play facility takes into account sensory processing needs.

Additionally, we recognise that technology is an ever-more prominent aspect of our world and can open up channels of communication for our students. Our students have access to technology, including laptops and iPads, which can be used to support their learning. We also hold strong links

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with specialists in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), which may be required by some of our students.

## The expertise and training of staff

Sladewood Academy recognise that the most valuable resources are our staff members. All staff are – or will be - trained with regards to their specialist area, whether this be specific to Key Stage, subject, or job-role. Staff are encouraged to cascade their skills and areas of knowledge to other members of the staff team. This encourages a ‘coaching culture’ and has proven to be an effective approach for increasing staff access to relevant development and training, with reduced cost impact to the school. All staff receive training on the school ethos (e.g. restorative practice), aims, and protocols.

Where possible, Sladewood seeks to recruit staff members who already have experience or additional training in working with students with SEND. However, all staff members are given opportunity to enhance their knowledge of and skills with SEND through continued professional development. We recognise the importance of offering training related to specific diagnoses and needs of the students at our school, enabling staff to provide the best support possible to the students.

Staff training opportunities might include:

- Team Teach (an approach to de-escalation and positive handling, essential for all staff working directly with children)
- Safeguarding (a statutory requirement for all staff at Sladewood – reviewed annually)
- Paediatric First Aid
- Training regarding specific diagnoses, such as Autism awareness or Pathological Demand Avoidance
- Training regarding medical needs (e.g. asthma, epilepsy) and administration of medication
- Training relating to communication and interaction, including Total Communication or PECS
- Intervention training, including THRIVE and trauma-informed practice
- Curriculum-related training, such as specific schemes or programmes (e.g. Read Write Inc)
- Induction and mentoring for new staff

Staff members with a specific responsibility for Inclusion receive training regarding specific interventions offered at Sladewood (e.g. use of AAC devices, DIR Floortime) and/or specific needs amongst the current cohort of students.

## Evaluating our provision

Sladewood is committed to being the best establishment that it can be and is constantly evaluating its successes in providing a high-quality education and meeting the needs of the students.

Evaluating our provision occurs in many ways, including whole-school staff feedback, analysis and feedback from Senior and Middle leadership, and evaluation by the Governing Body. Such analysis and evaluation directly informs our School Evaluation Form (SEF) which, in turn, supports our School Development Plan (SDP).

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As a school, we meet regularly to discuss the impact that all initiatives and approaches are having on student progress. This helps us to identify what is working well and if there are areas for further development (including planning of 'next steps' to address these areas).

All interventions are 'piloted' with a group of students before becoming a definite aspect of our provision. Interventions are reviewed on a 6-weekly basis to ensure that they continue to be meaningful and relevant, evidenced by positive progress from the students accessing the intervention. This enables us to swiftly implement an alternative approach if the intervention does not have the desired impact on holistic or academic progress and/or wellbeing.

We recognise that each student presents with different needs (and, likewise, that all students present with varying need at different stages of development and life experience), and that our provision cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach. Therefore, our provision always incorporates a level of flexibility and adaptability to ensure it meets the need of the individual and/or groups of students throughout the school year.

## **Engagement of SEND students with their peers**

Sladewood recognises that many young people who attend the setting will experience some difficulties and, potentially, some vulnerabilities with regards to social development. This is taken into account when considering class groups. The social and emotional development of each individual is considered, alongside their age and academic attainment, when grouping children into a class. This enables students to develop their social and emotional literacy alongside suitable peers, as well as enabling positive learning to take place in groups, as well as independently. It is important to note that teaching staff consistently differentiate learning which, as well as effectively meeting the needs of individual academic ability, also develops students' understanding of the needs of their peers and similarities/differences they may have; a vital skill required for life in the 'wider world'.

Although students are grouped as described, there are frequent opportunities for mixed-ability and whole-school collaboration, including (but not limited to); morning play, lunchtime play, assemblies, international/ charity days and whole school enrichment activities.

Students, therefore, have substantial opportunity to develop strong relationships with a variety of peers. School staff are committed to, trained in, and experienced with supporting the development of positive friendships amongst the students. Examples of this include restorative practice, thrive and trauma informed practices.

## **Support for improving Social and Emotional Development**

As a school, a key priority is supporting social and emotional development of our students. We believe that the foundation for doing so is establishing safe, secure relationships between our staff and students. This ethos is embedded throughout our school pedagogy and is supported by more specific aspects of our approach, such as incorporating Thrive principles throughout teaching and learning.

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Thrive is a renowned intervention (and assessment) strategy which supports Personal Development. At Sladewood, Thrive is delivered throughout intervention groups (whereby groups of students can monitor and assess their own progress against 6 core strands of development), and is also interwoven throughout whole-school teaching strategies.

Our system for reporting behaviour-related incidents focuses on working towards positive behaviour, and ensures we provide the right type of support for each student. Our school is a 'restorative practice' school - students are given support and time to reflect on choices they have made, encouraging them to make the a more positive choice when encountering similar future scenarios.

We employ three Higher Level Learning Partners (HLLPs), who oversee aspects of social and emotional development: Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Family Liaison, Medical Needs, OPAL and Inclusion. Our HLLPs have key links with external support agencies (e.g. CAMHs, play/drama/music therapists), as well supporting inclusive practice and interventions for each class. All of our HLLPs develop positive relationships with all students by providing teaching cover across the setting too.

## **How we involve other professional bodies**

Sladewood Academy recognises that a collaborative, multi-agency approach is often required in order to fully meet the needs of students with SEND. Teachers and the school's HLLP (Family Liaison) support families by signposting them to relevant agencies and supporting with multi-agency referrals. We welcome and value input from other agencies, including AAC device specialists, Educational Psychologists, Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT), Physiotherapy, and other organisations who form part of the team around child. Such professionals may come in to observe, assess, and provide written feedback regarding strategies for supporting specific students within the school setting.

A high proportion of students at Sladewood have identified needs within the realms of communication and interaction, such as receptive or expressive language developmental delay. In order to best support our students, we have employed our own Speech and Language Therapist for 1.5 days per week (in addition to those on the NHS caseload, we generally have a named linked with the school). We have a service-level agreement with Occupational Therapy in order to support identified needs within the realms of sensory and physical SEND.

Sladewood endeavours to form positive relationships with other professionals and establishments, both within the multi-academy trust and across the locality. Sladewood strives to build partnerships with local schools, establishing links that have a positive impact on the students (e.g. sharing use of facilities).

## **Arrangements for addressing concerns and complaints**

Sladewood encourages open, honest communication within the school community. Sladewood encourages any queries, concerns, or complaints to be brought to the attention of the class teacher, in the first instance. Any unresolved complaints regarding SEND provision at Sladewood Academy

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may be addressed to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher in the first instance, as we may be able to provide a resolution. If the complaint remains unresolved, additional information regarding complaints procedures can be found in our Complaints Policy.

## Key Contacts

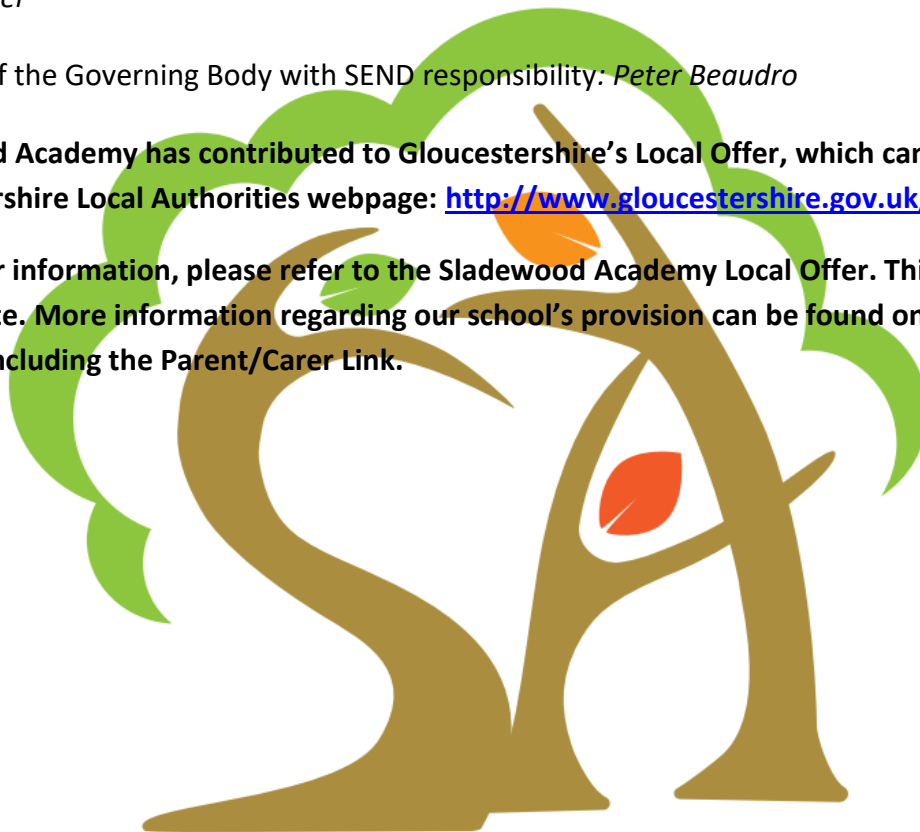
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): *Mrs Kathryn Baker, Assistant Headteacher*

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo): *Mrs Kathryn Baker, Assistant Headteacher*

Member of the Governing Body with SEND responsibility: *Peter Beaudro*

**Sladewood Academy has contributed to Gloucestershire's Local Offer, which can be found on the Gloucestershire Local Authorities webpage: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet>.**

**For further information, please refer to the Sladewood Academy Local Offer. This can be found on our website. More information regarding our school's provision can be found on the school website, including the Parent/Carer Link.**



**SLADEWOOD  
ACADEMY**



# SEND Local Offer

**Name of school: Sladewood Academy**

## **How does our school know/identify that children have special educational needs (SEN)?**

Children are placed at Sladewood Academy following a request for a specialist placement from the child's parent or carer, and an agreement with Children and Young Peoples Service Decision Panel (CYPDS) and the Headteacher. All children have an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) which describes their individual areas of special needs and informs their individual education plan. A formal review is held once a year to discuss a child's progress, their current areas of special educational needs and to agree at least one outcome for each area of need.

Children who attend Sladewood all have moderate learning difficulties but may also have additional complex needs such as, speech, language and communication difficulties, sensory processing needs, autism, or social, emotional and mental health needs. Each referral is looked at on an individual basis to ensure we can meet the child's individual needs.

## **What are the first steps our school will take if special educational needs are identified?**

All children who attend Sladewood have an EHCP detailing their identified SEND. As a team, we consider how the school can best meet the child's needs in order to ensure they make progress. This involves identifying suitable class groupings and key interventions or multi-agency support which need to be implemented. Upon starting at Sladewood, children's level of attainment is assessed using, where possible, data from the previous setting and our own baseline measures using our bespoke assessment tool. We subsequently monitor progress throughout the academic year, informing our understanding of positive progress and areas for development – both academically and holistically. By getting to know pupils well, we can also provide in depth updates regarding their areas of need when reviewing their EHCP paperwork.

## **How will our school include parents and students in planning and support?**

Sladewood Academy operates an 'open door' possibility – we value regular, open, and honest communication with families. At Sladewood, we view parents/carers as partners in the education of their child. We recognise the impact that engagement from parents and carers can have on a child's attainment, both holistically and academically. Parents and carers are invited to attend an EHCP annual review in order to share their thoughts and feelings about aspects of their child's

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development and areas of need. During the review, we encourage parents/carers to support evaluation of their child's progress towards their EHCP outcomes and to contribute their ideas regarding the setting of any new outcomes also. Students are also invited to attend their own EHCP annual review and provide their thoughts on their own needs, as well as their progress towards EHCP outcomes. There may be some circumstances whereby it is not feasible for this to occur and views will purely be provided by adults who know the child well.

In addition to an EHCP annual review meeting, we hold two Learning Conversation meetings during the academic year to discuss each student's progress. During these meetings, parents/carers can discuss their child's progress, achievements, and wishes for future education with the class teacher. If suitable to do so, students will be invited to attend these meetings. Students are actively encouraged to set and review their own teaching and learning targets, and review their progress towards these. Staff members support students to develop the skills required to do this.

In addition to these more formal methods of communication, we use Class Dojo (a form of 'instant messenger'), regular phone calls, informal handovers and conversations, and letters to ensure regular home-school liaison. Sladewood Academy also holds support groups for families and is working towards increasing opportunities for parents/carers to become more involved with events that take place amongst the school community.

Sladewood Academy follows guidance from the Local Authority regarding the Graduated Pathway but please note that, whilst we fully support My Plan and My Plan+ assessments, our staff team do not act as the Lead Professionals for these. The reasoning behind this is that educational support is usually detailed within EHCP outcomes.

## **How will our school involve young people in their education?**

As mentioned above, Sladewood recognises how important it is for students to have ownership of their education. Students are encouraged to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions regarding their learning on a regular basis (e.g. during lesson time, EHCP annual reviews, and Student Profiles). Staff encourage students to evaluate their own performance and learning. Due to the needs of the students, some may opt not to attend the meetings or require views to be provided by familiar adults who know them well.

We also encourage pupil voice by using our 'buddies' who are pupils that are given additional responsibilities around school. Our buddies regularly help other children around the school and take part in assemblies and any other activities which give them the opportunity to develop their sense of responsibility and share their views.

Pupil voice is also captured during our restorative conversations. Visuals and prompts are used to support our pupils who have communication needs.

## **How will our school teach and support children?**

At Sladewood, all students are taught a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum. Our aim is to deliver a curriculum that is appropriate to the age, interests, needs, and ability of our students. Our approach to learning is active and creative, with a focus on life skills and foundations for future learning. As a result, student progress is informed by positive learning experiences and students are

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encouraged to become active, responsible members of the wider community. Sladewood strives to create a community of students who love to learn, based upon curiosity, play, acceptance, laughter, empathy, and positive relationships.

All students are taught alongside their peers in small class groups of approximately 6-12 students. All classes have a teacher and, usually, two learning partners (LPs) to support teaching and learning across the class. However, there are timetabled sessions for students to receive additional, one-to-one, or smaller group sessions where staff can provide focused support on specific areas of need (e.g. social skills). Teaching staff monitor academic and holistic progress, in order to inform 'next steps' for each student and developing the 'whole child'.

Within curriculum planning, Sladewood Academy outlines opportunities to:

- Develop a love of and behaviour for learning.
- Provide suitable learning challenges.
- Meet the students' diverse learning needs.
- Remove barriers to learning.
- Conduct formative and summative assessment of progress.

Sladewood Academy offers all students access to a curriculum which provides high expectations and challenge according to individual need. Students are set individual targets and outcomes, in line with expected development and progress. These are, where possible, shared with students to ensure they understand their own goals. Teachers use a range of strategies to develop the students' knowledge, understanding, and skills. Resources are adapted and differentiated, and extra support is provided, to ensure our curriculum is inclusive and provides all students with access to learning opportunities and assessment processes. Lessons have clear learning objectives and success criteria, and are assessed to inform the next stage of learning. Students at Sladewood Academy have access to high-quality and innovative equipment, including up-to-date ICT equipment, to support a modern, relevant curriculum.

At Sladewood Academy, literacy and numeracy skills are embedded across the curriculum and reinforced in a cross-curricular manner. Early literacy skills are developed through high-quality delivery of systematic synthetic phonics. We utilise the Read Write Inc scheme throughout the setting. Whilst we recognise that some students may learn to read using alternative methods, such as sight-reading, phonics teaching and learning is renowned as the most effective method of learning to read and will remain our primary methodology of teaching early reading and writing skills (as advised by the Department for Education, 2021). We will work with individual students and families to establish the most successful approach for the child.

We recognise that many students who attend Sladewood Academy will exhibit SEND related to communication and interaction, such as delayed development of expressive and receptive language skills. In order this is not a barrier to curriculum access, Sladewood upholds a 'total communication' approach, which promotes all methods of communication. This includes use of (and the teaching and learning of):

- Total Communication/Makaton signing (promoted, for example, through 'signs of the week')
- Visual timetables
- Objects of Reference
- Symbol and/or picture exchange

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- Aspects of intensive interaction
- Access to symbolised computer software and lesson resources, e.g. Widgit or Communicate in Print

All members of the school community (including Senior Leadership, teaching and support staff, families, students, and multi-agency professionals) will work together to create a stimulating and meaningful curriculum. We recognise that the curriculum is continually evolving and developing in order to meet the needs of the cohort of students.

Sladewood is committed to providing a range of interventions to support academic and holistic development. The Assistant Headteacher and HLLP responsible for Inclusion identify students who will benefit from specific interventions.

Class teachers, Subject Leaders, and the Headteacher (responsible for Learning and Assessment) will be responsible for monitoring and tracking student progress, according to their targets, via use of the Sladewood Progress Tracker. Areas of strength are recognised, and areas in need of development will be accounted for by implementing interventions, alternative teaching strategies, and additional support to help students achieve their End of Year targets. This includes tracking and analysing social and emotional development through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) data and Thrive assessments.

The School Governors, SAND Academies Trust board, and SAND Academies Trust CEO are ultimately responsible for the progress and attainment of all students, although they delegate this responsibility to the Headteacher. They receive collated and anonymised data regarding the progress of specific groups of children, holding the Headteacher to the standard of this data in comparison to nationally similar groups of children. The Governing Body are supportive of Sladewood Academy through active engagement in school life, including trips and event.

Budgets will be set in accordance to Gloucestershire expectations, ensuring we are providing a well-resourced curriculum.

## Who will be working with the students?

Staff at Sladewood are qualified and trained to support children with SEND and are constantly improving their skills and/or knowledge through continued professional development. This includes Senior Leadership, Middle Leadership, and each member of the Sladewood team. Each teacher will get to know their students and address barriers to learning presented by individual needs, ensuring that they will receive appropriate teaching, interventions and resources to enable them to access the curriculum. The class teacher plans for the students within in their class and is responsible for overall assessment of their progress. In addition, Sladewood has three Higher Level Learning Partners (HLLPs) who offer further support and cover when needed. They also hold additional responsibilities for inclusion, interventions, family liaison, OPAL, medical needs and mental health and wellbeing.

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The school accesses a range of specialist services through Gloucestershire's multi-disciplinary teams, when required. Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), Occupational Therapists (OT), and The School Nursing Team work within the school to outline individualised programmes of support for specific students. The teaching and support staff at Sladewood will subsequently support implementation of these programmes. This allocation of therapy-related support falls under criteria outlined by the NHS and is led by the needs of the students. Due to the needs of our students, we have employed our own SaLT for 1.5 days per week and have commissioned AAC specialists, OTs, and play therapists to support our students. Sladewood will support access for parents/carers and students to participate in clinics to meet individual needs alongside multi-agency professionals, as required.

## **How does our school ensure that the information about a child's SEND or EHC plan is shared and understood by teachers and all relevant staff who come into contact with that child?**

Each student has their own 'profile' which contains key documentation regarding their SEND, including copies of most recent finalised EHCP documentation and latest review paperwork. This will also contain additional information that may be relevant to the student, such as multi-agency or medical reports, support plans (e.g. Intimate Care Plan), and communication-related documents. High-need pupils will have an accompanying risk assessment, stored centrally for all staff to access. Transitions, inductions, and meetings are carefully thought-out to ensure timely and efficient sharing of information, enabling support for students to be as effective as possible.

Sladewood have regular 'student focus' meetings, which may be held in class teams or as whole-school meetings. This enables the team to share key information and strategies related to specific students with other members of staff. Doing so ensures that all staff are consistent with their approach, thus supporting the student to understand expectations within the school setting and improving access to teaching and learning.

When we require supply staff, we aim to use a bank of regular staff who become well-known to the school and students. Supply staff will also have access to student information to ensure they can provide consistent support across the school day.

## **What expertise does our school and our staff have in relation to SEN?**

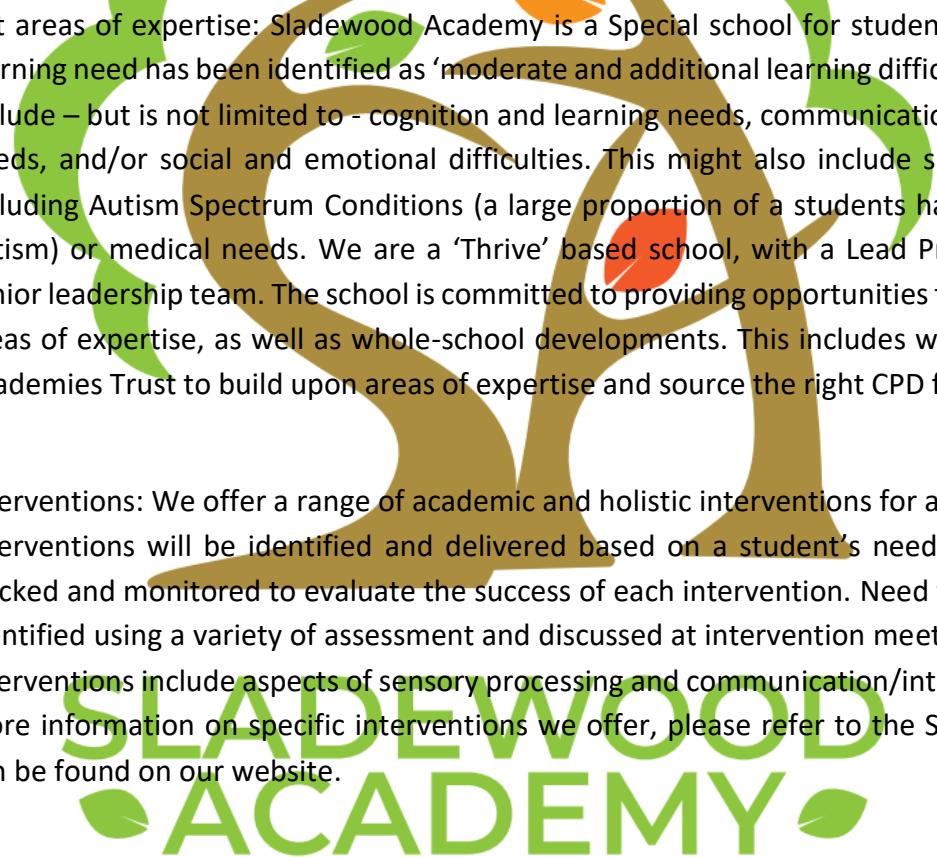
a) Training of staff: All staff are – or will be - trained with regards to their specialist area, whether this be specific to key-stage, subject, or job-role. Staff are encouraged to cascade their skills and areas of knowledge to other members of the staff team. This encourages a 'coaching culture' and has proven to be an effective approach for increasing staff access to relevant development and training, with reduced cost impact to the school. All staff receive training on the school ethos (e.g., restorative practice), aims, and protocols. Where possible, Sladewood seeks to recruit staff members already have experience or additional training in working with students with SEND. However, all staff members are given opportunity to enhance their knowledge of and skills with SEND through continued professional development. We recognise the importance of offering training related to specific diagnoses and needs of the students at our school, enabling staff to provide the best support possible to the students. Staff training opportunities might include:

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- Team Teach (an approach to de-escalation and positive handling, essential for all staff working directly with children)
- Safeguarding (a statutory requirement for all staff at Sladewood – reviewed annually)
- Paediatric First Aid
- Training regarding specific diagnoses, such as Autism awareness or Pathological Demand Avoidance
- Training regarding medical needs (e.g. asthma, epilepsy) and administration of medication
- Training relating to communication and interaction, including Total Communication or PECS
- Intervention training, including THRIVE and trauma-informed practice
- Curriculum-related training, such as specific schemes or programmes (e.g. Read Write Inc)
- Induction and mentoring for new staff

Staff members with a specific responsibility for Inclusion receive training regarding specific interventions offered at Sladewood (e.g. use of AAC devices, DIR Floortime) and/or specific needs amongst the current cohort of students.

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- b) List areas of expertise: Sladewood Academy is a Special school for students whose primary learning need has been identified as 'moderate and additional learning difficulties'. This might include – but is not limited to - cognition and learning needs, communication and interaction needs, and/or social and emotional difficulties. This might also include specific diagnoses, including Autism Spectrum Conditions (a large proportion of a students have a diagnosis of autism) or medical needs. We are a 'Thrive' based school, with a Lead Practitioner on the senior leadership team. The school is committed to providing opportunities to staff to develop areas of expertise, as well as whole-school developments. This includes working with SAND Academies Trust to build upon areas of expertise and source the right CPD for our staff team.
- c) Interventions: We offer a range of academic and holistic interventions for all of our students. Interventions will be identified and delivered based on a student's need. Progress will be tracked and monitored to evaluate the success of each intervention. Need for intervention is identified using a variety of assessment and discussed at intervention meetings. Many of our interventions include aspects of sensory processing and communication/interaction skills. For more information on specific interventions we offer, please refer to the SEND Policy which can be found on our website.
- d) It is important to note, we will deliver any recommended activities or exercises suggested by the Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, School Nurses or Speech and Language Therapists. We regularly review and introduce new interventions to support our students. Due to the high level of need in this area, we now commission our own Occupational Therapist and have employed our own SaLT to support the needs of our students, in addition to support allocated by the NHS. We also work closely with play, music and drama therapists for students who have this provision allocated. For more information, please see our SEND Policy and SEND Information Report, which can be found on the school website.



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- e) Teaching strategies: At Sladewood, teaching and learning involves exploratory play, hands-on and life skills, practical skills, technological skills, and much more. The National Curriculum is modified to meet the needs of the students. Teaching and learning activities are well-paced in order to ensure they are motivating and engaging. Planning is entirely based upon the needs of the children in each class. Many students at Sladewood have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition or SEND related to communication and interaction. In order to support their learning, we adopt a 'total communication' approach. This incorporates visual support for written materials, use of visual timetables, and use of signing. We also recognise that our cohort comprises students with hearing impairments. Instructions are short, clear, and reinforced by a total communication approach. For students with visual impairments, we ensure they are seated with a clear view of both the teacher and teaching resources (e.g. interactive whiteboard). We can also provide larger texts and images for children who benefit from this. Our teaching and learning takes into account any other recommendations from multi-agency professionals, such as the Advisory Teaching Service.
- f) Sladewood recognises that, in order to learn effectively, students must develop 'behaviour for learning'. We motivate and engage children in their education, encouraging them to make positive choices. All students are supported to reflect on their behaviour and we recognise 'mistakes' as important learning experiences. Sladewood adopts 'restorative practice' in order to reinforce the importance of learning from our experiences and reflecting on choices we have made, hence informing positive future decisions. We firmly believe these pedagogical strategies are essential for helping young people develop the skills and knowledge they need to become active, responsible citizens. Positive behaviour is celebrated through verbal feedback, weekly certificates and class rewards (Golden Time). Where it is felt beneficial, students may have a personalised reward chart. Students are able to have time-out if they need this. It may take a variety of structures, such as chatting with an emotionally available adult, using soft-play, or taking some independent quiet time. We also recognise that some students find the unstructured nature of playtimes to be challenging, so students are able to access the sensory garden or have additional adult support during these times. Our playtime scheme, OPAL, supports engagement with activities and resources, which are based upon student interests. In some cases, students may have access to play or music therapy. Students who frequently exhibit challenging behaviour will have a risk assessment in place and an accompanying behaviour support plan to ensure all staff are consistent in their approaches, and that the student receives the most suitable support for their individual needs. All staff are trained in Team Teach to ensure safe, positive handling strategies can be used in moments of crisis to ensure the safety of all students. The above strategies support positive behaviour across the entire school day. Ultimately, Sladewood Academy wishes to support reflection, intervention, and positive behaviours, underpinned by our school values of 'kindness, relationships, and high aspirations'. Internal or fixed exclusion is considered to be a 'last resort' and we strive to avoid permanent exclusion. However, should there be concern that we can no longer meet a student's needs due to extreme behaviour, we will offer our full support to parents/carers in finding a suitable placement for their child. For more information, please refer to our Behaviour Policy (which can be found on the school website).

## How does our school support the emotional and social development of students?

Sladewood is committed to supporting the social and emotional development of all students. We recognise that, often, this area of need can be a barrier to further curriculum access also. As a team, we have regular meetings with a pastoral focus, during which we discuss students who need further support within the realms of social and emotional development.

Sladewood has a number of strategies in place, in addition to aforementioned approaches (Thrive, Restorative Practice) to support social and emotional development. For example:

- Students with high-need in this area have access to regular meetings with a preferred adult (teacher or inclusion staff)
- Students are taught about many aspects of staying safe and keeping health in order to promote their independence
- Risk assessments in place for students with high-need, to outline consistency of approach
- Access to a School Nurse who responds to referrals and requests, and can signpost to further support if needed

a) **Administration of medication:** When a child enrolls at Sladewood, parents/carers will need to complete a medical questionnaire to provide accurate, up-to-date information concerning a child's medical needs. Our 'First Aiders' will be in contact with parents/carers of children with medical needs to ensure they are able to safely and accurately administer medication. Parents/carers are responsible for updating the school regarding changes to medication or administration instructions. First Aiders are responsible for the storage, administration and recording of medication. However, all staff undergo training related to medical administration in case of medical emergencies i.e. the administration of epilepsy medication. All students who require medication to be administered or have a medical needs will have their own protocol for staff to follow.

b) **Personal care:** Staff at Sladewood are able to support students with their personal care and hygiene. Staff can support students with toileting or intimate care needs. This ranges from supporting students during the toilet training process to supporting students with continence-related needs. Staff may support students with use of personal hygiene products and will liaise with parents/carers to ensure consistency of approach. For further information, please refer to the trusts Intimate Care Policy. With regards to eating and drinking, Sladewood staff will support students with cutlery skills, and promoting and maintaining a healthy and balanced diet (including exposure to new foods).

c) **Trips:** Sladewood is committed to providing our students with a range of trips, visits, and opportunities. Our school trips will align with topics of study and schemes of work, and have an overarching aim of providing the students with life skills and experiences. All trips are thoroughly risk-assessed in accordance with Gloucestershire County Council guidelines,

ensuring they safe and healthy for our students. A 'visit leader' is assigned during each school trip. The visit leader is responsible for ensuring codes of conduct and safe practices are followed at all times during the trip. Parents/carers will be asked to provide consent for participation in activities that support the curriculum. For local visits, this may be a generic gaining of permission, which can apply to a range of activities. Residential trips will require more complex assessments and additional permissions.

- d) **Pastoral Support:** Students are encouraged to talk to adults at times of need. At Sladewood, we follow a relational approach which focuses on building strong relationships to enable pupils to feel safe to talk about their worries. Additionally, students have further opportunities to talk to adults during specific interventions, such as Thrive, music therapy, play therapy, or Drawing and Talking. Staff members meet regularly to discuss, from a pastoral perspective, any students of concern and create an 'action plan' as to how concerns will be addressed.
- e) **Preventing Bullying:** Sladewood Academy has clear, consistent expectations for positive behaviour, including behaviour that peers exhibit towards others. During PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic) lessons, students will study topics incorporating understanding of behaviour, including their own and the behaviour of others. This will also include learning about bullying and what constitutes bullying. An anti-bullying ethos is consistently reinforced. As a school, we take part in anti-bullying week (referred to as 'kindness week') and also support promotion of this via assemblies throughout the academic year. Any cases of bullying will be treated seriously and acted upon in accordance with individual needs. Please refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy for more information, which is available on our school website.

## **What access do our students have to extra-curricular activities and facilities?**

When possible, Sladewood will provide a range of extra-curricular activities to suit the needs and interests of the students and their families. This includes breakfast club, swimming, Opal (Outdoor Play and Learning) schemas available at lunchtimes, additional sporting opportunities through Allsorts.

School trips will be planned by class teachers as they have the most secure understanding of the needs within their class group. There may be some trips, visits, or opportunities that are available to the whole-school community. However, different classes may have some differing extra-curricular activities due to need within the group, topic of study, or parent/carer feedback.

A member of our staff team continues to explore funding opportunities for residential trips and holiday clubs.

## **Who will be talking to and keeping in touch with parents/carers?**

All staff members employed at Sladewood Academy will be responsible for liaising with the families of our students. Sladewood takes pride in communicating well with parents and carers, and ensuring that staff are available to listen and respond to parent/carer feedback and views.

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Regular contact and discussion regarding each student's education and schooling is made using both formal and informal variety of methods, including:

- Class Dojo
- EHCP annual reviewing meetings
- Learning Conversation meetings
- Telephone calls
- Conversations during handover at the end of the school day
- Letters
- School Reports
- Certificates
- Assemblies and concerts.

The above methods of communication ensure that regular updates regarding a child's progress are shared, including the sharing of data (and explanations) regarding said progress. The impact of interventions is monitored and evaluated regularly, and the outcomes of such monitoring will be shared with parents/carers and, where suitable, students.

Our Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Kathryn Baker, is the designated member of staff for looked after children. She is supported in this role by our HLLPs Flossy and Rachael.

A parent/carer questionnaire is sent out on an annual basis to gather feedback regarding many aspects of provision at Sladewood Academy. This feedback is subsequently used to inform the School Development Plan.

## **What accredited and non-accredited courses do we offer for young people with SEND?**

Our school aims for all individual students to fulfil their unique potential by supporting their teaching and learning of key functional skills and knowledge that they will need during their future education. Sladewood's curriculum closely aligns with the curriculum at another MALD school within the multi-academy trust and supports the development of skills needed for the transition to Secondary Education.

Due to the needs of our students, we do not take KS2 SATs. There may be circumstances, however, whereby a student exhibits a particular strength in an area and may be entered for the relevant test (unless doing so would have a detrimental impact on the social or emotional wellbeing of the child).

KS1 students will take the Phonics Screening Check in order to ensure they are accessing the right phase of phonic input and to inform our planning for progression in Read, Write, Inc phonic sessions.

All students at Sladewood are assessed according to teaching judgement and supported to make progress in line with our methods of tracking progress.

## **What special arrangements are made for exams?**

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If a student is entered for an examination, they will be granted extra time and appropriate support, in accordance with their SEND (e.g. a reader, a scribe). Exams will be held within a familiar setting. All exams will take place and be moderated in accordance with exam standards.

## **How do we assess and evaluate the provision we have arranged for a child?**

All teachers and learning partners undergo a performance-management process throughout the academic year. This involves a twice-yearly observations conducted by the Senior Leadership Team and two progress meetings with a focus on teaching and learning.

Sladewood Academy will be externally-moderated by Ofsted approximately every three years. We are secure further support for school evaluation via the involvement of a School Improvement Partner (SIP). Sladewood maintains strong links with other settings in the multi-academy trust to ensure 'challenge and support' across the establishments.

The Governing Body are also involved in the evaluation of provision across the school. For more information on the role of the Governors, please see the school website.

Student progress is assessed through several methodologies to ensure it provides detailed information regarding the strengths, areas for development, needs, and progress of each student. Analysis of a student's progress is used to inform their subsequent targets. Progress is monitored, recorded, and reported via:

- Early Years Foundation Stage goals
- National Curriculum Key Stage Indicators
- Sladewood's bespoke assessment tracking system, incorporating academic and holistic measures of progress subject stages completed on Pupil Asset
- THRIVE assessments
- Continuous formative assessment (e.g. observation during lessons)
- EHCP annual reviews and breaking long-term outcomes into short-term goals
- Outcomes of interventions in place for specific students/groups

Sladewood follows statutory requirements for assessing and evaluating school provision, including EHCP Annual Review meetings, Pupil Premium statements, and reviews for looked-after children.

For more information on approach to measuring progress, please see our SEND policy.

## **How do we prepare our students for adult life?**

At Sladewood, we endeavour to provide all students with foundations for their future, including preparation for adult lives. The very nature of our curriculum ensures a focus on life skills. Additionally, we promote British Values and equip students with the skills and knowledge required to become active, responsible citizens. In addition to our planned and delivered curriculum, we aim to develop students' understanding of the world through Enrichment activities, International Days, Charity Days, and other unique occasions throughout the school year.

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## **What resources and equipment are provided for students at Sladewood Academy?**

Each student receives resources, equipment, and additional support in accordance with individual SEND. As a student's needs develop and challenge during their time at Sladewood, it is likely these aspects of support may need varying too (sometimes, this may even vary on a day-to-day basis, depending on need). Each student is allocated funding by Gloucestershire Local Authority, which determines how resources and support are quantified. Any additional funding (to include resources and equipment) will be sought through the 'banding' process and presentation of supporting evidence of the need for additional funding during meeting attended by a representative from the Local Authority and Senior Leadership.

## **What arrangements are in place internally and with other schools/education providers to support transfers/transitions for students with SEND?**

Parents/carers who are considering naming Sladewood Academy as a preferred school placement for their child are encouraged to arrange a tour of the setting. In order to prepare students for upcoming transition between year groups/phases of education (e.g. from EYFS to Year 1, Year 1 to Year 2 etc), they have opportunity to take part in three 'moving up' transition days. This enables to student to meet their new teacher, LPs and, potentially, new peers. This is an important part of preparing students for the next academic year.

Children who will be new to Sladewood Academy are invited to join these transition days. However, we recognise that each child may need an individualised transition programme and we will work closely with families (and, where applicable, previous educational settings) to determine how best to support their child's transition to Sladewood Academy.

At the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6), we focus on preparing students for their next steps of their education. This may include transition days to their new setting, opportunities for staff to observe and meet the student at Sladewood, or other individualised approaches as required. Our aim is to ensure that all students feel as confident and prepared as possible for their 'next adventure' by equipping them with key skills and knowledge required for the transition. This approach also applies for any student who leaves Sladewood Academy, regardless of Key Stage or phase of education.

Sladewood has strong relationships with, and understanding of provision offered by, other schools within the multi-academy trust and across the locality. This ensures that we support our students and families in identifying the most suitable setting for provision of Secondary education for each individual child. This may include support families and students with school visits, incorporating a member of school staff who knows the student well. Preferences for a Secondary Special School setting are discussed with families during the relevant EHCP Annual Review – this usually occurs during the student's Year 5 review as this is considered a 'transition year'. Year 5 Annual Review

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meetings are usually held earlier on in the academic year in order to allow sufficient time for naming of school preference. Sometimes, a representative from the Local Authority's SEND Casework team will attend the meeting in order to gather thoughts and feedback, and answer any queries families have at this stage.

Any upcoming transition for students, in any of the aforementioned scenarios, can be supported by a Social Story, photo book, or other Total Communication approach, as appropriate.

## **How accessible is our school to students?**

For information regarding the accessibility of Sladewood Academy, please refer to our Accessibility Policy which can be found on the website.

## **Where is our SEND policy?**

Sladewood Academy's SEND Policy can be found on the school website.

## **What role do the Governors have?**

The Governing Body plays an active role in the operational and strategic running of Sladewood Academy. Specific Governors are 'linked' with subject co-ordinators and senior leadership to support the development of the school. Governors are able to access data and reports pertaining to all aspects of the school curriculum, information regarding looked after children, behaviour monitoring, and details of exclusions.

## **What can parents/carers do if they are not happy?**

Sladewood encourages open, honest communication within the school community. Sladewood encourages any queries, concerns, or complaints to be brought to the attention of the class teacher, in the first instance. Any unresolved complaints regarding SEND provision at Sladewood Academy may be addressed to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher in the first instance, as we may be able to provide a resolution. If the complaint remains unresolved, additional information regarding complaints procedures can be found in our Complaints Policy.

Parents/carers who feel that their child's needs are not being fully met by Sladewood Academy are asked to bring this to the attention of, and meet with, the Headteacher to discuss their concerns. It may be that certain circumstances call for an early (or, sometimes referred to as, 'emergency') Annual Review meeting, with representation from the Gloucestershire County Council's SEND Casework team present, to formally review a child's progress, developing needs, and provision.

## **How can parents/carers arrange a visit to our school? What is involved?**

We recognise the importance of first-hand experience during the process of naming a Special School for your child. Sladewood Academy welcomes visitors to the school. We proactively arrange open days to show prospective parents/carers and students around our setting. During these tours we will share information regarding the setting and address any queries you may have. During these tours,

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we also strive to provide opportunities for prospective families to talk to current families of the students at Sladewood. Our Open days currently take place on a monthly basis.

If you would like to book onto the next tour (or if, for any reason, you require a visit to the setting at an alternative time or date), please contact the main school office on 01453 709300 who will be able to assist you with your request. Alternatively, you email [admin@sladewood.sandmat.uk](mailto:admin@sladewood.sandmat.uk)

### **Who can parents/carers contact for more information?**

The first point of contact for any queries relating to a child's education is their class teacher. We operate an 'open door' policy throughout the academic year and parents/carers are free to contact us at any point during the school year. There is no requirement to wait until the next formal meeting opportunity. When contacting teaching or support staff during the day, please be aware that they may not be able to respond until outside of their direct teaching hours. Meetings and appointments can be made at times mutually convenient for both the parent/carer and member of staff. In order to contact the teaching team, please telephone the main school office or send a direct message via Class Dojo.

For matters not directly related to a child's progress or in-class education, please contact the main office who will subsequently direct you to the relevant member of the team.

### **When was the above information updated?**

Our Local Offer was developed in consultation with staff, the Governing Body, and parents/carers in April 2023. The Local Offer will be reviewed by Governors on an annual basis, starting from September 2023. This document was last reviewed in September 2024.

For further information, please see the school website (including the parent/carer link).

