

St. John's
SCHOOL



LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

Those responsible:

Mrs P Lines – Head of Learning Support (S.E.N.C.O.)

Mrs F Armour – Headteacher

Mr M Butler – Deputy Headteacher

Mrs H Minto – Deputy Headteacher

To be reviewed regularly

Reviewed 09/2008

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

At St John's we aim to provide our children with the opportunity to fully develop their abilities and skills in all areas of the curriculum. We aim to develop an effective and positive partnership between home and school and to encourage a sense of worth in everybody involved in the school community.

What is Learning Support?

Learning Support refers to any circumstances resulting in an individual pupil requiring additional or alternative provision in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered to children within the same year group. This may include children with physical difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, sensory impairment or learning difficulties.

The Learning Support Department has always viewed itself in a more broader perspective as a learning advice department. For example, gifted pupils may need specialist support as well as their less academically gifted peers. Also, there are several pupils at St John's School who do not speak English at home. A list of these pupils is kept on the Learning Support register. In the lower part of the school, these pupils may be accommodated by having a Teacher Assistant in the classroom and having up to 2 x 30 minute sessions with a Learning Support Teacher per week. In the Senior School pupils may receive Learning Support or Study Skills if required.

Objectives

In order to provide effective education for the children with Learning Support needs, the school will:

- Acknowledge the responsibility of each member of staff to consider the accessibility of the curriculum for all children and its relevance so that each child can reach his/her potential.
- Provide opportunities for Form Teachers to discuss pupils with Learning Support with the Head of Learning Support.
- Operate a system of early identification and assessment of children who experience difficulties in accessing the curriculum.
- Ensure resources are available to cater for the needs of children, e.g. Alpha to Omega, etc.
- Use a system of monitoring progress and recording planning decisions for children with Learning Support needs.
- Liaise with outside agencies for help or advice.
- Seek the co-operation of parents in meeting the needs of children, by involving them in regular discussions and informing them of their child's progress.
- Ensure full entitlement and access for pupils with Learning Support needs to high quality education within a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum (including access to the National Curriculum) so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
- Educate pupils with Learning Support needs wherever possible, alongside their peers within the normal curriculum of mainstream schools after giving due consideration to the appropriate wishes of their parents and the necessity to meet individual needs.
- Stimulate and or maintain pupil curiosity, interest and enjoyment in their education.

- Meet the needs of all pupils who have Learning Support needs by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of all available resources.

Identification and Assessment of children with Learning Support needs will arise from and be based upon –

- Teacher's concern and judgement based on the observation of the child's performance.
- The child's attainment in assessments related to core subjects in comparison to the attainment of the majority of children of his/her age.
- The results in any other tests given to the child, e.g. N.F.E.R., reading tests, National Curriculum tests, etc.
- The child's health or medical problems.
- Any social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Any parental concern.

Pupils who are thought to have Learning Support needs are identified and assessed as early and thoroughly as is possible and necessary. Referral can come from a multitude of sources, e.g.

- Subject teacher's request
- Pupil self-request
- Parental request
- Management request
- D.H.A. or G.P. request
- Following information from a previous school (e.g. primary school)
- Following blanket testing of Year 7 pupils
- Following diagnostic tests
- Following individual interviews
- Following a Learning Support teacher tracking and observing individual pupils in lessons

If a child is causing concern the Head of Learning Support should be informed and the concern noted. The Head of Learning Support will then advise the KS1 or KS2 Co-ordinator to discuss their concerns with the child's parents and to gain permission to investigate the concern further. (Please note, in the Senior School it is the Head of Learning Support who liaises with the parents.) Once permission has been given, the Head of Learning Support will initiate some internal assessments and feedback to the KS1 or KS2 Co-ordinator, who will then feedback to the child's parents. The feedback could take any of the following forms –

- Referral to an outside agency, eg G.P., Educational Psychologist, Optometrist, etc.
- Offer of Learning Support provision within the school
- Continue Learning Support
- Monitor closely
- Retest at a later date

During Year 7, pupils are given various subject tests and sit the CAT 3 (Cognitive Abilities Test). Identification of pupils needing support will be partly based on the results of these tests. Learning Support staff spend a short time observing Year 7 classes before decisions are made on the kind of support to be provided. Specific requests for support are also considered from various sources including parents, teachers, etc. Some pupils may personally request support and the school endeavours to assess, identify and intervene as far as is possible within the limits of the resources.

Regular meetings between all staff and the Head of Learning Support ensure discussion takes place regarding children who are already targeted as having Learning Support needs and any others who are causing concern.

Early identification, assessment and provision for any pupil with Learning Support needs is very important for the following reasons:

- It can minimise the difficulties that can be encountered when intervention and provision occur.
- It can maximise the likely positive response of the child.
- It can allow for a temporary learning difficulty to be overcome and for future learning to be unaffected.
- If the child's learning difficulty prove less transient when addressed by the School alone, the external agencies can be brought in earlier and very likely with more success.

In the event that a parent does not wish to pursue a school concern or follow up a referral or does not want Learning Support provision, a disclaimer will be issued stating that fact, which the parents will be required to sign. A copy of the signed disclaimer will be kept in the pupil's file.

Arrangements for co-ordinating provision for pupils with Learning Support needs

The Learning Support Department works closely with the senior managers of the School Curriculum and timetable to ensure that:

- It is balanced, i.e. it allows for and facilitates adequate development in each curricular and skill area.
- It allows for differentiation according to individual needs.
- It offers equality of opportunity and access to the different curricular and skills areas.

This entitlement curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to the children's needs, both present and future and that it is perceived as such by the children themselves and their parents.

The Department supports a multi-disciplinary approach to maximise the educational provision for children with Learning Support needs. Many agencies and support services are able to help identify, assess and provide support for pupils. Such agencies and support services include a wide variety of specialist teachers and other professionals.

All staff support pupils in mainstream lessons as often as is possible and/or appropriate. Direct support is not always possible and so we tailor class-work and homework for pupils with Learning Support needs. Close liaison between subject teachers and the Learning Support staff is necessary. Some pupils will receive support in the classroom and a small number will be withdrawn for more individual help.

Educational provision is achieved through full integration into the mainstream school. Sensitive and creative adaptation of the curriculum may be required in order to match what is taught and how it is taught to the children's aptitudes and abilities. This can be done by adopting appropriate teaching methods and resources which are sensitive to the expected pace of learning. We consider that one of our key roles is to raise awareness of staff in these issues and to support them to 'deliver' the Curriculum to maximum effect.

Learning Support staff can offer advice and training opportunities to subject teachers and other staff on employing teaching methods and resources that allow all pupils (irrespective of their gender, ethnic origin, academic ability, Learning Support needs, etc.) to have equal access to the curriculum and to experience success and enjoyment in their work.

Lessons are conducted in a secure, supportive and disciplined manner. The pupils and the staff interact in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect. The Learning Support staff believe that good learning takes place most effectively in the context of a caring relationship and that good teacher/pupil relationships foster trust and promote self-reliance and initiative.

Learning Support Framework

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten 1, children work for half an hour per week in small groups. During Michaelmas Term, the Learning Support teacher aids the Form Teacher in assessing the children. During Lent Term, small groups are determined, using the initial assessments. The teaching includes acquisition of spoken language and an understanding of the sounds of the alphabet.

In Kindergarten 2, children work for 2 x 30 minute sessions in a group that has no more than 4 pupils. Using the teacher records from Kindergarten 1, together with observation and assessment, the Form Teacher decides which children need further help in basic skills such as letter formation, reinforcing sounds of the alphabet and acquisition of spoken language.

In Kindergarten 3 and 4, children work for 2 x 30 minute sessions per week. The Form Teacher determines which children need more individual help with reading. Reinforcement of letter sounds and basic spelling of key words may also be necessary.

Junior Department

In the Juniors, children work for 2 x 30 minute sessions per week. The Form Teachers determine which children are not reading as fluently as expected at this stage in their development and are

experiencing punctuation and spelling difficulties as identified by test marks. Using this as a guide, the Form Teacher determines who would benefit from small group tuition. Furthermore, children who may have a report from an Educational Psychologist will also be considered for extra tuition in small groups if their needs are not being addressed with outside agencies.

Senior Department

We make every effort to achieve maximum integration of pupils with Learning Support needs and their peers, while meeting pupils' individual needs. Pupils are taught mainly in mixed ability groups. As they progress through the school, they may be placed in sets according to their ability in a specific subject area. Teachers provide learning opportunities for all children within these different learning environments and provide materials appropriate to pupils' interest and abilities. This ensures that all pupils (including those with Learning Support needs) have a full access to our curriculum.

In the Senior Department, testing in Mathematics, English and Non-Verbal reasoning is undertaken at entry to U3 (Year 7) and by any new pupils joining the school. Pupils in particular with an Educational Psychologist's report may receive extra support. Other circumstances may also prevail so as to warrant withdrawal for more individual help. Currently, pupils in Upper 3, Lower 4 and Upper 4 are withdrawn from Spanish for one hour a week. At present there is also provision for pupils following the G.C.S.E. course to have extra support or private study time instead of studying a language. Some pupils also choose a Study Skills option, rather than following a G.C.S.E course.

Record Keeping

Every child who is on the Learning Support register will have an individual record held by the Head of Learning Support.

All pupils receiving Learning Support will have an Individual Education Plan highlighting their current learning objectives. These are completed at the beginning of an academic year and updated and reviewed termly by the Learning Support teachers. Opportunities for further discussion and review are held at Parent/Teacher evenings during the year. Written reports detailing progress in all subjects, including Learning Support, are undertaken in Michaelmas and Trinity terms.

Pupils and parents are kept regularly informed by a variety of means, e.g. personal contact, reports, annual reviews and the formation and implementation of Individual Education Plans.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

He/She has responsibility for the day to day management of all aspects of the school's work, including the provision for children with Learning Support needs.

Head of Learning Support

He/She has responsibility for:

- The day to day operation of the school's Learning Support policy.
- Liaising with and advising other teachers.
- Provision of a programme for children with Learning Support needs.
- Maintaining the school's Learning Support register and overseeing the records on all pupils with Learning Support needs.
- Ensuring that subject staff are fully informed as to the Learning Support needs of any pupils in their charge.
- Ensuring that our pupils' Learning Support needs are known to other schools or colleges to which they may transfer.

- Liaising with outside agencies and support services, e.g. Educational Psychology Service, Child Guidance Services, Student Support Service, Literacy Support Service, Advice and Inspection Unit, Special Educational Needs Assessment Service, Specialist Careers Officers, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Advisers with an expertise in using Information Technology to enhance the provision for Special Educational Needs.
- Liaising with parents of children with Learning Support needs.
- Contributing to staff training.

P Lines

Head of Learning Support September 2008