



SEN at Blackwater Integrated College

2025

Special Educational Needs

At Blackwater IC our policies are designed to ensure that all students, irrespective of ability, gender, race or social grouping, are enabled to work to their full potential.

This was recognised in the last ETI inspection which stated “Over the past three years, the pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning have attained well at GCSE (including equivalents).”

All students, including those identified as having special educational needs, experience a curriculum relevant to their needs and ability which fulfils the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum while having regard to the Code of Practice.

Blackwater Integrated College provides support for students with Additional and Special Needs in accordance with SENDO legislation. The College supports the principle of inclusion of students with a variety of learning difficulties within the student body and across a range of curriculum subjects.

We do this by:

- the early identification of SEN
- one to one or small group interventions in areas of need
- actively involving and working closely with parents
- maintaining a special educational needs register and ensuring all pupils on this register have a personal learning plan
- providing regular training for staff, including a team of teaching assistants
- liaising closely with appropriate services to support our young people, e.g. The Autism Advisory and Intervention Service who are based in BIC
- providing a complementary programme for students who need an alternative to the GCSE curriculum which enables them to achieve results equivalent to five or more GCSEs



KS3 - Specialist Provision (Learning Support Centre LSC)

Our KS3 learning support classes encompass students between the ages of 11-14 years of age. At Blackwater Integrated College our learning support centre caters for pupils who have a variety of complex learning needs and a statement of special educational needs that identifies the need for specialist provision. Situated in the main school the LSC provides a caring and stimulating environment for learning with the students involved in every area of school life. This is achieved by:

- reduced class sizes for literacy and numeracy based subjects
- a favourable adult to pupil ratio
- specialist teachers who implement individual schemes of work
- actively involving and working closely with parents
- provision at lunchtime - Lunchtime life skills
- participation in our social, emotional, learning programme and use of the Sensory Room.
- encouraging active involvement in practical subjects with their mainstream peers
- opportunities to get involved with extra-curricular activities and the school council

Key SEN staff

Mr Taylor - School Principal

Mrs Mallon - Learning Support
Coordinator

Mrs Millington - Head of
Pastoral Care

Mr McClean - LSC Teacher

Mrs Morrison - LSC Teacher



KS4 Specialist Provision (Vocational Pathway)

Our KS4 vocational pathway encompasses students between the ages of 14 – 16 years of age. It is designed to follow on from the Learning Support Centre and be relevant and interesting with the intention to reward and motivate learners and improve their opportunities.

In KS4 we build on the strong foundation already laid in KS3 and the curriculum is offered at each individual child's level and pace to help develop our students as a whole.

The aim of the vocational pathway is to deliver academic and confidence building opportunities that will help our students prepare for life as an adult. Pupils experience a wide range of exciting challenges during their two years of study. The structured and caring environment helps pupils reach their individual potential.

Our varied KS4 VP curriculum reflects the range of abilities of our pupils. It will provide them with the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for functional everyday living and help prepare them for the world of work.

Curriculum areas

Students have previously achieved accredited qualifications in the following areas:

- Essential Skills Literacy (Entry 1 – 3) and Communication (Level 1 – 2)
- GCSE Art and Design or GCSE Contemporary Crafts
- Essential Skills Numeracy (Entry 1-3) and Application of Number (1-2)
- GCSE Occupational Studies
- OCN Applied Science
- OCN Information Technology Applications
- King's Trust Achieve Programme – Personal Development and Employability
- OCN Religious Education



Within the VP stream of study we aim to assist each pupil to flourish by having:

- all staff trained in catering for the needs of SEN pupils
- small class sizes with teaching assistants to support pupils in class and around the school
- accredited courses designed to help our pupils achieve success
- active learning and a hands on approach to study
- activities to develop socially as well as academically
- close partnership with Careers Service NI and Education Authority Transition Officers
- work experience in Year 11 to gain valuable skills in a suitable local business environment



Mainstream provision



At Blackwater IC currently 27% of our school population have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and the provision in place for these students varies. Some students will attend the Learning Support Centre and some will be in mainstream classes. Some students will also access 'adult assistance'.

Adult assistance is support that is provided to meet the needs of a student and can range in the number of hours awarded by the Education Authority based on the perceived level of need of your child. Often the assistance is replicated from that in Primary School or can on some occasions be increased or decreased when transitioning into Post Primary School.

In Blackwater we have many students who avail of adult assistance in mainstream classes and will sometimes have some interventions in place to assist where required.

We are a mainstream school and our Learning Support Centre is referred to as 'specialist provision' and will operate with smaller class sizes though the adult assistance will not be specifically 1-1 and will be for the group as a whole.

Transport is always a concern we hear from parents of P7 students and we would strongly urge all parents to make sure this is raised at Annual Review if this is an area that needs to be addressed.





Mainstream Small Class provision



At Blackwater IC we are forward thinking and have found in recent years that many students coming to join us with adult assistance can work extremely well in a small class environment with additional adult assistance.

At present we have 3 small classes in Years 8,9 and 10 with 9 students in each with a teacher and 2 Classroom Assistants. This operates on the basis where these students are with one teacher for approximately 40-50% of their timetabled time and mix with mainstream peers for the remainder and specialist practical subjects such as Technology, HE and Art.

The small class provision allows for extra support and we have received very positive feedback from parents and students about how effective it has been. Working with the Education Authority we have put this provision in place and it very much encourages independence and integration which is extremely important for our students.

Feel free to contact the College to enquire further or get a tour and see the provision in place.

Useful links for Parents



<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/pupil-support-services> – **EA Support Services**

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-educational-needs-sen> – **EA SEN info for parents**

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/sen-guidance-parents> – **Department of Education SEN parent info**

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/useful-links-for-parents> – **Further useful links for parents from the Education Authority**

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/school-meals> – **EA information on free school meals**

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/home-to-school-transport/check-transport-eligibility> – **Transport information and useful links**

<https://www.middletownautism.com/> – **Middletown Centre for Autism**

<https://www.autism.org.uk/> – **National Autistic Society**

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/> – **British Dyslexia Association**

Interventions

In Blackwater IC we place great importance on delivering effective teaching and learning, we celebrate achievement and encourage self-reliance and independence for all our students.

Addressing Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a whole school priority and teachers and support staff have access to regular training and support which enables them to better meet the needs of pupils with SEN in their classrooms, the aim is to ensure that all of our students have equal and fair access to the full NI curriculum.

In some cases, our pupils need further assistance and this is identified early by a combination of assessment, standardised scores and teacher referral. Interventions may be for a short or extended period of time and pupils receiving these may be placed on the SEN Code of Practice at Stage 1.

In Blackwater IC we have high standards and expectations for every member of our school community and believe interventions and additional support are key for improving the learning experience of students.

We have developed a variety of provision, designed to meet a range of cognitive, social, emotional and sensory needs. These include the Bedrock Literacy programme, Mangahigh Numeracy programme, small group support, a Social & Emotional Learning Programme (SEL) which is delivered in conjunction with our sensory room and life skills groups before school and during lunch times.





Contact us:

Phone: 028 4461 2115

email: info@blackwateric.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk

Message: on our Facebook page

