

BEAM COUNTY PRIMARY SEND PROVISION OVERVIEW

Leadership of SEND: Embedding Social Justice through an Alternative Provision Offer

A Social Justice Approach to SEND Leadership

At our school, we recognise that true inclusion is about equity, not just equality. A socially just education system ensures that every child receives the right level of support to access high-quality learning, rather than assuming that the same provision works for all pupils. We do not see alternative provision as segregation but as a means of ensuring fairness—giving pupils what they need to make progress.

Our SEND leadership is rooted in the principles of social justice, ensuring that pupils with complex needs:

- Have access to a curriculum that meets their needs, rather than being excluded from learning due to barriers.
- Develop confidence and independence through a carefully designed balance of specialist support and mainstream integration.
- Experience meaningful participation in the school community, rather than mere physical presence in a mainstream classroom.

This aligns with Rawls' Theory of Justice (1971), which argues that fairness is about ensuring the most disadvantaged receive the greatest support. It also reflects the OECD's Equity Model (2018), which highlights the need for proportional resource allocation in education to close the gap for vulnerable learners.

Addressing Systemic Inequalities in Education

Research consistently highlights that children with SEND are at greater risk of educational disadvantage, exclusion, and long-term social inequality (Gillborn, 2018; EEF, 2022).

Our alternative provision offer directly addresses these systemic issues by:

- Reducing exclusion rates by providing a structured, supportive learning environment that meets pupils' individual needs.
- Ensuring social inclusion by integrating pupils into whole-school activities, such as productions, sports events, and trips, while also offering targeted and personalised interventions.
- Providing access to a broad and ambitious curriculum, ensuring pupils are not given a diluted version of learning but instead receive tailored, high-quality teaching that builds on their strengths.

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) emphasise the importance of education systems adapting to the needs of pupils, rather than expecting pupils to adapt to rigid systems. By embedding this principle into our SEND leadership, we ensure that our provision is built around pupils' needs, rather than forcing pupils to fit into a one-size-fits-all model.

A Commitment to Inclusive Excellence

Our approach ensures that alternative provision is not a lower-tier system but an equally valued and rigorous educational pathway.

This commitment to excellence is reflected in:

- Curriculum planning: Our alternative provision has the same high expectations as mainstream learning, with adaptations to ensure accessibility.
- Strong pastoral support: We prioritise emotional well-being, resilience-building, and self-advocacy, ensuring pupils leave school with the skills they need for independence.
- Staff expertise and professional development: We provide training for staff to ensure high-quality teaching and strategies. We work with other professionals and organisations to source specialist training and input, too.
- Focus on effective communication: We prioritise the development of children’s receptive and expressive language development. We recognise that communication is vital for social, emotional, and academic progress.

This aligns with the principles of culturally responsive and justice-oriented education (Ladson-Billings, 1995), which emphasises high expectations and meaningful inclusion rather than tokenistic integration.

Provision with Purpose

The rationale for our SEN Provision is a deliberate act of social justice, ensuring that pupils with complex needs are not marginalised within the education system. By designing an alternative provision offer that is aspirational, inclusive, and structured, we:

- Challenge systemic inequalities that limit the potential of SEND pupils.
- Promote inclusion that is meaningful, not performative.
- Ensure that every pupil has access to the education they deserve—one that is built around their strengths, needs, and aspirations.

This approach is not just about meeting statutory requirements; it is about leading with moral purpose to create a more just and equitable education system.

Our Provision Offer, Capacity and Legal Basis

We offer three internal specialist provisions: Atlantis (Pre-Formal Pathway), Artemis (Early Years Pre-Formal Pathway) and Apollo (Semi-Formal Pathway). Each class is designed, staffed and resourced to meet the needs of a maximum of 12 pupils.

It is important to note that Atlantis, Artemis and Apollo are internal provisions developed and funded by the school as part of our own SEND offer. They are not a Local Authority-commissioned or formally Additional Resourced Provision (ARP), and there is no agreement with the Local Authority that fixes a different number of places. As a maintained school, we retain responsibility for determining how many pupils can be safely and effectively accommodated within our own internally designed provision, based on the following legal duties:

- **Health and safety:** under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the school must ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff. Given the complex sensory, medical, communication and behavioural needs of pupils in these classes, safe staff-to-pupil ratios and adequate physical space are not optional extras but a legal requirement. A class of 12 reflects the ratio and space at which this can be safely maintained.
- **Evidenced staffing ratios:** this is not an abstract principle but is reflected in the staffing structure actually deployed. Atlantis and Artemis are each staffed by three to four adults for a maximum of 12 pupils — a ratio of approximately 1:3 to 1:4 — reflecting the intensive personal care, communication, sensory regulation and, in many cases, moving and handling support these pupils require. Apollo is staffed by two adults for a maximum of 12 pupils — a ratio of approximately 1:6 — reflecting its more semi-formal, skills-based curriculum and correspondingly different level of adult support. These ratios are the product of the school's own risk assessment and curriculum design for each pathway. Increasing pupil numbers without a proportionate increase in staffing would directly and quantifiably reduce the ratio the school has assessed as necessary, undermining the basis on which each provision has been judged safe.
- **Reasonable adjustments:** under the Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 13), the duty to make reasonable adjustments is not absolute. What is “reasonable” takes account of the resources, staffing, training and physical capacity available to the school. A defined capacity, set in advance and applied consistently, is a legitimate and anticipatory reasonable adjustment rather than a refusal to adjust.
- **Best endeavours and existing pupils' entitlements:** under section 19 and section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014, and paragraph 1.24 of the SEND Code of Practice (2015), the school must use its “best endeavours” to secure the special educational provision pupils require, and must ensure the provision specified in any Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is actually delivered. This duty is expressly qualified by what is reasonable given available resources. Admitting pupils beyond our designed capacity would dilute staffing ratios and risk the school failing to deliver the provision already specified in the EHC plans of pupils currently on roll — the capacity limit therefore protects, rather than avoids, this duty.
- **Suitability of premises:** the physical space allocated to each class has been assessed as suitable for a specific number of pupils, consistent with the school's duties regarding the suitability of premises.

These ratios, and the risk assessment underpinning them, are set out formally in the school's SEND Provision Staffing Risk Assessment and Deployment Policy, which is reviewed at least annually by the SENCo and the Senior Leadership Team lead for health and safety, and is available on request. This overview summarises that policy for parents, partners and the Local Authority; the underlying policy document is the formal record on which the school's capacity decisions are based.

On this basis, once a class reaches its capacity of 12 pupils, no further places can be offered from these provisions - including where a request is made by the Local Authority or by another school - until a place becomes available through a pupil leaving the provision.

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Atlantis Class: Pre-Formal Pathway

The mythical city of Atlantis has captured human imagination for centuries. By using this name for our class, we hope to inspire a sense of wonder, curiosity, and imagination through a play-based, pre-formal curriculum, which meets the developmental, sensory, and social needs of our pupils.

Learners on this curriculum pathway will usually have complex communication and interaction difficulties alongside complex social interaction difficulties, sensory difficulties, or behavioural needs. Pupils tend to be non-verbal or pre-verbal and need adult support with self-help, self-care, and self-regulation. Pupils are typically working below the level of the national curriculum and are not usually engaged in subject specific study.

As such, we pride ourselves on providing our pupils with a curriculum and classroom that allows them to feel safe, calm, and accepted. We nurture our pupils with activities and experiential opportunities that help them to engage with the people and environment around them, so that they can make sense of their world. Pupils will have access to assessments by both a speech and language therapist and an educational psychologist, in order to guide staff with personalised planning that recognises individual strengths and areas of development.

The primary intent of our Atlantis provision is to engage pupils with complex SEND, through meaningful, developmentally appropriate experiences that build on their interests and strengths and support their language and sensory needs. Adopting an approach that advocates developmentally appropriate practice does not mean making things easier for pupils. Rather, it means ensuring their experiences and targets are suited to their learning, development, and sensory needs and at the same time, are challenging and personalised enough to promote their progress and interest.

Pre-formal learning involves learning to regulate, to manage emotions, to develop relationships with others and to begin to understand language as a means of communication. We follow a thematic-based approach using the ethos of the Early Years – unique child; positive relationships; and enabling environments. Our approach is skills and context based and focuses on language, engagement, and experience. This allows us to support pupils to develop the essential pre-requisites for learning, such as beginning to look and attend, beginning to communicate, beginning to relate, beginning to play, and beginning to coordinate the body. We believe that establishing a secure foundation in this way supports our pupils to be able to access more formal learning when they are ready.

Within our Atlantis provision, we embrace Early Years pedagogy and strongly believe that a play-based approach is essential to supporting our pupils' development. As such, the prime areas of learning from within the EYFS (physical development, communication and language and personal, social, and emotional development) are core considerations. In addition, opportunities for sensory input, exposure and exploration are embedded throughout the day.

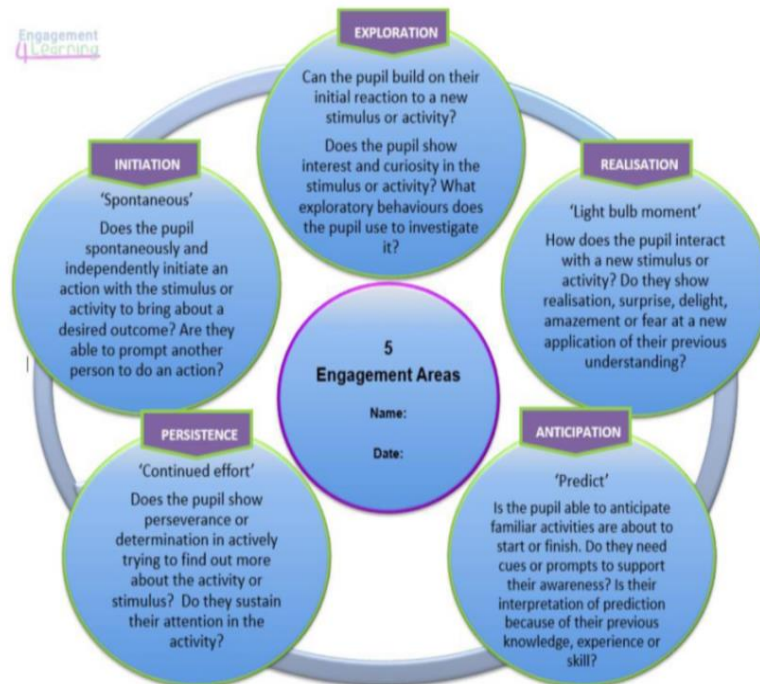
We offer a small, highly specialist team of staff. This allows us to provide an environment where safe and secure relationships can develop and where trust and a sense of belonging are key objectives. The needs of our pupils require staff to be attentive and attuned to their interactions and sensory needs. They get to know each pupil through observations and by forming strong links with parents and carers, so that they can guide and mediate progress in all areas of development.

Staff are trained to deliver targeted interventions such as Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, TEACCH approaches and Colourful Semantics, in addition to being proficient in first aid, Team Teach, Makaton, the Engagement Model and PIVATS.

The school day is anchored around routines which are consistent and predictable and where change can be supported by safe and familiar adults. We use a combination of tools to assist pupils' understanding including visual schedules, objects of reference, now and next boards, core boards, sound buttons, Widgit symbols, Makaton sign, spoken language, and written language. We adopt a total communication approach which involves finding and using the right combination of communication methods for each individual pupil. This may include the use of visual aids, signs, gestures, body language, and speech. We believe that this approach enables pupils to successfully make their needs known in whatever way they can.

Assessment outcomes will depend on pupils' levels of development but may include reference to the Engagement Model, EYFS or Pre-Key Stage Standards as part of our statutory assessment processes.

The Engagement Model uses a pupil-centred approach and complements the EYFS observational methods through regular observational assessment against five interrelated areas of engagement:



In addition to this, we use PIVATS assessments on an ongoing basis as our 'in school' assessment measure. PIVATS allow us to track the smaller steps of progress our pupils make and provides a tool to measure progress in areas such as personal and social development.

We recognise that pupils with complex and profound SEND may require a curriculum and classroom offer that is significantly adapted to that which can be provided within a mainstream setting. That is why we have developed a tailored approach that is specifically designed to meet their needs and to provide holistic learning and development opportunities at a developmentally accessible level.

Our Atlantis Provision is designed and resourced for a maximum of 12 pupils, staffed by three to four adults (a ratio of approximately 1:3 to 1:4), as set out in the school's SEND Provision Staffing Risk Assessment and Deployment Policy and for the reasons set out in 'Our Provision Offer, Capacity and

Legal Basis' above. Places are allocated from the current school roll following assessment, professional advice, and collaboration with Parents, SENCo and SLT. Parents of pupils not already attending Beam are not able to request a place within our Atlantis provision, and once the class reaches capacity no further places can be offered until one becomes available.

Atlantis Provision

	Homework	Spellings	Reading	Partnership with Parents/Carers
	Homework is set on a Friday and is personalised for each pupil. Information on the learning theme and story will be shared with parents.	Spellings are sent home weekly (using Widgit symbols to support) and may be more related to developing pupils' receptive and expressive vocabulary. Spelling/vocab checks take place on Tues/Weds.	Children read with staff daily. Books are changed weekly. Songs and music form a key part of language development. The development of receptive and expressive vocabulary is key. All pupils have a Lexia account which can be accessed from home. Online links to stories or songs explored in class are shared with parents.	Parents are fully informed about the provision offer and rationale for their child. Access to Tapestry (soon to move to Evidence for Learning). Access to input from Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist. Support with referrals including EHCP requests. Extended parent meeting offers each term. Meetings with provision staff and year group staff. Personalised reports. Lexia log-in sent home. Invited to parent CPD relevant to their child. Invited to parent coffee mornings. Support with transition including staff support for school visits if needed.

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Artemis Class: Early Years Pre-Formal Pathway

In Greek mythology, Artemis was closely associated with the wild, the moon, and the protection of the young. We have chosen this name for our Early Years pre-formal provision to reflect our role in nurturing and protecting our youngest pupils with complex needs as they take their very first steps into school life.

Artemis mirrors the ethos, curriculum model and pedagogical approach of our Atlantis provision, but is designed specifically for children of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age. Learners on this pathway will usually have complex communication and interaction difficulties alongside complex social interaction difficulties, sensory difficulties, or behavioural needs, and tend to be non-verbal or pre-verbal. Pupils typically need a high level of adult support with self-help, self-care, and self-regulation, and are not yet engaged in subject-specific study.

As our youngest and often most vulnerable pupils, children in Artemis benefit from an environment that is calm, predictable, and rich in sensory and communication opportunities. Pupils will have access to assessments by both a speech and language therapist and an educational psychologist, in order to guide staff with personalised planning that recognises individual strengths and areas of development, and we work closely with health visitors, portage services and other early years professionals to ensure a joined-up approach from the earliest possible point.

The primary intent of our Artemis provision is to engage pupils with complex SEND, through meaningful, developmentally appropriate experiences that build on their interests and strengths and support their language and sensory needs from the very start of their educational journey. As with Atlantis, developmentally appropriate practice does not mean making things easier for pupils; it means ensuring their experiences and targets are suited to their learning, development, and sensory needs, while remaining challenging and personalised enough to promote progress and interest.

Pre-formal learning in Artemis involves learning to regulate, to manage emotions, to develop relationships with others and to begin to understand language as a means of communication. We follow a thematic-based approach rooted firmly in the EYFS ethos of the unique child, positive relationships, and enabling environments, with a particular focus on the three prime areas of learning: communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development. This allows us to support pupils to develop the essential pre-requisites for learning, such as beginning to look and attend, beginning to communicate, beginning to relate, beginning to play, and beginning to coordinate the body.

We offer a small, highly specialist team of staff trained to work with our youngest children, allowing safe and secure relationships to develop and a strong sense of trust and belonging. Staff are trained to deliver targeted interventions such as Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, TEACCH approaches and Colourful Semantics, in addition to being proficient in first aid, Team Teach, Makaton, the Engagement Model and PIVATS.

The school day is anchored around consistent, predictable routines, supported by familiar adults. We use a total communication approach, drawing on visual schedules, objects of reference, now and next boards, core boards, sound buttons, Widgit symbols, Makaton sign, spoken language, and written language, so that pupils can make their needs known in whatever way they can.

Assessment outcomes will depend on pupils' levels of development but may include reference to the Engagement Model, EYFS Development Matters and, as pupils approach the end of the EYFS, the EYFS Profile, alongside PIVATS as our ongoing 'in school' assessment measure. We work closely with families and, where relevant, Reception or Atlantis staff to plan a well-supported transition as pupils move on from Artemis.

Our Artemis Provision is designed and resourced for a maximum of 12 pupils, staffed by three to four adults (a ratio of approximately 1:3 to 1:4), as set out in the school's SEND Provision Staffing Risk Assessment and Deployment Policy and for the reasons set out in 'Our Provision Offer, Capacity and Legal Basis' above. Places are allocated from the current school roll following assessment, professional advice, and collaboration with Parents, SENCo and SLT. Parents of pupils not already attending Beam are not able to request a place within our Artemis provision, and once the class reaches capacity no further places can be offered until one becomes available.

Artemis Provision

	Homework	Spellings	Reading	Partnership with Parents/Carers
	Homework is set on a Friday and is personalised for each pupil. Information on the learning theme and story will be shared with parents.	Spellings/early phonics activities are sent home weekly (using Widgit symbols to support) and focus on developing pupils' receptive and expressive vocabulary.	Children read with staff daily. Books are changed weekly. Songs and music form a key part of early language development. All pupils have a Lexia account which can be accessed from home. Online links to stories or songs explored in class are shared with parents.	Parents are fully informed about the provision offer and rationale for their child. Access to Tapestry (soon to move to Evidence for Learning). Access to input from Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist. Support with referrals including EHCP requests. Extended parent meeting offers each term. Meetings with provision staff and year group staff. Personalised reports. Lexia log-in sent home. Invited to parent CPD relevant to their child. Invited to parent coffee mornings. Support with transition, including staff support for school visits and settling-in sessions.

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Apollo Class: Semi-Formal Pathway

The name 'Apollo' is derived from Greek mythology, where Apollo was a god associated with music, arts, knowledge, and healing. By choosing this name, we draw inspiration from the qualities and attributes of Apollo and recognise the unique potential and abilities of the pupils within this class. Apollo was often seen as a symbol of enlightenment and knowledge, who represents hope and growth. The name Apollo therefore signifies our commitment to providing a nurturing and intellectually stimulating environment, wherein our pupils can progress, develop new skills, and overcome challenges.

Learners on this curriculum pathway will usually have severe learning difficulties with co-occurring speech, language and communication needs, social communication difficulties or other sensory impairments. Pupils are usually working at a pre-key stage level and may need support with their interpersonal skills, self-help, language and communication, as well as with their learning.

The primary intent of our Apollo provision is to offer learning opportunities and a learning environment that meets the unique needs and abilities of each pupil, with an approach that focuses on developing the practical application of skills and knowledge. Our provision centres around the development of student voice and choice, fostering positive social and communication skills and supporting the development of receptive and expressive language and comprehension. Pupils will have access to assessments by both a speech and language therapist and an educational psychologist, in order to guide staff with personalised planning that recognises individual strengths and areas of development.

Semi-formal learning requires a high level of adult support and a highly adapted and personalised curriculum offer. A semi-formal pathway provides pupils with experiences and opportunities that promote the development of functional skills, communication, emotional well-being, confidence, and independence. At the heart of our approach is the awareness that our pupils learn differently, so whilst we accept the desirability of providing a broad and balanced curriculum, it must be wholly appropriate to the needs of each learner. Pupils are developing emergent skills and require personalised input but may also be able to access aspects of the National Curriculum (with adaptations and support).

Within our Apollo provision we follow a thematic-based approach using the ethos of the Early Years – unique child; positive relationships; and enabling environments. Our curriculum is developmental and not specifically linked to age or key stage. Learning is skills, knowledge and context based and provides pupils with language rich opportunities that continually foster the development of interpersonal skills, communication, and independence. Carefully planned continuous provision further provides pupils with the freedom to explore and become independent in making choices and generalising their learning. Where pupils are able to access content from the early stages of the National Curriculum they are supported to do so, taking account of their individual learning needs, styles, and preferences.

Pupils within our Apollo provision may also access individual support in the form of speech and language therapy, Lego Therapy, Colourful Semantics, Lexia, Nurture Group sessions or Social Skills groups. Staff are trained to deliver targeted interventions such as Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, TEACCH approaches, Lego Therapy and Colourful Semantics, in addition to being proficient in first aid, Team Teach, Makaton, and PIVATS.

We have close working partnerships with parents, professionals, and school subject leads, to ensure that our approach considers pupils' development holistically. We strongly believe that taking a holistic approach is necessary for our pupils to reach their full potential and to become happy, satisfied, and independent young people. Pupils are supported to make academic progress and are also supported to be able to express their emotions, develop friendships, take care of their bodies and to foster a lifelong love of learning. Developing the use of functional expressive communication is a key objective with vocabulary development underpinning all aspects of the provision.

Assessment outcomes will typically reference Pre-Key Stage Standards as part of our statutory assessment. In addition to this, we use PIVATS assessments on an ongoing basis as our 'in school' assessment measure. PIVATS allow us to track the smaller steps of progress our pupils make and provides a tool to measure progress in areas such as personal and social development.

We recognise that pupils who have severe learning difficulties and other developmental or sensory challenges will require a high level of additional support and highly adapted teaching to reach their full potential in all areas of their development. That's why we have developed a tailored approach specifically designed to meet the needs of these pupils and support them on their educational journey.

Our Apollo Provision is designed and resourced for a maximum of 12 pupils, staffed by two adults (a ratio of approximately 1:6), as set out in the school's SEND Provision Staffing Risk Assessment and Deployment Policy and for the reasons set out in 'Our Provision Offer, Capacity and Legal Basis' above. Places are allocated from the current school roll following assessment, professional advice, and collaboration with Parents, SENCo and SLT. Parents of pupils not already attending Beam are not able to request a place within our Apollo provision, and once the class reaches capacity no further places can be offered until one becomes available.

Apollo Provision

	Homework	Spellings	Reading	Partnership with Parents/Carers
	Homework is sent home every Friday and is collected the following Tuesday. Homework usually includes literacy, maths, and spellings.	Spellings are in line with pupils' phonics groups/levels and may be personalised per pupil. Widgit symbols may be used to support understanding. Spelling tests take place weekly on Weds–Fri.	Children read with staff daily. Books are changed weekly. Songs and music are utilised to support language development. The development of receptive and expressive vocabulary is key alongside comprehension and questioning. Daily access to Colourful Semantics. All pupils have a Lexia account which can be accessed from home.	Parents are fully informed about the provision offer and rationale for their child. Access to Tapestry (soon to move to Evidence for Learning). Access to input from Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist. Support with referrals including EHCP requests. Extended parent meeting offers each term. Meetings with provision staff and year group staff. Personalised reports. Lexia log-in sent home. Invited to parent CPD relevant to their child. Invited to parent coffee mornings. Support with transition including staff support for school visits if needed.