Horsham Special Support Centre Admission/Operational Policy

Designation: Assessment and Developmental Language Disorder/Social Communication

Horsham Nursery School Special Support Centre (SSC) provides high quality early years education alongside intensive speech and language assessment and therapy for 16 part time children, (8 am and 8 pm places), during school term time. The SSC provides specialist provision for children with developmental language disorders, social communication differences, and act as an assessment placement prior to school entry.

Admissions Process/Criteria

- Each child **must** be known to 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).
- A child will be considered if speech and language delay/disorder or if communication and interaction is the primary area of need as part of social communication differences.
- The child's general development skills are **broadly** appropriate for their age (with the exception of their speech and language), and the child should show a desire to communicate. We recognise that children with Social Communication differences may not be working at age appropriate levels in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development.
- The child does not have extreme dysregulation challenges other than those associated with the speech/ language disorder.
- It is anticipated that the child would be able to access the main nursery provision, without additional adult support, and transition to a mainstream school setting.
- The child does not appear to require 1-1 support.
- The child must be eligible for free entitlement e.g. the term after their 3rd birthday.
- The child must ideally be able to attend the SSC for five morning or afternoon sessions a week.
- Children are offered an assessment place following discussion and agreement by the panel at the considerations meeting.
- Letters will be sent to inform parents the outcome of the meeting which will be one of the following outcomes:
    - The child will be offered a 15 hour placement in the SSC.
    - The panel concluded that the child's needs could be met by access to universal or provision which is ordinarily available.
    - The child does not meet the admissions criteria and a space will not be offered.

Children who are not offered a placement in the SSC will not automatically be offered a place in the mainstream nursery.

- Children may be offered a **maximum** of 5 terms in the SSC.
- Extended sessions will be offered at the discretion of the Headteacher and after a minimum attendance in the SSC of half a term. Consideration will take account of the level of adult support required.

Considerations Process

- There will be a termly meeting attended by a panel of representatives from Health and Education e.g. Headteacher. Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO), Resident Speech and language therapist, and member of the Autism and Social Communication team.
- Children are signposted to the SSC by Speech and Language Therapists, Health Visitors, Portage and other settings in the area, however, a formal referral to the SSC panel can only be made a Speech and Language Therapist.

- Children already in the nursery will be considered following an assessment by the resident speech and language therapist if no other assessment has been completed.
- Children are offered a place following discussion and agreement by the panel at the considerations meeting.
- Places are allocated according to 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, distance from the Nursery, and where the panel feel that the SSC can make the greatest impact).
- 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 other professionals

The above information will be used alongside referral information when considering each child for a space.

Oversubscription criteria

- In the event that more referrals are received than there are spaces available, two children will be added to the 'reserve' list, and will be offered spaces should they become available.
- Should a place become available unexpectedly, other children who have been referred to the considerations panel will be discussed by the in house SSC management team and the place will be allocated using the above mentioned criteria. If there is no waiting list and a space becomes available, the SSC in house team will request further referrals from colleagues in the Early Years Speech & Language Therapy Team or from the nursery school.
- 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 the Headteacher, a member of the Autism and Social Communication team and an allocated Governor of the Nursery School.

Exit Criteria prior to School Entry

A termly meeting will take place to review children's progress within the SSC. The panel will review each child's progress and make recommendations as to whether they have:

- made significant progress and no longer need the specialist provision, in which case they would move onto the nursery school roll.
- continue to require support provided and remain within the SSC.
- are not making progress and therefore suitable alternative provision maybe required to meet their identified needs.
- formal and informal assessment and observation indicate that a child's speech and language development is within the expected limits for their age.
- another appropriate nursery placement to attend.

An annual meeting will take place to review the effectiveness of the SSC provision and make recommendations about future school placements for the children. A written report on the effectiveness of the SSC will be produced annually.

Operational Guidance

Aims

- To provide high quality learning in an early years environment in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.
- To provide a local specialist provision for children with additional needs who meet the admission criteria.
- 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 on-going basis.
- To provide written Individual Plans 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 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 and Occupational Therapists.
- To provide and implement a successful transition for each child in the SSC, when they are moving to the next stage of the schooling.

Staffing
- There is a Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) five days per week, together with a specialist FTE Teaching Assistant. The NHS will appoint a Speech and Language Therapist to work alongside the Teacher-in-Charge.

Speech and Language Therapy
- The SLT will assess each child's speech and language skills, formally and/or informally and set individual targets, in conjunction with the parents, Teacher in Charge, and sometimes the SENCO.
- The SLT will work with the children on a one-to-one or small group basis, according to their individual needs. Parents are invited to attend therapy sessions at least once during the year. The SLT will liaise regularly with parents and provide activities and resources linked to their children's targets.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the Teacher in Charge or SLT if they have any questions or concerns, or require further support.

Teaching and Learning

The teacher in Charge of the SSC will:
- work with the children throughout the nursery session within the main nursery, enhancing their learning using each child's individual targets, and is responsible for developing each child's learning across all areas of the EYFS.
- communicate regularly with families. Parents will be provided with a parent handbook when their child joins the SSC.
- organise regular parent meetings, to chat, meet other parents and discuss their child's progress.
- meet regularly with the SENCO/SLT to discuss each child's progress and review targets.
- complete trackers and assessments for children attending the SSC.
- work alongside colleagues to develop and support their practice using specific strategies to support their speech and language development.
- liaise with the SMT and external agencies where appropriate.

Structure of the Session
- Children are escorted to the SSC by staff members, where they will be greeted by SSC staff and self-register. Children will access the mainstream provision following their own interests and developing their learning.
- During the session, children will be invited to the SSC for focused, individual or small group, speech and language work.
- Children access healthy snacks and drinks throughout the session, where conversation and social interaction is encouraged during this time.

At designated group times, children will work either with the Teacher in Charge of the SSC or with the allocated mainstream key carer.

Liaison with other Settings

Ideally children within the SSC should access all of their provision within the Nursery School. Where children do access alternative provision, the SSC staff team will:

- liaise with that setting/childminder in order to encourage consistency of approach.
- invite staff from other settings attended by children in the SSC, to visit the Nursery to inform their practice and provision, and provide consistency of approach.

Monitoring and Review

- After the first half-term, each child is provided with a personalised plan, consisting of specific targets relating to speech and language, as well as other areas of their development. This is reviewed and updated on a termly basis.
- Children will be referred to the Early Years SEND Under 5 panel if a higher level of support is likely to be needed when the child starts school.
- Where there is a high level of need, a coordinated assessment of education and health needs may be initiated following the SEND Under 5 assessment meeting which takes places each term
- Children will be discussed each term to discuss their progress and recommend the most appropriate placement going forward.

Transition to School

The Teacher in Charge and SLT will discuss school placements with the parents in a timely manner.

- When school places have been allocated, teachers/SENCO's from the feeder school will be invited to nursery to observe the child, and liaise with the SSC team.
- Reports will be shared, which will include Speech and Language 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 on-going 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.
- Parents wishing for the child to remain on roll at Horsham Nursery School must inform the Headteacher in writing by the deadline given.