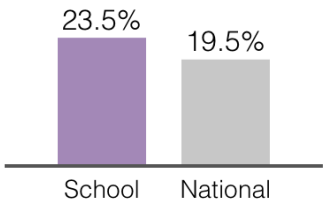
SEND Information Report September 2026

SEND Mission Statement

At Damers First School, we are proud to nurture an inclusive community of respectful, collaborative learners who are encouraged to achieve their very best. We empower all children to make meaningful contributions both locally and globally, while fostering a lifelong love of learning. We are committed to supporting every learner by proactively removing barriers so that every child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally throughout their journey with us.

As a school, we have an above average rate of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at both SEN Support and EHCP levels. Whilst our SEND register is a fluid and flexible recording and monitoring system in September 2026, we had the following rates of pupils with SEND:

Pupils with SEND



	# Pupils	% Pupils	National
SEN Support	84	18.3%	15.4%
EHC Plan	24	5.2%	4.1%

What do we mean by SEND?

We refer to the term 'Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)' using the SEND Code of Practice (2015) definition:

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has SEN If they have a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or

- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools[1]

Special educational provision refers to support that is additional to or different from what is generally provided for most children in school. Assessment is an ongoing process throughout the school. We regularly check that each child is making expected progress against the expectations for their year group, from Foundation through to Year 4. If a child is not making the expected progress, we identify the need, explore the reasons why and if required introduce a range of different interventions or support.

Who's who?

Tom Bracey is the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) at Damers First School. He is responsible for implementing the SENDCo policy and supporting staff to ensure that pupils with additional needs receive the right provision; works closely with parents, external agencies, and medical and psychological services to provide coordinated support. He attends and shares relevant training, delivers INSET sessions, and oversees the purchase and effective use of resources. Tom Bracey also manages the SEND Register and supports teachers in creating and reviewing individual plans.

Alongside our SENDCo, Tom Bracey, we have a dedicated team supporting pupils with additional needs:

- Sally Campbell - Senior Teaching Assistant, works closely with the SENDCo and provides direct support for pupils with SEND across the school.
- Sarah Kenny – Complex Communications Needs (CCN) Base Teacher, is an expert in CCN and leads provision for pupils requiring highly specialised support.
- Natalie Hirst - based in the school office, manages SEND-related administration and communication.
- Charlotte Hillier - Parent Partnership and Pastoral Lead, leads emotional literacy support and works directly with parents to support family engagement and pupil wellbeing.

Specialist Support and External Agencies

At Damers First School, we have a highly skilled team of specialist staff, including Teaching Assistants trained to deliver programmes such as *Learn to Move*, *ELSA*, Speech and Language, Wellcomm Speech and Language support and Trauma-Informed practice. Where a child's needs require further investigation or more specialist intervention, we work closely with a wide range of external agencies to provide the best possible support.

[1]DFE, SEND Code of Practice, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

We actively seek specialist services when needed to ensure every child's needs are met. Agencies we work with include:

- Educational Psychology and Specialist Teachers (Dorset Council)
- Our commissioned forest school teacher, Emily Stiles, who runs focused interventions for pupils with SEND
- Our commissioned play therapist, Vicky Osborne, who runs focused therapy sessions with identified pupils with SEND
- Outreach services, including ASD, ADHD and other support at NHS Dorset
- Specialist health services, such as:
    - Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
    - School Nurse Team
    - Health Visiting Team
- Hearing and Visual Impairment Service (HVSS)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Physiotherapy (PT)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Our Parent Partnership and Pastoral lead also works with additional agencies to support families, including:

- Local Early Help Team
- Dorset Family Matters
- Health Visitors
- Local Children's Centre Provision
- Best Start in Life Advisors
- Paragon, Koru and a range of other family focused charities

How do we identify pupils with SEND?

Damers First School follows a graduated approach to assessing, identifying, and supporting pupils with special educational needs. This model of action and intervention helps children make progress and access the curriculum successfully. We recognise that SEND exists on a continuum and, where necessary, involve increasing levels of specialist expertise to address individual needs.

Children are assessed throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2 against nationally set criteria. Those not making expected progress are identified through rigorous tracking and staff observations, including concerns about behavioural, social, or emotional barriers to learning. If progress remains limited, targeted school interventions and/or external agency involvement are introduced to identify and address specific needs.

Once a child is placed on the SEND Register, a Learning Plan is created. Class teachers are responsible for managing and updating these plans, supported by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) to monitor and evaluate progress. These plans can cover areas from behaviour through to cognition and learning.

More information can be found here: https://www.damers.wessex.ac/key-information/key-information/special-educational-needs

Our Teaching Approach

At Damers First School, raising children's achievement is our main focus. We do this by continually reviewing provision and creating an engaging, relevant curriculum that inspires learning. Teachers use a wide range of data to measure the impact of teaching and tailor and adapt learning to individual needs. The National Curriculum and EYFS outcomes form the foundation of our planning, which we adapt to meet the needs of individuals and groups by:

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to diverse learning needs
- Differentiating and adapting to best scaffold learning tasks
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment
- Providing additional curricular opportunities beyond the National Curriculum
- Working in partnership with parents and external agencies

Our curriculum is enriched with real-life experiences, and we are committed to ensuring all children are fully included. Lessons are adapted, and staff use a variety of strategies and styles to meet different needs. Teachers work closely with the Head of School, Assessment Leader, and SENDCo to track progress, set targets, and evaluate interventions, supported by a strong team of skilled support staff.

Furthermore, for pupils not making expected progress, we follow a graduated approach to support.

- **Wave One**: Our universal offer for all pupils, built on high-quality first teaching.
- **Wave Two**: Targeted support for pupils who need additional help, such as small group sessions focused on maths, motor skills, or a Learning Plan.
- **Wave Three**: Specialist support for pupils with more complex needs, which may involve external agencies such as Educational Psychologists or Speech and Language Therapy services.

This approach ensures that every child receives the right level of support to access the curriculum and make progress. We use a range of strategies and resources to support children with SEND, at these different levels which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Complex Communication Needs Base** – a dedicated space for pupils requiring specialist communication support.
- **Adapted physical environment** – including appropriate lighting, wheelchair access, accessible toilets, adaptions to the built environment and intimate care facilities.
- **Assistive technology** – to enhance learning and communication where required.
- **Sensory Room** – providing a calming environment for regulation and sensory needs.
- **Sensory Circuit Room** – supporting sensory integration and readiness for learning.
- **Sensory Garden** – supporting sensory integration and readiness for learning.
- **Purpose designed outdoor space** – including forest school and garden areas, outdoor classrooms, animal enclosure and play equipment to offer a range of alternative spaces that may be utilised by pupils with SEND.
- **Communication-friendly visuals** – such as the use of the Widgit app for consistent displays, timetables and signage across the school.
- **Specialist classroom aids** – for example, workstations, wobble stools, wobble cushions, body socks, sensory chews and other small sensory items or other resources to support access and engagement.
- **Explore Room** – a classroom designed to meet the needs of pupils not working at a National Curriculum level or who may need a calmer and more hands-on space at times.
- **Adapted curriculum access** – tailored to meet individual pupil needs.

Our inclusive approach ensures that most pupils' needs are met through objective-led planning, with lessons adapted to meet the needs of our pupils. We adopt a flexible approach so that individual needs can be supported effectively.

We place emphasis on learning within peer groups, while recognising individual needs. The school's layout allows for small group work and personal learning areas, enabling greater differentiation, adaption and high-quality support. Bespoke pastoral and learning support, including one-to-one, paired or small group plans and work, further enhances our inclusive approach.

Some pupils have disabilities that require additional resources. We are committed to providing an environment that ensures access to all areas of learning. Our school entrances allow wheelchair access, and we make reasonable adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, in line with the Equality Act. While some pupils with disabilities may also have special educational needs, not all will require SEND provision. For example, a child with asthma or diabetes may not have SEND but still has rights under the Equality Act. Each child is assessed individually, and appropriate provision is made based on their needs.

Transition

We have strong relationships with our feeder settings and the schools our pupils move on to, ensuring smooth transitions and continuity in learning and wellbeing. Information is shared at key transition points to support each pupils' educational journey.

For new Foundation pupils, we offer an extensive induction programme, including taster sessions, a welcome picnic, parent workshops, and evening information sessions. The SENDCo works alongside the Foundation Leader to observe pupils in their pre-school settings before arrival at school, continue to observe and plan when they start in school and attend meetings and arrange detailed plans for those who may present with higher levels of need. With the new Damers Preschool this transition work is likely to improve even further as we will know more about potential school aged pupils, sooner.

For pupils leaving at the end of Year 4, we work closely with local middle schools to provide enhanced transition support where needed. This may include additional visits, one-to-one sessions in the new setting, hosting key adults from middle schools, running small emotional literacy support groups for targeted pupils, and holding transition meetings. We also provide year-group and bespoke social stories to help prepare pupils for change and meet individually with parents where requested and appropriate.

Accessibility and Facilities

Our school building has been designed to provide an inclusive environment that increases access for pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. When a new pupil joins Damers and requires additional equipment or adjustments, we work closely with Dorset Council and other external agencies to ensure all necessary resources are in place and any barriers to learning are removed.

We have a range of specialist equipment available, including standing desks, sensory aids, wobble cushions and stools, workstations, large and small sensory equipment, bespoke iPads and individual Chromebooks. Where further adaptations are needed, we collaborate with professionals to secure appropriate facilities and ensure every child can access the curriculum fully. A recent example is the provision of two additional repeater screens, along with other relevant resources, in two classrooms provided for two pupils with significant vision impairment.

For more details, please see our Accessibility Plan on our school website, which outlines current provision and future development plans.

Equality

As a fully inclusive school and in line with our Equality Policy, we ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in every aspect of the curriculum, including extracurricular activities, wherever possible. Every child at Damers First School is expected to access all experiences we offer, with reasonable adjustments made where required.

When potential barriers arise, we work closely with parents and, where necessary, external agencies to create a plan that removes obstacles and enables full participation. Additional risk assessments and reasonable adjustments may be introduced to address individual needs, ensuring every child can take part safely and confidently in all opportunities available.

Assessment, Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of our SEND provision is a key part of our work to ensure pupils receive the best possible support. Many interventions are carefully tracked over a set period, either using bespoke tracking methods linked to the interventions or the ongoing use of whole-school assessment tools such as NTS testing, Reading and Spelling Ages or our Steppingstones Curriculum expectations, alongside feedback from teachers and parents.

All Learning Plans and EHCPs include clear outcomes with defined timeframes. Progress is tracked termly by class teachers and the SEND team, and parents receive copies of Learning Plans electronically so they can contribute to targets. Learning Plans are reviewed each term, with new goals set to ensure continued progress.

If an intervention is not proving effective, we adapt or introduce alternative strategies to maximise progress.

Governors are responsible for monitoring the overall effectiveness of the provision in place for pupils identified with SEND at the whole school level. The SEND Governor responsible for ensuring this evaluation takes place is Jackie Sonner.

Pupil Voice

Pupil voice is highly valued at Damers First School and plays an important role in shaping our school and the decisions we make. We actively encourage children to share their views and provide platforms where these are heard and respected. Our School Council and Junior Governors ensure that every year group is represented in weekly meetings.

For pupils with SEND, their views are central to the support process. Our Junior Governor group always includes one pupil with SEND, and pupils are supported to share their feelings and views in relation to their learning as part of the Learning Plan process. At Annual Reviews, pupils are at the heart of the process, completing questionnaires and presenting their successes and achievements for the year.

We place a particular focus on listening to the voices of pupils with SEND in relation to our anti-bullying policy, ensuring that every child's views are taken seriously and explore new ways in which to gather the views of pupils with significant additional needs, for example through the use of talking mats or widgit symbols for those pupils who struggle to verbalise their feelings and thoughts.

Communication

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting their child's learning journey at Damers First School. We encourage active involvement and provide a range of opportunities throughout the year to promote engagement.

Regular feedback is shared through annual reports and autumn/spring parents' evenings, covering academic progress, individual targets, Learning Plans where applicable, and social and emotional development. Parents and carers are welcome to discuss concerns or seek advice at any time with the class teacher or SENDCo.

We offer workshops and information sessions, such as phonics and home learning workshops, to help parents and carers support learning at home. Weekly and half-termly newsletters, online class blogs, "Stay and…" sessions, and our school Facebook and Instagram pages provide further insight into school life.

We actively consult with parents and carers to ensure their views are central to the development and ongoing review of our Accessibility Plan and other SEND related policies. Their insights help us make informed decisions that best support the needs of all pupils.

For pupils with a Learning Plan, parents and carers receive termly updates and copies of reviewed plans, which are discussed in detail during consultation evenings. For those with an EHCP or in our Complex Communication Needs Base, we maintain strong home-school links through meetings, phone calls, emails, and link books where appropriate, alongside annual reviews. We operate an 'open door' culture, ensuring requests for contact or meetings from parents and carers are followed up promptly.

Our Parent Partnership and Pastoral Lead offers additional guidance, support, and signposting for parents and carers on a range of areas including behaviour, routines, bereavement, mental health and family issues. We also hold regular information sharing meetings from a SEND perspective, especially when there is a clear demand for this, either presenting itself via school data or parental feedback, examples include recent parent workshops on SEND, toileting, and attendance and supporting children and families where pupils have a diagnosis of ASD. Annual questionnaires for parents, carers, and pupils help us gather feedback and continually improve provision.

Complaints

We hope that concerns and complaints about SEND provision will be rare. However, if there should be a concern that cannot be resolved by speaking to your child's class teacher, please contact the SENDCo who will be able to address your concern. If your concern is not dealt with satisfactorily, the process outlined in the school's complaints policy which can be accessed via

the school website should be followed. Further information if needed can be obtained from the school office.

Dorset Local Offer

The local offer website has been co-produced with parents, professionals and young people. You will find up to date information about services and support for children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs or disabilities. https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/dorsets-local-offer

End Notes

The report meets the legislative requirements for SEN information reports, which are set out in schedule 1 of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Regulations 2014 and paragraphs 6.79-6.81 of the SEND Code of Practice.

Date effective	September 2026	**Approval**	SGB
Maintenance	SLT	**Role/responsibility**	Tom Bracey
Date of next review	January 2027	**Date of last update**	January 2026