



Hitchin Girls' School SEND Information Report

(School Offer September 2026)

The aim of this information report is to explain how we implement our SEND policy. It is designed to explain how special educational needs support works at Hitchin Girls' School.

If you want to know more about our arrangements for SEND, please read this document in line with our school SEND policy which can be found on our school website: [SEND Policy](#)

This Report complies with the statutory requirement laid out in the SEND (Special Education Needs and Disability) Code of Practice 0 – 25 years (2014) and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years \(2014\)](#)
- [Schools SEN Information Report Regulations \(2014\)](#)
- [Statutory Guidance on Supporting students at school with medical conditions \(2014\)](#)
- [The National Curriculum in England; framework for Key Stages 1 to 4](#)
- [Teachers Standards](#)
- [Hertfordshire Ordinarily Available Provision](#)

Introduction

Hitchin Girls' School is a single-sex, single academy trust, mainstream comprehensive school based in Hitchin. We are part of a consortium for post-16 provision and serve families across Hitchin and neighbouring villages. As a school, innovation is embraced whilst being aware of our history and traditions. Central to the school are the values of Aspiration, Perseverance, Kindness, Respect and Positivity which are underpinned by our relationships, our community and our sense of family. Ofsted inspected the school in October 2024 and the school was awarded an Outstanding judgement in all areas. The report states that 'Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. Staff receive appropriate training to make adaptations to their teaching and the curriculum as needed. As a result, pupils with SEND are well supported and included in the full life of the school.'

The admissions criteria for the school, including for those students with SEND or medical needs can be found here: [School Admissions](#)

We have a SENCo, Mrs Cole, and an Assistant SENCo, Miss Lennon, along with 3 full time Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), 4 full time Learning Support Assistants (LSA) and 1 part time Learning Support Assistant. The team works closely with the Student Support Services team to co-ordinate support for students requiring pastoral or behaviour support. The SENCo is a qualified teacher with 21 years teaching experience and completed the NASENCo qualification in 2022 and is also the school senior Mental Health Lead. She is also an Assistant Headteacher, sitting on the school leadership team

and working closely with the leadership team to drive developments in inclusion at Hitchin Girls' School.

1. The kinds of Special Educational Needs for which provision is made at the school.

As a mainstream secondary school, we believe that all children, including those identified as having special educational needs or a disability, have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum which is adapted to their needs.

Hitchin Girls' School is trained as a 'Thinking School' with a focus on meta-cognitive development to build thinking skills and intelligent learning behaviours in students. This is designed to encourage independence for all students and provides scaffolds for those who may need extra support. As a school, we also take a relational approach to behaviour and staff have been trained to follow the Hertfordshire Therapeutic Thinking approach with high challenge, but also high support. We encourage the use of routines and consistency, alongside kindness and positive noticing to encourage valued behaviours within the school environment.

Every teacher is a teacher of special educational needs. Whilst we have a very strong and committed Learning Support Department, the ethos of the school is based on the principle of inclusion and whole-school collaborative working where every member of staff supports students to allow them to thrive in their learning and to be happy.

Our mission is to ensure all students who leave Hitchin Girls' School have gained the knowledge, skills and experiences they need that will help them navigate whatever lies ahead. We want students to be curious to learn and to achieve goals of their own design. We want them to act with integrity and kindness in the world around them. When there are barriers to achieving this, the school works with students and their families in implementing appropriate interventions to support progress.

2. How does the school know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

We use information gathered from previous schools, together with specialist reports and information from parents at transfer. On admission, students undertake baseline assessments and this information will be used to establish whether a pupil requires additional support. There is regular analysis of data throughout the school year which can highlight early areas of concern which might require intervention.

Additionally, staff are able to raise any cause for concern directly with Learning Support for advice and further investigation as appropriate. If you have any concerns about your child and whether they may have SEND needs that would benefit from investigation and additional support, we encourage families to speak to the Learning Support team. We are proud of the open dialogue we maintain with parents/carers and students and therefore both parents and students are welcome to contact the SENCo, Mrs Laura Cole, or the Assistant SENCo, Miss Alison Lennon or email (admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk).

3. How will school staff support my child and what training have they had?

At Hitchin Girls' School, students' needs are best met through High Quality Teaching, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014. The school uses the

graduated response approach to supporting learning needs. High quality teaching means that staff are adapting the teaching approaches in the classroom to meet specific needs. Teaching staff have training and guidance on specific strategies to support students with their learning. The school has a teaching and learning development team who deliver regular training about strategies which are supportive of a range of SEND needs in the classroom. The school uses the Hertfordshire Ordinarily Available Provision guidance to build the daily school offer for students. The SENCo, Assistant SENCo and Learning Support Assistants will support students with an EHCP or exceptional sensory/physical need, and provide strategies for identified SEND needs and those with emerging needs.

Where appropriate, students will have a pupil passport written in conjunction with students and parents in order to ensure staff are aware of particular individual needs in more detail. These are updated on at least a yearly basis following feedback from students and staff.

All students are supported by their Form Tutor and Head of Year. The Student Support Services Team at HGS is well known to students and may be approached at breaks and lunchtime, if students need advice or wish to talk. A range of support exists for those where SEMH needs are presenting including, art therapy, counselling, peer mentors, ELSA mentor, health and well-being coaches and group support.

The teaching staff participate in regular continued professional development to ensure that their knowledge and expertise is up to date. Staff within the Learning Support Department regularly attend training courses. Following a course, they will share this training with the rest of the department and other staff to address specific needs. All teaching staff receive regular on-going training and advice from the Learning Support Department to develop their practice to further support students in the classroom. There are weekly training briefings on a Friday which allow a range of teaching and learning (including SEND support) strategies to be discussed and updated. Any training is also shared through our weekly inclusion bulletin. This bulletin is also used to provide weekly updates about student needs and provision requirements.

Our Local DSPL network organises regular training in all aspects of additional needs and staff are supported to attend these as appropriate.

4. Which external agencies are used to support SEND provision and guidance at HGS?

Sometimes we need extra help to offer our students the support they need. Whenever necessary we will work with external support services to meet the needs of our students with SEN and to support their families. These include:

- Specialists the the local DSPL (Delivering Specialist Provision Locally)
- Local Authority Experts at Hand including: Integrated Services for Learning (Educational Psychology when an EHC needs assessment is being completed, Communication and Autism, Physical and Sensory impairment - including the Visual and Hearing specialist support teachers).
- Woolgrove Outreach support
- Speech and language therapists
- Occupational therapists
- GPs or paediatricians

- School nurses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and Step 2
- Positive behaviour, Autism, Learning Disability and Mental Health Service (PALMS)
- Behaviour outreach team from North Herts Education Support Centre
- Social services and other local authority (LA)-provided support services
- Voluntary sector organisations such as Stand by Me (bereavement support), GRIT (growing resilience in teens coaching), Herts Young Homeless (mediation support)

If additional, funded provision is required and a child does not have an EHCP, we apply for focused intervention funding from our DSPL in order to access more bespoke provision such as Tune in to ASD or Learning to Listen.

4. How will I know how my child is doing?

High Quality Teaching and high aspirations for all ensure that all students are stretched and challenged. Students at HGS receive progress checks twice a year and a further end of year exams results report, which are sent out to parents. There is also a yearly parents' evening for each year group where there is the opportunity to discuss progress with class teachers and the SENCo as required. Parents will also have access to go4schools and Arbor to check their child's progress on a more regular basis.

Baseline testing will take place to help establish any specific areas of need for students. If testing highlights an area of need, parents will be contacted and additional support may be offered.

If key subject reports show that a student is not making expected progress, teachers will review learning with the student. Contact may be made with parents and strategies will be suggested to help the student. Learning Support and Student Support Services teams may be involved, depending on the need. Students on an EHCP will be involved in an annual review with parents and the SENCo. All parents/ carers can contact the SENCo, Learning Support team, subject staff and Student Support Services staff via the school email. Support may also be offered through the Thrive and Fly programme of additional English and Maths interventions.

5. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

At HGS we believe that lessons should be inclusive and use the Thinking Matters tools to build metacognitive scaffolds for students. Subject teachers address the needs of students through a cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2014. This means they understand students' diverse needs, plan appropriate curriculum lessons, teach in a way that enables adaptation and scaffolding according to the needs of the student and constantly review students' learning to ensure progress.

Students' needs are addressed through differentiated and adaptive approaches in lessons, the use of assistive technology, specialist support, adapted materials and group work delivered under the direction of the subject teacher. Some students are offered interventions by the Learning Support Department, for example reading support, mentoring, homework club, social communication/autism support, maths small group

support, emotional/friendship skills group and dyslexia support. These are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ascertain the impact on student progress. The full intervention programme is regularly reviewed based on the key presenting needs of specific cohorts of students.

The majority of interventions take place in our dedicated Learning Support base called Rose Cottage. This space also provides space for students to regulate alongside key adults and have time for respite and overlearning of the curriculum as required. The space is managed by the Assistant SENCo, Inclusion administrator and the Learning Support team members.

Provision is regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure it continues to meet the students emerging needs. School leaders undertake regular evaluation of practice in school through learning walks and pupil voice to ensure the provision built into plans is being implemented in the classroom.

6. How will you measure the progress my child is making?

When students start at HGS, they undertake NGRT reading age testing to identify where there could be literacy needs. This information is used to build the reading intervention programme 'Reading Fluency' which is designed to support more rapid progress in reading. This is assessed by the tutors and progress is measured in line with the intervention outcomes.

At HGS, we work towards students having at least a secure knowledge of the curriculum in all subjects. Secure means that they are working in line with age related expectations. If a student is working towards this, they will be 'not yet' or 'developing'. If they are exceeding, it will be 'advancing' or 'excelling'. At data capture points, students' effort and progress are mapped to establish who might benefit from additional intervention.

7. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

Students have access to pastoral support via their Form Tutor, Head of Year and the Student Support Services Team. Where necessary, we may refer to external agencies through the Local Offer or will provide support from the services we have commissioned in school. All students with an EHCP, plus any other students who are identified as needing regular SEND support are allocated a key worker who will communicate with them at least termly to discuss and update provision based on pupil voice.

There are trained First Aid staff in the school who may work with individual students who have a medical condition. All staff are made aware of medical information for students they teach, where it is necessary for them to be informed.

All staff at the school have up-to-date safeguarding training. There is a designated team for safeguarding procedures, under the guidance of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Key staff are also trained in Mental Health First Aid and the school has a Senior Mental Health Lead who is Mrs Cole, supported by Mrs Batt-Corcoran. Regular well-being sessions take place during registration time as part of the Personal Development Programme and through Learning for Life lessons.

There is a student well-being section on the school website which provides a range of resources for parents/carers and students. It is also possible to access the Headstrong well-being sessions which form part of the personal development programme from this section.

Students are encouraged to engage with activities beyond the classroom through the extensive extra-curricular offer which is an additional opportunity to develop skills and have positive interactions with staff and peers.

8. How will you help me to support my child's learning?

There is a Parents' Consultation Evenings for each year group every year, with additional evenings put in place for key transition points. The SENCo will be available by appointment at each of these. Subject staff will contact parents if there is anything that can be done at home to support the students with their learning. There are year group specific information evenings which will provide you with advice and guidance about specific areas of school life that your child will be experiencing over the academic year. Some web-based interventions are offered and parents are notified if these can be continued at home. Parents/carers can also receive support to understand how to use technology such as Read and Write which can also be used for homework.

Parents/Carers are able to request a meeting with the SENCo or Assistant SENCo at any time. The Student Support Services and Teaching staff are happy to provide additional advice and support on request. The Learning Support Team will also work with you if a Pupil Passport would be beneficial to ensure everyone has shared information about students.

The SENCo and Assistant SENCo will also support by signposting to external provision which could be supportive for your family. Additional information about courses and support can be found in the weekly school opportunities bulletin which is emailed to parents/carers, but is also available on the school website.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's education?

The school runs regular parent information events to advise of key milestones in a young person's school career. Dates are available on the school website and parents/carers receive written invitations.

The SENCo, Subject staff, Student Support Services staff, Form Tutors and Heads of Year will contact parents/carers if there are concerns about a student's learning or well-being. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns about their child's education.

If your child has a pupil passport, this will be written in conjunction with your child and as appropriate, with parents/carers. This will be available on Arbor for staff to view and will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure the provisions remain appropriate. We recognise that no two children are the same and ensure that your child's voice and preferences are reflected in the planning for their provision.

Parent trustees take a full part in the governance of the school and the Trustee board receive regular SEND reports. A regular questionnaire to parents enables the school to understand the views of parents and to take these into account in decision making.

10. How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

All activities, including trips and clubs, are inclusive. If additional support is required to access a club or trip, parents/carers can speak to the Learning Support team who will work with the teaching staff to make adaptations as required. A representative group of students forms the student leadership team. Their views are most important and they take a full part in school life. Students with SEND needs represented in student groups and during pupil voice activities. Club and trip registers are completed to ensure that students with SEND are participating. Specific clubs such as 'Take a Break' club and break/lunch time respite exist and are by invitation only in order to ensure they remain a quiet and calm environment for students with sensory or communication needs.

11. How accessible is the school environment?

There is a full school accessibility plan which is working towards making the school as accessible as possible within the limitations of the building.

A copy of the current accessibility plan which runs from 2025-28, can be found here: [Accessibility Plan](#)

Access arrangements are supported within school. Assistive technology or practical assistance is made available according to need and in line with the JCQ access arrangements guidelines.

Due to the age and design of the school, the buildings are not fully accessible to students with long-term mobility difficulties. Where possible, the school will make reasonable adjustments if students on roll have a temporary need. Lifts have been fitted in the newer parts of the school and can be used by students as necessary. Timetable adaptations are made as appropriate to ensure students are on the ground floor as required if there are mobility issues. The school also applies to ESMA (education support for medical absence) and uses an AV1 robot if a student is unable to physically get into a classroom for a temporary medical reason.

There is also a dedicated Learning Support base when students need time outside of the classroom to regulate and a Student Support Services hub if a student needs to speak to an adult.

12. Who can I contact for further information?

The school Administrative Team is able to respond to general enquiries. The SENCo, Mrs Laura Cole and Assistant SENCo, Miss Alison Lennon, are available to respond to enquiries or concerns in relation to additional needs as are the Student Support Services Team led by Mrs Emily Robertson. Contact with any of these teams is initially through ***admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk***.

13. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

HGS works extensively with primary feeder schools. There is a specific transition event for Primary and Secondary SENCo's to share information after school places have been allocated. Staff speak with all year 6 teachers or other appropriate staff in the primary school. There are optional parent/carer meetings offered prior to the transition day so that pertinent information can be shared with staff and so that parents/carers have the opportunity to meet key HGS contacts. On Secondary Transfer Day in July, Year 6 students will spend a day at HGS and parents are invited for the evening. Additional visits may be arranged for individual students, particularly if they have an EHCP. Pupil passports for all EHCP students, plus any others where reports are received prior to starting at HGS. The first few days for Year 7 at HGS involve induction and orientation activities and these are supported by the Learning Support department. As part of the transition process, parents/carers will be invited to attend a transition evening to meet key staff in July and an information evening at the end of the induction week.

If a student transfers from or to another secondary school, there will be an exchange of information and transfer arrangements are agreed. In-year admission students will have a buddy provided and will have additional check-ins and support from their Head of Year and the Student Support Services team.

Students transferring to HGS in the Sixth Form have induction days and taster lessons. Information is shared with other schools within the consortium if a student has lessons at one of the other consortium schools.

We work closely with the careers service and further education colleges such as North Herts College and Shuttleworth College to ensure students' needs are met when they start college courses, post 16. The Sixth Form team works closely with students prior to transfer to university and the SENCo will provide information and support to the disability support team at chosen universities if needed.

14. How are the school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

There are various funding options available when an intervention is required to address a specific educational need or an exceptional need. Students with an EHCP are prioritised with support in order to meet the provision identified through the higher needs funding linked to the EHCP. Students with a physical or sensory disability may also receive practical support and adapted resources, assistive technology etc. If additional support is required, the SENCo will work with parents to write for local focused intervention funding (if the family address is in Hertfordshire) as appropriate. This is an external panel who decide whether it is appropriate to grant the requested funding.

Well-being support is triaged by the Student Support Services team and is allocated on a needs based model, however, students in receipt of pupil premium funding and those with an EHCP receive priority allocation to support.

The majority of the school SEND funding is allocated to provide High Quality Teaching and learning in every classroom, alongside the additional Learning Support Assistant provision. The Cottage learning support base also forms part of the Ordinarily Available Provision when it is identified that a student would benefit from additional support in this space. The

Learning Support department will help facilitate access arrangements for students in exams.

15. How is the decision made about how much support my child will receive?

We aim to give students the support they need to become resilient, independent learners to allow them to move onto the next steps as independent young people or adults. Support in school is allocated and monitored on a needs basis by the SENCo. As a school, we value the sharing of information with all teaching and support staff in decisions about appropriate interventions. The Learning Support team will use the information provided by external professionals to build support as required, particularly if this is part of an EHCP.

If external provisions are required by your child, the decision about this will be impacted by the higher needs funding they receive. The SENCo will work with the local authority if additional funding is required and will provide a costed provision map to them as evidence of the funding required.

16. What support do you provide for children and young people with Autism/Social Communication Difficulties?

The SENCo, Mrs Cole, and Deputy SENCo, Miss Lennon, are the Autism leads within the School. As a school, we provide students with a diagnosis of Autism or students that manifest social communication difficulties, with a range of reasonable adjustments. We offer students a quiet, safe space in the Learning Support base or the Student Support Services hub before, during and after school hours and in class strategies such as time out cards, pupil passports, and where possible, seating arrangements which are considerate of their sensory issues. Students are assigned a Key Worker LSA to meet with on a regular basis to discuss any positives, areas of concern or to support the development of social skills. Communication skills are also practised and supported during Take a Break Club (lunchtimes) and positive behaviours are reinforced during a social skills programme, which include the use of social stories. At the Hitchin Girls' School, we pride ourselves on our flexible and caring approach and see our students as individuals.

17. How can I find information about the local authority's Local Offer of services and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disability?

The Local Offer can be found at [Hertfordshire Local Offer](#). The DSPL offer also has information that is supportive to parents/carers: <https://nhdspl.org.uk/>

18. What should I do if I have a complaint about SEND provision?

As a school, we would aim to resolve any complaints by working together to establish the provision your child needs, so if you have concerns that something is not being addressed, please use the admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk address to arrange a conversation with Mrs Cole.

If you feel that the provision is still not being implemented as required, you can raise a complaint in line with the schools complaints policy which is available on the school website.