ACADEMY
GREAT BARR

SEND Local Offer Information Report and Intervention Guide

2026-27



Policy owner	Mrs V Noakes
Approval	Local Governing Body
Effective from	November 2026
Next review	November 2027

1. Purpose and scope

This report explains how Q3 Academy Great Barr identifies and supports students with special educational needs (SEN). It also describes the school's contribution to Sandwell's local offer and the interventions it may use.

The report applies to students in Years 7 to 13. It covers students receiving SEN support and students with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

The school will use its best endeavours to secure the special educational provision called for by a student's SEN. It will make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, including those who do not have SEN.

In this report:

- 'parent' includes carers and anyone with parental responsibility
- a student has SEN when a learning difficulty or disability calls for provision that is additional to, or different from, provision generally made for others of the same age
- 'SEND' means special educational needs and disabilities
- disability and SEN can overlap, but they are not the same
- 'SENCO' means special educational needs co-ordinator

The Mercian Trust is the school's proprietor. The Trust remains accountable for SEN arrangements. The Local Governing Body monitors local implementation under the Trust's governance arrangements.

This report is reviewed annually, with changes updated as soon as possible during the year.

2. SEND contacts and raising a concern

The school's SENCO is Miss Tromans. The assistant SENCO is Mrs T Holland. The SEND department also includes senior teaching assistants and teaching assistants.

You can contact the SENCO through the school contact page or telephone Reception on 0121 358 6186. Ask for your enquiry to be passed to the SENCO.

If you are concerned about your child's progress or access to learning, you should first speak to their personal tutor. You may then contact the head of year or SENCO. A concern may also be raised by the student, staff, a previous setting, or an external professional.

The SENCO co-ordinates SEN provision and is the main contact for families and relevant services.

General concerns about the school's SEND arrangements may be sent to the Local Governing Body through the clerk. Complaints about an individual student's provision follow section 14.

3. Needs the school supports

The school is a mainstream secondary school with sixth-form provision. It supports students across the 4 broad areas of need:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional, and mental health
- sensory and physical needs

Needs may include difficulties with literacy, numeracy, speech, language, communication, social interaction, emotional regulation, mental health, hearing, vision, mobility, or physical access.

The broad areas help the school plan support. They do not determine a fixed programme. A student's needs may fall across more than one area and may change over time.

4. Identifying and assessing SEN

The school identifies needs as early as possible. It considers:

- information from the student, parent, previous setting, and professionals
- teacher assessment and experience
- progress, attainment, attendance, and behaviour information
- work reviews, classroom observation, and screening where appropriate
- the student's development compared with their starting points and peers
- the effect of teaching, adjustments, and earlier support

Slow progress or low attainment does not by itself mean that a student has SEN. The school will consider other possible factors, including attendance, health, changes at home, English as an additional language, bullying, and unmet pastoral or safeguarding needs. A diagnosis is not required before the school identifies SEN or provides suitable support.

If a student is not making expected progress, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent. It will hear their concerns, discuss the student's progress and additional support, and discuss any proposed specialist referrals.

A middle or senior leader may refer a concern to the SENCO. Specialist advice may be sought with the parent and student's involvement.

If the school decides that a student has SEN and will receive special educational provision, it will record the decision. It will formally tell the parent or, where the relevant legal rights have transferred, the young person.

5. The graduated approach

SEN support follows an assess, plan, do, review cycle. The cycle becomes more detailed and may draw on more specialist expertise when needed.

Assess

The teacher and SENCO analyse the student's strengths, needs, barriers, and current support. They consider the views of the student and parent and any relevant professional advice.

Plan

The school, parent, and student agree the outcomes sought, support to be provided, who will act, and when progress will be reviewed. The plan may be recorded in a one-page profile, support plan, provision map, or other suitable record.

Do

The subject teacher remains responsible for the student's learning. Teachers adapt teaching and use the agreed strategies. SEND staff and specialists provide additional support where planned.

Review

The school reviews progress towards the agreed outcomes and the effect of the support. It considers assessment information and the views of the student, parent, and staff. Support may continue, change, increase, or end.

Parents of students receiving SEN support will have an opportunity to discuss progress and support at least termly. The school will provide an annual report on progress. Students with EHC plans will also have a statutory annual review arranged under the applicable process.

6. Teaching, curriculum, and participation

High-quality teaching is the first response to SEN. Teachers plan from students' starting points and adapt teaching where needed. Classroom approaches may include:

- clear learning intentions and structured routines, including 'Do Now' activities
- high expectations, challenge, praise, and Q-Points
- visual aids, visible key words, literacy resources, dictionaries, and thesauruses
- practical teaching, guided participation, and learning through dialogue
- explicit teaching of note-taking, study, revision, and independent-learning skills
- adapted resources, tasks, grouping, communication, or recording methods
- strategies in a student's one-page profile, support plan, or EHC plan

The school encourages students to take responsibility for their learning, with support appropriate to their needs.

The school enables students with SEN to learn and take part alongside their peers. This includes lessons, physical education, visits, clubs, after-hours provision, and other school activities. It will consider reasonable adjustments, suitable support, risk, and individual circumstances. A student will not be excluded from an activity simply because they have SEN or are disabled.

Exam access arrangements allow an eligible student to show what they know without changing what an assessment tests. They depend on individual need, evidence, and the relevant awarding organisation's rules, normally reflecting the student's usual way of working. Arrangements may also address temporary injuries. They are not automatic because a student has a diagnosis, SEN support, or an EHC plan.

7. Intervention guide

The school selects interventions after assessment and in response to individual need. It will explain the intended outcomes and review arrangements to the student and parent.

The school describes provision as universal (Wave 1), targeted (Wave 2), or specialist (Wave 3). These labels describe increasing levels of support. They do not decide whether a student has SEN or needs an EHC plan.

The interventions listed below are options selected to meet assessed needs. Availability and delivery may change with staffing, professional advice, and evidence of effectiveness. This does not reduce the school's best-endeavours duty, provision required by an EHC plan, or reasonable adjustments.

Students may be withdrawn from some lessons for intervention in the Inclusion Learning Room. The school will consider the benefit of the intervention, curriculum access, the student's views, and the effect of missed learning. The member of staff leading an intervention assesses progress, and the SENCO monitors the overall provision.

Universal provision (Wave 1)

Universal provision is high-quality teaching, classroom adaptation, and inclusive pastoral support. It is available across the curriculum and may prevent or reduce barriers without the student needing SEN support.

Targeted provision (Wave 2)

Targeted provision is additional support for an identified need. It may be delivered individually or in a group and may include a one-page profile or exam access arrangement.

A one-page profile is agreed with the student. It records the strategies and recommendations that help staff teach and support the student.

For cognition and learning, current approaches may include:

- **Sparx Reader and reciprocal reading:** carefully matched reading, teacher-led reading, and the strategies clarify, summarise, question, and predict. Reading requirements may be adjusted where reading speed creates a disadvantage. Eligible students may use Gold Reader status for a wider choice of physical books.
- **Homework Club:** support with homework, planning, revision, resources, handwriting, spelling, and comprehension. It may include one-to-one homework support and opportunities to work with students from different year groups.
- **Toe-by-Toe:** a structured daily, multisensory programme for word sounds and decoding. It may support students with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia.
- **Fresh Start:** a daily programme for accurate, fluent reading, comprehension, spelling, and step-by-step writing.
- **Vocabulary and Inference Programme:** structured work on vocabulary, comprehension, confidence, and engagement with reading.
- **Numicon:** assessed, practical, multisensory maths work delivered individually or in a group. It can cover patterns, ordering, counting, and early calculation.
- **Nurture Group:** a smaller, adapted pathway for students in Years 7 to 9 who are working considerably below age-related expectations. Students remain together for most lessons while following a curriculum

that relates closely to their peers' programme.

For communication and interaction, current approaches may include:

- **Social Use of Language Programme:** normally a weekly one-hour group programme, usually offered in Years 7 to 10, for understanding spoken language and social situations. Content is matched to need. It may cover eye contact where appropriate to the student's communication needs, listening, proximity, strengths, emotions, body language, self-esteem, assertiveness, stress, peer pressure, revision, forms, and finding information. Exam preparation content may also support students in Year 11.
- **speech and language intervention:** individual work following recommendations from a speech and language therapist.
- **Life Skills:** individual or group work, usually from Years 7 to 10. Age-appropriate topics may include personal safety, self-care, communication, friendships and relationships, digital skills, health, money, shopping, cooking, household tasks, travel, careers, applications, revision, and citizenship.
- **Travel Training:** staged teaching intended to build safe, independent travel skills. The stages are described below.
- **'Quiessance':** structured Lego-based group work in which engineer, builder, and supplier roles require students to communicate and co-operate.
- **dyslexia support:** this may include a visual-comfort check, coloured overlays or books where they help the individual, and audio recording of class notes or other suitable assistive technology.

Travel Training uses 4 stages:

- **pre-red:** recognising street hazards and learning general pedestrian safety
- **red:** learning key people and places on site, personal and emergency information, road crossings, walking routes, and supported public transport
- **amber:** developing greater independence with pedestrian, travel, and shopping skills in the wider community
- **green:** using communication, telephone, pedestrian, and public-transport skills with greater confidence

For social, emotional, and mental health needs, current approaches may include:

- **Social Use of Language Programme:** social communication work described above
- **Talkabout for Teenagers:** structured group work covering self-awareness, self-esteem, body language, conversation, friendship, and assertiveness
- **mentoring:** individual work with a mentor towards agreed goals
- **emotion coaching:** support with communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and age-appropriate social behaviour
- **resilience work:** strategies for coping with challenges and supporting emotional wellbeing

For sensory and physical needs, current approaches may include:

- **touch-typing:** building efficient keyboard skills, including for students whose normal way of working uses a word processor
- **physiotherapy routines:** assistance from a suitably trained member of the SEND team with a programme prescribed or advised by an appropriate clinician

Specialist provision (Wave 3)

Specialist provision may involve more individualised support, an external professional, or a Trust service. It may include:

- SEND staff available at lunchtime as a point of contact
- in-class support to help students access learning and develop independence
- referral to The Mercian Trust multidisciplinary team for assessment or intervention, including speech and language, occupational therapy, or mental health input
- individual speech, language, or communication work
- advice and support from visual-impairment or hearing-impairment specialists
- adapted or specialist resources, such as large print, braille, hearing or radio equipment, or other communication support where recommended

Every student with an EHC plan will have a teaching assistant or senior teaching assistant as their key worker. The key worker is a key adult and parent contact, represents the student's voice, monitors progress, and helps staff use effective strategies. The school may also allocate a key worker to a student without an EHC plan.

8. Reviewing effectiveness and allocating resources

The school evaluates SEN provision through:

- progress towards agreed outcomes and curriculum learning
- appropriate starting-point and follow-up assessments
- reviews of work, teaching, and support plans
- attendance, behaviour, engagement, and wellbeing information where relevant
- feedback from students, parents, teachers, and specialists
- review of intervention attendance, delivery, and effect
- annual reviews for students with EHC plans

The SENCO uses this evidence to review provision and advise on changes. The headteacher allocates resources for SEN in consultation with the Local Governing Body and within Trust arrangements. Decisions consider the needs of current students, support already in place, expected progress, specialist advice, available funding, staff expertise, facilities, and equipment.

A parent, young person, or the school may ask the local authority for an EHC needs assessment. This right does not depend on the school first deciding that a threshold has been met.

The local authority assesses whether the student has or may have SEN and whether special educational provision through an EHC plan may be necessary. Relevant and purposeful SEN support is evidence for that decision, not a prerequisite for making a request. After assessment, the local authority issues a plan if provision through an EHC plan is necessary. The school continues suitable support while a request is considered.

The local authority is responsible for securing the special educational provision specified in an EHC plan. The school works with it and other responsible bodies to put the plan's provision in place.

9. Working with students and parents

The school will involve students and parents in identifying needs, agreeing outcomes, planning support, and reviewing progress. It will listen to their knowledge, concerns, priorities, and experience of support outside school.

Students may contribute through:

- meetings and review discussions
- one-page profiles
- person-centred planning
- preparation for transitions and EHC plan reviews
- feedback on teaching, intervention, access, and wellbeing

The school will communicate in a way the student and parent can understand. It will consider accessible formats, communication support, and reasonable adjustments for meetings.

Staff will explain relevant strategies that parents can use at home where this would support consistent learning.

Parents should:

- keep contact details current
- tell the school about a change that may affect their child
- share relevant professional reports
- raise concerns promptly
- attend agreed meetings where possible
- make an appointment when they need a detailed discussion with SEND staff

For a student over compulsory school age, some statutory SEND decision-making rights transfer to the young person. The school will address the young person directly where required and help them involve their parent or another supporter if they wish. It will provide suitable decision-making support and take account of mental-capacity law where relevant.

10. Emotional, social, and pastoral support

Students with SEN can use the school's pastoral systems and may receive additional support through SEND staff, learning mentors, counsellors, the pastoral team, or external services such as children and young people's mental health services.

Support may include mentoring, emotion coaching, resilience work, social-communication groups, Homework Club, or a key worker. The school may seek external advice where a student's needs require it.

The school works to prevent bullying through its curriculum, assemblies, Tutor Time, Wellbeing Inspire, student groups, reporting routes including the Be Brave email system, and its behaviour and anti-bullying arrangements. A student may report a concern to any member of staff.

Looked-after students with SEN have regular monitoring meetings with support staff, who contribute to personal education plan reviews. The SENCO and designated teacher work together so that SEN support, the personal education plan, and any EHC plan are co-ordinated.

11. Staff expertise and external services

The school has a SEND training plan for teaching and support staff. Training responds to whole-school priorities and the needs of individual students. Staff may attend training provided by external agencies, and colleagues with relevant expertise share practice.

The school has staff expertise in dyslexia, autism, attention and communication needs, visual and hearing impairment, speech and language, social, emotional and mental health, bereavement, and counselling.

When more specialist expertise is needed, the SENCO may work with or refer to:

- Sandwell Inclusion Support and specialist advisory teachers
- educational psychologists
- speech and language therapists
- occupational therapists and physiotherapists
- sensory support services
- autism and complex-communication services
- children and young people's mental health services
- health and social care professionals
- The Mercian Trust multidisciplinary team
- relevant voluntary organisations

The school will involve the student and parent in a decision to seek specialist input. Some services require consent, professional criteria, local-authority approval, or their own referral process.

12. Disabled students, facilities, and equipment

The school will not discriminate unlawfully in admissions or education.

Applicants with SEN but no EHC plan are considered under the ordinary published admission criteria. Admission will not be refused merely because the school believes it cannot meet the need or because the applicant does not have an EHC plan.

A parent or young person may ask the local authority to name Q3 Academy Great Barr in an EHC plan. The local authority consults the school and will name it unless:

- it is unsuitable for the student's age, ability, aptitude, or SEN
- attendance would be incompatible with efficient education for others or the efficient use of resources

Parents and young people may also request a different placement, including a special school. The school will admit a student when named in their final EHC plan.

The school's 'Disability Statement and Accessibility Plan' explains reasonable adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, and improvements to curriculum, physical, and information access.

Learning Levels 1 and 2 are accessible to students with physical disabilities. Information and learning resources can be adapted, with specialist advice about equipment where needed.

The SENCO works with the student, parent, relevant staff, and professionals to identify suitable equipment or facilities. The school arranges these according to assessed need, effectiveness, practicality, and available resources, without limiting EHC plan provision or reasonable adjustments.

13. Transition and preparation for adulthood

The school plans transitions with the student, parent, current or next setting, and relevant professionals. Relevant information is shared lawfully and securely, with consent where required.

When a student joins from primary school or another setting, the school will contact the previous setting's SENCO or relevant staff. It may:

- visit the student in their current setting where useful
- offer additional visits to the school
- arrange meetings with the student and parent
- review records, professional advice, equipment, and support before entry

For movement between key stages, planning is person-centred. It considers curriculum choices, support, accessibility, independence, and the student's aspirations.

Preparation for adulthood begins early and becomes a particular focus from Year 9. It may cover:

- further and higher education
- employment, apprenticeships, or training
- independent living and travel
- health and wellbeing
- friendships, relationships, and participation in the community

From Year 9, EHC plan reviews will include preparation-for-adulthood outcomes.

Students receive careers education and guidance. In Year 11 and sixth form, the school provides targeted support for suitable next steps. Where possible and helpful, it may arrange visits to a new education, training, or employment setting. Preparation may also include Life Skills, Travel Training, and programmes developed with The King's Trust (formerly The Prince's Trust).

14. Information, safeguarding, and complaints

Information about SEN, disability, health, and support is personal information. The school will use and share it only where lawful and necessary for education, support, safety, or a legal duty. It will not give a parent or student another person's confidential information. Records are handled under the Trust's 'Data Protection Policy'.

Concerns that a student may be at risk of harm follow the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy'.

Parents should first raise a concern about SEN provision with the personal tutor, head of year, or SENCO so that it can be considered promptly. A formal complaint may be made under the Trust's 'Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy and Procedure'.

The school's complaints process cannot determine a challenge to a local-authority EHC decision or replace a statutory appeal, mediation, or disagreement-resolution route. Parents and young people should use the route set out in the decision letter and seek advice promptly because statutory time limits may apply.

Admission appeals follow the school's published admission arrangements. Disability discrimination concerning admission to this school is considered through the statutory admission-appeal route. Other school disability-discrimination claims use the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). The 'Disability Statement and Accessibility Plan' explains these routes. A school complaint does not stop statutory time limits.

15. Local offer and independent advice

The Sandwell SEND Local Offer publishes information about education, health, social care, preparing for adulthood, support services, activities, transport, and EHC processes across Sandwell.

Sandwell Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) offers free, impartial, and confidential information and support to children, young people, and parents. Contact SENDIASS:

- telephone: 0121 289 2566
- website: Sandwell SENDIASS