



Special Support Centre Operational Policy

Boundstone Nursery Schools Special Support Centre (SSC) provides high quality early years education and intensive speech and language assessment and therapy for 16 children with severe, specific speech and language difficulties. There are 8 places in each of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Aims

- To provide high quality learning in an Early Years environment in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.
- To provide intensive speech and language therapy for each child in the SSC.
- To assess each child's speech, language and developmental needs on an ongoing basis.
- To provide written Targeted Support Plans (TSPs) on a termly basis. Targets will be shared with all staff so each child receives appropriate support throughout each nursery session.
- To work in partnership with parents/ families. Please see the SSC booklet for further information.
- To provide a range of communication strategies to meet each child's needs, including signing, pictures, symbols and visual timetables.
- To liaise with outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists.
- To provide a transition plan into Primary School for each child in the SSC.

Admissions Criteria

- Each child **must** be referred by a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT). If a referral is completed by an independent SLT, a visit by the SSC therapist is required before the referral can be considered at the Considerations Meeting (see below).
- Each child must be referred to the Child Development Centre (CDC) and to the SEND Under 5s panel.
- Severe, specific, speech and/or language disorder is the child's primary difficulty and this requires specialist support within a mainstream nursery environment.
- The child's general development and social communication skills are broadly appropriate for their age.
- Speech and/or language disorder is in the child's home language where English is not the first language.
- The child does not have extreme emotional and/or behavioural difficulties other than those associated with the speech/ language disorder.
- The child must be at least three years old.
- The child must be able to attend the SSC for five morning or afternoon sessions per week.
- The child must be able to complete at least three terms in the SSC before starting school.
- Children are offered a place following discussion and agreement by the panel at the considerations meeting.

Considerations Process

- There will be a meeting at least once a year attended by a panel of representatives from Health and Education.
- Children are referred to the panel by speech and language therapists (SLTs) in the area.
- Children are offered a place following discussion and agreement by the panel at the considerations meeting.

- Places are allocated according to the severity of each child's speech and language need. Where similar speech and language profiles exist, other needs will be taken into account (e.g. whether the child is currently attending nursery, travelling time to the SSC).
- The panel is mindful that a child's profile in a clinical setting may not truly reflect their skills in an early years setting or at home. Therefore, in order to obtain as full a picture as possible and to ensure the SSC is the appropriate environment for the child, the SSC team may:
 - Discuss the child's strengths and needs with their current early years setting
 - Visit the child in their early years setting or at home
 - Request further information from the Child Development Centre
- The above information will be used alongside referral information when considering each child for a space
- It is likely that more referrals will be received than there are spaces available. Two children will be identified as 'reserves', who will be offered spaces should they become available.
- Should another place become available unexpectedly, other children who have been referred to the Considerations Panel will be discussed by the SSC team and the place will be allocated to the child who has the highest level of specific need.
- If there is no waiting list and a space becomes available, the SSC SLTs will request further referrals from colleagues in the Early Years Speech & Language Therapy Team
- If a parent wishes to appeal the decision made by the considerations panel and there is a space available then the decision may be reviewed by the appeals panel. The appeals panel will consist of an SLT manager and the Head of Boundstone Nursery School.

Staffing

- There is a Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) five days per week and Speech and Language Therapists for a total of three days a week.

Speech and Language Therapy

- The SLTs assess each child's speech and language skills, formally and informally through their interactions.
- Based on this information, individual targets are set, in conjunction with the TIC, Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and parents.
- SLTs work with the children on a one-to-one or small group basis, according to their individual need. Parents are invited to attend therapy sessions at least once during the year. SLTs liaise regularly with parents and provide activities and resources linked to their TSP.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the SLTs if they have any questions or concerns or require additional home resources

Teaching and Learning

- The TIC works on generalising each child's specific targets through observation, play and monitoring.
- The TIC is also responsible for developing each child's learning in all areas of the EYFS curriculum.
- The TIC communicates regularly with families, via the home/ school communication book, telephone and/ or email. Parents will be provided with a parent handbook when their child joins the SSC.
- The TIC organises regular parent meetings to discuss their child's progress.
- The TIC and SLTs meet regularly to discuss each child's progress and review targets.
- The TIC and SLTs liaise with external agencies where appropriate.

Structure of the Session

- Children are escorted to the SSC (Rainbow Room) by parents or taxi escorts/ drivers, where they will be greeted by SSC staff and self-register. They are then able to play throughout the nursery following their own interests and developing their learning.
- During the session, children will be invited to the Rainbow Room for focused, individual or small group, speech and language work.

- Children access healthy snacks and drinks throughout the session and conversation and social interaction is encouraged during this time.
- At the end of the session, there is a 15-20 minute group time where the whole group comes together for more structured learning experiences.
- Children are collected from the Rainbow Room by parents or taxi staff to go home.

Liaison with other Settings

- Where a child in the SSC is attending another setting, the TIC and SLT will liaise with that setting in order to encourage consistency of approach.
- Staff from other settings attended by children in the SSC will be invited to visit Boundstone.

Monitoring and Review

- After the first half-term, each child is provided with a TSP consisting of specific targets relating to speech and language development.
- The TSP is reviewed and updated on a termly basis.
- Consultation with an Educational Psychologist (EP) will be requested if a higher level of educational support is likely to be needed when a child starts school.
- Where there is a high level of need, a coordinated assessment of education and health needs may be initiated.

Transition to School

- Member(s) of staff from each child's school are invited to nursery during their final term.
- Reports are provided by the TIC and SLT which include targets for the child's first term at school.
- A child may transfer to a specialist school placement if they have an education, health and care plan
- Children who have ongoing difficulties with receptive (understanding) and/ or expressive (talking) language will **either** be transferred to the Mainstream Speech and Language Therapy Service **or** discharged from the Early Years Service and their needs will be managed within their school setting, dependent on their need.
- Children whose primary difficulty is with their speech sound development will **either** be transferred to their local clinic or to the Mainstream Speech and Language Therapy Service dependent on their need. The clinic or mainstream SLT will decide on further management.
- In exceptional circumstances, parents may wish to apply to West Sussex County Council Admissions Department for delayed admission to Reception. When this happens, their continued eligibility for an SSC place will be reviewed by the considerations panel.

Exit Criteria prior to School Entry

- Formal and informal assessment and observation indicate that a child's speech and language development is within the expected limits for their age.
- A child will have another appropriate nursery placement to attend.

Date: Spring 2024

To be Reviewed: Autumn 2024