

EHCP+ Initial Visit Meeting Summary

School: Harlyn Primary School	
Visitor: Sophia Abdel	Date: 22.05.2025
Visiting: Sarah Tosdevin	Time: 11.00am-2.00pm

Reason for Visit

On 22nd May 2025, I visited Harlyn Primary School which is located in Pinner. During the visit, I met with Sarah Tosdevin, the school's Inclusion Manager. I was also given a tour of the school by two autistic students who attend the setting. The tour also included a visit to the dedicated room where they hold their club, providing a valuable insight into the inclusive practices and supportive environment offered by the school.

The primary purpose of the visit was to introduce the EHCP+ Team and to engage in a focused discussion about the school's current challenges in effectively supporting students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In addition, we explored the school's identified strengths in SEND provision and support and considered opportunities for further collaboration and targeted assistance.

Discussion Summary

Overview of the SEND in the School

Harlyn Primary School currently supports 34 who have autism as their identified primary need. An additional 14 students are on the autism diagnostic pathway, reflecting a significant number of neurodiverse learners within the school community.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion through a range of initiatives. One example is the annual Celebrating Differences Week, a whole-school event that promotes awareness and understanding of SEND. For Key Stage 2 students, there is also a Celebrating Differences Club, which provides a supportive space for neurodiverse children to explore their identities, recognise their differences, and build confidence in their strengths.

To support students who may find it difficult to remain in the main classroom, the school offers access to a separate, quieter space where they can work in a more regulated environment. Currently, there is one student attending on a reduced timetable, with appropriate measures in place to support their individual needs.

The school maintains an open-door policy that is particularly valued by parents of children with SEND. It also runs a parent support group called 'Chat, Share and Cuppa', offering families a welcoming space to connect, share experiences, and access informal support.

Barriers to Supporting Students with SEND

Harlyn Primary School faces several challenges in supporting students with SEND, particularly around identification, provision, and sustainability. A key difficulty lies in identifying autistic girls, whose presentation often differs from that of boys. The majority of autistic students currently attending the school are boys, which may reflect broader challenges in recognising autism in girls, especially when masking behaviours are present.

The school reports a high level of SEND need, particularly in Reception, where the complexity of needs is increasing. Staff highlighted the difficulty of replicating the level of provision typically available in specialist settings, especially within the constraints of a mainstream environment. This is compounded by funding constraints, which raise concerns about the sustainability of support staff roles. Reduced funding for children with SEND makes it increasingly difficult to maintain adequate staffing levels and provide consistent support.

Supporting parents effectively is another area of concern. Children often present differently at home, making it challenging for staff and families to develop a shared understanding of needs. The school is also increasingly required to assist families with legal processes related to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), including appeals and tribunals. Sarah expressed concern about this responsibility, noting that she is not trained in legal advocacy and that this work falls outside her job description. However, she worries that without school involvement, vulnerable parents—some of whom struggle with literacy or understanding complex documentation—may be left unsupported. According to Sarah, there is also a perceived lack of transparency around the new EHCP Banding Model, which adds to parental confusion and anxiety.

Concerns were also raised about the inconsistency in EHCP quality. In some cases, when requests for assessment are declined, parents are offered medication without clear timelines or follow-up, leading to further frustration and, in some cases, tribunal proceedings. The Inclusion Manager often spends a significant amount of time correcting errors in EHCPs, which detracts from her core responsibilities. Although there have been improvements in EHCP processes, delays and inconsistencies in timeframes remain an issue for the school.

Staff wellbeing is an important consideration, as the emotional and logistical demands of supporting students with complex needs can be significant. Ensuring that staff feel supported and valued is essential to maintaining a sustainable and effective SEND provision. Additionally, access to external professional support has become more limited. Much of the input is now provided virtually, making it harder for professionals to build relationships with students and fully understand their needs. This shift has impacted the depth and quality of external assessments and recommendations.

SEND Provision and Support Strengths

Sarah shared her reflections on the school's key strengths in relation to its SEND provision and support. These insights are based on her direct experiences and observations within the school setting. The following strengths were identified:

- Proactive transition planning: The school informs secondary settings in advance when students with SEND are due to transition, supporting continuity of provision.
- Year 6 problem-solving focus: A targeted approach helps students develop problem-solving skills, including understanding the scale of problems and appropriate responses.
- Support for staff wellbeing: Teaching Assistants have regular meetings and access to support, helping to maintain morale and resilience.
- Leadership commitment to inclusion: The Headteacher is actively involved in SEND provision and attends all Annual Review meetings.
- Support for Young Carers: Regular coffee mornings and parent meetings are held to support Young Carers and their families.
- Inclusive ethos: The school fosters a culture of inclusion and recognition of individual needs.
- Dedicated and skilled staff: Staff are described as patient and committed, often running extracurricular clubs voluntarily, even without additional pay.
- Effective internal communication: Strong communication systems support collaboration across the school.
- Buddy class system: Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes are paired, with monthly team-teaching sessions to build relationships and peer support.
- Community engagement: The school hosts an Enterprise Day in partnership with Brunel University, enriching students' learning experiences.
- Transition support within school: Tailored support is provided for students with SEND and their parents as children move between year groups.

Staff Training

Staff have engaged in a broad range of professional development to enhance their capacity to support students effectively. The Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) team delivered targeted training on colourful semantics, barrier games, and intensive interaction, providing staff with practical tools to support communication development.

One teaching assistant is currently completing ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) training, which will further strengthen the school's provision for student emotional wellbeing.

All staff have undertaken mental health first aid training, including modules on bereavement, anxiety, and supporting girls with Pathological Demand Avoidance

(PDA). Additional external training has been provided by Hedgewood School and Young Carers, alongside in-house training on the use of Widgit symbols to support visual communication.

The school is considering further training focused on supporting transitions, to better assist students during key changes in their educational journey.

Follow-Up Actions

- Contact the SEND Team regarding the former student referenced by Sarah.
- Discuss with the SEND Team the concerns raised by Sarah about the EHCP mediation process.
- Share details of the financial management initiative for primary schools.
- Email information about the Elevate mentoring programme.
- Provide Sarah with details about the Mental Health Support Team (MHST).

Signature: *S. Abdel*

Date: 04.08.2025 (shared)