

Mercia Academy

Special Educational Needs (SEND) Information Report – September 2026

School/College Name:	Mercia Academy
Address:	Sunnyside, Newhall, Derbyshire, DE11 0TL
Telephone Number:	01283 216404
Name of Headteacher:	Sally Wicken (Executive Head Teacher), Nick Holmes (Associate Principal)
Headteacher contact details:	Tel: 01283 216404 Email: nick.holmes@merciaacademy.org.uk
Website address:	http://www.merciaacademy.org.uk
Twitter Feed details:	@MerciaAcademy
School/College Specialism:	N/A
Age Range of students:	11 - 16
Date of Last Inspection:	July 2025
Outcome of last inspection:	Leadership & Management, Behaviour & Attitudes and Personal Development = Good. The Quality of Education = Requires Improvement.
Does school/college have a specialist designated unit / additional learning support department?	No
Total number of students with special educational needs at school (SEND support):	156
Total number of students with an EHCP:	43

We are a mainstream school with a strong inclusive ethos based on our Trust vision that ANY young person from ANY background deserves an EQUAL chance to be successful in whatever they choose to do. We strive to ensure that all students achieve their potential personally, socially, emotionally and academically in all areas of the curriculum. This document is intended to give you information regarding the ways in which we ensure we support all our students, including those with SEND, in order that they realise their full potential. It may not list every skill, resource and technique we employ to achieve this as these are continually developed and used to modify our provision to meet the changing requirements of our students.

Information about:	How we do it at Mercia Academy:
1. <i>The range of special educational needs for which provision is made at the school.</i>	We are a mainstream school, we aspire for all our students to achieve their potential, including those with SEND. Students are identified as SEND when their progress has significantly slowed or stopped (this covers both academic and holistic development) and the interventions and/or resources based on Quality First Teaching that we normally put in place do not enable improvement. We use pupil passports to communicate individual need and strategies to help support their development and accelerate progress. We also track interventions using Provision Maps so that progress can be monitored effectively. Typically, the students with SEND in our school have difficulties with Communication and Interaction and Social, Emotional, Mental, Health. We have a number of students diagnosed with Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia and physical disabilities.
2. <i>The school's policies for the identification and assessment of students with special educational needs.</i>	Our teachers closely monitor the progress made by all students and ask advice from the SENDCo as soon as they have concerns about any student. SEND Leaders provide fortnightly Inclusion Briefings which provides additional training to teaching staff to support their delivery of Quality First Teaching and Adaptive Teaching. Student Spotlights are also delivered to staff to raise awareness of individual student's needs and key strategies to support progress.

	We have close links with our feeder primary schools, and this helps us to understand the needs of SEND students before they arrive. We also offer enhanced transition as a means of supporting key stage changes from primary to secondary education. We use Key Stage 2 teacher assessment and baseline testing to identify which students will require SEND support. We retest for students reading ability annually through the NGRT assessments. If students are identified by staff as needing targeted support, communication with parents/carers and student takes place to agree what additional support will be put in place. We will inform all parents if your child is added onto the SEND register. We will also inform you if we feel your child has made necessary progress and no longer needs to remain on the SEND register. The school will apply to the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) for access arrangements at Key Stage 4 where there is a history of need e.g. access arrangements are the student's normal way of working. An external Access Arrangements Assessor is then required to completed necessary testing to confirm examination assessments. We will inform parents if the JCQ has agreed an exam concession. We will ask you to encourage your child to use this concession by discussing it with them at home.
3. <i>The school's policies for making provision for students with special educational needs whether or not students have an EHCP, including:</i>	Our policies on SEND and access arrangements provide information about how we make provision for all students with SEND. These policies are available to view on the school's website. The SEND Team can also help teachers to plan activities such as small group work or special programmes to help the students. Pupil Passports are available for all staff to view which include strategies to best support SEND students.
a) <i>How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its</i>	We regularly review progress data for all students and the impact of interventions is considered through the Graduated Response, Plan, Do, Review, Process.

<i>provision for such students;</i>	Subsequent interventions will then be put in place if needed. The SENDCo and the Senior Leadership Team will assess and review the progress of all students with SEND at key data points in the year. This includes academic progress, attendance, behaviour, and SEMH.
<i>b) The school's arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of students with special educational needs;</i>	An Education, Health and Care Plan review and/or transfer review will take place during the academic year. Key professionals involved in the plan will be invited to attend. Parents and child are central to the planning and intended outcomes of the plan. The SENDCo will attend transfer reviews for students in Year 6 who have identified Mercia Academy as their next destination school. We invite post-16 providers to transfer reviews for students in Year 11 where possible, alongside 1-1 careers guidance for all students. Parents are welcome to bring a person to support them, for example a family member/ friend or parent partnership representative. However, you do not need to wait for these meetings if there is a concern, a meeting can be arranged with key staff to discuss concerns. All students on the SEND register have a Pupil Passport on Beehive which is reviewed and updated when necessary. This is done with the involvement of parent, student and SENDCo. We also work closely with Derbyshire County Council Inclusion Support Advisory Service regarding SEND advice, applying for Inclusion Panel funding and requesting targeted and specialist support for individual students to support their progress in school.
<i>c) The school's approach to teaching students with special educational needs;</i>	As a school, we have the highest possible expectations of your child and all students in their class. All teaching is based on building on what students already know, can do and can understand. Teachers are expected to offer a fully inclusive learning environment, scaffold and adapt work to ensure that all students can access the curriculum and are fully involved in learning in class. We have an ambitious curriculum and want to ensure all

	students can access this. This may involve things like using more practical learning or providing different resources adapted for your child, including ICT. The teacher will also put in place specific strategies (which may be suggested by the SENDCo or specialists from outside agencies) to enable your child to access the learning tasks.
d) <i>How the school adapts the curriculum and learning environment for students with special educational needs;</i>	Teachers regularly check and report on student progress. If there are gaps in understanding and/or learning, teachers will identify what extra support is necessary to close the gap in progress between individual students and other students of the same age. Additional interventions might include small group sessions such as Direct Instruction, That Reading Thing and Cognitive Behaviour Support for students. Intervention sessions will identify specific targets for improvement. These interventions may be led by either a teacher or a Teaching Assistant/member of staff. The interventions will be monitored so that the impact and effectiveness can be tracked. Heads of Curriculum Departments can provide information about what individual year groups are learning and how students are being helped to make better progress. There is more information about the school curriculum on our website.
e) <i>Additional support for learning that is available to students with special educational needs;</i>	Support is given to students by accessing Teaching Assistants in lessons to targeted interventions. Alongside external agency referrals such as Single Point of Access (SPOA's), Compass Changing Lives, School Health and Out of School Tuition (OOST). Other outside agencies such as Visual and Hearing Impairment services, Educational Psychology, CAMHS, NHS Family Services, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Support for individual students. As part of our provision, we currently offer Direct Instruction to Year 7 and Year 8 for both literacy and numeracy. We deliver reading groups using Reciprocal Reading for those students that require additional support. We also deliver That Reading Thing for those

	who need more intensive support to address phonics gaps. In addition to academic support, we also offer SEMH interventions to support wellbeing such as Anxiety Gremlins, Social Stories, Art Therapy, Talk About and ELSA. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is personalised through Option choices based on student preference. Core subject intervention is also offered at Key Stage 4 to support with academic progress. Alternative Provisions may also be consulted when students are struggling to access the mainstream curriculum as a result of behaviour or social and emotional needs. Parents/ carers will be involved in decision making about alternative curriculum pathways.
f) <i>Activities that are available for students with special educational needs in addition to those available in accordance with the curriculum</i>	Students with SEND are fully included in the school's extra -curricular programme of activities. This includes academic and wellbeing support through SEND drop ins to build student independence and resilience. Where adjustments or specialist risk assessments are needed for a student to access an activity, the activity leader will liaise with the SENDCo and parents/carers. This includes trips and visits.
g) <i>Support that is available for improving the emotional and social development of students with special educational needs.</i>	We have a range of programmes within school to support the emotional and social development of students. We utilise many agencies through Pastoral Support in school if we need expertise beyond our own staff. We also use external providers. Compass Changing Lives (mental health counselling) provides resilience and mentoring support. We also work with Specialist Community Public Health Nursing Team who supports any health care need through a weekly drop-in clinic to individual appointments and home visits. We have pastoral support staff who are available throughout the school day to help students who require support. All students access a tutor programme and complete Personal Development each week.
4. <i>The name and contact details of the SEND co-ordinator.</i>	Paul Galloway is the school's SENDCo, and Claire Evenden is the school's Assistant SENDCo. There is a team approach to SEND and Inclusion at Mercia Academy. If your child is already at Mercia Academy,

	then you can contact their Tutor, Head of House, Learning Manager or SENDCo. If your child is currently at primary school and you wish to contact Mercia Academy regarding their SEND needs, then please contact our SEND Team directly (send@merciaacademy.org.uk).
5. <i>Information about the expertise and training of staff in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and about how specialist expertise will be secured.</i>	At Mercia Academy we pride ourselves on inclusivity and the care and support we offer our students. We strive to keep up to date with SEND developments and training opportunities to support research-based developments and good practice. Regular and appropriate staff training takes place, both of a generic and child-specific nature. Whole staff training through Pastoral Briefings shares knowledge, expertise and experience to gain a consistent approach to supporting SEND learners. Training delivered by experts, but who are familiar with Mercia Academy context, is vital to accommodate individual need and staff are welcome of this. Derbyshire County Council Inclusion Support Advisory Service also provides staff training related to SEND and Quality First Teaching as part of staff CPD.
6. <i>Information about how equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs will be secured.</i>	The LA supports with the allocation of specialist equipment such as wheelchairs/standing frames and evacuation mats when prescribed by a relevant health specialist. The school provides additional adult support, usually a Teaching Assistant, where appropriate. In accordance with the Disability Act 2010, buildings may undergo 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that they are accessible for all our students. This is negotiated by the Local Authority and Lionheart Educational Trust. We utilise the SEND Support Room by offering break and lunchtime drop ins to reassure students whilst building student confidence and promoting friendships.
7. <i>The arrangements for consulting parents of children with special educational needs</i>	At Mercia Academy we value all our parents and truly believe in working in partnership to get the best possible outcomes for our students. Target setting/ reviews, emails, parent SEND meetings are all good ways to

<i>about, and involving such parents in, the education of their child.</i>	communicate and plan for SEND support. The school website also holds key information about the school curriculum and support structures. We also have key information about local external organisations that can support the student and the family by sharing knowledge of external agencies through the schools Family Resource Worker.
<i>8. The arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education.</i>	Students are at the forefront of everything we do. Their views are very important to us. This takes a variety of forms: involvement in EHCP reviews and meetings; student voice surveys; self-assessment and within their Pupil Passport.
<i>9. Any arrangements made by the governing body relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of students with special educational needs concerning the provision made at the school.</i>	In the first instance, approaching the SENDCo would be appropriate so that the issue can be discussed via emails, telephone conversation or through a face-to-face meeting. If your complaint is not resolved, then you can ask for a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team. If you are still dissatisfied, then you can request a meeting with the Associate Principal of the school. Our complaints procedure is available to view on the school website.
<i>10. How the governing body involves other bodies, including health and social services bodies, local authority support services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and in supporting the</i>	Services that currently come into school to support our students are listed below; however, these are not exhaustive and will change depending on the SEND cohort. Educational Psychology – assigned by the Local Authority Hearing Impairment Physiotherapy Occupational Therapy Specialist Community Health Nurse Compass Changing Lives

<i>families of such students</i>	CAMHS Derbyshire Wish First Steps Trent PTS (for 16-year-olds +) Young Carers Derby and Derbyshire Neurodiverse Community Hub Inclusion Advisory Support Team Most of these services will also meet to discuss strategies in the home and will signpost you to specific agencies for home support.
<i>11. The contact details of support services for the parents of students with special educational needs, including those for arrangements made in accordance with clause 32.</i>	Special Educational Needs Info and Advice Service (SENDIAS) can provide support to families. SENDIAS is a confidential and impartial service that supports families who have children with SEND. They support families of children and young people aged 0 to 19 years with any educational issues and can signpost to appropriate family support. Children do not need to have a special educational need or a medical diagnosis of disability to access the SENDIAS.
<i>12. The school's arrangements for supporting students with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education or in preparing for adulthood and independent living.</i>	All students will receive support, if needed to the next phase of their learning journey. The school has a full-time Careers Officer who oversees work experience, arranges University trips and wider school experiences, to raise aspirations whilst also providing individual careers meetings and advice on KS4 and Post 16 opportunities. There is an extensive primary to secondary transition process, with an enhanced programme for the more vulnerable learners. The SENDCo will attend transition reviews and link closely with other SENDCos in our partner primary schools.
<i>13. Information on where the local authority's local offer is published.</i>	Derbyshire County Council Offer homepage has information about the services that are available locally. Click here to view: https://www.localoffer.derbyshire.gov.uk/home.aspx