

MIDDLETON CHENEY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRUST.



Middleton Cheney
Special Educational Needs
Trust
(S.E.N.T)
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1. Introduction

My son was diagnosed with having an 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder' (ASD) at the age of four. Although he is only mildly affected, sometimes he can find normal activities in day to day life

fairly challenging or confusing. Not all people with an ASD are affected in the same way, but generally, those who are may have difficulty in the 'social world' concerning interaction, communication and imagination. Because he has this disorder, he currently requires extra support in his learning at school, or in other words has 'special educational needs' (SEN). As a parent of a child with SEN, I regularly discuss his educational progress and development with his teaching staff, as of course, it is in his interest that we do so and this has always been the case since he started his first educational setting at pre-school, before moving on to primary school. The teaching staff inform me on how they feel my son is progressing and point toward any areas where they think he may need extra support, and implement any practice in the classroom that they feel may help progress within these areas. These assessments are recorded as 'targets' and are put in place to work by over the following school term. It is an acceptable and satisfactory system. He is one of many children that are entitled to receive extra learning support and each child has an individual plan tailored to suit them, some children may need more support than my son, or perhaps very little support in one chosen area. On a personal level, I have found all staff to be most helpful in the part that they play in my son's educational life; we have a good parent-teacher relationship, and I feel that they perform exceptionally well with the resources that they have, albeit very limited.

There is, however, significant scope for improving services for both SEN children and teaching staff involved. A recent discussion with parents further afield who have children with SEN found that it is not an ideal world. Many think that a satisfactory education in mainstream school was relatively hard to come by. Some parents feel that they are being 'let down' by having inadequate funding or satisfactory procedures in place, inevitably leading to the breakdown of the parent-school relationship. Of course, the educational need differs with every child; each case is unique and it can sometimes be challenging for both parents and school staff, but from the outset it seems as though this is heavily blighted by lack of support and intervention from outside specialists who can play a vital role in the education advancement of children with SEN. This is due to government cutbacks. It is statutory duty for provision to be in place for children placed upon the SEN register at a school, but as government funding is very limited, the support from such specialists as these is minimal. So,

everything that could be done to improve the education for these children simply isn't. Special educational needs are explained further on; they are diverse and there are indeed varying degrees, but all require extra provision at some level. Taking this into account, it is evident the considerable amount of support required all in all. The current 'vision for improvement' can also be seen. This demonstrates how the authorities would like to see mainstream schools play their part in the improvement of education for these children in order to fulfil their needs; however, it appears that currently, it is virtually impossible to meet all of these needs even by adopting this vision due to their own budget restrictions. In short, it is my view that at national level there is significant need to further support teaching staff in their professional role in the advancement of educating children who have SEN in mainstream school

That said, it is all too easy to dwell on the negative aspect of this predicament and contrary to the opinion of the parents who feel let down, I feel very lucky indeed in having a good relationship with the staff at the schools, and mindful of the good work that they do in the circumstance. With this in mind, a means of financial support by way of a charitable trust has been created to help and support the requirements of both SEN children and teaching staff in educational settings and mainstream schools of Middleton Cheney. It acts as a voluntary, independent resource in the endeavour to improve the services to staff and children with SEN in the immediate vicinity, with immediate effect. This charity is named 'The Middleton Cheney Special Educational Needs Trust.' Teresa Aris, founder

There are three mainstream settings within the village of Middleton Cheney, Middleton Cheney Pre-School for children aged two and a half to four years, Middleton Cheney Community Primary School from 4-11yrs and Chenderit Visual School of Arts from 11-18yrs.

2. Special Educational Needs in Mainstream School.

(extracted from SEN, a guide for parents and carers - revised 2009)

The term 'special educational needs' has a legal definition. Children with special educational needs shall have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than

most children of the same age. These children may need extra or different help from that given to other children of the same age. The law says that children do not have learning difficulties just because their first language is not English. Of course some of these children may have learning difficulties as well. Children with special educational needs may need extra help because of a range of needs, such as in thinking and understanding, physical or sensory difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, or difficulties with speech and language or how they relate to and behave with other people. Many children will have special educational needs of some kind at some time during their education. Schools and other organisations can help most children overcome the barriers their difficulties present quickly and easily. But a few children will need extra help for some or all of their time in school.

Special educational needs could mean that a child has difficulties with:

- All of the work in school;
- Reading, writing, number work or understanding information;
- Expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying;
- Making friends or relating to adults;
- Behaving properly in school;
- Organising themselves; or
- Some kind of sensory or physical needs which may affect them in school.

These are just examples. Help for children with special educational needs will usually be in the child's ordinary, mainstream early education setting or school, sometimes with the help of outside specialists.

The Government has set out in the Early Learning Goals of the foundation stage of education for children from 3 to 5 years what most children should be able to do by the end of school reception year. The National Curriculum for children from 5 to 16 years also sets out what most children will learn at each stage of their education. Of course children make progress at different rates and have different ways in which they learn best. Teachers are expected to take account of this by looking carefully at how they organise their lessons, the classroom, the books and materials they give to each child and the way they teach. So all teachers will consider a number of options and choose the most appropriate ways to help each child learn from a range of activities. This is often described as 'differentiating the curriculum'.

All teachers should expect to teach children with special educational needs and all schools should play their part in educating children from their local community, whatever their

background or ability. Training for teachers, appropriate funding for schools and improvements in the way their achievements are judged is vital. All children should have opportunities to learn, play and develop alongside each other, within their local community of schools, with shared responsibility and a partnership approach to their support. Education is the key to a better and more fulfilling future for children, but for those with special educational needs and disabilities, too many barriers can stand in the way of the right education and support. Too often, the help they receive depends on where they live rather than on their needs. Parents should feel confident that their child's needs are being met effectively in school – without feeling that the only way to achieve this is through a statement of special educational needs. At local and national level work is going on to build the skills and capacity of schools and early years settings to meet diverse pupil needs.

A vision for improvement (issued by the Department for Education and Skills)

This vision is being delivered by working in partnership. The strategy provides clear national leadership supported by an ambitious programme of sustained action and review in four key areas:

Early intervention – to ensure that children who have difficulties learning receive the help they need as soon as possible and that parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities have access to suitable childcare

Removing barriers to learning – by embedding inclusive practice in every school and early years setting

Raising expectations and achievement – by developing teachers' skills and strategies for meeting the needs of children with SEN and sharpening the focus on their progress

An improved partnership approach – services working together to meet the needs of children and families. It may be necessary for teaching staff to adopt specific strategies in relation to particular areas of difficulty in a child's educational setting in order to assist the child to maximise their learning potential, preserve their dignity and be able to engage with their peers.

Support services to schools, including specialist teachers, outreach and educational psychology services play a vital role. Many Local Authorities have developed resources and initiatives to help those working directly with children. However, an overall limited budget has seen many of these services cut in recent years, leaving members of staff with minimal support from these service providers.

3. Brief Summary of Mainstream Settings in Middleton Cheney.

The following includes a brief overview of the three educational settings in the village of Middleton Cheney, along with a brief description on SEN policy.

(i) Middleton Cheney Pre-school

Middleton Cheney Pre-School (MCP) is a village community facility, a non-profit making registered charity which is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance. MCP is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents and is subject to regular OFSTED inspections. The last inspection was in November 2007 and MCP was graded "outstanding for Nursery Education.

MCP employs a team of staff who possess appropriate qualifications in early childhood development and education. A broad based curriculum of learning through play is offered for preschool children over the age of two and a half years.

MCP is open for five sessions per week, from 9am to 11.30am, Monday to Friday. When demand dictates, afternoon sessions are available on a Monday and Thursday. 1pm to 3.30pm.

MCP is licensed to accommodate a maximum of 26 children per session.

As a team, the committee of parent volunteers and the staff work to create a stimulating and friendly environment in which children's first experience of learning through play outside their homes is both a pleasant and fulfilling one.

The pre-school organises its sessions so that children can choose from a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their confidence to select a task then work it through to its completion. The children are encouraged to take part in adult-supported small/large group activities as well as totally child-led activities. These introduce them to new experiences/skills and help them to work alongside others. The children also have the opportunity to take part in a range of outdoor activities and children are free to access outdoor experiences during sessions. Although we offer a selection of free choice craft activities regularly, we believe it is more important to focus on the process of creating, rather than the finished product. Our workshop area allows children to freely access materials to create in both 2D and 3D. Science based, imaginative small world and role-play activities offer a great opportunity to develop children's creativity, vocabulary, problem-solving and social skills.

As a member of MCP

- a safe stimulating and well planned learning environment
- a specially tailored curriculum leading to the Early Learning Goals
- individual care and attention made possible by a high ration of adults to children
- opportunities for fun and friendship and learning with other children and adults
- the support of a personal key worker
- opportunities for you and your family to be directly involved in the activities of the group and your own child's progress

(ii) Middleton Cheney Community Primary School

Middleton Cheney Primary School aims to be a learning community for children aged 4-11yrs which strives to:-

Enrich children's lives with a life-long enthusiasm for learning.

Encourage children to value their role as participating members of the school, village and local communities and prepare them for life in our rich and complex society. We also aim to foster an understanding of, and respect for, the environment.

Empower children to take a proactive role in their futures by equipping them with skills, knowledge and understanding to explore the margins of their potential.

We aim to meet these aims through:-

A safe and stimulating environment where success is celebrated and where children feel confident to explore, take risks in their learning and gain from their experiences.

The encouragement of qualities such as creativity, curiosity and enjoyment.

The development of social skills and promotion of values such as fairness, tolerance and responsibility.

A broad and balanced curriculum that meets National and County expectations whilst providing opportunity to explore the richness of human experience beyond these.

Policies that ensure consistency and equality of opportunity for all members regardless of age, sex, colour, religion or disability.

A high quality team who seek to work in partnership with parents and supporting members of the wider community.

The necessary quality physical resources.

We place great importance on identifying children who have special educational needs and on providing appropriate teaching for them.

Where the teacher's assessment of a child's achievements shows that he or she is finding particular difficulty in acquiring basic skills in literacy or numeracy, parents will be informed and an individual programme drawn up for the child. Progress towards the targets identified in the programme will be reviewed after six or eight weeks and new targets set. Class teachers are supported in this by a member of staff with additional training as a special needs co-ordinator.

If the child continues to experience great difficulty, advice will be sought from the local authority's support services, and in some cases the authority may decide to issue a statement of special educational needs for the child, and fund additional support. Parents are consulted at every stage.

(iii) Chenderit - Visual school of Arts.

Chenderit School is a mixed 11-18 county comprehensive school with specialist school status in the Visual Arts. It was opened in 1979 on fields which it is said, were formerly used for archery practice. The name 'Chenderit' is an adaptation of a medieval name for Middleton Cheney. There are currently approximately 1,138 students on roll, of whom about 266 are in the Sixth Form. All students in Years 7-11 follow a broad and balanced curriculum; the sixth form programme offers over 22 courses at Advanced (A), Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ & ACVE), and an entitlement curriculum. Students are initially taught in mixed-ability tutor groups, with practical and creative subjects taught in smaller classes. Setting by ability is introduced progressively, where appropriate to subject needs. We are fortunate that we enjoy close working links with our partner primary schools, and have a range of innovative and practical programmes for developing and maintaining curriculum and social liaison

Chenderit aims to provide the best possible learning experiences for each individual student and is committed to integration and support in mainstream classes wherever possible. In exceptional cases there may be a need to withdraw a student from areas of the curriculum for a short while for intensive courses over an agreed period of time and to reduce the number of examination subjects in Key Stage 4.

Departments are expected to develop a range of strategies to meet the educational needs of all students. Each is asked to nominate a 'key teacher' with responsibilities for Learning Support. Workshops and training are provided for these key teachers. There is close cooperation

between specialist support teachers, key teachers, learning support assistants and department staff in developing support systems including the development of differentiated course materials. Each student's progress is carefully monitored and support programmes reviewed and adapted where necessary. Many students receive additional support within mainstream classes, and most departments have a learning support assistant as part of the subject team.

Chenderit values the close co-operation of parents, teachers and governors in ensuring that the special needs of each student are catered for so that they may achieve their fullest potential.

4. Middleton Cheney Special Educational Needs Trust - Mission statement.

To assist in the advancement of education of children who require extra provision by having special educational needs, in their mainstream educational setting within the village of Middleton Cheney.

. This can be achieved by:-

1. being able to financially provide or support any required matter in the educational enhancement of SEN children.
2. encouraging good relations between the charity and the beneficiaries, focussing on the current situation and requirements for the school. Regular feedback and progressive verbal reports from all parties are paramount in the improvement of services in SEN.
3. promoting awareness of the charity where possible. Making information about the charity freely available for any donors or funders to consider, both in the local and wider community. This may be done by route of the local media, the creation of a dedicated website and through the schools themselves. Social networking can also play a part in promoting the charity. Dedicated committee members should be a point of contact for the charity for the purpose of enquiry.
4. Ensuring that regular successful fundraising activities and events take place. Any fundraising event needs to be carefully planned and outlined. Varied fundraising activities should be considered in the interest of maximising potential proceeds. Particular interests may be targeted for any given event. There should be an estimated expenditure and income from the proposed event and those that are considered to be non-financially viable should not take place.
5. dedicating a committee member to looking into support from online sources. To approach existing organisations and bodies for help and advice on all required information in the development of the charity.
6. considering and developing any personal skills needed to support the mission.
7. utilising a committee member for the purpose of specific targets or projects to benefit SEN within these settings, if required, by approaching existing funding groups.

5. Summary Review of Middleton Cheney S.E.N.T

This includes the strengths and weaknesses we may have, and our assessment of the threats and opportunities facing us.

Strengths

- Small dedicated committee with skills and experience in local fundraising.
- Community based charity - ease of familiarity within the close community leading to support from the public.
- Good relationship with key staff members at each setting within the village.
- Good relationship with other charities and bodies at local level - e.g. Middleton Cheney Parish Council.

Weaknesses

- o Newly established charity group within the village; members of the community may

need time to learn and consider or anticipate support.

o Possible assumption that an existing group or charity already carries out similar work, e.g. - School Parents' association/PTA.

Opportunities

- To give SEN children an improved quality of educational life within their setting by providing a valuable resource for staff in their professional role in teaching and assisting.
- To grow and develop into an independent stable resource for SEN in mainstream education in Middleton Cheney
- To learn from being able to assess the requirements in certain particular areas of SEN.
- To learn from being able to assess the educational progress of children with SEN.
- To potentially portray or demonstrate to the wider community what can be achieved by providing extra funding for SEN.
- To network and develop in the local and wider community to gain extra support, knowledge or information for the benefit of the charity.
- To network and share information for the benefit of any similar groups in the wider community.
- To give all settings the opportunity to prosper in their league, by producing better results.
- To enhance the social and community event calendar by hosting fundraising events!!

Threats

o Belief that charity may be considered as 'some relief of statutory responsibility' by potential donors or funders.

o Belief that mainstream setting is not an appropriate setting for some children with special educational needs.

6 Working Plan of Middleton Cheney S.E.N.T

There are six voluntary members of the committee who act as trustees, all of whom are parents but none are, or claim to be professionals in the field of education. The charity is unaffiliated or in conjunction with any statutory system or body and is completely independent and voluntary run. The charity wish that it should not be confused with any existing group or be anything other than is set out for the purpose defined in the constitution.

- The charity shall be approached in the matter of a request by the mainstream school listed in the constitution, either electronically, or in writing, giving details of the nature or purpose of the request and enclosing details of approximate funding required.
- The request shall be made by the same designated member of staff at each setting,

whose position has relevance to the department of special educational needs:- e.g Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. If this is not possible, then the request should be made by a senior member of staff.

- All agreements and decisions shall be made by the trustees following full accountability of the trust, and after careful discussion by all members.
- Requests made in relation to or on behalf of an individual or 'named pupil' should not be made, and will not be considered.
- If any request is rejected due to insufficient funds in the trust, the beneficiary will be notified and is encouraged to re-apply at a later date. Retrospective requests shall not be considered, and the reply to the request is the final agreement.
- The committee shall call agreement after consideration, and a written response to the request shall be sent to the beneficiary within ten working days.
- The trustees' shall not consider any request from any person other than those listed above.
- The trustees' shall record and document all necessary details of requests and transactions and retain records for no less than five years.
- The beneficiaries should to make every effort in submitting copies of receipts to the charity, due to any payment or transaction, for the purpose of record keeping.
- The charity shall send a copy of the financial account to any beneficiary on request.
- The charity shall keep records of any donations made by the general public. These records should be retained for no less than five years.
- The charity shall keep records of both expenditure and income of any fundraising event or activity. These records should be retained for no less than five years.

7. Conclusion

This document should be reviewed and evaluated at each Annual General Meeting by the members of the committee. Any amendments should be made under agreement.