

SEND REPORT FOR GOVERNORS 2025-2026

Principal		Edward Senior
Senior Lead Inclusion		Rachel Briggs
KEY INFORMATION		
SEND Coordinator (SENDCo) in college		Rachel Briggs
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When the SEND Report was last reviewed?		May 2025
Is the SEND Report on the college website?		YES
Where to access the Local Authority's Local SEND offer		https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/schools-education-and-learning/send-local-offer
Where to access the college SEND Policy		College website
Where to access the college Accessibility Plan		College Website

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the progress made in the provision of support for students at Worcester Sixth Form College who have learning support needs. It summarises the support given to those students this academic year, many of whom have required the services of the Learning Support Department: -

- with physical disabilities
- having sensory impairment
- having mental health issues
- having medical conditions
- with specific learning difficulties
- with English as an additional language
- requiring learning support/study skills
- requiring assessment for examination considerations
- requiring special examination considerations

LEARNING NEEDS OF STUDENTS:

Neurodivergent Conditions

The support that students require with neurodivergent conditions (inc. Autism) can be complex, as no two students have the same support requirements. These needs are assessed with both the student and their parents/ guardians at the point of interview, so arrangements can be put in place for the September start. EHC plans also assist with ensuring that the transition is as smooth as possible and ensuring that required provision is put in place prior to enrolment.

In line with the increase nationally, we have seen an increase in requests from parents/students for referrals to be assessed for ADHD and/or Autism. This academic year we have responded to 30 referral requests with information from teachers, this is an increase from 10 last year. This process is difficult for both student and their parents and support through meetings and phone calls is often needed to navigate the assessment and offer emotional and practical support.

Mental Health Conditions

The numbers of students who suffer with anxiety/mental health issues continues to rise, and this has a significant impact on learning support and other pastoral services within college.

Due to the nature of one-to-one support and the professional rapport that develops, learning support assistants are increasingly on the receiving end of some very sensitive student disclosures. Having a designated Safeguarding Officer in college has made the process for reporting concerns and getting advice clearer.

The Senior Lead for Inclusion has joined the safeguarding team, working closely with the safeguarding officer and plans are in place for monthly meetings to discuss SEND students with safeguarding concerns.

Education, Health And Care (EHC) Plan Provision

The process of responding to the Local Authority "Request for a Placement" within a fifteen-day period remains the same. In this period the Learning Support Manager gathers information from both the Case Worker and current SENCo to establish suitability of a place of the individual request. This information is then emailed to the Case Worker on their proforma, where we decide if we feel we are able to offer a place of study.

We currently have 19 students who have an EHC plan with 8 requiring full in class support. Annual

reviews are carried out with both student and parent/guardian attending and submitted to Local Authority within 14 days of the annual date. There are three Local Authorities who we have liaised with in terms of current students and potential new starters. When reviews are completed, teachers are notified of any changes to the student's individual needs via the portal and progress is closely monitored and shared with SLT termly.

This year we have introduced learning walks to look at in class support for our EHCP students and to look at the effectiveness of classroom adaptations. This also allows for teaching staff to have a discussion with the SenCo about their concerns or questions. The outcomes of these learning walks are recorded with the termly reviews carried out for all SEND students.

This academic year we have seen a further increase in placement consultations, we have currently received 39 requests for a Placement directly from the Local Authority so far, compared with 31 last year, with further consultations anticipated. The Local Authority often consults with us as a college in their process of ruling out suitability of mainstream settings, hence the recommendation that we are unable to meet certain applicant's individual needs. As in previous years it is likely these will not be the only students applying to college who have an EHCP. Some applications are submitted by students with EHCPs without prior consultation from the Local Authority. If this is declared on application, a second interview is arranged to allow the SENCO or Learning Support Manager to contact the Local Authority and school SENCO.

Predicted numbers for 2026 are 37 students with an EHCP with 16 requiring full in class support.

In order to ensure a smooth transition between school and college, the Learning Support department plays a crucial role. Every student that applies to the college has the opportunity to declare if they have a learning need, a disability, or a medical condition that may affect their learning, when completing their application form. If a learning need or disability is declared it will be arranged for the prospective student's interview to be with the SENCO or Learning Support, so their needs and the suitability of their desired programme of study can be discussed further. For those who do not explicitly disclose information of a learning need, they may have this included on the school reference where the school makes that disclosure. Helen Wright who works within Admissions is very thorough and communicates this to the Learning Support Manager along with the reference, so we have a record. Initial admission interviews are continuing to take place remotely via telephone or on Teams. For some applicants there have been requests for either in person or Teams interviews and these needs have been accommodated by the Learning Support Manager and the Assistant Learning Support Manager. For some students needing that extra transition support, they have been offered a visit to the college to meet with the Learning Support Manager in the Summer term 2026.

To ensure that the department have a good knowledge of each student's needs and strategies for support, this year the Senior Lead for Inclusion is arranging to visit the main feeder schools to meet with each of their SenCo's for a verbal handover. Initial discussions with schools about introducing this transition element has been received positively.

Physical Health Needs

The department also supports students with a range of physical health needs; these are usually identified on application and allows staff to discuss support needs at interview. Currently there are 448 students with medical conditions identified, some of whom are clinically vulnerable and 11 of whom require an emergency course of action. There are several students with insulin pumps, and the college now has a fridge to store insulin reserves and emergency juice/food for a hypoglycaemic attack. In line with the new medication policy the college is now able to offer paracetamol to treat pain where parents have given consent, this allows a student to stay in college once pain is treated rather than going home and missing lessons.

SEND PUPIL DATA

YEAR	Total number of students Sept	% of Pupils with SEND support	% of Pupils with an EHCP
25/26	1825	9.21% (168)	1.2% (22)
24/25	1797	6.34% (114)	0.55% (10)
23/24	1819	4.78% (87)	0.71% (13)

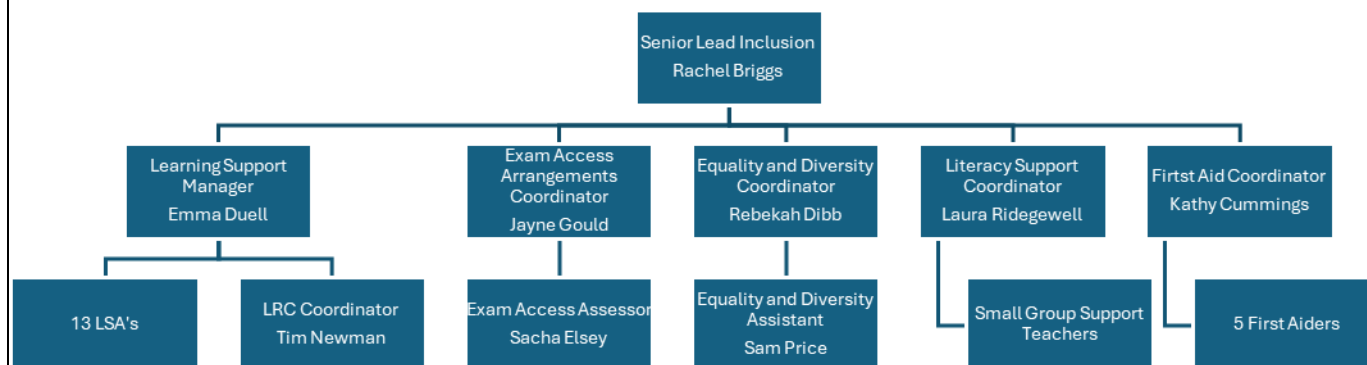
DEPARTMENT CHANGES

There has been a significant change in the department following the departure of the Learning Support Manager.

The decision was made to create a senior leader post responsible for inclusion. This meant changes across the college with Learning Support, Equality and Diversity, First Aid, Medical and Literacy Support all coming together under the inclusion umbrella. Whilst this decision was made as a result of staff changes and the growing need for support in all these areas, it was timely and coincided with the Ofsted focus on inclusion. As well as a management change there have been a number of new staff members within the department.

It is important to recognise that as well as change there has also been significant absence and this has put a huge pressure on the department particularly with such an increase in demand for support and assessment. The team have been immensely flexible and supportive, often taken larger work loads and working extra hours to ensure that work was completed so that the support for students was consistent.

New Staffing Structure:



New Staff appointed 2025-2026:

Nikki Baddesley Level 2 LSA/ Impact Coordinator
Gemma Thomas Level 2 LSA
Sally Eldridge Level 2 LSA
Heather Posey Level 1 LSA maternity cover
Andrew James Level 2 LSA
Alona Kyvenko Level 2 LSA/ EAL support

Physical Department Changes:

With increasing numbers of students within the college and the pressure on space, changes are being made to the LRC to increase capacity. These changes are planned for May half term and include:

- The removal of the rolling book storage and the relocation of books to departments
- The removal of the desk at the entrance
- The removal of the large staff desk
- Changing tables in the silent area to individual desks
- The addition of 2-seater pods for 1:1 sessions with LSA's
- The addition of individual pods for private study
- The addition of a collaborative working area
- The addition of laptops and phone charging cabinets

The changes will increase capacity in the LRC by approximately 70. The changes will also allow the zoning of the LRC allowing students to work in a range of ways. By removing staff desks, the space will be more accessible, particularly for neurodivergent students and those with anxiety, to support this

further there will be the addition of staffing boards and posters that highlight who and where staff are located, the different zones and the quiet/busy times. The changes have been planned to ensure that the space also remains flexible supporting events such as course confirmation, training events and when required exam space. The addition of 1:1 booths within the LRC means that there will be an increased staff presence within the LRC to support students.

Proposed further plans – changes to 1.17:

Changing the door to an automatic door

The addition of a wall to create a room for dysregulated /anxious students

The removal of staff desks

The addition of adjustable height desks

The addition of a range of seating types

The addition of a social space

The removal of the extra/unused entrance door

These changes would result in a dedicated hub for SEND students as indicated in the new SEND Reforms, support the growing number of students with SEND at the college and provide a private and safe space for staff to take dysregulated students to allow them to calm. The adjustable desks are an important addition as a study space for those with physical disabilities and wheelchair users.

Examinations and Exam Access Arrangements

Jayne Gould, Exam Access Arrangement Co-ordinator takes responsibility for the coordination of access arrangements for exams. The positive relationship with Exams remains and we have continued to strengthen the communication between the departments. Andy May and Claudia Cole are instrumental in aiding Alison Finch (Exams Manager) to develop the process of allocating alternative rooms for candidates and staff invigilation. There has been an increased pressure for rooms and exam access support with criminology and core maths exams due to the high numbers of students.

There are 508 students this year having access arrangements. The number of students requiring assessment for support with exams continues to rise and this is a trend that will continue and can be partly attributed to the increasing number of examined units in vocational subjects, the requests for provision of “smaller rooms” due to mental health conditions, and a positive increase of awareness of various learning difficulties and ASD.

Applied subjects continue to require significant involvement from the Learning Support department who have considerable involvement in formal exams and assessments throughout the year in addition to support provided during internal assessment weeks. Due to ongoing support required for high needs learners, providing support for students in exams and assessments has increased pressure on the department staffing

The Exam Access Arrangements Coordinator and Exams Manager have delivered training to the invigilation team to increase their skill set and enable them to invigilate smaller rooms and facilitate Exam Access Arrangements that were previously fulfilled by Learning Support staff, to meet increasing demands.

In addition to supporting students with their individual learning needs, a substantial part of the work of the Learning Support department is to conduct assessments for students who may need an application for exam access arrangements. Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for students based on evidence of need and their normal way of working within college. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: arrangements are delegated to centres, and arrangements that require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions, or temporary injuries to access exams/assessments without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and modified question papers. These arrangements will differ for each student depending on their individual needs.

The upward trend in the number of students requiring assessment for exam access arrangements continues; this comprises two groups:

1. Students who have a record of approved exam access arrangements at their previous setting, who need to be reassessed due to valid Form 8 paperwork not being received from previous setting, or previous assessments no longer being valid.
2. Students who have self-referred or been referred by their teachers who require access arrangements to be put into place following assessment.

The provision of exam access arrangements enables these students to access assessments without being disadvantaged by their learning needs. Teacher feedback is requested prior to assessments being conducted in order to establish the picture of need of the student's difficulties.

In person assessments have been carried out up to the March deadline for submitting applications for exam access arrangements set by JCQ for the Summer 2026 exam series. Assessments of Year 1 students who are sitting exams in the next exam series are scheduled to take place during the summer term. The increase in assessments being carried out this academic year remains possible to manage with a full-time assessor within the department.

Vocational subjects with examined modules continue to contribute to the increase in the numbers of students being referred for assessment for exam access arrangements. Increasing awareness of specific learning difficulties is also leading to a rise in the number of students requiring assessment for exam access arrangements.

The assessment list continues to be staggered across the year, prioritising those students who have examined modules on vocational courses, and GCSE resit exams for assessment in the Autumn term, with students sitting exams in the Summer series being assessed during Spring term.

Under JCQ regulations for exam access arrangements, all assessments are required to be conducted by a qualified assessor with a Level 6 qualification who determines the appropriate assessments to be conducted. This year we continue to use the Exact online screening tool as part of the assessment process, although other paper-based assessments have been carried out which has reduced the number of students screened using Exact on an individual basis.

Those WSFC students who intend to apply for university, or HE courses, require a more detailed assessment report that includes an assessment for underlying ability as well as the range of assessments that are carried out for exam access arrangements. We no longer offer this assessment in college and students will need to access this externally. However, the Learning Support team sends out information advising students about this on request.

Access arrangements must be applied for online by the JCQ deadlines and include:

- Reader
- Scribe

- Additional time of 10% for use of bilingual dictionary (but must show that the learning difficulty exists in student's first language and is not due to poor English language skills)
- Additional time of more than 25% and up to 50%
- Additional time of more than 50% (must be applied for directly to the relevant awarding body, with a

detailed picture of need' to substantiate the application)

- Practical Assistant
- Oral language modifier
- Modified papers

The following centre delegated exam access arrangements can be put in place without making an on-line application:

- Use of a word processor
- Supervised rest breaks
- Prompter
- Smaller room and a separate room owing to anxiety/medical conditions
- Cerium overlay
- Fidget toys
- Ear defenders (without Bluetooth enabled)
- Modified papers

These arrangements are subject to our existing exam policies and supporting evidence must be held on file for inspection purposes.

The JCQ requirements are reviewed and amended each year, so it is important that the assessments carried out meet the current criteria when submitting applications.

The need for supporting evidence from subject staff regarding usual way of working and picture of need continues to be a requirement for all applications for exam access arrangements. Requesting and collating the supporting evidence and overseeing the completion of the Form 8 for each student, as well as scheduling and conducting the assessments has meant additional demands on the time of the Exam Access Arrangements Coordinator impacted further by the long term absence of the Assessor and the need to use an external assessor. The new system for booking assessments and sending out invitations to students has continued to work well, using the external assessor has meant a change in the way assessments were carried out and this increased both efficiency and reduced the incidence of non-attendance. There needs to be further work in terms of information sharing with teaching staff to reduce the issues with delays in obtaining evidence from assessments.

A Form 9 is the requirement to record arrangements where a Form 8 or 8RF is not applicable. This form requires in-depth information to be included and must outline the evidence of need and the arrangement(s) required for the candidate. The Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator is responsible for the process of completing the paperwork and submitting online applications where required.

Learning Support

One-to-one learning support continues to be offered to students who have an identified need. Learning Support Assistants provide regular timetabled support sessions. The duration of the sessions allocated varies from 45 minutes up to 1 hour 10 minutes. This provision continues to be reduced this year on previous years because of changes to the timetable structure and fewer Learning Support Assistants on the team at the start of the academic year. Due to staffing demands of IMPACT sessions and timetable structure we have been unable to offer lunchtime drop-in support sessions this year. There has been a waiting list for 1:1 support and this has been allocated according to need as soon as staffing has allowed. Changes to impact sessions in the summer term will mean that support can be extended to those on the waiting list prior to the exam season. This year 144 students were identified or referred for 1:1 sessions, 96 students were allocated support with 48 remaining on the waiting list.

Further recruitment is planned to ensure that support can be allocated to those who need it earlier in the academic year.

Referrals for support are made to the Learning Support team by Pastoral Tutors, Teachers, Heads of

Department, and Heads of Year, with details of the individual areas of support required. Need for support is also identified as part of the interview process. Occasionally students self-refer for support sessions if they feel they need additional support. Support is requested through an online form, this enables Learning Support to assess need at time of referral, and to continue to track student progress and attendance more effectively.

Support sessions are allocated based on priority of need; using information provided to us in student applications, diagnostic and medical reports, and summary assessment feedback.

Learning Support Assistants keep a record of attendance, and the support provided at each session, individual learning plans are created, targets set, and feedback provided for EHCP reviews and Heads of Year meetings. LSA's liaise with teachers, parents and other college departments regarding student targets and any issues identified in sessions. They also work with the Senior Lead for Inclusion and the Learning Support Manager to update teachers regarding appropriate classroom adaptations. Attendance overall remains good, but as sessions do not appear on student timetables, many still require regular reminders of their allocated sessions.

Admission Interviews

All applicants declaring a learning support need or exam access arrangements on their application form are booked in for interview with Rachel Briggs, Emma Duell, or Jayne Gould. Interviews are conducted on the telephone or in person depending on individual student needs. We liaise with Helen Wright, Admissions Coordinator regarding interview bookings. Being involved in the interview process enables us to get to know prospective students and keep an accurate record of their support needs; this helps with planning resources for the next academic year. We have seen an increase in the number of interviews with the team required for students applying for the next academic year. Additional interview slots have been made available by the team to meet demand.

As a trial, for 2027 applicants, Rachel Briggs and Emma Duell are liaising with local feeder schools, offering the option of onsite face to face interviews for SEND students.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

Emma Duell continues to have responsibility for overseeing the creation and implementation of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for students with a disability that may affect them in an emergency. This year 18 students requiring a PEEP have been identified and completed to date. Lift passes are now issued by Emma Duell who records details of student need on a spreadsheet which is regularly reviewed to ensure we are aware of any students who may require assistance in an emergency/a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan.

Emma continues to liaise with Stephen Carter, Premises & Estates Manager, regarding plan content and notifying of any issues identified during practice evacuations. Discussions have been had regarding the installation of light signalling fire alarms in areas where students may not hear the bell due to the use of noise cancelling headphones such as the calm room.

Impact Sessions & Independent Study

Each student is timetabled to attend one impact session a week. A Learning Support Assistant is allocated to register and deliver each session in rooms 1.24 and 1.25. The sessions are a valuable additional opportunity for LSAs to check in with students who are being supported by the department. Impact sessions have been successfully researched and produced by Andrew Fitzpatrick. We have recently received positive and constructive feedback on these sessions following a student survey, some of the highlights being the introduction and use of Unifrog, support and guidance with personal statements, work experience and the opportunity to work toward an OSA Online safety certificate. Students have also enjoyed guest speakers and the opportunity to work on independent study.

Independent Study

Students register their attendance for Independent Study this year by scanning the QR code in the LRC.

Collaboration With Student Services

In order fully support students with SEND, it is important to consider progression routes and effectively prepare students for these transitions. SEND students may not access opportunities for support and guidance independently. Student services have identified Jan Whitehorne as their SEND careers advisor and she is undertaking a specialist qualification for this role. Links with the careers department have been strengthened and as a result bespoke trips for SEND students have been arranged by both departments. This collaboration has also allowed processes to be implemented that safeguards SEND students during college trips and work experience. We are also looking at alternative work experience for our most vulnerable or anxious students such as virtual experiences.

Learning Resources Centre

Study Space (LRC)

The LRC is the largest study area within college and the main port of call for those students wanting to complete work in their free periods. It is supervised by the LRC Co-ordinator and Learning Support Team.

- Computer area – 104 pcs
- Quiet Study - 16 tables with 4 chairs at each (64 seats)
- Silent Study – 16 tables (1 student per table)
- Quiet reading study area – 2 tables with 4 chairs at each (8 seats), 2 low upholstered chairs and low table

Behaviour in the LRC remains good and is monitored throughout the day by Learning Resource Centre staff and Learning Support Assistants, who are also on hand to provide support to students. Demands on social space within college continues to put pressure on the LRC. In some lessons students may struggle to find a place to study, especially when timetabled groups are booked in on the computer bays. We aim to limit class bookings in the computer bays to one group per session to limit impact on students seeking to study independently during their free periods. The planned changes are aimed to alleviate the pressure at busy times.

General Information (LRC)

LRC Opening Hours (Term time)

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 8.30am - 4.30pm

Wednesday – 8.30am - 4.10pm

The LRC is also staffed during some holidays to allow students to continue with revision/study particularly for some of our more vulnerable students.

During Easter, the LRC was open every day 9am-4pm. Student feedback was positive with requests for opening during May half-term as it is felt that the LRC is a good environment to complete revision for their exams.

Physical Department Changes:

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Funding

The funding Worcester Sixth Form College receives will be based on a national funding formula for its core provision, and additional funding will be for those with special educational needs. The funding is not ring-fenced and included with the main allocation in a 'single line' budget. For students requiring support exceeding the nationally prescribed threshold, the Local Authority should provide additional top-up funding. Students with an EHC plan will have a particular level of funding assigned to them and this can be obtained through the Local Authority as requested. This year has seen some issues with securing the payments for extra funding and several local authorities had to be chased.

SUMMARY OF TARGETS FOR 2026/27 ACADEMIC YEAR

To advertise and recruit for further LSA roles in order to offer support to the increasing number of SEND students

Create a more inclusive and neurodiverse friendly LRC.

Create a student focused 'hub' to support the increasing number of SEND students

To review the process for exam access arrangement assessments to make the process more efficient so that support is in place more quickly for the student.

To review the interview process and trial alternative systems to increase efficiency and reduce anxiety for SEND students

To establish an effective monitoring system using the graduated response to ensure support is effective and allows the student to reach their potential

Ongoing liaison with teaching departments regarding Quality First Teaching practices to support students with SEND that will also benefit other students in their lessons. Learning walks will be undertaken to monitor this.

Senior Lead for Inclusion to complete NPQ SENCo qualification.

