



Blackburn with Darwen L.A.

St. Thomas's Centre

SEN Information Report

2025/2026

Review Date: September 2026

1. Introduction

St Thomas's Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) within Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority, operating across a Hawthorn and a Lambeth Site. The school provides both full and part-time education for pupils aged 5–16 who are experiencing difficulties in mainstream education due to medical needs, social, emotional, or mental health (SEMH) needs, or other barriers to learning.

St Thomas's Centre is not a designated specialist school for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). However, we do provide short to medium-term support for pupils with SEND, ensuring that they are supported to make progress and achieve their educational goals.

“It is our expectation that pupils succeed - No exceptions! No excuses!”

Our ethos ensures to ensure all pupils, regardless of disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum tailored to their needs. We work closely with parents, carers, mainstream schools, and external agencies to support pupils effectively.

Further information is available through the school's [SEND Policy](#) and Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority's [Local Offer](#)

2. Admission Arrangements

St Thomas's Centre provides education for pupils who are permanently excluded from their mainstream school and serves the BwD areas. Referrals for permanently excluded pupils come via the Local Authority.

St Thomas's Centre supports education at Royal Blackburn hospital. St Thomas's Centre also provides education to pupils who are experiencing difficulties in mainstream settings due to medical or social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils will remain dual registered with their referring mainstream school.

Mainstream can refer pupils who are residents of BwD for an Intervention place, if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties and who may be at risk of permanent exclusion. Intervention places are dependent on the school's capacity with Statutory pupils (Permanently Excluded and Medical pupils) and they are at the discretion of the Headteacher. St Thomas's Centre do not accept referrals from mainstream schools for pupils with EHCPs unless the Local Authority, who has a legal responsibility to keep arrangements for pupils with SEN under review, including any changes to provision, has agreed to the referral.

3. How We Identify Pupils with SEND and Assess Their Needs

At St Thomas's Centre, we believe every child is entitled to an education that meets their needs, promotes high standards, and helps them fulfil their potential. We use a graduated, multi-layered approach to identify and support pupils with additional needs, following the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycle.

Our process begins with information from pre-placement inductions and referral documentation from the pupil's current school or Local Authority. Upon arrival, pupils complete baseline assessments, including AAB and CAT4 testing, Phonics in reading, English, and maths, as well as curriculum assessments within the first six weeks. These identify baselines, areas of need, and inform academic and personal targets. Assessment outcomes are shared with teaching

staff, and targets are then set collaboratively. During Academic Review Days, half-termly academic, social, and emotional targets are agreed upon with pupils and parents to support progress and development.

Monitoring includes social, emotional, and behavioural observations by staff, alongside tracking of academic progress, engagement, attendance, and behaviour. Any SEND concerns are addressed promptly with parents, base schools, and relevant professionals. Pupils with additional needs have an Individual plan, reviewed regularly to ensure interventions remain effective, tailored, and responsive supporting each pupil to reach their full potential.

4. Types of SEN Provided For

Pupils at St Thomas’s Centre may have needs in the following categories as per the SEND Code of Practice (2014):

Area of need	Condition
Communication and Interaction	Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) Speech and language difficulties
Cognition and Learning	Specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia, and dyscalculia Moderate learning difficulties Severe learning difficulties
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	Attention deficient hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) Attention deficit disorder (ADD)
Sensory and/or Physical Needs	Hearing impairment Visual impairment Multi-sensory impairment Physical impairment

We recognise that behavioural difficulties may reflect an unmet need in one of these categories rather than being a standalone SEN. Some pupils may also have additional factors affecting progress, such as EAL, health, attendance, or being a Child in Our Care (CIOC). Although St Thomas’s Centre is not a designated specialist school for EHCP pupils, we provide short to medium-term support tailored to each pupil’s needs.

5. How We Support Pupils

Universal Support through Quality First Teaching

- Small class groups with a high staff-to-pupil ratio;
- Nurture-based and trauma-informed teaching approaches;
- Enrichment activities, sports, and creative projects;
- Consist staffing including pastoral team and pupil support officers
- Regular contact with parents regarding engagement, progress, and achievement;
- Transition planning for all pupils.

Targeted Additional Support

- Literacy, numeracy, and catch-up programmes;
- Small group or 1:1 SEMH, Nurture and Mental Health First Aid interventions;
- Specialist advice and strategies for staff;

- SEND assessment and planning;
- Exam Access Arrangements where appropriate.
- 1:1 intervention for cognition, learning, SEMH, or communication needs;
- Educational Psychologist and SALT input;
- Support for physical and medical needs through specialist services;
- Therapeutic interventions where recommended;
- Referrals to external agencies (e.g., CAMHS, Early Help, Youth Justice Team, counselling services).

6. How We Adapt Teaching and the Curriculum

At St Thomas's Centre, lessons are adapted to pupil's abilities and learning style, with small group teaching, one-to-one support, and pre-teaching sessions where necessary. The curriculum is personalised and flexible, with adapted resources, alternative assessment methods, and additional processing time provided to ensure all pupils can access learning effectively. We make use of visual aids such as visual timetables, overlays, and other supportive materials, and teaching assistants and specialist staff provide in-class support to reinforce learning. Individualised targets are set for each pupil and reviewed regularly, with progress shared with parents, base schools, and other professionals involved.

7. Facilities for Pupils with Disabilities

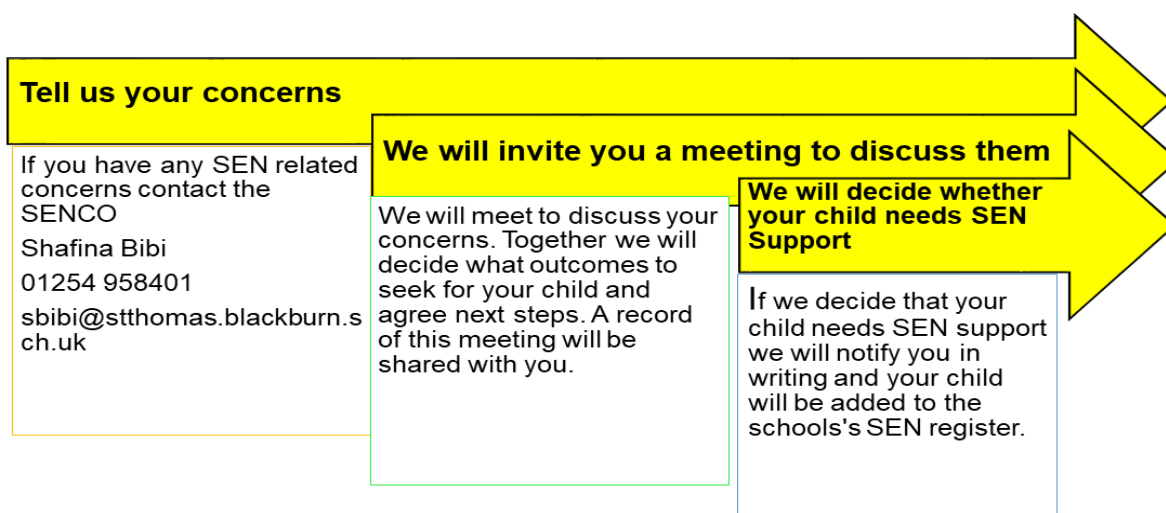
- Wheelchair accessible provision;
- Provision for medical needs, including staff training and first aid;
- Access to transport from the LA if threshold assessments met.

8. Supporting Pupils at Key Transition Points

St Thomas's Centre provides structured support at key transition points, including school entry, KS3–KS4 moves, reintegration, and progression to post-16 pathways. For pupils with EHCPs, Annual Reviews include transition planning.

Pupils attend induction sessions and work with a dedicated Pupil Support Officer for guidance and consistent support. Transition plans are personalised and developed with parents, schools, and external agencies, alongside careers guidance to prepare pupils for their next stage.

9. Who to contact if you need support



The school maintains strong systems to ensure all pupils receive appropriate support. Progress is monitored through half-termly reports, termly meetings, and Annual Reviews for pupils with EHCPs, allowing targets to be updated and emerging needs addressed promptly. Parents and carers are kept informed via phone, text, or email, and are encouraged to raise concerns with Pastoral Leaders, the SENCO, or senior staff. Pupil voice is promoted through the Pupil Council and other feedback mechanisms, giving pupils regular opportunities to share their views and contribute to school improvement.

10. The Role of the SENCO

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Coordinating SEND provision across the school;
- Attending meetings (EHCP reviews, multi-agency meetings);
- Undertaking SEND assessments and supporting interventions;
- Liaising with families, mainstream schools, local authority, and external agencies;
- Providing staff training and CPD;
- Supporting SEND guidance across the school community.

Contact details:

Shafina Bibi SENCO	01254 958401	sbibi@stthomas.blackburn.sch.uk
Jack Downes Pupil Support Officer	01254 958401	jdownes@stthomas.blackburn.sch.uk
Julie Barritt Pupil Support Officer	01254 958401	jbarritt@stthomas.blackburn.sch.uk

11. Staff Training and Expertise

Our staff are highly qualified and experienced in supporting pupils with complex needs and challenging behaviours. The school is committed to continuous professional development, ensuring all staff have the skills and knowledge to provide effective, evidence-based support. Recent whole-school training has included:

- SEND awareness and strategies
- Trauma-informed practice

- SEMH and nurture-based approaches
- Behaviour management and restorative practices
- Literacy and numeracy interventions

Staff also have access to external CPD tailored to SEND, including Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), Dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). Ongoing training ensures staff are confident and up to date in meeting the diverse needs of all pupils.

12. Anti-Bullying and Wellbeing Measures

St Thomas's Centre has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. All pupils are encouraged to speak to any member of staff throughout if they have concerns about bullying or other safeguarding issues. All reports are taken seriously, investigated promptly, and logged as safeguarding concerns in accordance with the school's [policies and procedures](#). The school operates a clear behaviour policy with rewards and sanctions, and pupils displaying concerns receive individual support and mentoring. Wellbeing is promoted through nurture-based support, mentoring, therapeutic interventions, and the curriculum, including PSHE, and enrichment activities.

13. Complaints Procedure

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise any concerns regarding their child's education or support. These can first be discussed informally with the class teacher or Pastoral Leader. If the issue is not resolved, it can be raised formally with the SENCO. Should concerns remain unresolved, a written complaint can be submitted following the school's [Complaints Policy](#).

14. Local Authority Support and useful Links

If you have questions about SEN or you need information and support we are here to help. Blackburn with [Darwen Local Offer](#) contains information what help is available locally. [SENDIASS](#) is our local special educational needs and disabilities information advice and support service advice.

15. Glossary

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: Provides assessment and treatment for children and young people with emotional, behavioural, or mental health difficulties.

CioC – Child in our Care: A child or young person who is looked after by the local authority.

EAL – English as an Additional Language: Refers to pupils whose first language is not English and who require support to develop proficiency.

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan: A legal document outlining the support a child or young person with SEND needs to achieve their outcomes.

EP – Educational Psychologist: A professional who assesses children's learning, behaviour, and social-emotional needs and advises on strategies to support them in school.

CPD – Continuing Professional Development: Ongoing training and learning for staff to maintain and improve their professional skills and knowledge.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Refers to children and young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities that require additional or different support.

SEN – Special Educational Needs: Learning difficulties or disabilities that require special educational provision.

SALT – Speech and Language Therapy: Therapy provided to support children with speech, language, and communication needs.

SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health: Refers to difficulties with emotional regulation, social interaction, or mental health that affect learning.

YJS – Youth Justice Service: A service that supports children and young people who have offended or are at risk of offending, helping them to rehabilitate and prevent reoffending.