

The Two Way Street

Dear Parents/Carers,

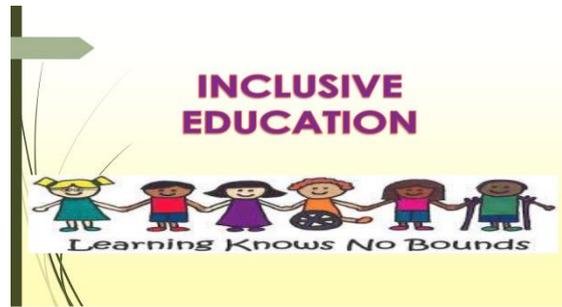


It has been lovely to welcome children back for the start of our new school year. We have already had a fantastic start, with trips, workshops and exciting topics underway! The children have settled remarkably well after the summer break and following two very unsettled years. The atmosphere in school is calm, positive and behaviour is excellent overall.

As always, we are working hard to ensure we meet the needs of all the children in our care. Within our school, we cater for children with a range of Special Educational Needs, which is given the following definition in the SEND Code of Practice: 'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she: has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.'



In addition to these children who need extra support to access school life and their learning more effectively, we are providing additional sessions to help close the gaps in learning that Covid has helped to create!



As well as this support, as an inclusive school, we work hard to support all children in our care, regardless of their ability or needs, through Quality First Teaching, which focuses on high quality, inclusive, personalised learning to meet the needs of all pupils.

Over the year, our staff receives a wide range of training to help achieve this, comes together regularly to share good practice and provides support to each other across school.

Within the classroom, we make lots of adjustments for any children who need them, at any given time. We are fluid with this. We would like to share some of the adjustments that we make within the classroom to reassure you that pupils' needs are being met as best as we possibly can, every single day!

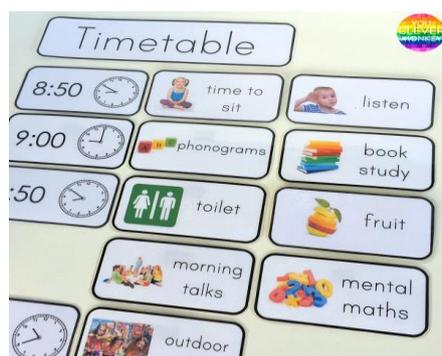
We recognise that each child is individual and their needs can change regularly, based on a range of factors including health, issues at home or with friends! Therefore, we check in regularly with our classes and children that we work with. Good relationships between staff and pupils and regular, clear communication between staff across school supports this. We make time to talk to the children and unpick any issues. When we know what they struggle with we can find ways to help. Getting to know our children well helps us to pre-empt issues or meltdowns when we know what the triggers are.

We try to provide positive affirmations as opposed to negative ones (for example, 'I really like the way you are...' as opposed to 'Don't do that!') and use positive praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour, rather than focusing on unwanted behaviour.



Our staff uses emotion coaching (using moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child about more effective responses. It is important that their emotional state is acknowledged and validated to promote a sense of security and feeling understood and recognised) and restorative practice (where the focus is less

punishment-oriented and based more on discussions for everybody affected by a situation, to listen to points of view and restore relationships) to support behaviour and emotional wellbeing in school.



We try to prepare children every day, so that they feel familiar with their routine and what to expect for the day ahead. Each class has a visual timetable and we break this down into smaller chunks for some pupils as necessary.

We make adjustments for pupils who struggle during less structured times such as break time and lunch time, as well as for those who struggle to enter school due to emotional difficulties or anxieties. Staff are available at the gates in the morning for urgent issues and to welcome the children in.

In classrooms, we use dyslexia friendly colours on whiteboards and provide overlays for individuals who need them. We have areas for children to go to calm down when they feel angry or upset and provide opportunities to move out of class if they feel anxious. We carefully consider the positioning of pupils within the classroom and accept that not all children find it easy to sit still. For these pupils we provide equipment such as wobble cushions, foot steppers and fidget toys. We provide pencil grips and writing slopes to support writing and provide opportunities for fine motor exercises to aid this.

For children who struggle to manage noise and distractions, we recognise that classrooms may not always be the ideal environment for them to work to the best of their ability. We provide 'work stations', or quiet, distraction-free places to allow them to focus.

We provide a range of resources to meet different learning styles, including lots of practical and visual resources to allow children to access work more independently.



We have small groups throughout school to further support learning, as well to help meet social and emotional needs. These include pragmatics groups, social stories, Circle of Friends, ELSA (emotional literacy) and Lego therapy.



Hopefully, the list above - which is not exhaustive and is added to and adapted when necessary - gives an insight into how much every single child is valued in school. All of these adaptations are happening across school, all the time, to meet the needs of all our pupils. However, in order to ensure we are doing as much as we can, as effectively as we can, we need to know if there are any issues going on that we should be aware of. You know your children better than anyone else. For this reason, relationships between home and school are key and good communication is vital. As always, we are able to be contacted during the week by phoning the school directly or by messaging on Dojo and we will aim to get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support,

St John's team

If you have any comments, concerns or questions - why don't you email us at;

office@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk

...or call 01543 452197

