SEND Information Report 2026/27

Dixons Unity Academy

Responsibility: SENCO and SLT

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SEND Information Report

Introduction

At Dixons Unity, we believe that the entitlement to a broad, balanced, relevant and adaptive curriculum is a right for all learners. This entitlement should be delivered by trained personnel, committed to maximum inclusion, who are able to provide a happy, sensitive, secure and developmental environment in which all individuals are encouraged and enabled to undertake self-development, self-advocacy, respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment. Equality of opportunity, thoughtful and effective assessment, family involvement and a variety of teaching and learning styles appropriate to the needs of the individual and the subject matter should be integral to the planning of educational provision for all students. We are committed to ensuring that any student can get the extra support that they need, if and when they need it, without stigma or prejudice. All students are equally valued. High standards of behaviour and moral values are set for all whilst appreciating that not all students will be able to meet them without guidance, support and structure.

At Dixons Unity, the SEND team is led by Assistant Vice Principal (AVP) Mr Phil Grayson and Mr Will Jackson, Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCO) & Associate Assistant Vice Principal (AAVP), and consists of a varied team of highly skilled professionals including: an LSA; Deputy SENCO; Strategic Inclusion Manager and a Wellbeing Hub manager. Students also receive daily input from the Pastoral Team. The SEND team works closely with all members of the staff body to promote the academic, emotional and social development of students with special educational needs and this, along with strong working relationships and close co-operation with external agencies and families, strengthens the support we can offer to the students in our academy. When a child is not making sufficient progress, and concerns are raised, their case and context are discussed in a Team Around the Child (TATC) meeting. This meeting involves a range of school leaders who collaborate to address the child's needs. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the ways in which we support and work with our students, to highlight our successes and next steps, and advise on how to access further information if required. We recognise that any student may require the support of our team at some point during their time with us, and that support may be temporary or long term. Support packages are individually tailored with a focus on our core values of resilience, integrity and respect. We work closely with academic departments, academy leadership, outside agencies and families in order to develop independent and resilient learnings who make rapid and sustained progress regardless of starting point, socio-economic background, personal circumstance, special educational need or disability. At Dixons Unity, we aim to design all aspects of learning and community with the full broad range of abilities and need in mind, so that each student can be treated as a unique individual, subject to the same high expectations, respect, compassion and flexibility as their peers. True inclusion means equal quality of education and experience for all students. Every decision and action taken is done so with the aim to ensure that every student can achieve to the very best of their potential, climb their personal mountain to university or a real alternative, and go on to live happy and purposeful lives.

Key contacts

Assistant Vice Principal and Inclusion Lead	Phil Grayson (pgrayson@dixonsua.com)
SENCO	Will Jackson (wjackson1@dixonsua.com)
Deputy SENCO	Lyndsey Hazlewood (lhazlewood@dixonsua.com)
Strategic Inclusion Manager	Gini Martin (gmartin@dixonsua.com)
Wellbeing Manager	Patrick Royal-Lawson (proyal-lawson@dixonsua.com)

QUICK LINKS	Staffing and timetable	Assess Plan Do Review	Outcomes
Values and culture	Identification of needs	Collaborative working	Feedback and complaints
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Values and culture

The academy provides a safe, well supervised and highly structured environment in which all students can learn and thrive. Our core values of resilience, integrity and respect are at the heart of everything that we do; we never give up, we do the right thing and we are always professional. High expectations for behaviour, daily check-in with pastoral team amongst other things, ensure a safe and supportive experience for all students without the need for additionality or difference for vulnerable learners. The Wellbeing Team is there for all students when they need it and because they need it. Further information on our values and culture can be found on the academy website: www.dixonsua.com

Teaching and learning

1.24 – High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of children and young people. Some children and young people need educational provision that is additional to or different from this. This is special educational provision under Section 21 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Schools and colleges must use their best endeavours to ensure that such provision is made for those who need it. Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less.
SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (DfE / DoH, 2015)

Our aim is that, by committing to constantly improving and developing our classroom practice, we will be able to meet most needs our students have through our main timetable and routines. This means ensuring that our teaching staff have the knowledge and skills that empower them to teach inclusively and carefully considering our curricula and classroom practice (including how we adapt our teaching to meet a range of needs, and how we support and intervene when needed), so that children can learn in their classrooms and alongside their peers. For most students, this will enable them to succeed in their education and beyond, but we also recognise that some students will need provision beyond the classroom. High quality classroom teaching and whole academy routines provides the foundation and starting point for all of our students, and we are then able to build on this to provide the targeted group work and specialist, sometimes individualised, provision that some students need. Examples of strategies used by our teachers across all subjects and year groups include (but not limited to): visually supported 'learning modes' that enable all students to understand what is expected of them; carefully rehearsed classroom routines for a consistent approach in the learning environment; analysis of class data to identify students requiring in class intervention to close known gaps and weekly CPD based around well-established teaching pedagogy from Doug Lemov's the Teach Like a Champion. At Dixons Unity all staff are taught teaching strategies and practices designed to enhance student learning and engagement which forms the basis of our adaptive teaching. This is called the DUA Way and the key features include:

1. **Retrieval and Retention**: Lessons start with a warm welcome and a "Learn Now" task to help students retrieve and retain knowledge. Teachers greet students warmly and use clear, strategic tasks to begin learning immediately.
2. **Adaptive Teaching**: Lessons are planned and delivered to meet the needs of all students, using techniques like chunking, scaffolding, and dual coding to prevent cognitive overload and ensure all students can demonstrate understanding. Staffing and timetable
3. **Formative Assessment**: Teachers use formative assessment methods, such as messy marking and cold calling, to identify and address gaps in learning, ensuring students keep up rather than catch up.
4. **Literacy**: Literacy strategies are deployed to ensure students are literate in the subject discipline, including teaching vocabulary, exposing students to high-quality texts, and encouraging extended writing and oracy.
5. **Classroom Culture**: Strong classroom culture and behavior management are emphasized to ensure a conducive learning environment. This includes clear instructions, consistent routines, and positive framing.
6. **Joy and Engagement**: Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for their subjects and use various strategies to increase student participation and engagement, encouraging students to take risks and make connections between their learning and wider experiences.

Overall, "The DUA Way" aims to create a supportive, engaging, and effective learning environment through well-planned, adaptive teaching and strong classroom management. Students identified with SEND meet individually with our SENDCo. During these meetings, the SENDCo assesses each student's strengths and areas for improvement. Based on this assessment, the SENDCo develops personalised teaching strategies tailored to each student's needs. These strategies are then shared with all teaching staff in the form of brief notes called 'Sticky Notes,' which are attached to staff lesson planning documentation for quick reference.

Staffing and timetable

In order to ensure a high-quality learning experience for the most vulnerable learners at Dixons Unity Academy, the timetable is adapted to allow a more focussed and tailored learning experience for our currently lower attaining learners. The students are broadly set upon prior attainment and some classes are of mixed ability. Students' reading abilities are assessed at multiple points throughout the academic year. Those identified as struggling with literacy receive support through a phonics-based program led by our trained English staff. Learning is scaffolded to ensure that the currently lower attaining students develop their conceptual understanding of key ideas. Further to this, teacher led interventions are built into the timetable, enabling teachers to ensure that same day interventions are planned and carried out using formative assessment to ensure all children keep up. Other interventions are implemented based on data to ensure that any groups or individuals who are currently lower attaining are supported to make accelerated progress in order to close the gap in attainment. Staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a priority. Each week, teachers are given dedicated time away from their regular teaching duties to participate in a tailored program. This program is designed to enhance their skills and keep them informed about the latest and most effective inclusive teaching practices.

Identification of needs

Information from primary school, families and agencies, alongside our own programme of screeners and baseline testing, are the main ways in which we identify individual needs. In addition, any member of staff or parent / carer can raise a concern that would then be investigated fully by the SENCO. This would initially involve a thorough analysis of up to date progress and attainment data alongside current provision before referring to outside agencies if needed. To raise a concern about a student, Staff can email our SENCO or raise a referral via the DUA Staff App.

Students with additional needs currently on roll		Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Communication and Interaction (including ASC & SLCN)	EHCP	3	3	0	0	0
	SEN Support	10	15	7	5	8
Cognition and Learning (including MLD, SLD & SpLD)	EHCP	2	2	0	0	1
	SEN Support	11	17	16	21	18
Social, Emotional & Mental Health (including ADHD, ADD & RAD)	EHCP	0	1	3	1	2
	SEN Support	23	13	23	29	20
Physical and Sensory (including HI, VI & physical needs)	EHCP	0	0	0	0	0
	SEN Support	3	3	10	8	5

Additional and different provision

Any provision that is additional to or different from our whole academy timetable and routines will be built around specific students' needs and so varies over time and between year groups, but is delivered by experienced practitioners working in established specialist teams within the wider SEND team. The Wellbeing Room is a calm, quiet space where identified students can visit at allocated times of the day to receive support for their needs. This may range from 1:1 work on mental health to small group work from delivered by one of our wellbeing mentors to more bespoke external agency group work from one of our many providers. The Unity Community room is a learning space our Learning Support Assistant supports identified students. In addition to the above the SEND team can provide a range of other support and intervention based on individual students or groups within the academy's needs, for example Fresh Start (phonics intervention), support with equipment such as coloured overlays or hearing aids, access to word processors, and 1:1 support either in lessons or for individualised intervention outside of the classroom. For some students, accessing the mainstream curriculum can be challenging. In these cases, they may join our internal Alternative Provision, Connect. In Connect, students are taught in a nurturing environment with a maximum adult-to-student ratio of 1:6. Despite the smaller setting, students still follow the full mainstream curriculum, ensuring they are not at a disadvantage. As students gain confidence and make progress in Connect, they will be considered for reintegration into the mainstream setting.

Assess Plan Do Review

Our ‘assess plan do review’ processes are embedded into our whole academy routines and day to day practice, with SEND students prioritised in order to ensure their provision and support is effective. All staff are aware of students’ individual needs through the SEND Support Strategies documents and regular, child-centred CPD. Students with SEND are prioritised in department and class level intervention planning, ensuring they are considered first for interventions and opportunities, and that the strategies they needed are embedded in classroom practice. The SENCO and SEND team maintain an overview of SEND students’ academic outcomes, attendance, behaviour and access to opportunities, and will intervene and advocate at the first opportunity when needed. For any student accessing a specific intervention or provision, for example phonics or 1:1 support in the Wellbeing Hub, a clear baseline is established and the beginning of their involvement and progress is measured both within the intervention and how it impacts on the student beyond the intervention itself. This will be different depending on the intervention, but could include observation, student or staff voice, analysis of academic outcomes, or improved attendance. For students with the greatest amounts of ‘additional to or different from’ provision, including those with an EHCP, their needs will be monitored through an INP (see below). This enables us to work collaboratively and consistently on their key skills and targets across all lessons and a range of interventions. The INP ensures that the most current information and strategies are delivered to all staff working with a student, that the student has opportunities to work towards their current targets in different ways and with different people, and that all stakeholders contribute to the review process.

Key Documents

INP	Individualised document detailing the targets and strategies for a specific student, so that all staff can work collaboratively to support the student to achieve their personal priorities for each cycle. Designed to enable teachers and support staff to meet need and provide meaningful feedback in order to contribute to review.
SEND Support Strategies (staff access via virtual platform) or ‘Sticky Notes’	Strategy banks bespoke to your child's needs as identified by our SENCO in consultation with your child / or potentially family and designed to link directly into whole academy routines and embed inclusive practice into day to day practice for all staff.
IHP	Individual Health Plan When available, for students with medical needs, a copy of the their NHS Care Plan will be held in school and followed in order to ensure their safety and wellbeing. When the NHS Care Plan is not available, or the student does not have one but the academy and family agrees that a care plan would be beneficial, an IHCP will be written. This will be developed collaboratively with families and, wherever possible, medical professionals.

Transition

A successful transition from primary school or nursery is key to the success and wellbeing of any student and so a rigorous and supportive transition programme is in place for all admissions to the academy. All students who receive a place at the academy are visited in their primary school. The visit is conducted by the Pastoral and Inclusion Teams as they play central roles in ensuring their welfare and support when they start at the academy. Student information sheets are completed by the primary schools and received by the academy towards the beginning of the summer term. There are two transition days for all secondary students at the beginning of July each year, both at Dixons Unity Academy, and additional transition visits are arranged for vulnerable students. Liaison with primary, outside agencies and parent / carers is arranged for any student with additional needs. For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the SENCO would attend their Year 6 transition Annual Review in order to ensure families were fully informed of provision at the academy, to receive the most up to date information about the child’s individual needs and that the provision laid out in Annual Review document could be made available in preparation for their arrival. Each student transitioning from KS3 to KS4 will be met with in order to ensure a high quality and appropriate KS4 pathway for every child. A meeting with an independent careers advisor is also arranged for vulnerable learners and any other student who requests it and there are dedicated options evenings and parents’ evenings in order to ensure both students and their families are fully informed. For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the Annual Review immediately prior to their taking KS4 options would be a transition review and ensure that the best provision was put in place for the students KS4 pathway.

Collaborative working with families and supporting agencies

Dixons Unity may involve specialists/ professionals from outside agencies to advise them on early identification of SEND along with effective support and intervention methods. Where a student continues to make less than expected progress, despite support and interventions that are matched to the students’ needs then the school may consider involving specialists including those from outside agencies. The SENCO can liaise with specialists and outside agencies to ensure the students’ needs are met. Outside agencies and specialist services include:

- DAHIT (Deaf and Hearing Impairment Team)
- SENIT (Special Educational Needs Inclusion Team)
- SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services)
- Education Psychology Team
- Gypsy Roma Traveller Outreach and Inclusion Team

• Social Care Services

• St Giles Trust

• Barca

• STARS (Specialist Teachers Autism Response Service)

• Occupational Therapy

• SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) To facilitate working with families the SENCO is available to attend all parents' evenings and transition events and in addition to this:

• Phone calls home if any concerns arise

• Parents can contact school at any time to speak with their allocated SEND Key Worker with any concerns

• Annual review meetings

• SENCO available to discuss SEN needs

• Head of Years, Class Teachers and Form tutors available to discuss subject specific concerns

Successes and next steps 2025/26

Dixons Unity is striving to increase all opportunities for students to improve their outcomes and to live happy and purposeful lives. Last academic year, some of our successes include:

- Attainment 8 improved for SEND students
- Successful trial and formal launch of the 'Regulation Menu' within classrooms
- Continued SEND specific CPD to all teaching staff
- Year on year increasing in additional SEND funding
- Year on year improvement in SEND attendance
- Successful induction of SEND students from year 6 to year 7 with SENCO meeting all families

Feedback and complaints

Providing a high quality education is of paramount importance and we believe that a close working relationship between the academy, student and parent / carers is crucial in achieving this. We actively seek to collaborate with parent / carers on a cycle-by-cycle basis, but understand that things can change much more quickly than this. We are always happy to arrange a meeting or phone-call in order to discuss a student's provision and how best to meet their needs. Any complaints to the academy would follow the standard complaints procedure for the Trust, details of which can be found by following this link: https://www.dixonsat.com/about/policies

Frequently Asked Questions

How are the different types of additional need and disability provided for at Dixons Unity?

At Dixons Unity Academy we recognise that every child is unique and will have varying degrees of need. We work closely with families and external agencies to identify a package of support bespoke to the individual. All students will have access to all aspects of academy life, high quality teaching and immerse themselves in our culture and ethos. Staff use student data to identify areas of strength and plan interventions for areas of development. On a cycle by cycle basis, students' provision is reviewed via the graduated response.

How is provision for students with additional needs evaluated for effectiveness?

Progress and attainment for all students is assessed three times per year as part of the highly effective cycle of teaching and learning, and provision will be reviewed, and intervention put in place, for any student who has not made expected progress in that period of time. This enables the academy to review the overall provision of each individual student and adjust accordingly. All interventions have their own built in progress assessment mechanism that allows the academy to ensure that each one is having impact and is of value to the individual learner.

How are students with additional needs and their parents / carers consulted in order to involve them in their education?

Student voice activities are conducted throughout the year and students are encouraged and supported to share their opinions. Parent / carer contact is incorporated into each of the three learning cycles and this could be in the form of a report, a phone-call home or a parent feedback meetings with keyworkers or other identified staff. Parents can contact the academy and arrange a meeting or phone call at any time if they have a concern or would like an update on their child's provision. For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the SENCO will arrange a yearly review of their provision (the Annual Review) for parents / carers, key academy staff and any outside agencies. Interim reviews can be called at any time if the needs or provision change.

How are specialist equipment and facilities to support students with special educational needs secured?

We work closely with external agencies and professionals ensure we have appropriate equipment and facilities and to identify any specialist equipment that a child may need. Once identified, the item will be bought and maintained for the duration of need.

How are staff supported to meet the needs of students with additional needs?

Focused staff training and support is crucial to ensure that the needs of all students are met inclusively and all students receive an equal quality learning experience. All staff have access to a range of documents designed to inclusively support students with individual needs and staff training and CPD is incorporated into staff induction and coaching. In addition to this, the SENCO and the Wellbeing Team are available to support with individuals and classes at any time. If a student requires specialist support or intervention that is beyond the current expertise of the academy, outside agency help will be sought. This could take the form of staff training or regularly scheduled input from outside specialists, and their feedback will be shared with all staff so that it can be incorporated into their everyday practice. Staff use SEND Strategies, INPs, and IHPs to gain insight and follow suggested strategies as part of the graduated response.

What additional expertise and training do staff have in order to support students with additional needs?

Dixons Unity has provided and continues to provide high quality CPD relevant to our setting and delivered to all staff. Where specialist knowledge is required, Dixons Unity will ensure that a designated member or members of staff will undertake relevant training from an established provider.

How does the academy work collaboratively with the local authority and other outside agencies?

Dixons Unity works closely with the Local Authority and external agencies and their involvement is sought when the needs of a student go beyond the expertise of the academy. This could be for staff training or to work directly with an individual student or group of students. The Local Authority also provides a range of resources and opportunities for staff development and the academy considers these in relation to our current needs and engages accordingly. Through agreed appointment, specialist teachers and practitioners meet with students on a 1:1 or small group basis or indeed as part of a wider professionals meeting. Agencies that Dixons Unity can seek support from a listed (but limited to) Collaborative working with families and support services section within this document above.

Further information can be found in the Local Authority's SEND Local Offer (LINK)

How is the socio-emotional development of the students supported? How is bullying prevented?

At Dixons Unity Academy, the socio-emotional developmental needs of the students are supported through the form tutor system (small pastoral groupings for registration), the values driven culture, and the Positive Behaviour Policy. To see this, please follow the link below: https://www.dixonsua.com/uploads/files/dixonsua/DUA-Positive-Behaviour-WTD.pdf?v=1664775207 In addition, the Wellbeing Team provides a drop-in service for all students where they can discuss anything that is concerning them and receive the support that they need. Students are well supported through assemblies, whole-school values and celebration assemblies and through daily contact with their tutor in tutor time. For those students who need extra support, the academy's wellbeing team work closely with students, parents and staff to support the development of social or emotional regulation skills both in groups, 1:1 and external agency group work. The academy incorporates anti-bullying themes into the curriculum and has a rigorous system for identifying, reporting and following up all alleged bullying incidents. See the Trust anti-bullying policy for more information: https://www.dixonsat.com/uploads/files/dixonsat/Anti-Bullying-Policy.pdf?v=1657024937

How does the academy ensure that students with additional needs or other vulnerabilities are treated fairly at the admissions stage?

Please refer directly to our admissions policy for a detailed explanation of how we achieve this:
https://www.dixonsua.com/admissions/admission-policy

What facilities are provided to support the needs of students with physical disabilities?

Dixons Unity has several internal lifts, which allow any child with a physical disability to access all areas and floors of the school. Where a child has an individual evacuation need, they will have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). In addition to the above Dixons Unity offers:

- Accessible toilets to facilitate personal care needs and fully equipped care suite
- EVAC chairs and stair climber available in case of emergency
- Passes to leave lessons early
- Learning Support Assistants provide 1:1 support in lessons if required.
- Variable height tables available
- Access to a range of IT equipment and writing apparatus

How does the academy adapt the curriculum and learning environment for students with additional needs?

All our students are treated as individuals and we have in place a well-planned curriculum that allows students to access appropriate courses and support to meet their needs. Members of staff use a range of strategies and resources to ensure work is planned and delivered at a level that meets the learning needs of all students through an increasingly personalised curriculum. Support staff are deployed, as appropriate, to support SEND students in successfully accessing the curriculum. SEND students are withdrawn from lessons for intensive support where necessary.

Further information can be found in our academy Accessibility Plan (LINK)

How does the academy ensure that it is meeting the needs of students with additional needs who are also in local authority care (CLA)?

The needs of all students, including those with additional needs and who are looked after by the local authority, are met through well designed whole-academy systems and high-quality teaching. The SENCO attends the regular CLA and PEP (Personal Education Plan) of any student who is identified as CLA and is then responsible for ensuring the implementation of any provision outlined in the plan at the academy.

Where can I find further information and support services if I'm a parents / carers of a child with additional needs?

Families can get in touch with a range of key staff via the schools at Info@dixonsua.com email address. Support services offered via the Local Authority can be sought from: Leeds Local Offer: https://leedslocaloffer.org.uk/#!/directory.

Support and information for the families of children with SEND can be found by contacting your local SENDIASS service (LINK)