SEND Policy & Information Report

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Introduction

Ridgeway School is an area special school and college in Bedford Borough which provides specialist educational provision for pupils aged from 3 to 19. All pupils at Ridgeway have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place before joining us. All of our pupils have learning disabilities; these might be moderate, severe or profound & multiple. Many pupils have additional special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), such as autism, cerebral palsy, sensory impairments, or Downs syndrome. Ridgeway has maintained an Ofsted judgement of 'Good' following an inspection in April 2025. The report notes: *'The school celebrates and champions each pupil's unique qualities and abilities. Pupils can express their wishes and feelings due to the bespoke communication methods in place. These adaptations also mean pupils fully access the learning. Pupils are heard, valued and safe.'*

Ridgeway has a separate site for the college, which provides education for young people in Key Stage 5.

The purpose of this policy

Effective provision for pupils with SEND is at the heart of all of our policies and procedures. The purpose of this policy is to clearly state our vision, values and broader aims for pupils with SEND, and to share information about what this looks like for our pupils on a day-to-day basis.

How does Ridgeway provide an inclusive environment?

Our classes are determined by children's age, creating inclusive mixed ability classes where pupils are encouraged to socialise, communicate and learn with their peers. We have high levels of expectations for all our children and young people, and we aim to fully extend their academic and social development. Enhanced levels of staffing and individualised learning programmes ensure both the learning and social needs of each individual are met within their class. Each pupil receives support matched to their own SEND; this will vary across each day and throughout their time in our school, as the level of support is directly related to their needs and circumstances.

All of our pupils follow the same curriculum, working at the stage appropriate for them. All pupils participate in the curriculum and off-site activities. The extent to which young person participates, and the levels of support received will vary between each young person and each across time, but we differentiate the activities and expectations to enable all young persons to take part.

We believe in the moral, as well as the legal entitlement, of all pupils and staff to have equality of access to teaching, learning, resources and opportunities, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (please see equality information & objectives policy). In all activities, positive attitudes towards, and respect for, difference, diversity and individuality will be promoted. Resources and subject plans are differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils and will reflect and celebrate worldwide cultures as well as those of the local community.

We have a school council and conduct annual pupil surveys, to encourage pupils to actively practise democracy and to feel able to have their say about what matters to them.

Who supports pupils at Ridgeway?

Staff have a broad range of expertise; all classes are led by a qualified teacher. They are able to access support from a highly experienced extended leadership team, with expertise in key areas of learning. Teachers are supported by a high number of experienced and enthusiastic Teaching Assistants and Health Care Assistants. Staff work in teams: Early Years, Primary, Secondary and 6th Form, with daily support and oversight from an experienced Key Stage leader.

Pupils also build supportive relationships with staff in the admin, site and catering teams – interviews for every education post at Ridgeway involves spending time with pupils. All staff receive a comprehensive induction and ongoing training in meeting the needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties.

In addition to more specialist curriculum training, all staff receive mandatory annual safeguarding training. We train class-based staff in Team Teach and positive behaviour support which teaches staff how to safely support pupils who are feeling dysregulated and consequently presenting with unsafe behaviours. Many staff have also been trained in Moving & Handling, First Aid, Food Hygiene, and MIDAS, amongst others. We work with the special school nursing team to ensure that staff have access to the correct medical training to meet pupils' health needs, such as administration of medication training. Ridgeway benefits from having its own trainers in Moving & Handling, Safeguarding, and Team Teach, meaning that staff can receive ongoing advice and support.

We have a strong programme of continuing professional development for our teachers, drawing on both internal and external specialists, consistently building their skills and knowledge.

All personal care needs are met by each class team, with particular support from a team of Health & Care Assistants, and we have an Intimate Care policy in place to offer staff guidance and to establish expectations, with a significant focus on dignity and consent.

Ridgeway has excellent non-class-based support staff, who work alongside class staff to enable the best possible outcomes for pupils. These include: a Family Support Worker who works directly to support parents/carers and provide invaluable wellbeing support for pupils; a Communication Support Team, who work alongside SALTs to ensure that there is an excellent universal communication offer in all classrooms; a Positive Behaviour Lead Practitioner, who work with staff and families to implement highly personalised PBS strategies

These professionals include:

The Children with Disabilities social care team

Early Help professionals

Adult social care teams

Special needs nurses and nursery nurses

Occupational Therapists (OT)

Community paediatricians

Dieticians

Speech and Language Therapists (SALT)

Physiotherapists

CAMHS

Specialist Support for Young People with Hearing Loss

Visual Impairment teachers

Music therapists/Play Therapists

Educational Psychologists

Attendance Officers

for pupils.

We work very closely with a wide range of professionals from other settings whose advice is highly valued by staff, and we work as multi-professional teams to ensure the best outcomes for the young people. Some allocation of therapeutic support falls under criteria set down by the NHS and is very much needs-led.

Ridgeway also works closely with Sunflower House, Foxgloves and George Beal, residential homes located in Bedford, which provide respite, which is operated by Bedford Borough Council.

Ridgeway is led by a team of dedicated governors. The Governing Body works with the senior leaders in the strategic development of the school. They support the Headteacher and staff as well as offering constructive challenge, ensuring that Ridgeway achieves the very best it can for all students.

How does Ridgeway match its curriculum to pupils' needs?

Our curriculum has been developed to enable all pupils to access each subject in a meaningful and purposeful way. It is based on the Early Years Framework and National Curriculum and is rich in opportunities and experiences to ensure lifelong learning. The 'golden thread' of our curriculum is to prepare our pupils effectively for adulthood and we are committed to 'making every moment count'. We have a dedicated Lead Practitioner for Curriculum, who is part of the SLT and works with Area of Learning leads to ensure that the curriculum is rich, well-reasoned, appropriately sequenced and meets the needs of all pupils working at all levels. There is more information about provision aligned to the areas of learning identified in the SEND Code of Practice in Appendix One.

Every pupil has a Personalised Learning Plan, which has short term targets based on their EHCP outcomes. They are all assessed individually against both these targets and the Ridgeway curriculum, and teachers use this information to inform their planning.

We receive advice and guidance from therapists and specialist teachers to ensure that we are using the right specialist equipment and aids for pupils that need it, to ensure that they are able to access the curriculum. We have lots of in-house specialism and support available, including a specialist teacher for pupils with complex learning disabilities, a MOVE co-ordinator, Team Teach tutor, a Positive Behaviour Support lead practitioner, and a sensory integration lead.

We are highly committed to the personal development of our pupils: we teach using a holistic approach with life skills integrated throughout to help pupils learn as part of a group as well as individually. Pupils have the opportunity to generalise and transfer such skills to other settings in the school/Post 16 and out in the community. As so many of our pupils access school or Post 16 via local authority transport, there are reduced opportunities for after school enrichment opportunities. Therefore, we work hard to ensure our curriculum is broad, vibrant and enriching, with opportunities such as Forest School, special whole school events, a wide variety of accessible competitive sports activities, trips to local provisions (such as shops, libraries and parks) and other exciting educational visits.

How does Ridgeway assess and review the progress and needs of pupils?

As all our pupils have learning difficulties as well as associated SEND, it is to be expected that they will be working outside their age-related levels as they progress through Ridgeway.

Pupils' EHCPs describe their individual needs and identified outcomes to work towards. These plans are reviewed yearly in an Annual Review meeting, which is attended by family members, Ridgeway staff and other relevant professionals where possible. Progress is celebrated and both long-term and short-term outcomes are reviewed. Any additional needs or provision required are noted and recommended to the SEND team. We encourage and support pupils to attend their Annual Review meetings wherever appropriate; if they are unable to attend, we ensure that their voice is represented through a 'pupil's views' document, or by sharing photos or videos.

As all classes have enhanced staffing ratios (relative to a mainstream setting), teachers are able to quickly identify any requirements for additional support on an ongoing basis throughout the year and will discuss these with senior leaders and parents/carers. On a daily basis, the class teacher determines the level of support for an individual young person from within the class team. When a young person whose SEND circumstances, health requirements or complex learning needs indicate that additional support may be required, discussions are held between families, the class teacher and senior leaders to determine what this might be. Typically, this support continues to be provided from within the class team due to our enhanced staffing ratios, but it might be identified that the young person might require support from beyond the class team, or a specific type of intervention. This is where multi-professional discussion is beneficial. If the evidence suggests that even higher levels of support may be beneficial, this is agreed by senior leaders if the resource is provided from within the school; for a small number of pupils, we request funding for additional support from the Local Authority.

Assessments are made on a regular basis in every classroom, and the class teacher is responsible for maintaining and updating records in their classroom. We use an app called Evidence for Learning, which allows staff to record observations, photos and video, against both the Ridgeway curriculum and pupils' individual targets. Teachers use assessment to plan for future learning and progression; data is monitored by senior leaders, who are able to support teachers to identify interventions to help individuals who are not making expected progress.

How does Ridgeway work with families?

Ridgeway highly values communication with families and recognises the enhanced importance of collaborative working for young people with SEND.

Class Dojo is used to help keep families of pupils informed about the school day, and we encourage families to let class teachers know if there is any specific information that they require on a daily basis in order to meet their child's needs. How information is shared looks slightly different depending on the Key Stage that pupils are in. We use ParentMail and Class Dojo to send out information to parents and keep them updated with whole school information.

Pupils' class teachers are the first point of contact for any communication parents/carers may wish to make on a daily basis.

Families can download the Evidence for Learning app discussed above at home, enabling us to share learning journeys with families.

We hold two consultation evenings across the year; annual review meetings also provide an important opportunity to discuss feedback and review individual targets. Families with any concerns are welcome to contact teachers to have discussions outside of these structured sessions.

Our non-class-based support teams work closely with families, and will often arrange meetings to discuss specific circumstances, particularly the Family Support Worker and Positive Behaviour Support Lead. The Family Support Worker encourages families to get in contact with any concerns that aren't directly related to education; they can either offer support, or signpost families accordingly.

If families aren't sure who to talk to about an issue, they can contact the main office, who can direct them to the right person.

How does Ridgeway support pupils with their communication?

A total communication approach is used throughout Ridgeway; communication & language is a prime area of our curriculum. We have a commitment to building signing competence across the setting and support this with signing videos on our websites, and 'sign of the week' in assemblies.

Our Communication Support team – which includes a qualified Speech & Language Therapist (SaLT) – carry out audits and work with staff to ensure that classroom environments are communication-friendly and that appropriate visual supports are available and used. We use the framework SCERTS to shape our understanding of pupils' communication needs – this stands for Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports.

As well as our in-house SaLT, we work with NHS SaLTs, who offer pupil-specific advice and set targets, particularly for pupils who use AAC (alternative and augmentative communication), such as communication boards, PECS (picture exchange communication system) and PODD books (pragmatic organisation, dynamic display). Speech and Language Therapists helped us to develop our curriculum, but most pupils will also have individual learning outcomes for communication, which are discussed and agreed during their annual reviews.

How does Ridgeway support pupils with their wellbeing?

At Ridgeway, we recognise wellbeing and emotional health is a key area of learning. Class teachers plan for the holistic development of each young person in their class, using their detailed knowledge of each individual to promote their confidence and self-esteem. The enhanced staffing levels enable class teams to allocate additional time as required to support the emotional wellbeing of individual pupils. Our annual pupil survey is an important tool for ensuring that we understand how our pupils are feeling and what matters to them; they consistently tell us that they feel safe at school.

Safeguarding is of utmost importance at Ridgeway. All of our pupils – regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age – have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Our whole staff team work alongside families and other professionals to create a strong culture of safeguarding, where pupils feel valued, respected and listened to. We recognise that our pupils' SEND makes them more vulnerable, and therefore our safeguarding practice needs to be particularly thoughtful and robust. We work hard to help our pupils understand how they can share concerns, if they want and are able to. Every classroom has an accessible safeguarding policy displayed and we are really dedicated to building positive relationships.

We recognise the importance of friendships for our pupils and develop opportunities for them to nurture these friendships and to build their interaction skills and confidence. We work with a trauma informed approach and use Zones of Regulation across the school to encourage pupils to build up strategies to manage their own wellbeing.

We have a trained Senior Mental Health Lead, whose job purpose is to develop and oversee the whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, including support for pupils, staff and the wider community. The Family Support Worker, Positive Behaviour Lead and Communication Team offer direct support with pupils regarding wellbeing, such as weekly check-ins.

A small number of pupils access music therapy, delivered by specialists from Music Therapy Bedfordshire.

How does Ridgeway support pupils with their behaviour?

At Ridgeway, we use a Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) approach. These are our principles of Positive Behaviour Support:

1. All behaviours happen for a reason, and it is our responsibility to ensure the needs of the pupils are met.

2. The PBS approach is data led and enables us to identify potential causes or triggers of behaviours of challenge or concern.
3. The assessment, development and implementation of PBS plans are carried out in partnership with our pupils and all those involved with them.
4. The strategies developed are designed to increase quality of life for the individual and teach skills to replace behaviours of concern.
5. We have an Assistant Headteacher leading on PBS who will work in partnership to provide training, support and guidance to ensure consistent implementation.
6. PBS plans will be monitored, evaluated and where necessary changed to support the individual's needs.

Our PBS Lead Practitioner works with staff, families and relevant professionals to help complete observations, identify interventions and develop shared plans that support the young person in a positive and proactive way. Where appropriate, they will work jointly with staff with specialisms within Ridgeway such as the Family Support Worker or Speech and Language, to ensure that pupils' needs are considered as holistically as possible. We also work with the CAMHs neurodevelopmental team and can access support through ongoing consultations.

What does transition look like at Ridgeway?

Once a place at Ridgeway has been confirmed by the SEND team, Ridgeway work with the family to arrange an appropriate transition package, based on the needs of that individual young person. The Head of School who oversees admissions will work collaboratively with the family and the current setting.

Depending on when the place is offered, this won't always be organised straight away, but close to the young person's start date. Transition booklets and information will be sent out in the post.

When a transition package is planned, it might include support such as:

- Ridgeway staff visiting the young person in their current setting
- Parents/carers being invited to an information session
- Young person being invited for sessions such as Stay and Play, a look around or a longer visit, depending on their age/need
- Visits to Ridgeway during the school day, where this is deemed appropriate and meaningful for the individual young person
- The special needs nursing team will also complete an initial assessment with families.

Families are responsible for applying for transport if required directly with the SEND transport team.

Most of our pupils transition to Ridgeway 6th Form after year 11, but some might wish to move to an alternative placement, based on need. Students can stay in 6th Form until the end of year 14; they move onto a wide variety of placements after this.

What can families do if they believe their child's needs are not being met?

Parents / carers who believe their young person's needs are not being met should contact the senior leadership team to arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. Where appropriate, an Interim EHCP Review can be arranged, with representation from the SEND team to formally review your young person's progress and current special educational needs and provision.

We are very committed to collaborative work with families and will always do our best within our capabilities to address concerns promptly and effectively.

Appendix One: provision available to support the areas of areas of need as per the Code of Practice

Cognition & Learning		
Universal	**Targeted**	**Specialist**
• A carefully sequenced curriculum written in-house, which follows the National Curriculum but is carefully adapted for pupils with SEND, written by experienced SEND teachers, drawing on expertise of other professionals, e.g. SaLT • Personal Learning Plans • Annual Review, parents/carers evenings • Ongoing contact through Class Dojo • Ongoing assessment of pupils' progress and achievement • Analysis of data and monitoring from senior leadership team. • Small class groups • Teaching assistant support (number dependent on needs) • Ongoing specialised professional development for staff • Use of specialist teaching strategies • Sounds-Write approach to phonics teaching and Pre-Phonics curriculum • Forest School Lead • SEND – appropriate practical resources, overseen by Areas of Learning needs. • Multi-agency support • Individual programmes and guidance as appropriate provided by Speech and Language therapists, Occupational therapist and Physiotherapist which are delivered by staff integrated within the class timetable to support and facilitate access to the curriculum. • On-site support and monitoring from the special needs nursing team. • Specific personal learning objectives related to cognition and learning	• Individualised learning programme • 'Breakout rooms' or use of alternative teaching spaces where appropriate. • Bespoke meetings with parent/carers regarding specific issues. • Opportunity for individual learning programmes and the ability to work across other classes or group settings in response to need. • Structured activities within a paedagogy focused on play, exploration and enquiry. • Use of schedules/now and next. • Specialist resources and programmes, such as Numicon and Colourful Semantics. • Streamlined English and Maths at KS4 & 5.	• Ongoing review of personal learning plans • Support from specialist professionals • Multi-agency meetings to review areas of difficulty and levels of support. • 1:1 support funded by the SEND team (based on multiprofessional evidence of need). • Personalised timetables. • Priority access to identified resources such as the sensory room. • Advise from specialist teachers e.g. Visual Impairment Team, Hearing Impairment Team.

Communication and Interaction		
Universal offer	**Targeted Support**	**Specialist**
• Total communication approach throughout the school and college, and communication-friendly environments. • Natural and sensory cues. • Signing (BSL). • Objects, symbols and photographs alongside spoken language. • Communication and Interaction recognised as a prime area of the curriculum. • Visual supports in all classes. • Boardmaker software. • Education and support in place to help implement good practice within the universal offer. • Zones of Regulation used consistently. • Structured prompts for attention and listening. • Communication passports/pupil profiles. • Song cues used as part of everyday transitions. • Staff trained and supported to use and embed all elements of the universal offer. • Specific personal learning objectives related to communication and interaction.	• NHS SaLT recommendations. • Communication targets on Personal Learning Plans. • Attention Autism. • Language interventions such as Star Word of the Week, Blanks Levels, Shape Coding, Colourful Semantics or Lego Therapy to support expressive language. • TACPAC. • PECS. • Intensive Interaction. • Colourful Semantics. • Signalong. • Clicker. • Social Stories. • Personalised Zones of Regulation resources. • Personal decision-making tools such as Talking Mats. • PODD. • TechTalk. • Other AAC.	• Enhanced personal advice and strategies provided to home and school/college. • Some children at Ridgeway will have access to specialist strategies and interventions. • These children may need active involvement with the speech and language team. • Use of a bespoke form of communication, e.g. adapted communication book, eye pointing or voice output communication aid. • The therapy team will help with access skills needed to support AAC. • Support from CASEE team.

Social and Emotional		
Universal offer	**Targeted Support**	**Specialist**
• Golden Rules for school pupils. • Expect Respect for Post 16 students. • Reward systems connected to these expectations. • All staff trained in Positive Behaviour Support. • Embedded use of Zones of Regulation. • RSE embedded into the curriculum. • Support available from Family Support Worker (FSW). • Access to an enriching curriculum. • Communication with families via Dojo. • A trained Senior Mental Health Lead with strategic oversight of provision. • PSED as a prime area of the curriculum. • Specific personal learning objectives related to social and emotional areas.	• Individual Positive Behaviour Support Plan. • Personalised visual supports, e.g. timers and now/next boards. • Personalised Zones of Regulation resources. • Regular wellbeing check-ins or mentoring from FSW or PBS. • Support from the special needs nursing team.	• Multi-professional work with other agencies, e.g. Early Help, Children with Disabilities Team and CAMHS. • Direct input from PBS team. • Specialised therapeutic input, e.g. music therapy.

Sensory and Physical		
Universal offer	**Targeted Support**	**Specialist**
• A teaching pedagogy based in play, exploration and enquiry. • Resources to support practical learning. • Well-lit and well-resourced environment. • Access for all classes to outdoor learning areas. • Stimulating external play areas. • Forest School. • PE lessons. • Outdoor learning. • Outdoor gym equipment. • A large field, with spaces to safely regulate. • Sensory room. • Low arousal spaces. • Hydrotherapy pool for pupils with physical needs. • Swimming lessons at local pool. • Opportunities to participate in competitive sport. • Consistent use of Zones of Regulation. • Fine motor skills programme. • Specific personal learning objectives related to sensory and physical needs.	• Specialist equipment such as hoists, specialist seating and standing frames provided through Ridgeway, on advice from therapists and health colleagues. • Physical targets integrated into Personal Learning Plans. • Movement breaks. • Sensory programme. • Sensory diet. • Hydrotherapy sessions (off site). • Horse riding for some KS2 and KS1 classes. • MOVE programme, with specialist support from the MOVE coordinator. • TACPAC. • Weighted jackets. • Ear defenders. • Chewies. • Adapted cutlery. • Writing supports, wedges and grips. • Adapted scissors.	• Specialist sensory Occupational Therapist advice. • Specific NHS Occupational Therapist advice. • Music Therapy. • NHS Physiotherapist advice. • Highly specialised equipment. • Extra time to access specially adapted bikes. • Acheeva beds — specially adapted beds for pupils.