



Annual SEND Information Report 2025 – 2026

(Written in accordance with section 69 (2) of the Children and Families Act 2014)

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Shepherdswell Academy's Vision

At Shepherdswell Academy we believe in providing all children with an education which enables them to achieve to the very best of their ability. Shepherdswell Academy is an inclusive, nurturing and ambitious learning environment where mutual respect and high expectation produces resilient, independent and curious learners.

We are committed to the principles of inclusion. We promote equality of access and opportunity to all areas of the curriculum for all learners. Pupils are taught in an environment where they receive equal respect and in which their individuality is valued. It is the responsibility of all teachers to help each, and every pupil reach their full potential through high quality-first teaching across the curriculum.

Shepherdswell Academy strives for our provision to meet the needs of all pupils; this means stretching and challenging pupils in the areas they are exceeding in, as well as pupils that may require more support than others. At Shepherdswell Academy make every effort to cater for each child's individual needs, strengths and next steps.

We believe that parents and carers play a central role in supporting their child's education and we therefore aim to foster positive relationships between school staff, parents, carers and pupils during their time at Shepherdswell Academy.

At Shepherdswell Academy we aim to:

- Identify pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) as early as possible and ensure that their needs are met.
- Have systems in place to ensure all teachers are aware of pupils with SEND.
- Ensure that all pupils take a full and active part in school life.
- Provide all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that is adapted to the needs and ability of the individual.
- Work collaboratively with the pupils and parents, ensuring a strong and supportive network for each child with SEND.
- Have high ambitions and expectations for all pupils including those with SEND.
- Actively engage in support from the Local Authority and outside agencies.

Shepherdswell Academy's provision for Special Educational Needs

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2014) identifies four broad main areas of SEND which provide an overview of the range of needs that are planned for at Shepherdswell Academy.

These are:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

In many cases, pupils may have needs that cover more than one of these key areas. The needs of the whole child are considered alongside the provision required to support the pupil's Special Educational Needs. This ensures that the most appropriate provision and intervention is put in place to support the pupil at the earliest possible point.

Where more specialist support and provision is needed, or where a pupil has an existing EHC Plan, we will work closely with families and external agencies to secure the provision that meets each child's individual needs.

Shepherdswell and Orchard's Social Communication Department - Aspen

In January 2022, Shepherdswell Academy's Social Communication Department (previously known as 'Sparrows') merged with the Department at Orchard Academy (previously known as 'Cedar') in a new provision at Orchard Academy known as 'Aspen.'

Children are allocated a place in the Social Communication Department by Milton Keynes Local Authority. It is a requirement of the authority that the child has an EHC Plan, and that the child's main area of need is Social Communication. At present, the department has twenty places for children at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are on roll at Shepherdswell Academy, and pupils at Key Stage 2 are on roll at Orchard.

As much as our department is focusing on the social communication needs of the children, we pride ourselves on offering personalised teaching and support for each child.

The learning pathway of each child is individualised and bespoke to their needs. The staff work closely with each child to ensure that their physical environment, visual environment and adapted learning approaches work to build on each child's strengths and support the children to achieve to the best of their ability and make progress from their starting points. This may be your child accessing the department but attending specific lessons within mainstream to the ability of your child's needs. We look at improving your child's independence within each setting and encouraging this both in mainstream and the department gives your child lots of opportunities to develop their independence.

Children in the school's department provision also receive regular Speech and Language support delivered by the NHS School's team.

How does Shepherdswell Academy know if pupils need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have Special Educational Needs?

Shepherdswell Academy liaises closely with each pupil's pre-school, nursery or previous school to ensure appropriate provisions are in place for a smooth transition for each child. For those pupils who are new to the country we will allocate support to ensure they too have a smooth transition; ensuring their start at Shepherdswell is a happy and positive one. We also have a close working relationship with external agencies with whom your child and you as a family would have been working alongside i.e. the speech and language team, specialist teaching team and the school nurse. This ensures that we have a bank of knowledge and support strategies in place for the pupils receiving additional support.

Throughout the academic year class teachers undertake a range of different assessments on a half termly basis to monitor the progress of all children. Termly progress meetings are held between the Senior Leadership Team, which includes the SENDCo, and all the class teachers. During these meetings, the progress of pupils across the school is discussed. The focus is then on the children that have been identified as making less than expected progress or those that have social, emotional and mental health difficulties that could be affecting their ability to engage in their learning. Once the identification has been made, appropriate strategies can be suggested and then put into place by the class teacher i.e. smaller group teaching to address any specific areas of difficulty and/or reasonable adjustments within the classroom such as: visuals or task plans and individual reward or behaviour strategies. The progress of the child will be

closely monitored for a 4-6-week period before deciding if the interventions or adjustments have had the required impact or if further assessments or support will be required.

Shepherdswell Academy operates an open-door policy. We actively welcome parent/carers involvement and where decisions are made, they are made conjunctively with both parents/carers and the pupil concerned.

Parents or carers may contact the school at any time if they have any concerns about their child's learning.

A child's class teacher is the initial point of contact for responding to parental concerns. Parents/carers can also ask to directly to speak to:

SENDCo Mr Luke Allwood

Head of School - Miss Williams

Contact Details:

School telephone 01908 665418

SENDCo: luke.allwood@orchard.emat.uk

School website: www.shepherdswell.emat.uk

How will Shepherdswell Academy support my child in the mainstream?

A child's class teacher is responsible for planning learning outcomes which are appropriate to each child's needs and will adapt or scaffold activities accordingly.

Where there are concerns regarding a child's progress or attainment, the child's class teacher will complete an early identification concern form. On this form they will highlight the child's areas of strength and areas where they think they require additional support. They will also share the high quality first teaching strategies that they have already put in place for the child. The SENDCo will then observe the child on two separate occasions and may carry out further assessments if required.

If a class teacher assesses that a child has specific learning needs and/or difficulties in their learning, they may be supported in a small intervention group. The class teacher or teaching assistant will run this group. The length of time the intervention group will run for is dependent on need, however, groups are planned for at least half a term in the first instance. An intervention's effectiveness is reviewed half termly through identifying the impact it has had on expected outcomes set at the beginning.

In addition, internal monitoring arrangements such as Pupil Progress Meetings are held every half term. During this meeting, your child's class teacher and a member of the Senior Leadership team (SLT) discusses the progress of all the pupils in the teacher's class. This shared discussion may highlight any potential concerns and identifies where further support needs to be planned.

If child has a Special Educational Need or Disability, they will be recognised on the SEND register.

How will I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

As a school we operate an open-door policy and encourage parents to talk to us about how their child is progressing at Shepherdswell Academy. Our SENDCo is easily contactable via the school office, by telephone or email and always responds to parents' correspondence as swiftly as possible.

Each term, class teachers will hold a family consultation to discuss every pupil's progress. This will highlight strengths and areas of improvement across the curriculum.

Children on the school's SEND Register

Class teachers will review Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at least termly. All progress towards individual outcomes is reviewed with pupils and parents formally at least termly during parent's consultation meetings. Parents of pupils on the school's SEND register might be offered separate meetings to focus solely on this, as well as being offered the termly parents' evenings. Ways in which a parent/carer can also support a child at home will be discussed and recorded on the Individual Education Plan. It is expected that the school and home will work closely for the child's needs to be met.

In addition, a child's class teacher is available at the end of each school day. Appointments can also be made to speak in more detail to the class teacher, SENDCo or other staff members should this be required. Where external professionals are involved, parents/carers will be invited to meet and share information. Suggestions and programs of study are usually provided by external professionals which can be used both at home and school. Shepherdswell Academy will also provide parents/carers with copies of any subsequent reports.

Some children who we believe may require higher levels of additional support will have an SEN support plan in place.

For pupils with an EHC Plan there will be an additional parent meeting with parents once a term. There will also be a formal annual review held in school once a year to review how well the EHC Plan is meeting the pupils' needs.

Shepherdswell Academy's arrangements for assessing and reviewing SEND children's progress.

In addition to the school's assessment and reporting system, children with SEND have a Pupil Passport and an IEP (Individual Education Plan) or an SEN Support plan. Any decisions and support given to a child on the SEND register will be discussed and agreed with parents/carers.

The Pupil Passport is completed with the child and the teacher and outlines ways in which the child needs or wants to be supported to access the learning and curriculum goals in class. It records what the child's strengths are, what they find difficult and identifies the ways in which they can best be supported. This is a useful visual record for any member of staff who might be working with the child.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) records the short-term targets which have been identified and discussed with the class teacher, child and their parents/carers and the provision that is required for the child to meet these targets. These will be regularly monitored by class teachers and reviewed with parents and the child (when possible) once per term.

This document provides a full background history which includes any information relevant to their SEN needs. Targets and provision will be recorded in the document, and this will be reviewed every six weeks. The SENDCo will involve external professionals from Milton Keynes SEND team after two reviews have taken place. They will provide further observations and advice about targets and provision.

Children with an EHC Plan, in addition to the above, will also have a child centred annual review, involving support from external specialists. Reports from the school and reports from external specialists regarding the child's progress are also shared.

How will Shepherdswell Academy's Social Communication Department support my child?

Children in our Social Communication Department are educated using a variety of strategies and methods. The department lead adapts the curriculum to match learning outcomes to your child's learning needs. Your child will be assessed using a range of frameworks appropriate to their needs. Their learning journey will be documented and shared with you using the Evidence for learning App. Advice from your child's Speech and Language Therapist is also used to guide their individual learning approaches.

We liaise with the class teachers and, together with all adults involved, monitor a pupil's progress and well-being. We also liaise with outside agencies such as Speech and Language therapists to set specific targets for each pupil.

In the department your child will follow their own individual visual or written timetables so that they know exactly what they are doing throughout the day. We also have a sensory and a soft play provision and a group room for individual or small group work, away from distractions.

Some children may access mainstream classes for some of their learning if this is appropriate for their needs. We endeavour to include all children in department in whole school events such as assembly or special celebrations.

How will I know how my child is doing in the department?

In the department we see lots of our parents daily and any issues from the day are discussed at these times. We also use the home school link book to stay in regular contact with parents/carers. We hold Family Consultation Evenings (parents' evenings) termly to talk about child's progress, how they are settling into their learning environment, successful strategies and any new targets. We ask your views on how you feel your child has been getting on with their targets and a meeting will take place to look at new targets.

How can I support my child?

Together, we can work towards your child's individual targets to ensure the best possible opportunities and development for your child. Should you need any advice or strategies the department staff or SENDCo are more than happy to help.

How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

At the beginning of the year, class teachers look closely at information based on the needs of individual children and plan their learning accordingly. Quality First Teaching is in place in all the classes and helps to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum. Teachers are skilled at developing their teaching to meet the diverse needs of the pupils in their class.

Grouping arrangements are organised flexibly with opportunities for ability and mixed groups to maximise learning opportunities for all.

All pupils access our bespoke, relevant, broad and balanced curriculum. Adaptations are made to support specific curriculum needs, for example where a need to develop more independence is identified. Teachers provide appropriate scaffolds to enable all children to be able to access the learning.

Teachers continually 'Assess, Plan, Do and Review' their practice so that all children in their care can access the curriculum and make good progress and attainment at the end of the key stage in relation to their starting point.

When a child is identified as having an additional or special need, their work and working environment will be scaffolded further by the class teacher to enable them to access the curriculum. Additional learning aids and support may also be put in place. A part of this support may include a pupil working with a teaching assistant either in a small group or individually.

Advice and guidance may be given to the teachers and teaching assistants by the school's SENDCo. In agreement with the parents/carers, the SENDCo may also request further support and guidance from external professionals.

A child's FACT/FACT Plus assessment outcomes might also inform practice if relevant.

Recommendations in a child's EHC Plan will also guide practice for teachers when planning the learning opportunities for the child.

How effective is the SEND provision at Shepherdswell Academy?

At Shepherdswell Academy we are always working towards improving our provision to meet the requirements of the changing needs of our pupils. Every half-term, following on from discussions with a range of people, including parents, teachers and the SLT, the SENDCo looks closely at the progress of all pupils on the SEND register. This enables these children to be monitored closely, and provision adjusted to ensure rapid progress is made to narrow the gap between them and their peers.

At the end of every term, the Head teacher and the Teaching and Learning Leads along with the SENDCo look at the data for each year group for the three core subjects, Reading, Writing and Maths, and this data is used to monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness of our school's SEND provision. This information is then used to inform future planning for the following academic year.

What support will there be for my child's overall well-being (Emotional, Social and Mental Health)?

Our Pupils are taught Physical, Social, Health and Emotional (PSHE) lessons through weekly sessions whereby we address topical issues in the world at the time that are relevant to Shepherdswell Academy and our pupils. We also discuss PSHE topics as and when required in class settings to personalise the discussions based around the children in the class and their needs at the time.

Whole school and year group assemblies cover themes based around current affairs, religious celebrations and the key drivers and expectations we expect from our children for them to be successful learners and responsible citizens. We aim to teach pupils to become respectful, resilient and mindful of others' thoughts and feelings through a consistent approach to expectations of behaviour across all year groups to prevent behaviours that may lead to bullying.

All Year groups have been taught about Protective Behaviours and how to look after themselves to keep themselves safe.

At Shepherdswell Academy we pride ourselves on providing outstanding pastoral support. We acknowledge that many children at sometime within their school life may need additional support from their class teacher to support their emotional, mental or social development.

Where a child requires further support, the school employs a full-time Children and Family Welfare Worker to work with them and their family. This person closely works with parents and can provide 1:1 or small group work to support any additional social, emotional and mental health difficulties. They also monitor pupils' attendance and can provide support to parents with this.

Teaching assistants may also be deployed under direction of the class teacher, or members of the senior leadership team, to provide additional support for identified individuals.

Support may involve opportunities to talk with key members of staff, access to small group work and playtime support. This may involve exploring feelings, anxieties, behaviour, promoting confidence, encouraging a positive self-esteem, fostering emotional awareness, strategies for anger management issues/social interaction etc.

What additional support is available for pupils with SEND?

Children on the school's SEND register may require more specialist support from time to time. In agreement with the child's parent/carer and the school's SENDCo, referrals may be made to external agencies such as:

- Educational Psychologist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Milton Keynes Specialist Teachers team (who support the following areas of learning: Learning Difficulties and Specific Learning Difficulties, Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication/Autism Spectrum Condition; Medical/Physical difficulties; sensory (hearing, visual or multi-sensory) impairments).

As appropriate to a child's needs, other external agencies may also be contacted such as:

- School Nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Service)

What arrangements are in place for involving SEND children in their own education?

At Shepherdswell Academy we believe that it is essential that children's opinions and thoughts are central to informing any decisions being made about a pupil's support. Pupils are therefore invited to all meetings regarding provision being made for them. The Pupil Passport is written in conjunction with the pupil and their teacher. Adaptations are made for pupils who may find the process of being involved in such discussions and expressing their opinions a challenging task due to their age or ability.

We always involve any child with an EHC Plan in their annual review, and this may vary according to the child's special educational need. Participation can range from the child helping with the preparations, to attending the meet and greet / welcome part of the SEND review meeting, through to the child playing a full part in the entire SEND review meeting. Regardless of whether the child attends the meeting, their views will be sought and recorded before the meeting. The child will record their thoughts, wishes and feelings in an appropriate way depending on their capability. This process will be supported by an adult that has worked closely with the child. These views will then be shared during the meeting.

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

Our SENDCo seeks advice from the Local Authority Specialist Teacher team each term. The SENDCo also actively engages with Local and National opportunities to share best practice and keeps up to date with current local and national policies to support pupils with SEND.

The Local Authority School Nursing Team, if required, supports the school with referrals to additional services including Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists. Our SENDCo supports parents with referrals to community paediatricians and can provide written evidence for parents to detail any provision that a child is having at school. We welcome visits in school from outside professionals involving observations and discussions about individual children and actively use any strategies suggested to us to improve our provision.

The Local Offer is a directory of information that helps families to find and access support and, through getting families feedback on the Local Offer, will become a useful tool in considering what services need to be changed and developed. All local authorities are required to have their own local offer as part of the government's SEND reforms.

The Local Offer for Milton Keynes can be found on the following website: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/send-local-offer>

The academy works closely with agencies delivering the Local Offer and makes reasonable adjustments to support pupils across other schools.

Ensuring best practice

Shepherdswell Academy is an inclusive school. The SENDCo is in the process of completing the 'National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination' qualification. She has a B.A (hons) degree. She has over sixteen years' experience working both as a mainstream teacher and specialist teacher at a local Special school. The SENDCo advises teachers and TAs of the best ways in which to support and plan for children with SEND.

Regular whole staff training is used to disseminate knowledge, strategies and experience to staff.

The school has a School Improvement Plan which identifies training needs for all staff to improve the teaching and learning of children, including those with SEND.

Individual teachers and support staff attend training courses run by external agencies (e.g. Specialist Teachers team, School Nurse etc) that are relevant to the needs of the children they teach in their class. This may be to support academic progress or to ensure medical/health needs are met.

When external professional advice is required to support school staff, the SENDCo will request this action in agreement with the child's class teacher and parents/carers.

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

At Shepherdswell Academy we aim for all pupils to be able to access all trips and visits that take place outside the classroom. Reasonable adjustments will be made to enable any pupil attending Shepherdswell Academy to fully participate in activities outside of the classroom, including school trips. Risk assessments are conducted and where appropriate are discussed with parents to ensure that where possible all pupils can

participate in all activities. If it is deemed appropriate that an intensive level of 1:1 support or greater is needed, a parent may be asked to accompany their child during a specific activity.

How accessible is the school environment?

Shepherdswell Academy's teaching areas are all on one level and there are ramps at the front of the school to allow easy access to the main school building. Reasonable adjustments would be made to support any children with additional needs in our care from our SEND budget. Please see our Accessibility Policy and Plan on our school website.

Who can I contact for more information about SEND at Shepherdswell Academy?

Class teacher

Relationships are built between school support staff, teaching staff and parents informally on a day-to-day basis. If any concerns arise about your child's learning or progress, parents are initially encouraged to request a meeting with their child's Class Teacher. Further meetings can be arranged to discuss strategies and progress as required.

SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) – Mr Luke Allwood

Further conversations between the SENDCo, the Class Teacher and parents can be arranged as appropriate to discuss any developing needs. The SENDCo is responsible for coordinating any additional support that your child may need.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Avery

Mrs Avery oversees any attendance and safeguarding concerns. She also works closely with the children and their families if they have any pastoral needs; this support can be both one off and ongoing.

Headteacher – Miss Williams

Our Exec Head teacher and Head of School oversee all areas of the school's provision. If appropriate, they will be involved in meeting with parents to discuss children's progress and deciding upon how the school can best meet your child's needs.

Inclusion Governor: Bekky Salako

Our Inclusion Governor supports the school in ensuring that the needs of all children are met in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2014).

Please see our school website: <http://www.ShepherdswellEMATUK>, where you will find the following policies and procedures that you may wish to read:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy

Shepherdswell Academy's Local Advisory Board is active and fully supports all areas of school life. We have an allocated Inclusion Governor who meets regularly with school staff and information is regularly fed back and shared during governors' meetings.

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of the SEND provision at Shepherdswell Academy, please do so by consulting the procedures detailed in our Complaints Policy. This can be found on our school website by following the link above.

How will the school prepare and support my child when they join Shepherdswell Academy, transfer to a new school or move on to the next stage of their education?

Starting in EYFS

During the Summer Term before children start in September, they are invited to school as part of a whole school transition day in July. On this day pupils will familiarise themselves with their new teacher, new class and layout of the school and get a feel for the daily routine of Shepherdswell Academy.

For pupils that have an EHC Plan, there will be an agreed series of transition visits and meetings organised by the SENDCo to ensure that arrangements are in place for the child's transition to Shepherdswell Academy. These meetings will involve Shepherdswell Academy staff, staff from the current setting and parents.

Additional visits can be organised if appropriate for any pupils so that they can become more familiar with Shepherdswell Academy and the staff before September.

Joining Shepherdswell Academy at other times

A new child is encouraged to visit the school prior to starting so that he/she can meet their 'buddy' and be shown around the school.

When pupils join Shepherdswell Academy in-year, the SENDCo will liaise with the child's previous school if the child has any additional needs. The SENDCo also aims to meet with the pupil's parents prior to them starting at Shepherdswell Academy. This helps to ensure a smooth transition and helps the school prepare for the pupil starting Shepherdswell Academy.

As above for pupils who have an EHC Plan, there will be an agreed series of transition visits and meetings organised by the SENDCo.

Moving to Junior School

During the Summer Term before pupils move to Secondary School, the SENDCo will ensure that transition arrangements are in place for pupils with additional needs. Meetings may be held with the SENDCo of Shepherdswell Academy and the SENDCo of the pupils' new school to discuss the pupils' needs. These meetings may also involve the Class Teachers. For those pupils with an EHC Plan, the SENDCos from both schools will meet to discuss additional transition visits for pupils as appropriate. Any TA's that support the pupil at Shepherdswell Academy will also be involved in this transition process.

For those pupils transferring to other schools, the SENDCo will liaise with the SENDCo from these schools to organise an individual transition schedule as appropriate to the needs of the pupil.

Transitions for my child within the Social Communications Department

Transition arrangements are made according to the individual pupil's needs, in discussion with parents/carers and professionals involved. For some children, this may involve a more gradual and staggered process. The Inclusion Team work closely with the next schools to make each individual transition process suit the pupils needs and ensure that each transition is a smooth one.

How are resources and equipment allocated and matched to children's Special Educational Needs?

The school has a SEND Budget allocated each year. The money is used to provide additional support or resources to support the needs of children. The Head teacher decides on the budget for the Special Educational Needs in consultation with the school governors and SENDCo, based on needs in the school. The Headteacher and SENDCo deploy resources in consultation with the Headteacher and other staff members.

This money can be used for:

- Providing specialist equipment to support a specific need
- Providing additional intervention programmes to help a child learn and progress
- Providing a Learning Support Assistant to support individuals or small group
- Providing any additional resources to support learning in any area.

The school's Social Communication Department budget is set and funded by the Local Authority.

This SEND Information Report was updated July 2025.