



SHERBORNE GIRLS

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Approving body: SLT

Owner: Deputy Head Academic

Author: Director of Studies, Assistant Head SENDCO

Executive Summary

This policy is for staff and parents and sets out how pupils with Special Educational Needs, other recognised disabilities, or barriers to learning in English, are supported in accessing the curriculum at Sherborne Girls. It fulfils the statutory requirements of the Children & Families act 2014.

It covers the admissions process before pupils arrive at the School, identification of needs while pupils are at the School, the types of support offered for pupils at the School and communication with the pupils and parents. The roles of the SENDCO, the Learning Support department and other staff at the School are explained. This policy also includes details of our support for Exceptionally Able pupils.

Date of Review: Lent 2025
Date of Approval: 30 April 2025



Issue Number: 4.2
Review Due: Lent 2026

Contents

Definition of Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)	2
Admissions and pupils with disabilities, SEND and learning difficulties	3
The selection process	3
Before entry	3
Barriers to learning.....	3
Physical accessibility	4
Other adjustments	4
Auxiliary aids and services.....	4
The Learning Support department.....	4
English as an Additional Language	5
Exceptionally Able (Gifted and Talented) pupils	5
Identification.....	6
Strategies.....	6
Scholars	7
Evaluation	8
Role of the Assistant Head SENDCO	8
Staff training	8
School behaviour and discipline	8
Partnership with parents	9
Complaints.....	9
Continuum of support	9
Supporting documents which inform this policy	9
Appendix 1: Summary of Changes	10
Appendix 2: Meeting the needs of pupils diagram	11
Appendix 3: More information about screening tests	12

Definition of Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

This term applies to all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whether they have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or not. A pupil has SEND if they:

- i) have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made, or a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; and/or
- ii) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age ([Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice 2014](#)).

Admissions and pupils with disabilities, SEND and learning difficulties

Sherborne Girls welcomes all children who can make the most of the opportunities offered and can flourish in its caring environment. The Governors and staff are firmly committed to inclusivity and to giving every child the best possible start in life. Treating every child as an individual is important, and pupils with physical disabilities are welcome if we are able to ensure that they are able to access the educational opportunities at the School should any necessary reasonable adjustments be made. Pupils whose Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and learning difficulties are suited to the curriculum are also welcome provided that the Learning Support Department can provide them and their teachers with the help and support that the pupils require. Our staffing and qualifications to support SEND are set out in the Learning Support Department section below.

The selection process

Our selection policy is set out in the [Admissions Policy](#). Applications from all who have the ability and aptitude to access an academic curriculum are welcome. However, parents of children with SEND or learning difficulties are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the Director of Admissions or the SENDCO before they sit the entrance assessments so that adequate provision can be made for them on the day. Parents are asked to provide a copy of a medical report or educational psychologist's report to support their request, for example, for large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements. We also accept school recommendations made by suitably qualified staff (i.e. those who have a Specific Learning Difficulty [SpLD] Diploma or equivalent in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications [JCQ] guidelines).

Before entry

Each pupil with SEND requires special consideration and treatment. If appropriate adjustments need to be put in place, they will be discussed thoroughly with the pupil's parents and medical advisers, including adjustments that can reasonably be made to the curricular and co-curricular activities before their child becomes a pupil at the School. Access arrangements and interventions to be put in place on entry to the School will be discussed with parents, and, if appropriate, with medical advisers, to enable the pupil to enjoy full access to curricular and co-curricular activities. A pupil's evolving SEND needs will be monitored throughout their school career through feedback from subject teachers and pastoral staff, Learning Support progress testing and whole year assessments, as well as from meetings with the pupil and their parents.

Barriers to learning

The School recognises that social, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning can be associated with some disabilities. Mental illness or learning difficulties can cause behavioural issues. The School aims to work together with families to overcome or minimise these as far as is possible.

Since pupils with SEND have distinct individual needs, the School recognises the importance of communicating closely with parents with regards to learning assessments for their child(ren) and related targets for improvement. The School shares progress, targets and strategies with pupils and parents through the School's reporting system. Individual teachers are able to detail

any special adaptation or differentiation made to a teaching programme for an individual pupil through termly reports and through parent and staff meetings. Included in this reporting structure are specialist Learning Support lessons. The School also promotes the wider personal and social development of pupils with SEND through co-curricular opportunities.

Physical accessibility

Parents of current and prospective pupils with disabilities may wish to obtain copies of the School's [Accessibility Plan](#) from the [Policies, Inspection and Strategy Coordinator](#). This shows the ways in which the Governors plan to make the buildings progressively more accessible to pupils, parents and visitors. The School has an active monitoring policy and will do its best to make adjustments to take account of an individual pupil's needs, within the constraints imposed by its historic and listed buildings, the nature of the site and resources. Facilities to improve accessibility are introduced progressively as buildings are upgraded ([see Accessibility Plan](#)).

Other adjustments

All pupils have personal devices and Office 365 accounts, with a number of accessibility features available that allow pupils to retain independence and find ways of working that suit them best. The Learning Support Department advises pupils on features, software and apps that will address their needs. Pupils can also be advised on the purchase of reading pens, and provided with modified hard copy resources, such as large print or documents printed on coloured paper. For pupils with special dietary requirements associated with SEND, menus can be devised to ensure individual needs are met (see [Food policy](#)).

Auxiliary aids and services

The School will fulfil its duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) to include the provision of auxiliary aids and services. Please also see paragraphs on 'Barriers to Learning', 'Physical Accessibility' and 'Other Adjustments' and our Provision Map for support, which the School can provide to pupils.

The Learning Support department

The Learning Support department is staffed by experienced specialists (with qualifications to teach and/or assess pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties) and led by the Assistant Head SENDCO. These specialist teachers are able to support each pupil with a specific learning difficulty in the following areas

- [Speech, Language and Communication](#) – including Autism
- [Cognition & Learning](#) – dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
- [Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties](#) – ADHD (including inattentive type), emotional and behavioural problems
- [Physical Disabilities](#) – including visual or hearing impairment, which impact on learning

Staff receive regular SEND training and are aware that conditions may manifest co-morbidly and occur across diverse spectrums. The School therefore endorses the use of the term 'Specific Learning Difficulty' to encompass the range of challenges with which pupils may present.

Some SEND pupils may require specialist support from the Learning Support department. This will be discussed with parents before their child enters the School, or as soon as a need is identified.

Group screening at pre-determined stages of a pupil's progression through school is accompanied by individual screening usually conducted by the Head of Learning Support and qualified specialist teachers (see [Appendix 3](#)). Specialist, bespoke one-to-one and group intervention lessons are offered alongside the normal curriculum for some pupils and paid for by parents. The School works closely with the pupil and their parents to help overcome the barriers that their difficulties present. The pupil is encouraged to take ownership of their learning advancement and to assist in the identification and planning of their own areas of development, with a key aim being the development of independence in their learning. Sessions with external specialists, such as Speech and Language Therapists, can be arranged if advantageous.

Pupils with identified or suspected learning difficulties may need to be assessed at their parents' expense by a specialist, such as an educational psychologist, so that the areas requiring support can be identified. A formal assessment, either by an in-house Level 7 assessor or an educational psychologist, is required for all SEND pupils¹ in advance of public examinations to secure appropriate access arrangements. Where the assessment has been carried out by an external professional, it is appropriate and anticipated that the School's feedback will also be required to secure the necessary access arrangements. In identifying appropriate access arrangements for public examinations, the School will seek to support the pupil's needs while proceeding with access arrangements allowing for the greatest independence and least intrusion, so that each pupil's examination experience is as close as possible to that of pupils without SEND.

All new pupils' files are screened by the Assistant Head SENDCO and Head of Learning Support and pupils with potential needs are identified using admissions tests and information from parents and previous schools. All new pupils are screened by the Learning Support Department early in the academic year. Further screening of existing pupils is also carried out; this follows referrals from teachers or tutors as they identify potential needs.

English as an Additional Language

Pupils are not regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language used in their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. However, support will be available should a pupil have difficulties not related to their second language skills; these will be identified and met in accordance with this policy.

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Sherborne Girls, pupils should be fluent English speakers. The school may recommend that some children, whose first language at home is not English, receive tuition in English as an additional language.

Exceptionally Able (Gifted and Talented) pupils

Our pupil body is by its nature made up of individuals with a wide range of skills and talents, gifted by national standards. Our aim is to allow each pupil to achieve their potential and to that end we do not see provision for these pupils as something "bolted on", but as an integral part of our ethos. A small number of pupils have exceptional all-round ability. Others have exceptional

¹ Where pupils have relevant specific medical needs or an ADHD assessment, they may qualify automatically for some access arrangements without further assessment being required.

skill or greater than average previous experience in one specific area; these gifts may be very diverse.

The role of Assistant Head Academic Enrichment and Aspiration (AHAEA) exists to acknowledge or help identify such ability and promote appropriate awareness of and provision for it, so that each pupil is motivated and able to develop. The AHAEA has responsibility for recording and evaluating action and maintains the register of able pupils. The AHAEA works under the immediate direction of the Deputy Head Academic, but is involved in liaison with tutorial, pastoral and teaching staff.

Provision should be made where possible for pupils with a head start (e.g. bilinguals) who may be intellectually average but differently skilled.

Identification

Our exceptionally able may be defined as having:

- ability across the board;
- ability in a specialised area (e.g. maths, music, languages...);
- maturity (not the same as extroversion or confidence);
- a need for direction and inspiration more than supervision.

Pupils for whom intervention/ extension is appropriate may be identified by 3 main routes:

1. Baseline testing (CAT4);
2. Performance in one or more subject areas, reported by an academic department;
3. A general appetite for achievement, or signs of frustration, recognised in a pastoral or tutorial context.

Pupils identified on all three counts are a priority for whole school action – i.e. more than simple classroom differentiation is needed.

The AHAEA will liaise as appropriate with the Assistant Head SENDCO. Together they encourage all staff to cater sympathetically for the pupil who:

- has an advanced social and moral awareness;
- is a born leader;
- is persistent and resourceful;
- can concentrate for an inordinate amount of time on one topic;
- has an unusual hobby such as astronomy, fossils;
- is inquisitive and sceptical;
- has an advanced vocabulary;
- shows initiative and does not follow the herd;
- pays great attention to detail;
- grasps new concepts with ease;
- links areas of knowledge without specific teaching;
- is very motivated and self-disciplined;
- is a lateral or divergent thinker.

Strategies

Marking and classroom interaction should always push learning forward.

In years 7-9, the Sherborne Girls Diploma provides a framework for celebration, reflection and extension, scope for individualisation and the development of key skills. The tutor should encourage a creative approach to compiling the portfolio, and special events should be represented here.

Staff should:

- make sure the pupil is not afraid to show their ability;
- give stimulating work so they don't 'switch off';
- have extension material available to offer additional challenges;
- help them to feel valued as a person, not just for an unusual gift;
- try to ensure they have contact with pupils of similar ability or adults with similar interests;
- help them to become self-critical and evaluate their own work.

Ways in which pupils can be stimulated include:

- Participation in external events such as Olympiads, Maths Challenge, Salters, competitions, NCGT residential courses, public speaking, Douzelage symposium etc.;
- Participation in Seminar group and academic clubs and societies;
- Oxbridge preparation;
- Fast track – GCSE French early modules;
- Mentoring – reading programmes;
- Differentiated tasks.

Scholars

Sherborne Girls offers scholarships for excellence in Academic performance, Music, Sport, Drama and Art. Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent.

All scholars and exhibition holders are involved in special Scholars' Events, typically a morning or afternoon devoted to a particular theme, and often jointly with other local schools in both the maintained and independent sectors.

Art Scholars are encouraged to develop their skills across a range of media, whilst Photo Club, Life classes and numerous workshops offer extra stimulus.

Drama Scholars benefit from additional Speech and Drama lessons and enjoy numerous workshops which offer extra stimulus.

Sports scholars are offered elite coaching in any of: hockey, lacrosse, tennis, running and swimming, as well as participation as appropriate in trials for County, Regional and National teams. There are many opportunities for them to develop leadership skills through captaincy as the school runs many teams involved in both external and internal competition e.g. Inter-House Tournaments.

Music scholars have the opportunity to learn an orchestral instrument, play in an orchestra, sing in a choir, participate in ensembles and be prepared for examinations in musical theory, as appropriate, in addition to their first instrument. There are many opportunities for music making at a high standard, including the Joint Schools Symphony Orchestra and the Joint Schools Sinfonia.

Evaluation

The Deputy Head Academic and Assistant Head Academic Enrichment and Aspiration meet periodically, and also liaise with Heads of Year to ensure that the School's responses are effective and appropriate.

Role of the Assistant Head SENDCO

The Assistant Head SENDCO has an important role as Sherborne Girls' SEND co-ordinator (SENDCO). Line managed by the Director of Studies and working closely with the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the other pastoral staff, the Assistant Head SENDCO plays a key role in determining the development of SEND provision in the School in order to cater for the individual needs of pupils. They will liaise closely with the pupil's teaching staff, the Head of Learning Support, family and, where appropriate, with the School's medical staff and external agencies. The Assistant Head SENDCO will attend appropriate training in order to remain current with their duties.

Staff training

In line with the Code of Practice (2014) and the [Standard for Teachers \(2014\)](#), all teachers are responsible for ensuring that all pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum which is differentiated to enable maximum progress. This is supported by a flexible but graduated structure of provision for meeting Special Educational Needs.

All staff (including teaching and support staff) receive regular training on supporting pupils with SEND from the Assistant Head SENDCO or members of SLT. This training focuses on helping each child to reach their maximum potential through appropriate adjustments that can give full access to the curriculum and facilities of the School to the greatest extent possible.

The School trains its teachers to differentiate within the curriculum and to take into account pupils' learning difficulties (as well as the needs of gifted and talented pupils). The Assistant Head SENDCO liaises with the teaching staff about the most appropriate means of meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and learning difficulties. The Assistant Head SENDCO has an important role in ensuring consistency of approach by all teachers in providing appropriate adjustments.

School behaviour and discipline

The School takes pride in its well-developed system of pastoral care for social interaction amongst pupils. All pupils are taught that victimisation and bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated. The school's objective is to ensure that a pupil with SEND or other protected characteristics does not suffer less favourable treatment. Pupils are taught through the curriculum and other activities the importance of respecting each other and behaving towards each other with courtesy and consideration.

The School's behaviour policies and school rules make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment in all its forms. All pupils understand that the School has a zero tolerance policy on bullying and that bullies can expect strong sanctions to be applied to them. Bullying on the grounds of Special Educational Needs or Disabilities is covered under the School's [Anti-Bullying Policy](#).

Partnership with parents

The School's hope is that all parents feel able to share any concerns about their child with staff in order that a healthy partnership for the care of their child can be developed. The Assistant Head SENDCO, pastoral staff, tutors, teaching and medical staff who are involved with their child are always happy to discuss any parental concerns. A member of staff will always ask to see a parent if they feel that an adjustment to the curriculum followed by their child might be in their best interests, or if there is a specific concern.

Complaints

The School naturally hopes that a parent will not feel that they have cause to complain but its [Complaints Procedure](#) is available from the [Policies, Inspection and Strategy Coordinator](#) for any parent who wishes to use it. Additionally, all parents of children with SEND have the legal right to seek redress from the First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if they believe that their child has been discriminated against.

Continuum of support

The School supports different levels of need through a continuum of provision. Our graduated approach to assessment and provision for Special Education Needs is in line with latest guidelines and the 'Assess/Plan/Do/Review' plan.

Level 1 – A need is identified by a teacher (or parent/carer) and a plan to support in class is discussed and put in place. This is shared with the Assistant Head SENDCO so that she is aware of the need, can advise on intervention strategies and can alert other staff to monitor progress in other subject areas.

Level 2 – If specific targeting by a subject teacher has not ameliorated identified difficulties, or it has but concerns are still present, then teachers will refer their concerns to Heads of Subject (HoS), Heads of Department (HoD) and Heads of Year (HoY). A timed period of intervention will usually follow from this consultation.

Level 3 – If the actions inherent in Levels 1 and 2 do not result in the expected level of progress, then the concern will be referred to the Assistant Head SENDCO for specific targeted support, who will liaise with the parents. Interventions in the form of one-to-one Learning Support lessons will be charged to parents at the School's published rate. A referral may also be made, with the parents' consent, to an external agency, such as an educational psychologist, and parents will be required to meet any associated costs. Pupils progress will be closely monitored and quantified via specialist progress testing. This will be discussed with parents in termly reports and at parents' meetings.

Supporting documents which inform this policy

This policy has been written with consideration of the following School documents:

- [Accessibility plan](#)
- [Admissions policy](#)
- [Anti-bullying policy](#)
- [Complaints procedure](#)
- [Curriculum policy](#)
- [Equal Opportunities policy \(pupils\)](#)

- [Examinations Policy](#)
- [Food policy](#)
- [Health Policy](#)
- [Pupil Wellbeing policy](#)

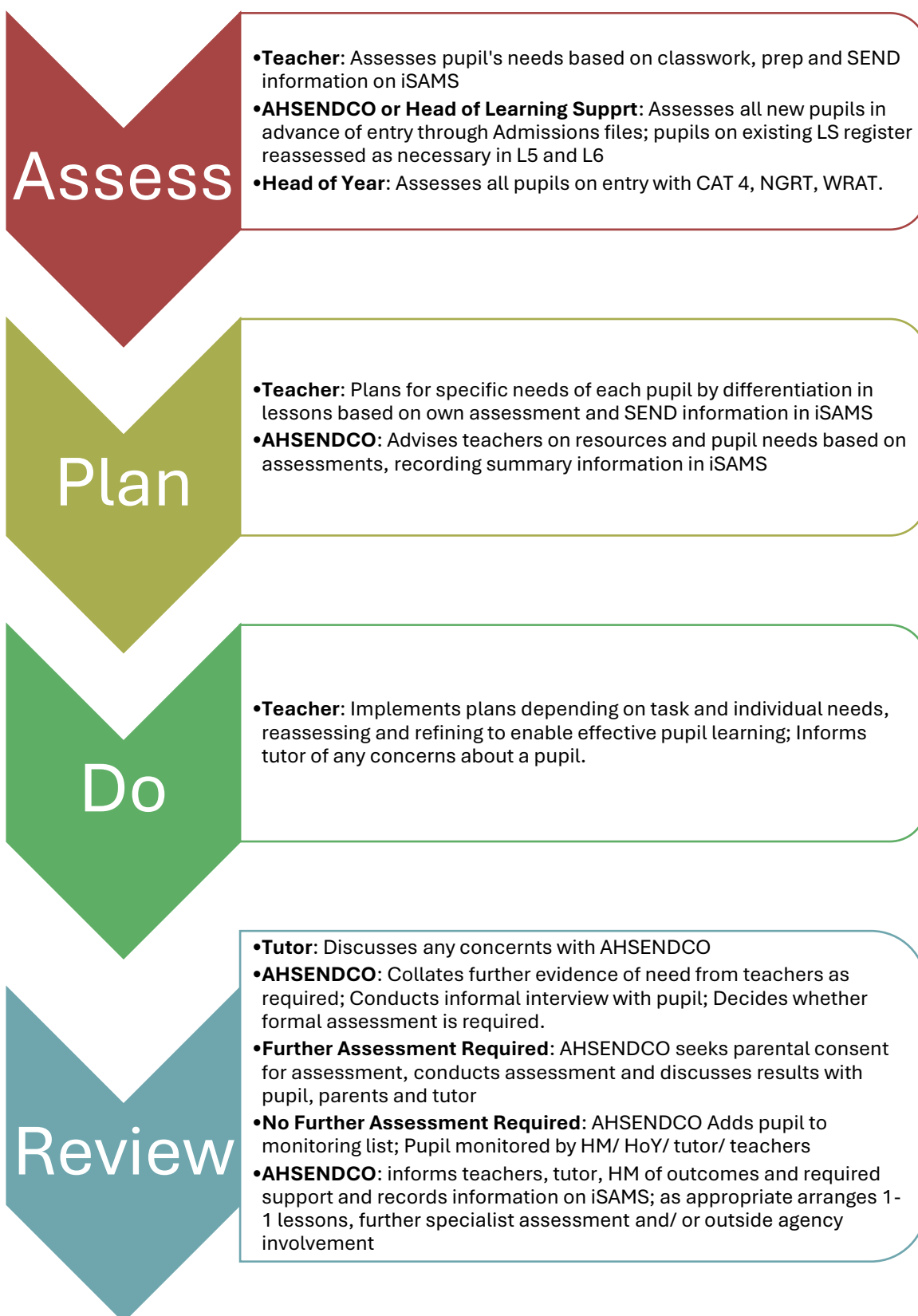
To request a copy of any of the documents listed above please contact the Policies, Inspection and Strategy Coordinator: g.shavesmythies@sherborne.com

Appendix 1: Summary of Changes

- Job titles amended to reflect developing roles and responsibilities
- Addition of Appendix 3

Appendix 2: Meeting the needs of pupils diagram

(Assess/ Plan/ Do/ Review)



Appendix 3: More information about screening tests

Our standard screening tests at SG include:

- Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4), designed to help pupils and their teachers understand how they learning and what their academic potential might be. It assesses how pupils think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning.
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT), a standardised termly assessment that reliably measures reading skills against the national average
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), an assessment tool designed to evaluate academic skills in mathematical computation, word reaching, spelling, and sentence comprehension
- Pupil Attitudes to Self and School measure (PASS), designed to sensitively explore social and emotional wellbeing

Where the results of these tests identify an area of concern, the following interventions may be recommended:

- NGRT - accelerated reader intervention
- WRAT - group literacy intervention
- PASS - wellbeing interventions.

Where it is identified as potentially beneficial pupils may take an EXACT assessment which, in conjunction with other assessments, supports the School in defining specific Exam Access Arrangements and teacher strategies to support learning.