



**Cambridge Academy
for Science and Technology**
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Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology SEND Information Report

Owner:	Sam Lakin
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CAST SEND Information Report – October 2024

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What are the main additional needs at CAST?

At Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology we have a wide range of additional needs, which fit within the 4 broad areas of need, as identified in the DfE Code of Practice (2014).

- **Communication and Interaction** including Speech and Language and Autistic Spectrum Difficulties
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties**
- **Cognition and Learning** including moderate and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia
- **Sensory and/or Physical Difficulties** such as Hearing/Visual Impairment

The college adopts the approach of regarding such difficulties as '**barriers to learning**' and uses that phrase when describing SEND.

Considering the number of students on roll (464), CAST has a higher-than-average overall number of SEND students on the register (29% including EHCPs) compared to the national average of (17.3%). There is a total of 464 students at CAST. 134 (29%) are categorised as having SEND. **128 (K) 6 (E)** Six students have an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Our highest area of need is **Communication and Interaction**, with a high number of students (51) being diagnosed with ASC and associated need. Our second highest need is **Cognition and Learning** with 45 students either diagnosed with dyslexia or having dyslexic traits. Next is **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)** difficulties, including ADHD and OCD (21), and we have 8 students with **Physical or Sensory** challenges (Colour blindness, Auditory processing and Hypermobility)

We need to take a broad view of any statistics as students reveal a large degree of comorbidity with SEND difficulties.

This year has seen a rise in students with ASC and combined AuDHD. We have also seen a rise in students with SEMH and anxiety.

How are SEND students and disabled students admitted to CAST?

The admission process to join CAST is different from most other secondary schools since we do not have a Y7 or Y8 at the school. Our students join at Y9 and Y12. Therefore, the Year 6/7 transition is not applicable here and we do not go out to visit primary schools.

Students with additional needs (without an EHCP) will apply to the Admissions Team in the usual admissions process, as outlined in our Admissions Policy and on the CAST Website.

Those with an **EHCP** need to contact the **Statutory Assessment Team**. Consultation between CAST and the County Council will take place based on the paperwork provided to the SENDCO.

If a student has a specific SEND need that they wish to discuss prior to applying for a place, the SENDCO is available for meetings during Open Events, and prospective parents are always encouraged to attend the information, advice and guidance meetings set up for discussion prior to transfer.

After joining CAST, information from the enrolment form is processed to produce an initial SEND Register. School files are requested for those joining the school and needs are identified wherever possible. As we get to know the pupils, the information is updated, and this will then form the final SEND Register. Initial Strategy Sheets are created and disseminated to teachers as fast as possible to begin the ASSESS-PLAN-DO-REVIEW process.

For students who are leaving CAST, we will make the students' file available to the new academic institution, including all standard school information and any SEND-related information where applicable and available.

CAST has a much smaller building than ordinary secondary schools with all teaching taking place in one block. It is a tall building with three flights of stairs and one small lift that can house a small wheelchair. The modern building is designed to allow wheelchair access. On each floor there is a disabled toilet that can be accessed with a wheelchair. There is access to gender neutral toilets on the top floor. Though we pride ourselves on our inclusivity, we strongly advise all students and their parents and carers to attend open events and look around the building to see if it suits their needs. Unlike other schools we do not have a SEND hub. Due to limited space, it is difficult make additional changes to the building. At CAST there is an expectation that students are able to work independently and in groups on Challenge projects. This is an integral part of the courses we offer. There are two small interventions rooms for SEND Literacy, Maths and SEMH intervention work. For PE, there is access to an ASTRO turf pitch and a neighbouring sports hall.

How are additional needs identified at CAST?

We recruit in year 9 and 12 and sometimes in-year. New students with SEND status are identified through the **transition processes**, including notification on the college admission form, file transfer from previous schools and information uploaded on to the Management Information System and most importantly during the Information, Advice and Guidance meetings held with new students.

We also expect and encourage students and families to self-refer if they are concerned that a barrier to learning is either emerging or has not been identified in the past.

The SENDCO will also attempt to contact all new intake families before the end of the summer term to gather essential information and manage expectations.

Using a digital '**Barriers to Learning**' alert form, the college encourages college staff to raise awareness of any previously undiagnosed atypical behaviours or learning profile/patterns. The interpretation of any identified patterns is the responsibility of the SENDCO and if appropriate, further specialist expertise may be sought.

When a student is identified as having special educational needs, the SENDCO will initiate the production of a **Strategy Sheet** (Individual Education Plan) which identifies the SEND need and the adaptations which need to be put in place by staff to reduce any barriers to learning. The Strategy Sheet is developed collaboratively in a meeting with the student and family. The SENDCO then discusses the content of the strategy sheets with the relevant quality first teachers and ensures, as far as possible, that the teachers have the appropriate materials and training to support the SEND students.

Teachers review the SEND students' strategy sheets and associated interventions during allocated departmental SEND time on Conference Days and Training days on a termly basis. This forms part of the Plan/Do/Review process for all SEND students at CAST.

We pride ourselves on our holistic approach to helping students and The SENDCO has weekly meetings with the Pastoral Team and Heads of Year to share relevant information and update strategies to support the SEND students.

What provision can CAST offer to students with SEND?

Our approach to teaching students with SEN

Our teachers have high expectations of all students, including those with SEND. All teachers design lessons for students with different attainment profiles, and they are all required to adopt Rosenshine Principles to manage learning according to identified barriers that a student may have. All teachers will be told about a student's SEND through the **Strategy Sheets Plan** and will adapt their lessons accordingly and sensitively, ensuring that all feel fully included. Most of our staff are **quality first** teachers and have experience of and are trained in adapting teaching styles to be inclusive of all types of learning and need. There is ongoing weekly CPD to enable teachers to upskill in our approach.

Resources are allocated based on evidence of need but are finite. Students with an EHCP have resources allocated as outlined in their statement, and in agreement with the family and local authority. As a small college with a very limited budget our resources are restricted. Our aim is that every student with SEN should be taught by teachers so, except for 'key worker' support which may be stipulated in an EHCP, students will not generally be allocated teaching assistant support in the classroom. There may be exceptional cases where students with EHCPs are allocated LA 'top up' resources, but there would need to be evidence of a significant need for this to be justified in a setting such as ours. In some cases, however, teaching assistants will provide time-limited mentoring support to targeted students in classes and in Challenge workshops where a need has been identified.

CAST follows the latest research in effective SEND support from the Educational Endowment Foundation, which states that quality subject specialist teaching is the most effective support strategy. The majority of SEND students attend all timetabled lessons. Our training and expectations ensure that all teachers are aware of students' individual needs and have the necessary tools to support students successfully. Our Teaching and Learning Policy (influenced by **Rosenshine Principles** and Doug Lemov's **Teach Like a Champion**) involves well researched and proven pedagogical strategies which work effectively when supporting students with SEND. Generally, we do not have additional adult support in class, again based on recent findings which show the limited value and use of teaching assistants in secondary education and preparation for adulthood. We aim to empower students to enable them to be self-reliant rather than develop dependency on teaching assistants, and wherever possible we employ technology to support this. There are some exceptional circumstances, however where time-limited targeted support in class may be given by a TA.

There is a limited programme of Literacy and Maths interventions for Year 9,10 and 11 SEND students who need extra support. Subject assessments are used as entrance and exit points to measure a students' progress. Progress within the classroom is measured at two assessment points throughout the year and will form part of the input for the Assess-Plan-Do-Review programme.

There is an Independent Study Support session for all students that all SEND students are invited to if they are struggling with homework. Whether a child is identified as SEND or has an EHCP, the intervention offered to them will be personalised and based upon the graduated response of assess, plan, do and review that begins when they enter the school.

d. Additional adaptations to improve access for SEN

Most of our students follow the prescribed curriculum. However, occasionally a tiny number of SEND learners have a more personalised programme with a reduced number of subjects.

The college is a safe and accessible building, and we do our best to make it welcoming to the whole community. All safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are in place and adhered to by all staff.

We have a range of different facilities to help SEND students throughout the college including: a lift to access all areas, wide corridors, disabled toilets, gender neutral toilets and equipment to help with reading and writing (including reading pens and laptops).

Where required we apply for exam Access Arrangements according to the Joint Council for Qualifications exam regulations. Reasonable adjustments are put in place where necessary to provide equality of access to assessments for SEND students.

CAST can access a range of services from within the local area. These services are contacted when necessary and appropriate, according to the student's needs.

For students who struggle with acute anxiety, there is a Games Club at lunchtimes where students can find peace reading and drawing. They are also offered a Time-Out card for a movement break if necessary, during lessons. We permit the use of noise cancelling earbuds to reduce anxiety from noise overload.

How are students with SEND assessed, with regards to their provision and how is further provision determined?

The **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** model is used to establish whether SEND students are making necessary improvements and achieving their outcomes. This is based on a pre-determined time frame to ensure sufficient time to embed new skills or knowledge. Each student is individual in their review period. Formal assessment points are used to measure academic progress and the potential requirement for further testing and support.

SEND staff are invited to Outcome Tracking Intervention (OTI) meetings with SLT and Heads of Departments after every assessment point to review progress of SEND students and update interventions where appropriate.

Students, parents/carers, SEND staff, pastoral staff and classroom teachers are all required to provide their input into students' review periods to gain a full understanding of a student's provision and progress. A holistic viewpoint of the student is always considered, which means social interaction, wellbeing, organisation and attitudes to learning are all considered when reviewing provision.

When there is potentially a lack of progress after a longer set period of time and several amendments to provision, specialist advice may be sought to assess whether there are any further recommendations to implement for a student.

What training do staff undertake at CAST to support students with SEND?

CPD and staff commitment to upskilling is incredibly strong at CAST. Teaching staff are regularly updated on SEND issues during briefings and training sessions organised by SLT in collaboration with the SENDCO and the Professional Tutor. All staff undertake an annual reminder on the importance of SEND and their responsibility in having high expectations and providing appropriate individual support. Staff are reminded that every teacher is a teacher of SEND and strategies to support SEND students support all learners. Identification and accountability are the pillars in our approach to SEND support. The SENDCO delivers regular training on the main additional needs at CAST (ASC, ADHD and SpLD), and sources external training where appropriate. The sharing of good practice at all levels is promoted. This ensures quality teaching for all students.

Our SEND staff undertake both internal and external training as a team and individually in their area of expertise. As a school we are fortunate to be able to draw on the expertise of specialists and professionals in our local area, particularly Cambridgeshire County Council and NHS Speech and Language.

How are students with additional needs encouraged to take part in the wider school offer and learning opportunities?

As per United Learning's *Framework for Excellence* we actively encourage *Education with Character*, with students experiencing and taking part in events in and outside their local community. This includes trips (eg: Y9 trip to Wales, Ski trips, visits to CERN Switzerland, Geography field trips to Southwold, Holkham and London), visiting local Challenge project employers eg: Astra Zeneca, through charity work (such as bake sales and non-uniform days), and student leadership opportunities (eg: Volunteering at Open Evenings, attending external leadership conferences). The Duke of Edinburgh programme is well-established and SEND students are encouraged to sign up for it. Through careful risk assessment and planning, we aim to limit any barriers that would limit students being able to attend and participate in such events. Our anti-bullying policy and inclusive ethos at CAST aim to eradicate discrimination.

What Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision is there at CAST?

The college has a highly responsive and supportive Pastoral Team to support students with SEMH. The Pastoral Team works collaboratively with Designated Safeguarding Leads, Heads of Year, Student Services and SEND, and is led by two key people: an Inclusion Manager and Pastoral Support Manager. The Pastoral Team liaise with students and families over day-to-day issues which present 'barriers to learning' for all students including those with SEND. Such issues include developing social strategies, supporting mental health and the prevention of, and dealing with, any bullying.

The Pastoral Team, SEND team and Heads of Year collaborate to support the following:

- To meet families to investigate SEMH need.
- To put together Early Help Assessment (EHA) referrals for families.
- To liaise with external professionals such as CAMH/CAMEO/Young People's Workers/CAFCAS.
- To make referrals to a psychodynamic therapeutic counsellor.
- To provide a quiet calm lunch club/boardgames room for those suffering from anxiety.
- To provide a motivational map programme for individual students.
- To provide time-out cards for those who feel overwhelmed and anxious (with temporary access to a quiet area)
- All students, including those with SEMH/SEND take part in extra-curricular and wider curricular activities. We also run coursework/revision sessions for students as and when required.
- **All students on the SEND register have a meeting with their Learning Mentor from the SEND department once a week.**

How are students and families included in the decision making?

Parents and students are strongly encouraged to visit the school on Open Evenings when the SENDCO will be available with the SEND team to answer any questions and for parents to see if the school setting is suitable.

If a non-EHCP SEND student applies to CAST through the admissions process, they are invited to a guidance meeting where needs and provision are discussed. After starting at CAST, parents are contacted for information and invited to take part in an information gathering TEAMS meeting as part of our Assess-Plan-Do-Review process. Parents are recontacted at various intervals, particularly after assessment points to review progress. Parents can request a meeting with the SENDCO at any point.

If a non-SEND student exhibits SEND need, a teacher will complete a **Barriers to Learning** form, which is passed to the SEND department. The SENDCO contacts the parent and invites the parents to an information gathering meeting to discuss need, provision and progress. This forms the beginning of the Assess-Plan-Do-Review programme for that student.

Where a student has an EHCP we generally meet the parents and student at a guidance meeting and then have a follow up meeting soon after entry to discuss needs, strategy and progress.

Parents are called to an EHCP review meeting once every six months as part of the Assess-Plan-Do-Review process. External Specialists may also be invited to these meetings.

On some occasions, outside specialists may request a meeting with the student and a family member at the school (usually where pastoral and SEND need overlaps) and we are happy to facilitate this.

At CAST we pride ourselves on having a friendly, approachable SEND team and always try to make ourselves available to respond to parents' questions and requests.

Generally, communication with parents is through Open Days, Teams meetings, email, telephone calls and in-person meetings.

How are transition periods managed at CAST?

The way we operate transition at CAST is different from other academies. Our age range is Y9 to Y13. Students come in in Y9 and 12 so there is no traditional handover point. We have a large catchment area of 25 miles around the school. So, if a student applies and indicates on the admissions form that they have a SEND need, we arrange an interview with their parents via Teams or in person.

Information regarding procedures and time scales for students wishing to join CAST are covered by the CAST Admissions Policy. If a student has a specific need that they wish to discuss prior to taking up a place, the SENDCO is available for meetings during Open Events, and prospective parents are always encouraged to attend the **Information, Advice and Guidance** sessions set up for discussion prior to transfer.

Before starting at CAST, students are invited to an induction day in the summer to meet both staff and peers. Where transition is identified as a concern, students have other opportunities to attend CAST for example on taster days.

For students who are leaving CAST, with the student's permission, we will make the student's file available to the new academic institution, including all standard school information and any SEND-related information where applicable and available.

At the end of year 11, students with SEND will be supported with their transition through meetings with the SEND team at their post 16 provider to share crucial information on their needs, current provision and exam access arrangements. To support students with the next stage of their education and adulthood, independent study and resilience building are key components of the curriculum at CAST. Throughout KS 4 and 5 students have access to a **Careers Coordinator**. Additionally, In Y11, students have a meeting with a member of the SLT to discuss their futures and in Y12 there is support for UCAS applications and Apprenticeships applications. Our Careers programme includes interviews with HR professionals from a variety of companies. SEND students are encouraged to engage with the whole end-transition process.

How is the provision and support of students with SEND evaluated at CAST

Success for SEND students at CAST is measured using a range of key performance indicators which are frequently reviewed and acted upon. We do not solely focus on academic success but also the positive experience of students within the school, ensuring they truly are included and happy with their school experience.

We aim to reduce any gaps or disparities between students who have SEND and those who do not, this includes reviewing academic progress, attendance, behavioural data and attendance to extra-curricular opportunities. This data does not however give us an insight into the experience or feelings of an individual, therefore student voice and parental contribution is also important to us in reviewing our provision.

Three times a year the Senior Leadership Team prepare a report on progress and attainment for the Governing Body where data is scrutinised and areas for intervention determined.

Reviewing the effectiveness of our provision - teaching and interventions

This is done on a termly basis and is a process that happens across the college for every young person and the groups that they are in. By looking at how well students are performing, and in the case of students with a barrier to learning, how well those with SEND are progressing, we are able to track back to the teacher and class or intervention group. If progress is not being made at the rate we believe it should then the college leadership will take action to improve effectiveness. We also monitor effectiveness through regular observation of classrooms, teachers and the site. Such observations are undertaken by the college leadership, the SENDCO and the Deputy SENDCO.

Assessing and reviewing SEN student progress

All students, including those with SEND, are assessed on a half-termly basis, and in formal tests twice a year. These formal tests feed into whole school **Outcomes, Tracking and Intervention** programme (**OTIs**) which are overseen by SLT and which enable the SEND department to plan further interventions and support.

Teachers report on progress and attainment each term after set tests, the results of which are communicated to parents/carers by a report that is available online. Additionally, biannual parent consultation evenings are held, where there is an opportunity to discuss progress, attainment and future progression. Any specific and urgent concerns about progress are communicated by email or phone to parents/carers and meetings may be called. Tutors are usually the main point of contact about general learning concerns but SEND students' parents may contact the SENDCO directly.

All students with a Statement or Education, Health & Care Plan have an Annual Review. SEND students who are on the SEND register also have regular reviews of their strategy plans.

The progress made by all students is regularly monitored and reviewed by teachers. Initially, concerns registered by teachers, parents /carers or other agencies are addressed by appropriate intervention within the classroom, using the strategies identified in a student's plan. Additionally, learning support in the form of targeted Literacy and Maths interventions may be initiated, but this is only available if a student's barrier is quite obviously going to be improved by such provision, and if it is possible to resource this from within school.