



St John's
School Billericay

Learning Support Policy

Date: July 2024
Those Responsible: Mrs P Lines – Head of Learning Support (SENCo)
Mr A Angeli - Headteacher
Mrs A Fleming - Deputy Headteacher

To be reviewed: Annually – Next review July 2025

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.

The Learning Support department understands its duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice related to pupils with special educational needs/disabilities and this policy details the reasonable adjustments that we make for them.

What is Learning Support?

Learning Support refers to any circumstances resulting in an individual pupil requiring additional or alternative provision 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 definition of 'special educational needs' in the Children and Families Act 2014 includes pupils with significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of his/her age or a disability which means that a pupil cannot make full use of the general educational facilities provided for pupils of their age in mainstream state schools.

These pupils may be accommodated by having additional support in lessons from a teacher, support from a Learning Support Assistant (L.S.A.) in the classroom, by having group sessions with a Learning Support Teacher, by receiving one-to-one private tuition with a Specialist Teacher or by having group sessions with a Learning Support Assistant (L.S.A.) in the Learning Enhancement Centre (L.E.C.).

Objectives

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.
- 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 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, through 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 most children of his/her age.
- The results in any other tests given to the child, e.g., N.F.E.R., reading tests, Maths and English standardised tests, CAT 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
- Senior Leadership Team request
- G.P. request
- Following information provided from a previous school.
- Following CAT4 testing of U3 and U4 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. For pupils in the Lower School, the Head of Learning Support will then advise the member of staff to fill in a referral form (currently held by the KG (KS1) and Junior (KS2) Co-ordinators). The completed form is then passed to the relevant Co-ordinator who will then investigate the concern through observations, work scrutiny, report, and test analysis, etc. They will also discuss their concerns with the child's parents and seek to gain permission to investigate the concern further if deemed necessary. (Please note, in the Senior School it is the Head of Learning Support who liaises with the referring staff and parents.) Once permission has been given, the Head of Learning Support will initiate some internal assessments and feedback to the KG or Junior 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, e.g., G.P., Educational Psychologist, Optometrist, etc.
- Offer of Learning Support provision within the school
- Continue Learning Support
- Further monitoring.
- Repeat of the testing in either 6 months or 12 months' time

During U3, pupils are given various subject tests and sit the CAT4 (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 U3 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 proves less transient when addressed by the school alone, the external agencies can be brought in earlier and very likely with more success.

If a parent does not wish to pursue a school concern or follow up a referral or does not want Learning Support provision, the parents will need to put that in writing/email. A copy will be kept in the pupil's file and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (D.S.L.) will be informed.

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

The Learning Support Department works closely with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the timetable:

- Is balanced, i.e., it allows for and facilitates adequate development in each curricular and skill area.
- Allows for differentiation according to individual needs.
- 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 can 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 classwork 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 group help. The plans and Schemes of Work will consider the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils.

The plans do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Educational provision is achieved through full integration into the mainstream school. Teachers have inclusive teaching practices. Sensitive and creative adaptation of the curriculum may be required to match what is taught and how it is taught to the children's aptitudes and abilities. They ensure that adjustments are made to procedures and policies, so far as reasonable, to ensure pupils with disabilities, including Learning Support needs are not put at a substantial disadvantage. 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 in the Department is to raise awareness for staff 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 Pre-Reception and Reception, support can be across curriculum areas and feature different pupils, depending on the individual needs. The Form Teacher decides which children need further help in basic skills such as letter formation, reinforcing sounds of the alphabet, number work and acquisition of spoken language skills.

In Lower and Upper Kindergarten, children work for 2 x 30-minute sessions per week in a group with a Learning Support Teacher. The Form Teacher determines which children need more individual help with reading. Reinforcement of letter sounds, sentence construction and spelling of high frequency words may also be necessary. Pupils will have a Personalised Plan with individual targets, which is reviewed termly.

Junior Department

In the Juniors, children work for 2 x 30-minute sessions per week in a group with a Learning Support Teacher. 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 prioritised. Pupils will have a Personalised Plan with individual targets which is reviewed termly.

Senior Department

We make every effort to achieve maximum integration of pupils with Learning Support needs with 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 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 with an Educational Psychologist's report may receive extra support. Other circumstances may also prevail to warrant withdrawal for more help. Currently, pupils in Upper 3, Lower 4 and Upper 4 are withdrawn from French and/or Spanish for two hours/four hours a week. Pupils will work in a group with a Learning Support Teacher. They will have a Personalised Plan with individual targets which is reviewed termly. At present there is also provision (Enhanced Core/E Core) for pupils following G.C.S.E. courses to have extra support in the core subjects of English and Maths, instead of taking another option.

Learning Enhancement Centre (L.E.C.)

The Learning Support Department is based in the L.E.C. It is a suite of three rooms, purely devoted to one-to-one or small group support. It consists of 2 classrooms and the Learning Support office. Please note – due to timetabling constraints, Learning Support lessons also take place in other classrooms throughout the school.

Modern Foreign Languages

All Senior pupils can learn both French and Spanish in our Modern Foreign Languages department. However, pupils with Learning Support needs can continue with both languages, take one language, or receive Learning Support and follow a scheme of work based on their needs. A Learning Support Assistant or Learning Support Teacher will be available to provide this support and the Head of Learning Support oversees the pupils' programmes.

One-to-One Tuition

Catherine Wright, a highly experienced and qualified specialist teacher, visits the L.E.C. once a week. She offers individualised, one-to-one tuition on our site, which supports pupils' educational psychologist or specialist teacher reports.

Toni Packer, a specialist teacher, and assessor, also visits the L.E.C. regularly. She conducts educational assessments for pupils and assesses our G.C.S.E. pupils for examination access arrangements.

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 a Personalised 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. Copies are provided for staff on the shared area of the network. 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 termly.

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 Personalised Plans.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

He 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

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 of 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.
- Liaising with parents of children with Learning Support needs.
- Contributing to staff training.
- Managing the Learning Support Assistants across the school

P Lines

Head of Learning Support

July 2024