

Ad Astra Academy Trust

**SEND Graduated
Response
& Support Offer**



How can I find out about the support for SEND in each of the Ad Astra schools?

Schools in the Trust each produce a SEN Information Report which is published on their website. The school SEN Information Report will contain details of:

- how the school identifies children with SEND
- how it makes provision for children with SEND and the facilities available to do this
- details of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), and
- what arrangements the governing body themselves have for dealing with complaints from parents about their child's SEND provision.

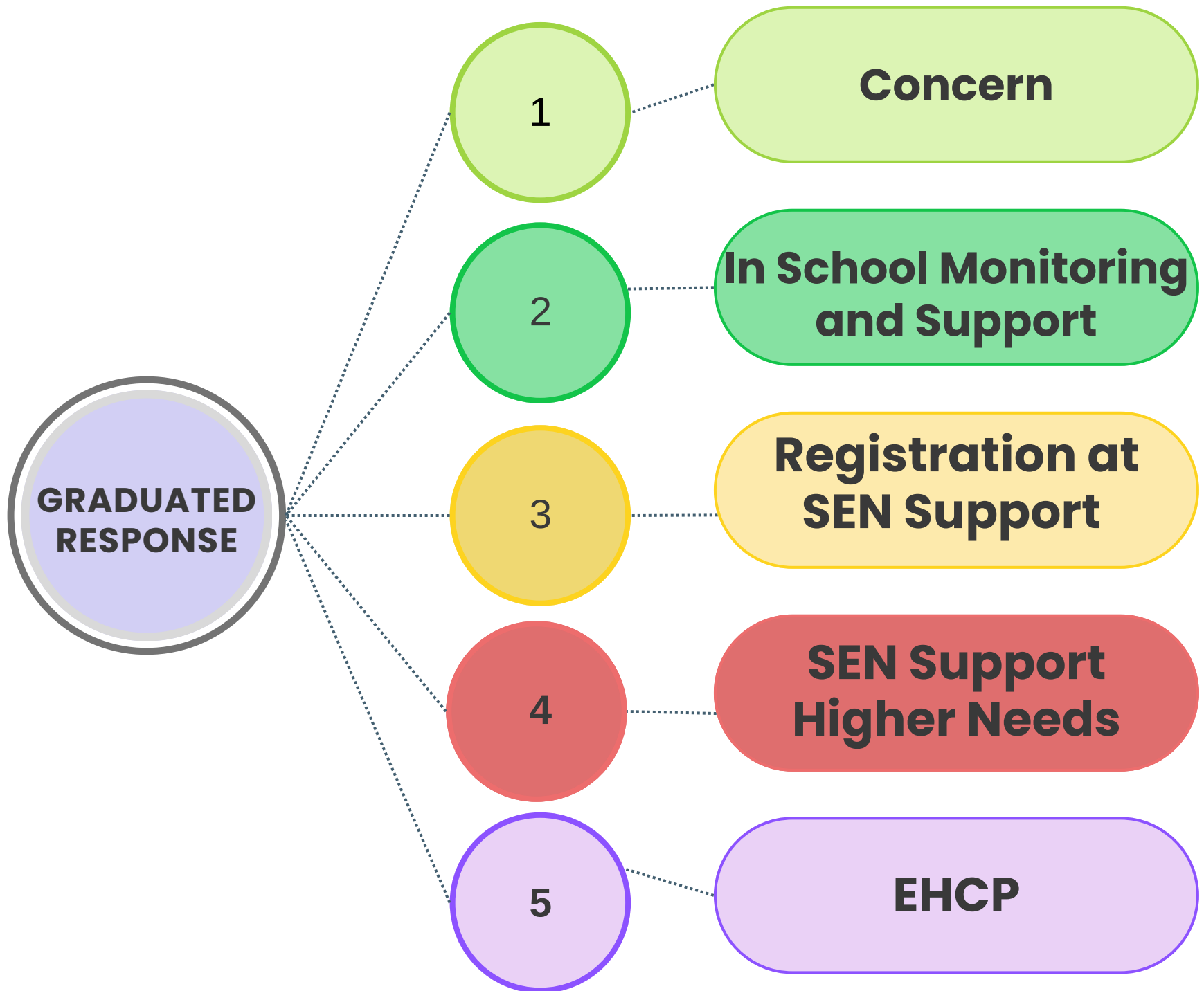
What is a Graduated Approach?

The majority of children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability will have their needs met within **local mainstream schools** within the **resources normally available to them**. Schools within Ad Astra Academy Trust ensure they are using their '**best endeavours**' to secure special educational provision for all children or young people for whom they are responsible. This means all schools doing everything that could reasonably be expected to meet the special educational needs of learners.

The graduated approach to supporting SEND Needs is a continuous cycle, of assess, plan, do and review. Provision starts with high-quality teaching and classroom adjustments (or **Ordinarily Available Provision**) before moving to more specific interventions.

What is Ordinarily Available Provision?

Ad Astra Academy Trust use the term 'Ordinarily Available Provision' (OAP) to describe what pupils can typically expect to access in mainstream schools to support their special educational needs/disabilities (SEND). This includes pupils presenting with indicators of SEND and/or with assessed and evidenced SEND, in our Graduated Response this is pupils who fall in Band 1,2 and 3. Following the 'Ordinarily Available Inclusive Principles' will support all pupils. Further adaptations and interventions can then be made to support specific identified needs.



**GRADUATED
RESPONSE**

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Concern

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**In School Monitoring
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**SEN Support
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EHCP

Bands 1 & 2 In School Monitoring

	<u>Band 1 - Concern</u>	<u>Band 2 - Monitoring and Support</u>
What are the needs and how do we identify them?	At this stage there may be initial concerns raised by parents/carers <u>or</u> class teacher regarding progress in learning, development in other areas e.g. social/emotional, communication or physical. e.g. immature speech	At this stage there will be growing concerns around progress, gaps in learning and/or development from Parents/Carers, class teachers and/or other professionals such as Speech and Language. It is likely that initial concerns were raised at least 1 term previously and that adaptive strategies monitored over at least one term are not demonstrating impact.
How do we meet the needs?	Pupils needs will be met through adaptive teaching approaches and the Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) for the school.	This stage is for targeted support and assessment and it helps to build a picture of the needs of any pupil who may need to be registered at the SEN Support stage. Interventions are monitored for their impact. Pupil needs are met through adaptive teaching and adjustments in the classroom, alongside general interventions.
How do we assess and monitor the needs?	Initial concerns are recorded on CPOMS and pupils are identified as a 1 on the graduated response tracker. This will be formally reviewed each half term by class teachers and the SENDCo.	Pupil progress and development are monitored through teacher assessment and dialogue with pupil/parents& carers. A One Page Profile or Pen Portrait is created and uploaded to CPOMS to ensure consistency in approach to meeting needs and to support transition. Pupils continue to be assessed on age related frameworks. Pupils are identified as a 2 on the graduated response tracker. This will be formally reviewed each half term by class teachers and the SENDCo.

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Bands 1 & 2 based on Areas of Need

(these are not extensive and staff should refer to their LA OAP for further detailed guidance)

Cognition and Learning Needs

(learning difficulties, working memory & processing difficulties)

Quality First/Adaptive Teaching

- **Tasks broken into small, manageable steps** with clear success criteria.
- **Scaffolding and modelling** used consistently (e.g. worked examples, writing frames).
- Range of **ways to record learning** (e.g. typing, drawing, scribing, oral explanations).
- Opportunities for overlearning, repetition, and frequent revisiting of key skills.
- Flexible pacing of learning, with additional time given for processing and task completion.

Use of Multi-Sensory and Visual Approaches

- Visual aids, symbols, and diagrams to support memory and understanding.
- Use of concrete resources in maths and other subjects to support abstract thinking.
- Colour-coding and visual organisers (e.g. story maps, timelines, mind maps).
- Multi-sensory phonics and spelling support embedded in lessons.

Reading, Writing and Maths Support

- Phonics-based reading and spelling strategies (e.g. Sounds~Write, Little Wandle).
- Word mats, sound mats, and high-frequency word prompts available on desks.
- Access to reading rulers, overlays, or background colour adjustments for dyslexia.
- Use of maths manipulatives (e.g. Numicon, base 10, number lines) as standard practice.
- Structured writing supports (e.g. sentence starters, handwriting guides).

Organisation, Memory and Executive Function

- Visual timetables and task planners to structure the day.
- Checklists and visual step-by-step instructions to support task completion available to pupils who need support.
- Memory strategies taught explicitly (e.g. mnemonics, chunking, mind maps).
- Opportunities for overlearning and spaced retrieval of key facts and skills.

Adaptive Use of Technology

- Access to typing or speech-to-text tools where handwriting is a barrier.
- Use of audio books or texts read aloud to support comprehension.
- Spellcheck tools or predictive text enabled for written tasks.
- Visual timers or countdowns to support time management.

Classroom Environment and Seating

- Seating near supportive peers or the teacher for quick clarification.
- Reduction of visual clutter on walls and worksheets.
- Quiet working zones or headphones to reduce distractions.
- Consistent, clear classroom layout to support working memory.

Staff Awareness and Inclusive Practice

- All staff trained in principles of adaptive teaching
- Awareness of how SpLDs (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia) present in primary learners.
- High expectations combined with scaffolded support to promote independence.

Peer Support and Inclusion

- Structured collaborative learning with clear roles and expectations.
- Encouragement of strengths-based participation (e.g. art, drama, sports).
- Focus on effort, progress, and resilience through positive reinforcement.

Family Engagement and Planning

- Home-school communication about learning strategies and progress.
- Support for home routines (e.g. reading at home, spellings, maths games).
- Joint planning of personalised support where needed, using one-page profiles or pen portrait.

Monitoring and Early Intervention

- Use of in-class formative assessment to identify gaps and adapt provision.
- Classroom-based interventions (e.g. precision teaching, small group catch-up).

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Bands 1 & 2 based on Areas of Need (these are not extensive and staff should refer to their LA OAP for further detailed guidance)

Communication and Interaction Needs (including ASD, Speech, Language and Communication Needs)

Classroom Communication Environment

- Use of clear, concrete language and avoidance of idioms or ambiguous instructions.
- Visual timetables and now-next boards to support understanding and routine.
- Use of gestures, signs (e.g. BSL, Makaton), and visual aids to reinforce spoken language.
- Key vocabulary pre-taught and revisited through multi-sensory strategies.
- Chunking of instructions, using short, simple sentences, with time to process.

Curriculum Access and Interaction

- Opportunities for structured, supported talk (e.g. talk partners, sentence stems).
- Modelling of correct language and social communication through adult interaction.
- Use of alternative recording methods (e.g. drawing, symbols, voice recordings).
- Support to interpret figurative language, inference and abstract concepts.
- Supported small-group tasks to develop turn-taking and listening skills.

Social Communication and Autism-Specific Support

- Social stories, comic strip conversations, and role-play used to explore social scenarios.
- Explicit teaching of unwritten social rules and expected behaviours.

- Adapted group tasks with clearly defined roles and outcomes.
- Provision of a predictable and low-arousal classroom environment.
- Identified safe space or 'time away' card to support emotional regulation.

Staff Knowledge and Response

- Adults attuned to signs of social or communication overload.
- Staff trained in ASD awareness, neurodiversity, and SLCN-responsive strategies.
- Time allowed for processing responses without pressure.
- Consistent use of visual prompts and clear transitions between tasks.

Wider Inclusion and Relationships

- Peer awareness and diversity education to promote understanding of communication differences.
- Support with playground or unstructured time via buddy systems or structured games.
- Scaffolded participation in group discussions, class assemblies, and whole-school events.

Family Engagement and Planning

- Regular communication with families to share strategies and concerns.
- Collaborative approaches to transition support and preparation.
- Use of one-page profiles or pen portrait co-produced with pupils and parents.

Monitoring and Early Support

- Use of observation checklists or language screening tools to identify early needs.
- In-class interventions such as vocabulary groups, narrative therapy, or attention and listening sessions.

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Bands 1 & 2 based on Areas of Need (these are not extensive and staff should refer to their LA OAP for further detailed guidance)

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

(including ADHD, Attachments & Trauma and emotional dysregulation linked to other areas of need)

Whole-School Ethos and Environment

- Positive behaviour policy based on relational or restorative approaches.
- Clear, consistent expectations and routines across the school.
- Emotionally literate staff modelling respectful and empathetic communication.
- Recognition systems that celebrate effort, progress, and kindness.
- Safe spaces or calm areas accessible during the school day.

Relationships and Belonging

- Key adult or 'trusted relationship' identified for pupils needing additional support.
- Use of peer mentoring, buddy systems, or playground friends.
- Regular class circle time, PSHE, or community-building activities.
- Anti-bullying strategies embedded in daily practice.

Teaching and Curriculum

- A sequenced PSHE curriculum addressing emotional literacy, relationships, conflict resolution, and wellbeing.
- Use of emotional check-ins, zones of regulation, or similar frameworks.
- Social stories, comic strip conversations, and scripted interventions to support understanding.
- Planned opportunities for success to boost confidence and self-worth.
- Visual support for routines, expectations and transitions to reduce anxiety.

Regulation and Support Strategies

- Calm boxes, sensory tools or regulation kits available in classrooms.
- Flexible use of movement breaks or time-away cards.

- Use of predictable timetables, with warning of changes to reduce anxiety.
- Access to pastoral support within the day.
- Support with transitions (between activities, classes, or key stages) through visual or relational strategies

Staff Training and Awareness

- All staff trained in trauma-informed and attachment-aware approaches.
- CPD on emotional regulation, anxiety, and behaviour as communication.
- Encourage culture of reflective for staff to support emotionally demanding work. Supervision for DSLs and where possible wider pastoral staff.

Family Engagement and Planning

- Open communication with parents/carers to understand the pupil's context.
- Shared strategies between home and school (e.g. consistent language, visuals).
- Support in accessing Early Help or external services if appropriate.
- Co-production of Pen Portrait or One-Page Profile

Monitoring and Early Intervention

- Use of pastoral tracking tools or behaviour logs to identify emerging concerns (e.g. CPOMS, Boxhall, Readiness for Learning, Thrive)
- Early, short-term interventions (e.g. friendship groups, Lego therapy, ELSA, short term counselling intervention).

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Bands 1 & 2 based on Areas of Need (these are not extensive and staff should refer to their LA OAP for further detailed guidance)

Sensory/Physical

(d/Deaf, Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Physical disabilities, mobility and motor issues, Medical Conditions)

Access and Environment

- Step-free access to main areas of the school.
- Accessible toilets and changing facilities.
- Clear signage and visual cues to support orientation.
- Use of contrasting colours on walls, floors, and doors for pupils with visual impairments.
- Adjustable lighting or blinds to reduce glare and manage sensory sensitivity.
- Seating arrangements to support physical needs (e.g., near the front for hearing, space for wheelchairs).
- Safe, uncluttered spaces for mobility and navigation.

Curriculum Access and Teaching

- Adapted PE and physical activity opportunities (e.g., seated exercises, reduced equipment).
- Differentiated delivery (e.g., visual, auditory, and tactile methods).
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and visual scaffolding.
- Use of visual timetables, Now and Next boards, and task management strips.
- Access to laptops or writing aids for pupils with fine motor challenges.
- Use of enlarged print or alternative formats (e.g., braille, tactile resources).
- Low-stimulus learning environments for sensory-sensitive pupils.

Support and Equipment

- Pencil grips, sloped writing boards, and scissors adapted for motor needs.
- Access to sensory tools (e.g., fidget toys, weighted cushions, wobble stools).

- Ear defenders or noise-reducing headphones.
- Height-adjustable furniture where necessary.
- Close liaison with occupational therapy or physiotherapy to embed recommended strategies into the classroom.

Adult Support and Supervision

- Trained staff to provide physical prompts safely and with dignity.
- Supervision during movement times (e.g., transitions, lunch, PE).
- Staff awareness of individual medical needs, moving and handling protocols.
- Application of intimate care and manual handling plans if appropriate.

Emotional Regulation and Wellbeing

- Access to a calm or sensory space for regulation.
- Use of zones of regulation or similar emotional literacy frameworks.
- Flexible expectations for participation based on fatigue or pain levels.

Family Engagement and Planning

- Regular communication with families to share strategies and concerns.
- Collaborative approaches to transition support and preparation.
- Use of one-page profiles or pen portrait co-produced with pupils and parents.

Inclusion and Participation

- Proactive planning for accessibility on trips, assemblies, performances, and sports day.
- Pupil voice considered in adaptations.

Band 3 – Registration at SEN Support

If a pupil presents with needs which require provision that is **'additional to or different from'** the majority of their peer group, in order to make progress within their academic attainment and/or holistic development the pupil's name and primary/secondary needs would be formally added to the **SEN Register**. Parents are to be informed and are asked to contribute to the development of a **SEN Support Plan/Individual Learning Plan**. Pupils at this stage are likely to be involved with **external professionals**, their advice may lead to more specific or bespoke support/intervention for the pupil, which is also included in their plan.

What are the needs?

- Pupils working 18 months – 2 years behind **age-related expectations** in literacy and/or numeracy despite high-quality teaching and targeted interventions.
- Demonstrates **slow progress over time** that is not explained by EAL, poor attendance, or limited prior experience.
- Needs require **regular, planned small-group or individual support**, modified tasks, or overlearning that is not required by most peers.

- Persistent difficulties in **understanding or using spoken language**, social rules, or classroom instructions that impact engagement and progress.
- Requires **frequent use of visual supports, simplified language, or structured routines** beyond normal classroom differentiation.
- Difficulties with **peer interaction or social communication** that require regular adult facilitation or direct teaching of social skills.

- Ongoing difficulties with **emotional regulation, attention, or behaviour** that are affecting access to learning and require planned, ongoing intervention.
- Needs consistent use of **individual strategies, relational approaches, or access to regulation spaces** not typical for peers.
- Presents with **anxiety, attachment or behaviour challenges** that require adults to regularly adapt the environment or expectations to support inclusion.

- Requires **regular adjustments to the physical environment or learning materials** (e.g. enlarged print, use of pencil grips, seating modifications).
- Experiences sensory processing difficulties that necessitate **planned sensory breaks or adaptations** throughout the day.
- Has a diagnosed physical or medical condition which impacts learning or independence and requires **individualised strategies or equipment** to participate fully.

How do we meet the needs?

Pupil needs, adaptations, adjustments and interventions will be clearly identified on a **SEN Support Plan/Individual Learning Plan** and the provision they receive will be **additional to or different from** what the majority of their peer group receive but is still what is **'ordinarily available'** within the school notional SEND budget. Specific interventions within (and sometimes out of) class provide targeted support towards targets or outcomes.

How do we assess and monitor the needs?

Pupils are identified as a Band 3 on the Graduated Response Tracker and as 'K' on the formal SEN Register on SIMS. Pupils in this band are monitored closely during team meeting and pupil progress meeting discussions. SEN Support Plans/Individual Learning Plans are working documents which are reviewed termly in conjunction with parents/carers. Pupils are assessed using 'stage not age' Teacher Assessment Frameworks where appropriate. After a period of intervention and support, some pupils may move off the SEN Register, back down to a Band 1 or 2. Depending on ongoing support needs some pupils may remain on Band 3 for their educational journey.

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Band 3 based on Areas of Need

Cognition and Learning Needs

(learning difficulties, working memory & processing difficulties)

Targeted Literacy Interventions

- Evidence-based phonics programmes (e.g. Little Wandle Keep Up/SEND Programmes, Lexia, Nessy, Sound Discovery, Rapid Phonics).
- 1:1 or small group reading intervention using specialist schemes (e.g. Reading Recovery, Project X Code).
- Precision teaching for key spelling, phonics, or high-frequency words.
- Reading fluency practice using paired reading or echo reading strategies.

Targeted Writing Support

- Sentence-level or paragraph construction support (e.g. Colourful Semantics, Shape Coding).
- Handwriting interventions (e.g. Write from the Start, Speed Up!, Penpals fine motor programmes).
- Use of writing frames, scaffolds, or modelled shared writing.
- Use of assistive technology – dictation tools, Clicker, or typing programmes.

Targeted Maths Interventions

- Specialist maths catch-up programmes (e.g. Plus 1/Power of 2, Numicon intervention, Dynamo Maths).
- 1:1 or small group support focused on pre-teaching or overlearning key concepts.
- Use of structured concrete-pictorial-abstract (CPA) approaches in bespoke sessions.
- Individualised practice in number facts and times tables using memory-based techniques.

Cognitive/Memory Support

- Working memory intervention (e.g. Memory Magic, Memory Fix).
- Daily rehearsal and overlearning of core facts/skills (e.g. 10-minute daily reviews).

- Individualised checklists, visual task plans, and timers for task initiation and completion.
- Targeted support with organisation and executive function skills (e.g. visual schedules, 'get ready' routines).

Increased Adult Support

- Targeted 1:1 or small group support in class for accessing the curriculum (planned, not permanent).
- Individualised in-task support (e.g. breaking instructions into steps, refocusing).
- Pre- and post-teaching of key vocabulary and concepts.

Curriculum Access Adjustments

- Simplified language and content tailored to developmental level (while retaining age-appropriate themes).
- Use of alternative formats (audio books, simplified texts).
- Adapted success criteria and differentiated learning objectives for key curriculum areas.

Specialist Assessment and Support

- Possible involvement of external professionals (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Specialist Teacher).
- Implementation of bespoke strategies based on dyslexia/dyscalculia screening or EP recommendations.
- Use of individualised targets in line with a SEND Support Plan

Progress Monitoring

- Personalised progress tracking linked to small-step, achievable targets working towards annual outcome.
- Use of 'stage not age' assessment frameworks.
- Termly Reviews with ongoing reflection to adapt interventions based on response to support.

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Band 3 based on Areas of Need

Communication and Interaction Needs

(including ASD, Speech, Language and Communication Needs)

Targeted Speech and Language Interventions

- Delivery of speech and language therapy programmes designed by NHS or private SLTs (e.g. for articulation, vocabulary, sentence structure).
- Use of structured language interventions (e.g. NELI, WellComm, Talk Boost, Spirals).
- 1:1 or small group sessions focusing on:
 - Understanding and following instructions.
 - Narrative skills (e.g. 'who, what, where' prompts).
 - Developing vocabulary and grammar through play and structured tasks.
- Daily language enrichment activities embedded across the day, not just discrete sessions.

Targeted Social Communication Support

- Use of Social Stories™ and Comic Strip Conversations to explore specific social situations.
- Structured social skills groups (e.g. LEGO®-based therapy, Time to Talk, Socially Speaking, Talkabout).
- Explicit teaching of:
 - Turn-taking and listening.
 - Recognising emotions and facial expressions.
 - Starting and ending conversations appropriately.
- Pre-teaching of social expectations for unfamiliar events (e.g. school trips, assemblies).

Adapted Communication Support

- Use of visual communication systems (symbols/signs) personalised to the pupil:
- Use of visual cues and scripted language for transitions, task completion and managing anxiety.
- Additional processing time and reduced verbal load in interactions.

Targeted ASD Support and Adjustments

- Access to a structured, low-arousal workspace or workstation.
- Individualised visual schedules (daily/lesson-level).

- Use of personalised sensory regulation plans (e.g. movement breaks, sensory diets).
- Adjusted curriculum content (e.g. reducing abstract concepts, supporting theory of mind development).
- Regular support with change management and transitions, including preparing for events or timetable changes.

Adult Support and Key Relationships

- Access to a key adult for co-regulation, emotional support and mediation of peer relationships.
- Individualised support during unstructured times (e.g. lunch, playtime) where interaction challenges are more likely.
- Adults trained in autism-informed strategies and responsive communication techniques.

Curriculum and Access Adaptations

- Lessons adapted using concrete, literal language with minimal figurative speech.
- Scaffolded group work with clearly defined roles and visual instructions.
- Modified tasks that remove barriers related to comprehension or interaction rather than ability.
- Pre- and post-teaching of topic-specific vocabulary or social context.

Specialist Involvement and Planning

- Implementation of advice from Speech and Language Therapists or Autism Outreach Teams where appropriate.

Progress Monitoring

- Use of language development checklists (e.g. ICAN, WellComm) .
- Review of social, communication and emotional progress through small-step outcomes (PIVATS assessments, AET Framework)
- At least termly input from parents/carers and key staff in assess-plan-do-review cycles to update SEN Support Plans

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Band 3 based on Areas of Need

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

(including ADHD, Attachments & Trauma and emotional dysregulation linked to other areas of need)

Emotional Regulation and Support

- Individualised strategies to support regulation (e.g. emotion check-ins, calming routines).
- Access to a quiet space or agreed location for de-escalation or recovery.
- Use of tailored visual tools (e.g. emotion charts, regulation prompts).
- Personal regulation plans developed with the pupil and shared with key staff.
- Adapted expectations based on emotional readiness to engage in learning.

Planned Therapeutic Support

- Planned small group or 1:1 sessions focused on emotional literacy, social skills, or self-esteem as part of a regular, sustained therapeutic offer for the pupil.
- Sustained, structured interventions addressing specific SEMH needs such as worry management, confidence building, or resilience.
- Regular time with a trusted adult for emotional coaching or relational repair.
- Regular opportunities for reflective conversations following incidents or dysregulation

Adaptations to the Environment

- Low-stimulation or predictable working areas available when needed.
- Seating plans or learning environments adapted to reduce anxiety or distraction.
- Access to calming or sensory resources to support regulation and focus.
- Consideration of sensory sensitivities in lighting, sound, and space.

Routine and Structure

- Use of personalised visual schedules, routines, and advanced warning of change.
- Flexibility within the day to accommodate emotional needs (e.g. break-out time, supported transitions).
- Clear, consistent boundaries and routines delivered with empathy and relational consistency.
- Preparation for and support through transitions, including changes of activity, adult, or environment.

Adult Support and Relationships

- Access to a consistent, named adult to provide emotional containment and reassurance.
- Support with peer interactions and social engagement during learning and unstructured times.
- Planned adult facilitation of problem-solving or conflict resolution.
- Relational approaches embedded in support and behaviour responses.

Curriculum and Task Adaptations

- Adapted learning tasks and reduced workload during periods of dysregulation.
- Use of interests and strengths to engage pupils in learning.
- Alternative methods for completing and recording work, depending on emotional readiness.
- Adjusted success criteria to promote a sense of achievement and motivation.

Staff Practice and Professional Input

- Staff use consistent de-escalation strategies and relational repair approaches outlined in personal regulation/behaviour plan.
- Targeted CPD for staff on understanding and supporting SEMH needs.
- Implementation of external advice or recommendations from professionals (e.g. education or mental health specialists).
- At least termly reviews of individual support with contributions from staff, parents/carers and the pupil.

Family Involvement and Communication

- Regular, open communication with families to understand context and build consistency.
- Joint strategies developed for home and school where appropriate.
- Support for families to access additional help where needed. (e.g. referral to Early Help, Daisy Chain, DLA)

Examples of Ordinarily Available Provision at Band 3 based on Areas of Need

Sensory/Physical Needs

(d/Deaf, Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Physical disabilities, mobility and motor issues, Medical Conditions)

Access to the Physical Environment

- Personalised adaptations to classroom layout (e.g. clear routes for mobility, proximity to board/teacher).
- Use of specialist furniture or equipment (e.g. adjustable tables, supportive seating, writing aids).
- Access to accessible toilets, hygiene facilities, or quiet rest areas as required.
- Individual movement plans or personal evacuation plans (PEEPs) in place and reviewed regularly.

Curriculum Access and Task Adaptation

- Modified learning materials (e.g. enlarged print, alternative font, tactile resources, simplified layout).
- Access to assistive technology (e.g. laptops, speech-to-text tools, audio materials).
- Alternative ways of recording work that reduce physical or sensory barriers (e.g. scribing, verbal responses).
- Adjusted pace of work and extended time to complete tasks and assessments.

Sensory Regulation and Support

- Individual sensory profiles used to inform planning and support.
- Access to sensory regulation tools and strategies tailored to the pupil (e.g. fidget tools, weighted items, ear defenders).
- Sensory breaks or movement opportunities planned into the day based on need.
- Environmental adaptations to reduce sensory overload (e.g. controlled lighting, reduced noise, visual calm spaces).

Support with Personal Independence

- Development of fine and gross motor skills through targeted 1:1 or small group activities (e.g. handwriting, coordination, dressing skills).
- Individual care plans in place for personal hygiene, toileting, or eating and drinking, where appropriate.
- Support for developing independence in navigating the school environment and routines.

Adult Support and Specialist Input

- Trained adults deliver programmes recommended by external professionals (e.g. physiotherapists, occupational therapists, advisory teachers).
- Targeted adult support for mobility, positioning, or equipment use within lessons and around school.
- Staff follow personalised plans for lifting, handling, and personal care with dignity and respect.
- Regular liaison with health and therapy services to review and update strategies.

Access to Learning and Inclusion

- Planning to ensure participation in all areas of school life, including trips, PE, performances, and extracurricular activities.
- Risk assessments and reasonable adjustments made to ensure safe inclusion.
- Support to engage with peers in learning and social contexts, as required.
- Use of pupil voice to identify barriers and suggest solutions.

Staff Practice and School Systems

- Key staff trained in understanding specific sensory and physical needs.
- Staff aware of signs of fatigue, discomfort, or sensory overwhelm and know how to respond.
- Proactive planning for transitions and changes to minimise anxiety and disorientation.
- Flexible expectations in light of physical health fluctuations or sensory sensitivities.

Family Involvement and Communication

- SEN Support Plans co-developed with families and regularly reviewed.
- Clear channels of communication about health needs, fatigue levels, equipment, or access issues.
- Support for families in liaising with health or therapy services and accessing additional support.

What if a SEND pupil is not making progress at SEN Support (Band 3)?

If a child does not make expected progress despite sustained (at least 2 terms usually), targeted intervention and support, schools may apply for additional support from their Local Authority (LA), either through Higher Needs Funding (HNF) or an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

High Needs Funding (Band 4 on the Ad Astra Academy Trust Graduated Response)

Schools need to demonstrate to their respective Local Authorities, that the pupils, for whom they are requesting additional support or assessment, have needs that require provision **significantly outside and beyond the descriptors for ordinarily available provision** and which cannot be met from resources allocated as part of the mainstream schools' delegated budget share.

Some pupils may not be placed on Band 3 and may immediately jump to Band 4 of The Graduated Response due to the high level of support they require in school. In this case, the SENDCo would apply for High Needs Funding to support funding this identified provision.

High Needs Funding Bands are dictated by the respective Local Authority. Local Authorities vary in terms of the ways they identify the level of need, the way they allocate their own banding systems and the paperwork and evidence they require to successfully allocate High Needs Funding. In the Tees Valley region, levels of top-up funding vary between Local Authorities, however, for most pupils within this band, it is likely the LA will allocated between £2,500-£5000 top up for the pupil (dependant on needs and LA). This contributes to (but does not usually fully fund) the provision identified on their SEN Support Plan. Schools can allocate this funding in any way they deem appropriate to support the needs of the pupil.

Hartlepool LA allows SENDCos to apply for a slightly larger amount of money to support funding provision for a group of pupils within the same cohort (Group Funding Bid). This means the top-up is not allocated to a specific pupil but that the funding provides additionality within that cohort (often in the form of adult support or a shared resource).

Each Ad Astra School applies for High Needs Funding in line with their own LA expectations. All Local Authorities usually require at least two cycles of Assess-Plan-Do-Review, which for most pupils is 2 full school terms. Where needs escalate rapidly or a pupil has transferred from another school or authority, the LA may allow SENDCos to submit two shorter Assess- Plan-Do -Review Cycles e.g. 2 x 6 week cycles = 1 term.

Some of our schools have access to additional support through the Local Authority for pupils who are at Band 4, these vary between authorities but may consist of outreach workers, Specialist Teachers, specialist assessments or interventions from specifically trained practitioners.

Band 4 – High Needs – additional funding required or pathway to EHCP

At this stage pupils are identified with higher levels of need, likely to be evident across more than one area of need from the SEN Code of Practice. Needs and provisions will be outlined in **detailed SEN Support Plans/Co-ordinated Support Plans** depending on the Local Authority requirements.

Cognition and Learning

- Learning is significantly below age-related expectations, likely 3+ years behind
- Limited progress despite sustained targeted intervention.
- Requires a bespoke and personalised aspects to their curriculum, ongoing adult support and specialist advice

Communication and Interaction

- Pupil has a severe and persistent communication and/or interaction difficulty that significantly impacts learning and/or wellbeing.
- Requires AAC systems (e.g. PECS, voice output devices), key adult support, and a communication-focused curriculum.
- Needs frequent direct input from SLT, often integrated into daily provision.
- Needs intensive adult support to initiate, interpret, or sustain interactions.

Social, Emotional, Mental Health

- Pupil presents with severe, persistent SEMH needs significantly affecting relationships, regulation, and learning.
- Exhibits high levels of distress, anxiety, or dysregulation, often needing time out of class or a personalised timetable
- Needs ongoing specialist therapeutic input and sustained adult support across the day.
- Curriculum must be highly adapted or alternative, with reduced demands based on readiness to learn.

Sensory and Physical

- Pupil has complex or significant physical or sensory needs that require a high level of adult support, specialist input, or equipment.
- Support is needed throughout the day across multiple areas (e.g. mobility, personal care, access to learning).
- Curriculum and environment are significantly adapted to reduce barriers and promote participation.
- Needs a sensory integration plan with structured regulation strategies throughout the day.

What are the needs?

How do we meet the needs?

Needs are likely to require significantly enhanced provision **well beyond the descriptors for Ordinarily Available Provision** (e.g. very regular small group/small class support, high levels of adult support for most activities) and which cannot be met from resources allocated as part of the mainstream schools' delegated budget share. It is likely the pupil will be involved with one or more external agencies such as Speech and Language Service, Educational Psychology, CAMHS, Early Help, Social Care or counselling services. Recommendations from external agencies are likely to be bespoke and delivered on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis. The school SENDCo is likely to apply for High Needs Funding (HNF) from the Local Authority in order to deliver the more personalised support.

How do we assess and monitor the needs?

Pupils are identified as a Band 4 on the Graduated Response Tracker and as 'K' on the formal SEN Register on SIMS. Any HNF accessed is also recorded on SIMS. Pupils in this band are monitored very closely during team meeting and pupil progress meeting discussions. SEN Support Plans/Co-ordinated Support plans are working documents which are reviewed at least termly in conjunction with parents/carers and where appropriate, external professionals. Sometimes, with the support of HNF, pupils make accelerated progress and through assess, plan, do review cycle it may be determined they no longer require the same level of support and they may move to a Band 3. It is likely that pupils identified as Band 4 will require a bespoke approach to assessment, which may include the use of a small-step approach such as PIVATS.

Examples of Enhanced Provision at Band 4 based on Areas of Need

- this is provision beyond what is ordinarily available and will require additional funding streams

Cognition and Learning Needs

(learning difficulties, working memory & processing difficulties)

Curriculum Access and Individualised Planning

- Highly individualised learning programme with **modified curriculum content** focused on core functional skills (literacy, numeracy, communication, independence).
- Use of **bespoke small-step targets**, drawn from specialist assessment tools (e.g., PIVATS, Engagement Model).
- Alternative or adapted curriculum pathways where appropriate (e.g. pre-Key Stage standards, sensory curriculum).
- Access to **individual learning plans** that prioritise key cognitive, communication, and functional life skills.

Specialist Teaching and Provision

- Teaching delivered or overseen by a **specialist teacher** (e.g. learning and cognition advisory teacher, SENCO with specialist qualification).
- Daily **small-group or 1:1 teaching** outside the classroom focused on individualised learning targets.
- Delivery of evidence-based specialist programmes for reading, writing, spelling, and numeracy.
- Integration of specialist advice (e.g. from an educational psychologist or cognition and learning team) into teaching practice and planning.

Staffing and Support Structures

- **Key adult support** to scaffold learning, support engagement, and enable access to curriculum tasks.
- Regular, structured feedback and ongoing adult modelling to build metacognitive and problem-solving skills.
- High adult-to-pupil ratios, particularly during core learning times or transitions.
- Consistent use of **multi-sensory approaches** and overlearning techniques embedded in daily practice.

Specialist Equipment and Resources

- Use of **specialist resources** tailored to the pupil's cognitive profile (e.g. coloured overlays, symbolised text, Clicker, task-specific visual prompts).
- Access to **assistive technology** (e.g. voice-to-text, adapted keyboards, audio texts) as needed.
- Customised learning aids (e.g. tactile materials, number frames, chunked texts, scaffolded workbooks)

Environment and Classroom Adaptation

- Learning takes place in a **highly structured and low-distraction environment** (e.g. quiet workspace, learning hub, nurture space).
- Opportunities for **alternative pacing**, including extended processing time and planned learning breaks.
- Personalised visual timetables and task management systems tailored to individual working memory needs.

Monitoring, Assessment, and Review

- Progress monitored using **specialist assessment tools** and reviewed regularly.
- Ongoing consultation with external professionals (e.g. educational psychologist, specialist inclusion team, outreach, SALT, OT, CAMHS).
- Support is documented and regularly reviewed through the SEND Support Plan.
- Adaptations made in response to **formative and diagnostic assessment data**.

Multi-Agency Working

- Coordinated support involving **external agencies** such as:
 - Educational Psychology Service
 - Learning and Cognition Advisory Teams
 - Occupational Therapy (where fine motor or coordination needs impact learning)
 - Community paediatrics or CAMHS (where cognition overlaps with neurodevelopmental needs)
- Joint planning meetings with families and professionals to ensure shared understanding and consistency.

Preparation for Transition and Life Skills

- Planning focuses not only on academic skills but also on executive functioning, self-help skills, and independence.
- Support for transitions between key stages, schools, or settings includes **enhanced planning and visits**.
- Where appropriate, **early preparation for adulthood** themes are embedded (see Ad Astra Academy Trust PfA document)

Examples of Enhanced Provision at Band 4 based on Areas of Need

- this is provision beyond what is ordinarily available and will require additional funding streams

Communication and Interaction Needs

(including ASD, Speech, Language and Communication Needs)

Individualised Curriculum and Planning

- Highly individualised teaching and communication targets, often prioritising functional communication, interaction, and understanding over full curriculum access.
- Curriculum may be significantly adapted or alternative pathways followed (e.g. pre-Key Stage standards, Engagement Model, communication curriculum).
- Individual Communication Plans or Speech and Language Therapy programmes embedded into daily provision.
- Visual and communication supports fully integrated into all subject areas and social contexts.

Specialist Teaching and Communication Support

- Direct support from or delivery of programmes advised by speech and language therapists (SLTs) or autism outreach specialists.
- Daily or frequent 1:1 or small-group teaching to develop expressive/receptive language, interaction, or social communication.
- Use of structured interventions for communication (e.g. vocabulary development, narrative work, comprehension).
- Access to structured social communication programmes tailored to individual needs.
- Access to Sign Supported English (SSE) or British Sign Language (BSL) to support understanding and language development.

Communication Systems and Aids

- Use of augmentative or alternative communication systems (AAC) such as:
 - PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
 - Core vocabulary boards
 - Voice output communication aids
- Highly personalised visual support systems (e.g. personalised timetables, now-next boards, transition cards).
- Use of signing systems (e.g. Makaton) integrated into everyday teaching and interactions.

Environment and Social Adaptations

- Learning takes place in a low-arousal, communication-friendly setting, often with access to a quieter area or learning base.
- Social communication supported through:
 - Structured playtime interactions
 - Adult-facilitated peer activities
 - Visual and verbal scripts to support turn-taking, initiation, and repair
- Reduced sensory and social demands during unstructured times or transitions

Staffing and Key Adult Support

- Support from a named adult trained in ASD/SLCN strategies who supports across learning and social context.

- Adults implement strategies recommended by professionals with consistent communication modelling and scaffolding.
- Staff trained to identify communication breakdown and provide sensitive repair or alternatives.

External Professional Involvement

- Ongoing involvement from relevant specialists, such as:
 - Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)
 - Autism outreach or specialist teaching services
 - Educational Psychology
 - Occupational Therapy (particularly where sensory integration or fine motor skills impact communication)
- Reports and recommendations directly inform provision, curriculum adaptations, and support strategies.

Monitoring and Review

- Communication targets regularly reviewed and adapted through assess-plan-do-review cycles.
- Use of specialist assessment tools to track communication progress (e.g. attention and listening checklists, language development tools, ASD profiling tools).
- Outcomes linked to EHCP Section F (if applicable) with clear tracking against agreed provision.

Inclusion and Access to Wider School Life

- Access to all areas of the curriculum and school life is carefully planned and supported.
- Risk assessments and structured preparation used to reduce anxiety and ensure successful participation in trips, assemblies, and group activities.
- Alternative communication methods used during assessments, performances, and collaborative tasks to ensure equity of access.

Preparation for Transition and Long-Term Outcomes

Targeted support to develop:

- Independent use of communication tools
- Emotional regulation linked to communication needs
- Functional social and life skills (e.g. asking for help, navigating new situations)
- Enhanced transition planning between classes or settings with photo books, transition visits, and pupil-centred planning.
- Communication and interaction outcomes often align with Preparation for Adulthood themes (e.g. forming relationships, accessing the community).

Examples of Enhanced Provision at Band 4 based on Areas of Need

- this is provision beyond what is ordinarily available and will require additional funding streams

Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs

(including ADHD, Attachments & Trauma and emotional dysregulation linked to other areas of need)

Individualised Planning and Provision

- Highly **personalised support plan** developed and reviewed in collaboration with the pupil, family, and professionals.
- Focus on **emotional regulation, wellbeing, and relational development** as priorities alongside academic progress.
- **EHCP outcomes** drive planning, with small-step, realistic targets in areas such as self-awareness, behaviour regulation, social problem-solving, and engagement.
- **Reduced or adapted curriculum** may be delivered, with a focus on learning readiness and emotional development.

Specialist Therapeutic and Behavioural Support

- Regular **1:1 or small-group therapeutic interventions**, such as:
 - Emotional literacy development
 - Trauma recovery or self-regulation work
 - Self-esteem and identity exploration
- Access to trained staff delivering **structured therapeutic approaches** (e.g. nurture principles, trauma-informed interventions, restorative practice).
- Ongoing or time-limited support from school-based mental health professionals, such as ELSAs, counsellors, or therapeutic mentors.

Staffing and Relational Support

- Designated **key adult** provides consistency, emotional containment, and relational support across the school day.
- Adults are trained in **attachment-aware, trauma-informed, and neurodiversity-affirming approaches**.
- Individual relational approaches used to build trust, co-regulate emotions, and model safe behaviour.

Environmental Adaptations

- Access to a **calm, predictable space** (e.g. sensory room, nurture room, regulation area).
- Flexibility in **timetable and expectations** to respond to fluctuating emotional needs.
- **Low-stimulus learning environments** to reduce emotional overload and support concentration.
- Planned opportunities for regulation breaks, sensory input, or downtime throughout the day.

Behaviour and Risk Management

- Personalised **Regulation Support Plans, Positive Handling Plans, or Risk Reduction Plans** in place and regularly reviewed.
- Staff follow agreed protocols for **de-escalation, co-regulation, and repair** after incidents.
- Behaviour is consistently understood and responded to as **communication of need**.
- School follows a **relational, not punitive**, behaviour approach, with support focused on skill-building and restoration.

◆ Multi-Agency Involvement

- Regular engagement with external professionals such as:
 - Educational Psychology
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
 - Behaviour Support or SEMH Outreach Teams
 - Early Help or social care where relevant

Joint-agency planning meetings and **Team Around the Child (TAC)** or **EHCP annual reviews** in place.

◆ Family Engagement and Support

- Close, proactive collaboration with families, including regular updates, shared strategies, and joint problem-solving.
- School may help families access external support (e.g. parenting programmes, Early Help, mental health services).
- Consistent approaches used across home and school to support emotional regulation and behaviour.

◆ Monitoring and Review

- SEMH outcomes tracked using bespoke or specialist assessment tools (e.g. Boxall Profile, SDQs, Leuven Scales).

Ongoing **assess-plan-do-review** cycles to adjust interventions and provision.

Progress regularly reviewed through SEN reviews or EHCP processes, with evidence from multiple sources.

◆ Inclusion and Participation

- Structured support to enable full participation in learning, play, and wider school life (e.g. clubs, trips, performances).
- Alternative forms of inclusion provided where full participation isn't possible initially (e.g. flexible timetabling, smaller group settings).
- Emphasis on **relationship-building with peers**, supported by adult facilitation and structured social opportunities.

Examples of Enhanced Provision at Band 4 based on Areas of Need

- this is provision beyond what is ordinarily available and will require additional funding streams

Sensory/Physical Needs

(d/Deaf, Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Physical disabilities, mobility and motor issues, Medical Conditions)

Individualised Planning and Curriculum Access

- A highly **personalised support plan** in place, addressing access to learning, mobility, physical care, and sensory regulation.
- Curriculum is **adapted or modified** to meet the pupil's physical/sensory profile, while maintaining high aspirations and personalised outcomes.
- Focus on developing **functional independence, life skills, and communication**, alongside academic progress where appropriate.
- Use of alternative methods of recording, presenting, and accessing information tailored to the pupil's needs (e.g. speech-to-text, eye gaze technology, tactile books).

Specialist Teaching and Therapeutic Input

- Provision is delivered in collaboration with, or under the guidance of, **specialist professionals**:
 - Occupational Therapists (OTs)
 - Physiotherapists
 - Teachers of the Deaf or Visually Impaired
 - Advisory teachers for physical disabilities or sensory processing
- Targeted **therapy programmes** integrated into the school day (e.g. fine/gross motor skills, postural control, sensory integration activities).
- Adults implement and regularly review therapy goals and strategies as directed by external professionals.

Environment and Access Adaptations

- Pupil has access to a **highly adapted environment**, which may include:
 - Height-adjustable furniture
 - Hoists or changing equipment
 - Low-stimulation learning spaces or controlled sensory environments
 - Specific seating or positioning equipment to support posture, safety and concentration
- **Mobility and access** needs carefully planned for (e.g. safe navigation routes, ramps, lifts, quiet routes during transitions).
- **Acoustic and visual environments** adapted for sensory sensitivities or hearing/vision impairments (e.g. soundfield systems, blinds, contrast marking).

Staffing and Specialist Support

- Named adult(s) trained to deliver personalised physical or sensory care, including manual handling, intimate care, or use of medical devices.
- Additional adult support provided for access to learning, mobility, or use of equipment across the school day.
- Staff trained in specific health, communication, or access needs (e.g. epilepsy management, tube feeding, braille).

- Ongoing **CPD and supervision** for staff working with pupils with significant physical/sensory needs.

Equipment and Assistive Technology

- Pupil has access to **specialist equipment** such as:
 - Mobility aids (wheelchairs, walking frames)
 - Augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) devices
 - Braille, radio aids, magnifiers, screen readers
 - Physical support tools (e.g. splints, weighted vests, reachers)
- Equipment is regularly maintained and reviewed in partnership with health or therapy teams.

Health, Care, and Regulation Needs

- **Medical or intimate care plans** in place and regularly reviewed.
- Staff trained to administer medication, support feeding, or respond to medical needs safely and with dignity.
- Individualised **sensory regulation plans** used proactively throughout the day to support engagement, alertness or calmness.
- Access to a **calm or sensory space** used as part of an agreed regulation strategy.

Multi-Agency Working

- Close collaboration with external professionals (e.g. OT, physio, VI/HI teams, community nursing, paediatrics).
- Joint planning with families and services to ensure provision meets **holistic health, care and learning needs**.
- Regular reviews through **EHCP annual review**, Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings, or health-led reviews.

Monitoring, Progress and Review

- Use of **specialist assessment tools** to track progress in physical functioning, independence, sensory regulation and learning.
- Regular **assess-plan-do-review cycles** driven by EHCP outcomes or personalised plans.
- Evidence gathered from teaching staff, therapists, families, and the pupil to inform reviews and adjustments.

Inclusion and Participation

- **Access to wider school life** (e.g. trips, PE, performances) is proactively planned and supported with reasonable adjustments.
- Pupil voice used to plan **meaningful participation** in learning and social life.
- Risk assessments completed and adapted dynamically to enable safe inclusion in all appropriate aspects of school.

When should a School consider applying for an Education, Health and Care Plan?

Schools should consider applying for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) when a child or young person's special educational needs (SEN) cannot be met through the resources typically available at SEN Support (Band 3 & 4 of our Graduated Response). This decision should be made following a clear process of assess-plan-do-review cycles, with evidence that:

- The pupil continues to make very limited progress despite high-quality, targeted support over time (usually two or more review cycles).
- The child requires provision that is additional to and different from what is ordinarily available in mainstream settings, even with reasonable adjustments, notional SEN funding and High Needs Top Up Funding.
- The pupil's needs span education, health, and social care, requiring coordinated, multi-disciplinary input which cannot be planned or monitored effectively without an EHCP.
- The child is at risk of exclusion, frequently unable to access learning, or the placement is not sustainable without additional specialist provision or funding.

Before applying, schools should ensure:

- There is clear evidence of assess-plan-do-review cycles (usually at least two terms).
- Parents/carers are engaged and consulted.
- All available support through the notional & top-up funding has been exhausted or is clearly insufficient (including using this budget to commission assessment and support services).

There are occasions when needs are recognised from the outset:

- The pupil has complex, severe, or lifelong needs (e.g., profound ASD, physical disabilities, multi-sensory impairments) that clearly exceed what the school can provide without specialist support or settings.
- Early intervention professionals (Paediatricians, Speech and Language Therapists, Specialist Teachers or Consultants) may recommend an EHC Needs Assessment from the outset.

Band 5 - EHCP

What are the needs?

At this stage there is a growing picture of evidence in terms of bespoke support, assessments and multi-agency work. The impact and progress at SEN Support is likely to be deemed insufficient and/or there maybe evidence that the pupil requires more specialist and ongoing support. EHCP is often required to access Additionally Resourced or Unit Provisions and is always needed to if pupils require a placement within Special School Provision.

How do we meet the needs?

In conjunction with parents/carers, the SENDCo will lead the referral and meetings required for the application of an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment. This is considered by the relevant Local Authority SEND Team. For any EHCP, whether the school have been involved in the original application or they have inherited the EHCP from another setting, Section F outlines the provision that the pupil requires to support them in a school setting. It is up to the Local Authority to ensure that Section F is fulfilled, this is often through resource and funding allocations to the named school in Section I.

For any new EHCP admission to the school, prior to the school being named, the LA must consult with the school to ascertain that they can meet the needs of the pupil and what resources may be required to be able to fulfil Section F - identified provision. Parents/carers have a right to request a mainstream education for their child.

How do we assess and monitor the needs?

If an EHCP is granted, the long term outcomes will be broken down into small steps and monitored termly by class teachers. The school SEND Team/SENDCo will host an Annual Review Meeting each year to evaluate progress against outcomes and update any relevant sections of the EHCP on behalf of the Local Authority, who then have to agree the changes.

If needs and provision change significantly (and not within the window of an annual review meeting), it may be that parents/carers or the school wish to hold an Interim Review Meeting. Through this the EHCP can be amended and requests to re-assess need or seek alternative provision to better meet need can be submitted to the Local Authority.