



University College School Junior Branch

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

September 2010
(Original 2005, updated 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)

CONTENTS

- 1. Aims and Ethos**
- 2. Context**
- 3. The department**
- 4. Identification of learning difficulties**
- 5. Provision for support**
- 6. Review and evaluation**
- 7. Communication with teaching and pastoral staff**
- 8. Responsibilities of teaching and pastoral staff**
- 9. Communication with parents**
- 10. Development plans**
- 11. Complaints and appeals**

1. AIMS AND ETHOS

The primary aim of the Learning Support Department is to support the school in its core purpose of encouraging each pupil to achieve the highest standards possible and the greatest fulfillment from his/her particular academic skills and to focus also on the general educational principles which will support wider learning. The school respects the individuality of each pupil and is committed to helping pupils overcome any barriers to learning that they may encounter.

The Learning Support Department aims to identify and support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and to assess, record, monitor and evaluate their progress

to ensure that it is comparable to other pupils of the same age and ability. We believe that this involves a proactive partnership between learning support staff, other teaching and pastoral staff, parents, pupils and other professionals. We offer assessment, advice and individual teaching for pupils experiencing difficulties. Intervention is planned and structured to meet individual need. Consultation with parents and pupils forms an important part of this process.

The Learning Support Department aims to foster the habits and attitudes that best support learning and to develop the skills which allow pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding confidently. We believe that the ability to question and make connections and to review and assess one's own progress are essential skills for all Learning Support pupils.

The legal framework within which additional assistance is provided is set out in the SEN Code of Practice in the Education Act 1996 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The SEN Code of Practice states that "A pupil has a learning difficulty if he or she a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of the same age b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the pupil from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for pupils of the same age."

Discrimination under the 2005 act can take place in two ways: a) treating a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably for a reason relating to his or her disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification or b) failing to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils or prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their non-disabled peers without justification. This is known as the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

2. CONTEXT

The Junior school selects pupils for entry on the basis of their academic ability and breadth of interest. 48 boys enter at 7+ and 12 at 8+ each year. All applicants are interviewed in the Autumn term before sitting the entrance exam in January. Approximately 60 boys transfer from the Junior branch to the Senior School each year. They are not required to sit a qualifying examination. Any concern about a boy's ability to cope with the academic requirements of the Senior School will be discussed with the pupil's parents by the Junior School headmaster while the boy is in Year 5.

There are currently 19 (Sept 2010) pupils in the school who are on the Learning Support Register. The register comprises those pupils with an identified Learning Difficulty and those who are receiving individual support in school from the Learning Support Coordinator (**LSCo**). This includes pupils with indicators associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficits and some medical needs that impact on learning.

There are currently no pupils in the school with a **Statement of Special Educational Need**. However, when we have such pupils, the procedures outlined in the SEN Code of Practice are followed. An IEP in the form of a shared target sheet will be drawn up and reviews arranged regularly with outside agencies, medical and teaching staff and parents. All specific requirements will be met, an annual review held and contact maintained with the issuing borough for the duration of the statement.

3. THE LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

Staffing and responsibilities

The person responsible for coordinating the provision of Learning Support in the three schools, which form the UCS foundation, is Robyn Spencer, the **Director of Learning Support** (DLS). She has weekly meetings with the **Learning Support Coordinator** (LSco), Sarah Miller, at the Junior Branch. Sarah Miller reports to the DLS and Sharon Martin (Deputy Head Pastoral) with the Headmaster taking overall responsibility.

The responsibilities of the LSco in the Junior Branch are as follows:

- Arranging the screening of all new pupils
- Drawing up and updating a Learning Support Register (LSR)
- Coordinating provision for pupils on the LSR
- Maintaining the records of pupils on the LSR
- Conducting reviews of pupils on the LSR
- Liaising with and advising the parents of pupils on the LSR
- Providing tutorial sessions for individual pupils
- Communicating with and advising fellow teachers about individual need
- Supervising the use of laptops by certain pupils on the LSR
- Contributing to the in-house training of staff and the induction of new members of staff
- Liaising with external agencies (e.g. educational psychologists)

Accommodation

The Learning Support Department has exclusive use of a small but pleasant L shaped room next to the Library on the first floor. There is space for an office area, teaching area and small meetings.

Resources

The department is well resourced with a wide range of teaching and resource materials, games and books too numerous to list. There is also an extensive range of assessment tools and some ICT software.

The department's annual budget currently stands at approximately £1,000. This covers expenditure on

- Teaching materials
- Books and magazines
- Furniture and equipment
- Subscriptions to professional bodies
- ICT software.

Outside agencies

The department consults with Andrea Smollan (educational psychologist) once a term and may refer pupils to her for assessment. Sarah Geiger (educational psychologist) has also given consultation and assisted with staff training. The LSco also has contact with other educational psychologists selected by the parents.

Stephanie Egerton (teacher specialising in assessment of SpLD) sometimes takes referrals of boys needing specialist dyslexic tuition.

Where problems in the visual system are suspected, referral is made to Simon Barnard & Associates (behavioural optometrists) or to the Institute of Optometry at the Elephant & Castle.

Referrals are also made to Angela Webb, a local handwriting specialist and occasionally the LearnWrite Centre in Nottingham, which specializes in retraining handwriting.

Courses at the New Learning Centre in West Hampstead are sometimes recommended for advice and training in matters related to learning and parenting.

Regular contact is made with occupational therapists and physiotherapists chosen by parents and working with children outside school.

Where behaviour or poor self esteem is a persistent issue affecting learning a referral to a counsellor may be recommended. Claire Chappell – counsellor/educational therapist is working with several children in the school.

4. IDENTIFICATION

The identification of need begins with the entry procedures.

Admission of new pupils

Where an applicant to the school has a special educational need this should be stated in the current school's report with a description of the ongoing support normally received by the pupil. This should be supported by evidence from an appropriate professional source (specialist teacher or educational psychologist). Requests for extra time in entrance tests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will also need to be supported by professional advice and school reports.

The parents of new pupils entering the school are given a form on which to record details of any previously diagnosed learning difficulties. Where relevant these are passed to the LSCo by the admissions secretary. The parents are contacted and, if appropriate, a transfer meeting will be arranged before the start of term, sometimes with staff from the child's existing school, to discuss any concerns. Having received relevant information the LSCo will brief staff about the specific learning needs of new pupils and update the pupil data base to support information given.

Screening

The Screening procedures aim to identify pupils who may have specific difficulties that have not been recognized on entry.

Whole School Screening

On entry and every following year all boys are assessed in verbal reasoning, non – verbal reasoning, spelling and reading. (The Edinburgh Reading Test, Parallel Spelling Test, Nelson NVR /VR.) This information provides useful tracking material which can be used to monitor progress particularly in reading and spelling.

Also on entry all boys are given the **International Cognitive Profile test** (administered by E. Eames M.Sc.B.Sc.Hons Psychologist) this can help identify SpLD, particularly Dyslexia.

Cognitive Abilities Test Level A is administered to all boys in Year 4. This is externally marked and gives KS2 predictors for individual boys as well as for the whole Year group. From this information it is possible to spot boys who are not achieving expected outcomes.

Termly Year Group Meetings are held to discuss academic progress and any concerns. They provide an ongoing opportunity to monitor progress and any issues raised regarding SEN pupils will be followed up by the LScO.

Weekly pastoral Meetings are held between the school nurse, Deputy Head Pastoral and the LScO. They provide an ongoing opportunity to discuss pupils whose behaviour, emotional or social circumstances are giving cause for concern.

Individual Assessment

The LScO will assess pupils individually if they are referred to the Learning Support Department and parental agreement has been secured. The following assessment tools are used.

Special Needs Assessment Profile – computer aided diagnostic assessment and profiling. Provides an overview of a child's specific learning difficulties with a parental questionnaire and computer generated profile available if required.

LASS Junior- Has been acquired for use in the Junior Branch on an individual basis. If it proves a useful diagnostic tool we intend to extend its use to whole school screening.

Dyslexic Institute Maths Diagnostic Test – Helps to identify children who have problems with maths related to Dyslexia. Also provides a useful Maths diagnostic assessment.

Other Assessment tools sometimes used include ;

Beery test of Visual Motor Integration

Neale Analysis of Reading Ability - NARA 11

Vernon Graded Word Spelling Test

Automated working Memory Assessment

Results of the above screening tests are scrutinised, sometimes with the aid of an educational psychologist. Information from all the above tests is used in the creation of learning support profiles on the data base.

Transfer to Frogna

The Learning Support files of pupils in Year 6 at the Junior Branch who have received individual help, or are on the Junior Branch Learning Support Register, are passed to the DLS during the second half of the summer term. This information is shared with the Entry Warden. The parents of those on the register are contacted and these pupils are placed on the Senior School register for the following year. Learning Support Profiles are created for them in SIMS.

5. PROVISION

Referral

Any member of staff may discuss their **concerns** about the learning effectiveness of individual pupils with the LScO, or pass on concerns raised by parents. These concerns may be raised because a particular aspect of the pupil's learning may be

out of line with the rest of their abilities and progress. Lack of learning confidence, low motivation, poor behaviour and lack of focus are all legitimate reasons for raising concerns.

A **referral** to Learning Support can be made by putting these concerns in writing (this can be done via email or on a Learning Support referral form) and, where appropriate, should be accompanied by samples of work.

Information Gathering and Assessment of need

Following referral the LScO will do an assessment of need. Current data is checked with particular attention paid to the pupil's progress since entering the school – especially recent progress. Samples of work will be considered if appropriate and other informal assessment may be carried out. (This may include class **observation**) Parents would only be contacted at this stage if they had raised the original concern or if the information gathered suggested a need for immediate support or more thorough assessment. The aim is to provide a **graduated** response to need.

1. Monitoring

If it is considered appropriate the pupil will then be placed on a monitoring list. Monitoring will take place over a half or full term, with support for the teaching staff given in the form of suggested strategies and targets. Staff are informed about pupils who are being monitored via a half termly list distributed to all staff and the pupil data base. Any new or immediate information is mentioned in Monday morning staff meetings.

Monitoring Reviews

The monitoring list is reviewed at the end of each half term. The LScO will discuss pupils' progress with the subject and form teachers involved. If progress is satisfactory and concerns have been resolved, a pupil's name is removed from the list. However, if there are ongoing concerns another period of monitoring may be arranged or parents will be contacted and further assessment arranged.

2. School Action

If further action is required, **parents** will be contacted either, by the member of staff who originally raised the concern, or the form teacher. Further assessment will be carried out and individual support may be offered.

Individual support

Individual support is provided free of charge. In general it is initially offered for a limited number of sessions or a term. Pupils are either withdrawn from lessons according to a rotating timetable or from the same lesson each week to support a particular subject area with the agreement of the teacher concerned.

A series of sessions focuses on improving a particular skill set such as planning or editing written work, English comprehension skills, reading for meaning, spelling, handwriting, maths confidence, organisation, listening and following instructions, asking and answering questions and learning for tests and exams. Wherever possible material in these sessions relates closely to work the pupil has done recently, or will do in the near future to aid the transfer of skills to work in subject areas.

The **concerns and wishes of pupils** are given a very high priority at every stage of learning support intervention. They are consulted during the information gathering stage and in the review process. They are encouraged to develop a good

understanding of their learning strengths and weaknesses and to develop effective strategies for overcoming their weaknesses.

IEPS or Shared Target Sheets

Shared targets are devised for pupils having individual sessions with one or more of the subject teachers involved. This is to encourage a transfer of skills from the individual sessions to other areas, to ensure class targets are supported and that learning support is targeted most effectively. Shared target setting sessions are arranged twice a year after the October and February half terms. A form (shared target sheet) is produced from these meetings and copied for teachers. Targets are also increasingly being put on the Learning Support data base for easy reference. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress at this stage by the LScO who will arrange meetings, telephone or e mail as appropriate.

Individual Support Reviews

Individual support is **reviewed** at the end of every term. The views of teachers, pupils and parents are taken into account. If adequate progress has been made individual support may be discontinued and the pupil either monitored for a further half term or removed from the support list altogether. However, if there are ongoing concerns support may be continued for a further term and assessment and advice may be requested from an educational psychologist or other external agency as appropriate.

3. Further Action

Educational Psychologist's or other professional reports

Where an external assessment of a pupil's learning difficulties has been made, a copy of the report will be passed on to the Learning Support Department and the relevant advice made available to the pupil's teachers via staff meetings, notice board or the pupil data base. A list of these children is in the front of the staff Learning Support handbook and on the Pupil information board. All teachers should familiarize themselves with the needs of those pupils they teach who have a diagnosed difficulty and differentiate classroom practice accordingly.

Laptop use

Occasionally pupils at the JB with a special physical need or with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia / dyspraxia) find it beneficial to use a laptop for classwork in specific subjects. In order to use a laptop in school a pupil must have an assessment that establishes there is a specific difficulty. In addition the pupil must have undergone training in touch typing and have a typing speed at least equivalent to his handwriting speed.

If it is agreed that a laptop can be used, they are required to sign the Junior Branch Laptop agreement. Pupils should meet with their Form teacher or IT support once a week to sort out any organisational or technical problems.

6. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Appraisal of the Learning support staff and department

The work of the department is regularly reviewed in weekly meetings with the DLS. The Headmaster undertakes a formal appraisal of the Learning Support Co-ordinator every three years, the last one being in Nov 2007. There is also an ongoing program of informal observation by the Senior Management Team which informs the appraisal process as well as forming a part of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Review of pupils

As described previously (under provision) all Learning Support pupils receiving individual support are reviewed termly or at the end of the agreed intervention. Each review comprises a scrutiny of reports and test results (if available) to establish levels of progress, plus discussion with pupil, teachers and often parents. Pupils who are being monitored are reviewed each half term the review being comprised of a recorded discussion with the referring teacher.

7. COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHING AND PASTORAL STAFF

Learning Support teaching and monitoring lists

The main instrument by which staff find out which pupils experience learning difficulties are the Learning Support lists. These are issued to all staff in the **Staff Learning Support Handbook** at the beginning of the academic year. They are updated in January and April and redistributed to all staff. (It is anticipated that this will increasingly be done by email.)

Learning Support Profiles

Each pupil on the Learning Support lists has a Learning Support Profile created in the school database and updated termly. Teachers are expected to access the profiles of those pupils whom they teach. The profiles contain information about a pupil's assessment history, details of any individual support received, advice about their learning needs and shared targets being worked on.

Staff Learning Support Handbook

This is a booklet, issued to all staff at the beginning of the academic year. It contains information about staff responsibilities, the way the learning Support department works, advice about addressing common problems associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficits and strategies that can be used in the classroom.

Meetings

The LScO has weekly meetings with the DLS and separately with the Deputy Head (pastoral) and the school nurse.

Other opportunities to share information are provided in the following ways :

- Termly Year group meetings.
- Monday morning staff meetings.
- Shared target setting and review meetings held between LScO and relevant members of staff.

Staffroom notice boards.

The pupil information board in the staffroom has copies of all current teaching and monitoring lists and any new relevant information/ literature given by parents that staff need to read or familiarize themselves with. The whiteboard on the back of the staffroom door and email are used for passing on urgent information.

Training

There is an ongoing commitment to raise awareness of pupils' learning needs and to develop teaching strategies that will maximize learning potential. The following help to implement this;

- The LSco holds a meeting for all new members of staff at the start of each year to explain the duties of staff in relation to learning support pupils and to show them the resources available in the Learning Support room.
- Regular meetings between the DLS and JB senior management and the DLS and LSco to discuss learning strategy and any matters arising from special needs within the school. This information is used, in part, to inform the Inset program.
- Whole staff training on matters related to Learning Support are organised as the need arises. In 2008 – 9 Sarah Geiger (educational psychologist) gave 3 twilight training sessions on dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention disorders. Barry Hymer gave a one day inset on 'Creating a climate for higher order thinking, questioning and dialogue in the classroom'.
- Provision is made for the DLS and LSco to attend training courses relevant to the needs within the school. Individual staff are also encouraged to attend courses as appropriate so that they feel equipped to deal with the needs of the boys in their care.
- Pupil centered initiatives - at present there are several which aim to promote more effective learning. These are : an annual puzzle day for year 3, a thinking skills day for year 5, and a study skills day for year 6. There is an element of staff training in each of these.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHING AND PASTORAL STAFF

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole. In addition to the governing body, the school's headteacher , SENCO and learning support team, and all other members of staff have important operational responsibilities. All teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching such pupils is therefore a whole – school responsibility, requiring a whole – school response.

Para 6.2SEN Code of Practice 2001

All teaching staff

All teaching staff have a responsibility to help identify and support pupils with special educational needs. They should recognise that their classes will contain pupils with special educational needs and follow school policy and seek advice when they encounter these pupils. They should also be aware of the possible link between behavioural problems and learning difficulties.

Subject teachers

- Note which pupils are on the Learning Support register and the monitoring list. Highlight in mark books, check profiles on the network.
- Discuss any concerns about progress, motivation or behaviour with SM as necessary.
- Attend target setting sessions and contribute to targets. Keep a note of targets set and review termly with SM.
- Plan and deliver lessons with the needs of LS pupils in mind using *UCS specific learning difficulty guidelines* to help. Consult SEM or SM for further advice on differentiation as necessary.

Subject Coordinators

- Department policies and handbooks should contain subject specific guidance on how to support pupils with specific difficulties.
- Ensure that all department members follow the advice given,
- Monitor the progress of Learning Support pupils within their department.

Form teachers

- Note which members of their form are on the learning Support register, especially those who have an educational psychologist's report.
- Check Learning Support profiles on the network.
- Pass on relevant information from parents to SM
- Attend LS meetings if requested.
- Monitor the organisation (homework diaries, desks etc) of selected LS pupils and dedicate some individual time to them as necessary.

Senior management

- Share concerns about pupil progress, behaviour & motivation and agree action with SM.
- Pass on any relevant information concerning LS pupils or new boys who are potential LS pupils to LS staff as soon as possible.

9. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

The Learning Support Department recognizes that parents have a vital role to play in the identification and support of pupils with learning difficulties.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have about their child's progress at the earliest opportunity. Form teachers can be contacted by telephone or email and are available at the beginning and end of each day. If appropriate these concerns will be passed to the Learning Support department in referral form.

Parents will be consulted by telephone or email at the start of any individual learning support intervention and notified at the end of it.

Parents views are used to help build a Learning Support Profile and to review it. They may be invited for meetings with the LSco and other staff to discuss their son's progress. They can also contact the LSco at any time by phone or email for advice about how to support their child's progress or for information about outside agencies which may be helpful.

The **reporting system** provides one report and two parents' evenings for each pupil a year. The LSco will write reports for pupils she is working with individually.

At the beginning of each academic year there is an information evening for parents where general procedural information can be shared and it is intended that all new parents will be provided with a Learning Support Information Sheet which sets out how Learning Support works at UCS. (Development target).

10. DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The current Learning Support Department development plan (See appendix) focuses on the following areas:

- To raise awareness of spLD amongst staff. .**
- To have a fully functioning pupil data base.**
- To establish a 'joined up' approach for pupils with behavioural issues.**
- To establish whole – school screening using LASS junior assessment.**
- To provide more information for parents.**

11. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Complaints about special needs provision in the school should be addressed, in the first instance, to the DLS. She will arrange a meeting to discuss the issues and inform senior management.

The school will make any adjustments which are deemed reasonable to ensure that a pupil with learning difficulties or disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage. However, in some cases it may not be possible to accommodate a proposed adjustment, for example if the cost greatly outweighs the benefit.

If an individual believes that a decision under this policy has not been made correctly, they may appeal in the first instance to the Headmaster. The individual should set out in writing the grounds for their appeal and this should be sent to the Headmaster. The individual may be invited to attend a meeting at which the grounds for the appeal will be discussed. A further appeal may be made to the Board of Governors and the individual may again be invited to attend a meeting at which the grounds for the appeal will be discussed. The individual will then be informed of the governors' decision in writing. The decision of the governors will be final and there will be no further right of appeal.