

South Avenue Primary School



SEND Annual Report January 2025 - January 2026

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1. School Profile

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South Avenue Primary School serves 407 pupils across 14 classes, each supported by a Teaching Assistant (TA) during morning sessions focused on English and Numeracy. In the afternoons, TAs facilitate targeted interventions. The school currently has 16 children supported by High Needs Funding (HNF) and 11 children with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP).

We ensure **quality-first teaching** across the school, embedding inclusive practices into daily lessons. Our **Behaviour Policy**, guided by the *Zones of Regulation*, fosters emotional regulation and parental involvement. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) and Risk Assessments are in place for children requiring them. Our dedicated SEND team is comprised of a SENDCO, a SEN HLTA and a SEN TA.

Progress Monitoring: Pupil progress is reviewed termly, and targeted support - 1:1 or small group - is implemented as necessary.

Social-Emotional Support: A Thrive and Wellbeing Team addresses the needs of children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) challenges.

Our ethos aligns with the **Special Educational Needs Code of Practice**, ensuring that SEND policies and procedures remain central to our mission.

2. Breakdown of Pupils' needs

The SEN Register includes 121 children, representing 30% of the school population. Of these, 11 children (3%) have an EHCP. A breakdown of pupils' SEND status according to their Year can be seen below.

YEAR	NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON THE SEN REGISTER	NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH AN EHCP
Reception	12	1
Year 1	9	2
Year 2	18	0
Year 3	18	3

YEAR	NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON THE SEN REGISTER	NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH AN EHCP
Year 4	18	4
Year 5	15	1
Year 6	19	0

3. Attainment

The attainment of pupils on track to be expected by the end of the year with SEND compared with pupils without SEND has been presented for comparison purposes below. The data from January 2026 indicates a significant shift in the school's attainment, as the previous two years of steady improvement for children with SEND have been interrupted. While both cohorts saw a decline in outcomes, the disproportionate drop in SEND attainment suggests that the current Reception and Key Stage 1 cohorts have more complex profiles than previous year groups. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate specialist placements for children with EHCPs likely contributes to these figures, as high-need pupils remain in the cohort while awaiting specialist provision. This downward trend has resulted in the attainment gap widening by at least 5% across Reading, Writing and Maths, with Reading seeing the most substantial divergence.

It is worth mentioning that the data below represent an in-year snapshot rather than end-of-key-stage outcomes.

ATTAINMENT JANUARY 2025			
	Reading	Writing	Maths
Pupils with SEND	42.3%	32.5%	41.5%
Pupils without SEND	77.4%	70.5%	78.6%
Attainment gap	35.1%	38.2%	37.1%

ATTAINMENT JANUARY 2026			
	Reading	Writing	Maths
Pupils with SEND	29.2%	21.5%	29.9%
Pupils without SEND	70.8%	65%	72%
Attainment gap	41.6%	43.5%	42.1%

4. External Agencies

At South Avenue, we engage the services of Rebecca Rice, an Educational Psychologist who assesses four to five children throughout the academic year; Kim Reynolds, a Speech and Language Therapist; and Simon Worthington, a private Occupational Therapist (OT). These services are commissioned by the school to ensure our most vulnerable children are assessed more quickly than through standard NHS pathways.

Based on the reports that our private therapists produce, the SENDCO is able to create Personalised Plans and support referrals for further funding, EHCPs, letters of support to GPs and referrals to the Swale Community Paediatric Service.

The school has a positive working relationship with the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS), NHS Speech and Language Therapists and NHS OT Therapists and their support has been instrumental in developing the provision for some of our children with complex and profound needs.

At South Avenue, we also work closely with the Local Authority. We have participated in surgeries organised by Melanie Wenban (SEND Inclusion Adviser). Dr Hannah Gilson (an Educational Psychologist from the Kent Educational Psychology Service) has engaged with the school through a school-based review, and Elizabeth Pole (Kent Professional Lead Speech & Language Therapist for The Balanced System®) is working with the SENCO to help the school achieve The Balanced System® accreditation.

The Balanced System® is a strategic, outcomes-based, whole-system framework. It provides a suite of tools and templates designed to improve the delivery of speech and language provision, allowing children to benefit from a more integrated approach to achieving outcomes

5. High Needs Funding

The Local Authority has introduced several changes regarding how funding is allocated. For a summary of how top-up funding is distributed to mainstream schools, please visit the following website: https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/204933/Mainstream-Top-Up-Funding-Changes_25-26-KELSI.pdf

We currently have 16 children receiving High Needs Funding (HNF). Historically, this funding allowed us to maintain staffing levels that ensured we could support our pupils effectively and implement ambitious provision plans. Unfortunately, due to these changes, we have had to discontinue the roles of nine teaching assistants. This has significantly impacted our provision; since September 2025, our focus has been on mitigating the impact of this reduction in staff while striving to balance the essential support our children require.

As part of these changes, the Local Authority has introduced Communities of Schools. Our school is an active member of one of these local partnerships, and we meet on a termly basis to collaborate with our peer schools. This is a countywide partnership designed to foster inclusive leadership and raise standards across mainstream schools. The functions of these communities include:

- Improving Quality First Teaching: Sharing best practices to raise standards and narrow achievement gaps.
- Peer Moderation: Developing a non-judgmental system to share and grow inclusive practices between schools.
- Targeted Support: Providing schools with access to multi-disciplinary teams for more specialized assistance.
- Funding Flexibility: Reviewing the distribution of HNF to allow schools more flexibility in planning curricula or therapies that meet changing local priorities.
- Local Inclusion Plans: Developing strategic plans in line with government policy to improve provision at all levels.

6. Review of the Year

This year, the number of children on our SEN register remains consistent with last year. This is primarily due to the high level of need identified early within our Reception cohort. The majority of children on the register continue to have Communication and Interaction as their primary need; these pupils have received dedicated support from our SEN TA, Mrs Pattern.

We have supported three families across the school in identifying appropriate specialist provision; all were successful in securing places for this academic year. Locally, we have seen an increase in paediatric referrals through 'Right to Choose'

and a corresponding decrease in direct referrals via the Community Paediatric Service. Demand for autism and ADHD assessments in Sittingbourne has risen so rapidly that services are currently unable to keep pace with the need.

In Swale, the NHS is shifting toward a "support first" model to prevent children from waiting years for help without a diagnosis. This is facilitated through the 'This is Me' programme. Mr Savva, Mrs Cadwallader and Mrs Loft have received training to support parents through this process.

The tool assesses nine specific areas to create a needs summary:

- Speech and language
- Energy levels
- Attention and impulse control
- Emotional regulation
- Motor skills
- Sensory skills
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Empathising and systemising
- Cognitive abilities

Currently, the 'This is Me' profile is the only method for direct referral to the Community Paediatric Service. To date, Mr Savva has worked with two families to complete this summary.

We have worked closely with the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) to reduce part-time timetables, with only two children currently on reduced hours. Since our last report, two new EHCPs have been issued, and two children with existing EHCPs have joined our school.

South Avenue was invited to join the Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project. This initiative brings health and education specialists into mainstream settings to:

- Shape whole-school SEND provision
- Provide early interventions and upskill staff
- Strengthen partnerships between schools and parent carers

As part of PINS, we are working with Kent Parents and Carers Together (PACT) to establish a parent carer forum. We have already held a successful meeting with our Family Liaison Officer and SENCO. Additionally, we secured £500 to develop a sensory room in our EYFS area, and staff have accessed bespoke training on Active Learning and sensory environments.

Following the admission of three children with complex and profound needs, we established the Platinum Room with STLS support. This is a temporary, termly-reviewed intervention focused on the fundamentals of language, including shared attention and turn-taking.

Our staff continue to develop their expertise through training in:

- Adaptive Teaching and Active Learning
- Trauma-Informed Practices
- Colourful Semantics and Widgeits
- Zones of Regulation (instrumental to our behaviour policy)

Summer transitions remain a priority. This year included extra taster sessions and personalised support through transition booklets and postcards from teachers.

Our playground has also been enhanced through the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme. We have introduced significant storage and new equipment—including scooters, bicycles, and pipes, to strategically improve the quality of play. OPAL is currently the only programme of its kind independently proven to sustainably improve play in British primary schools.

The SEND Team recently conducted a full audit of the SEN register to ensure teachers feel confident in their provision. We also reviewed and updated the Accessibility Plan, SEND Information Report, and SEND Policy.

To celebrate our students' progress and values, we held the school's first Knighthood Ceremony, attended by Kevin McKenna, MP. Three children from Years 5 and 6 were honoured as our first "Knights of South Avenue" for demonstrating resilience, respect and nurturing.

7. Next Steps

Throughout the last three years at South Avenue, there has been a significant increase in paediatric referrals. It is paramount that the school continues to work with key agencies, such as the Local Authority, STLS, and the Community Paediatric Department in Swale, to ensure children are supported through early identification and effective provision, both financially and through professional recommendations.

An increasing number of parents have expressed disappointment regarding the significant waiting times for assessment and have requested guidance on how to exercise their 'Right to Choose.' This referral system allows parents to select a private ADHD/ASD assessment provider for their child. "Right to Choose" within mental health is a relatively new option (available since 2018), and although most local GPs are aware of it, there is sometimes a misunderstanding as to how the process works. The school has engaged with local providers to ensure up-to-date information is offered to

parents to help them navigate this referral pathway. Furthermore, the school encourages parents to use the 'This is Me' programme to ensure support is offered to children while they remain on a waiting list.

The strategic monitoring of Platinum, an intervention created due to the lack of places within special schools and the inability of the Local Authority to find placements for children with EHCPs citing Cognition and Learning or Communication and Interaction as primary needs, remains a focus. It is a concern that the majority of children with EHCPs in EYFS and KS1 are either waiting for a placement or appealing the Local Authority's decision to name a mainstream provision on their EHCPs.

The SENDCO will continue building positive relationships with parents and carers through an open-door policy, the organization of SEND-related workshops, and opportunities for families to contribute toward the early stages of identifying SEND and language development. Following an initial baseline of the school's speech and language provision through The Balanced System®, a main priority identified was the need to develop the school's offer to parents and carers. This is now a priority, and the SENDCO is developing a programme of workshops to be offered to parents moving forward.

As part of the school's drive to develop adaptive teaching, further training has been delivered on Jerome Bruner's approach to scaffolding. This ensures that learners are supported by breaking tasks down into manageable steps. Scaffolding is defined as:

"A metaphor for temporary support that is removed when it is no longer required, providing enough support so that pupils can successfully complete tasks that they could not yet do independently" (EEF, 2025).

This training, alongside 1:1 planning session with teachers, has supported the development of adaptive teaching, particularly regarding the adaptation of resources in KS1 and KS2 for both core and foundation subjects. It is key to continue this work to ensure consistency across all classes and subjects, utilizing dual coding through Widgits and Colourful Semantics to enable all children in our school to access the curriculum.