

Solihull Junior School

Learning Support Policy

Introduction

This school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all children. The National Curriculum is our starting point for planning that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. When planning, teachers set suitable learning challenges and respond to children's diverse learning needs. A minority of children have particular learning and assessment requirements that could create barriers to moving towards their potential.

These requirements are likely to arise as a consequence of a child having specific learning difficulties. Teachers take account of these requirements and make provision, where necessary, to support individuals or groups of children and thus enable them to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities.

Children may have specific learning difficulties either throughout, or at any time during, their school career. This policy ensures that curriculum planning and assessment for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities takes account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the child.

Central to the policy implemented is the recognition that very able and highly intelligent pupils may suffer from weaknesses or difficulties in particular areas: we aim to help such pupils realise their true potential.

The service provided is an integral part of the curriculum: it supports learning and the acquisition of skills in all subject areas which involve literacy.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are:

- to create an environment that meets the specific individual needs of each child;
- to ensure that the specific needs of children are identified, assessed and provided for;
- to make clear the expectations of all partners in the process;
- to identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for children's specific needs;
- to enable all children to have full access to all elements of the school curriculum.

Educational Inclusion

Through appropriate curricular provision, we respect the fact that children:

- have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations;
- require different strategies for learning;
- acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates;

- need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences.

Teachers respond to children's needs by:

- providing support for children who need help with communication, language and literacy;
- planning to develop children's understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences;
- planning for children's full participation in learning, and in physical and practical activities;
- helping children to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely;
- helping individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma or stress, and to take part in effective learning.

Specific Learning Difficulties

Children with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities have specific needs that call for special provision to be made. All children may experience specific learning difficulties at some time in their lives.

In our school the functions of the Learning Support Department are:

- To ensure all pupils who have any kind of learning difficulty, or who need revision of a particular skill, are identified at the earliest possible stage.
- To provide extra tuition and support for pupils who have been identified as having a learning difficulty.
- To monitor the progress of all pupils receiving extra tuition.
- To ensure that tutors, form teachers and parents are aware of the pupil's progress.
- To ensure that all members of staff are fully aware of the learning difficulties of the pupils they teach.
- To provide advice to staff about appropriate teaching strategies across the curriculum in respect of pupils with difficulties.
- To encourage staff to participate in the monitoring of individual pupil's progress.
- To communicate with outside agencies, such as Educational Psychologists, and to provide information for such agencies to assess pupils as appropriate.
- To monitor and arrange requests to Examination Boards for special consideration or extra time to be made available.

Assessment and support

Early identification is vital. The class teacher informs the Head of the Junior School and the parents at the earliest opportunity to alert them to concerns and enlist their active help and participation.

The class teacher assesses and monitors the children's progress in line with existing school practices.

At the beginning of each academic year all children in the Junior School are assessed in Reading using a word recognition test, and in Spelling using the BSTS programme. (We have recently purchased the NFER Nelson Spelling and Reading tests which will replace the current diagnostic tests used.) This screening highlights any difficulties of which the school may have been unaware. Children performing below their chronological age are, therefore, identified and monitored closely.

We monitor the NFER scores closely, noting any discrepancies that might indicate an underlying problem and which might be causing underachievement.

Class teachers may have their own concerns about individual children and these are also brought to the attention of the Head of the Junior School and the Learning Support teacher. The teacher responsible for Learning Support will write individually to parents explaining the procedure for extra help if needed.

We are constantly looking at new initiatives and resources for identifying those who require intervention. We are currently investigating the LASS programme used in the senior school to see if it is appropriate to our needs. We have also recently purchased the York screening tests for levelling and assessing Reading comprehension.

The identified children are withdrawn from one lesson per week to work in small groups with the Learning Support teacher. These lessons are delivered in a multi-sensory way, best suited to those with Dyslexia. These support sessions concentrate on each individual's specific learning difficulties which may include spelling patterns, spelling strategies, irregular spellings, proof-reading and mnemonics. In J3 and J4, comprehension skills become the main focus for Learning Support, in preparation for the 11+.

A very small number of children in J3 and J4, who are identified with having specific learning problems in reading, follow the Toe –by-Toe programme on a daily basis with an experienced teacher or practitioner.

The Learning Support teacher works closely with parents and teachers to plan an appropriate programme of intervention and support.

The Director of Learning Support may offer, in consultation with the parents, a brief assessment to establish whether further intervention is needed.

If further intervention is deemed necessary the Director of Learning Support will advise on a suitable agency.

Access to the Curriculum

All children have an entitlement to a broad and balanced, relevant curriculum, which is differentiated to enable children to:

- understand the relevance and purpose of learning activities;
- experience levels of understanding and rates of progress that bring feelings of success and achievement.

Teachers use a range of strategies to meet children's specific needs. Lessons have clear learning objectives; we differentiate work appropriately, and we use assessment to inform the next stage of learning.

Children who have an Educational Psychologist report are given an Individual Educational Plan.

Pupil Profiles, which employ a small-steps approach, feature significantly in the provision that we make in the school. By breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded measurable and achievable targets, we ensure that children experience success.

Partnership with Parents

At all stages of the learning support process, the school keeps parents fully informed and involved. We take account of the wishes, feelings and knowledge of parents at all stages. We encourage parents to make an active contribution to their child's education.

We have regular meetings to share the progress of learning support children with their parents. We inform the parents of any outside intervention, and we share the process of decision-making by providing clear information relating to the education of children with special learning difficulties.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Director of Learning Support monitors the movement of children within the system in school. The Director of Learning Support and the Junior School Learning Support co-ordinator provide staff and Head of the Junior School with regular summaries of the impact of the policy on the practice of the school.

This policy is part of a whole school policy.

Lindsay Brough
Head of the Junior School

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