

## ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

### **Our Vision**

*To be a school that lives the Gospel values, promotes the dignity of every individual and is committed to excellence.*

### **Mission Statement**

We are a Catholic School where every student, regardless of individual faith:

- is valued
- is a member of a thriving, happy community
- is helped to achieve his/her personal best
- is given a wide range of opportunities to develop his/her talents
- is prepared for the challenges of adult life
- is helped to understand and fulfil his/her responsibilities to self, family and society

Within Learning Support we recognize that:

- Each pupil has intrinsic value and is of equal worth.
- The richness and diversity of many cultures, languages and traditions are important aspects of education.
- All pupils should be treated with dignity, whatever their age, sex religion, ability, appearance, social class or ethnic origin.

We are therefore committed to valuing every individual and aim to promote a secure environment where every child has a sense of belonging within the community, can grow in confidence and develop her strengths and improve her weaknesses.

The 1981 Education Act defined special educational needs as individual learning difficulties experienced by pupils, which are significantly greater than those of his/her peer group. The Act identified duties for L.E.A.s, Governors and Schools and gave rights to parents.

A figure of 20% of the school population nationally is generally recognised in the broad concept of special educational needs for the allocation of resources.

The DCSF circular, "Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs 1989" re-emphasizes the place of the classroom teacher and mainstream provision for the majority of children with special educational needs. The Code of Practice November 2001 gives practical guidance to L.E.A.s and schools on their responsibilities towards all children with special educational needs.

St. Catherine's School observes the SEN Code of Practice and is committed to supporting the right of all young people to have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, including the National Curriculum, thus enabling them to reach their full potential and to achieve as high a degree of independence as possible, within the community.

St. Catherine's School is a school of equal opportunities, which accesses the full range of the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and encourages full and active participation in all areas of school life. We firmly believe that all children have the right to achieve their full potential: regardless of their gender, race, culture, language, physical ability and special educational needs or socio-economic background. All pupils, irrespective of ability, are encouraged to develop an awareness and respect for individual differences.

## **Learning Support Policy**

This policy, based on the DfES Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs, was prepared in consultation with the Senior Management Team and was approved by the Governing Body on 26 February 2009

### **Aims and Objectives**

St. Catherine's School makes provision for pupils of varying abilities and aims to maintain high academic standards. The school is keen to bring out and nurture the aptitudes and talents of pupils. Within the Christian ethos of the school, it is hoped to offer a balanced and broadly based curriculum, suited to the needs of pupils of different abilities. The general aims and objectives of the school and the aims of the Learning Support Department are specifically directed towards those pupils who have been identified as having Special Educational Needs. The Department seeks to ensure: -

- That all subject policies have provision for pupils requiring learning support, within them.
- That the needs of these pupils be addressed
- That children with special educational needs be given access to a broad and balanced education, including the National Curriculum where applicable.
- That pupils with special educational needs should, where appropriate, be educated alongside their peers in the school.
- That the knowledge, views and experiences of parents be taken into account.
- That children with special educational needs be identified as early as possible. That learning support provision should if appropriate, take into account the wishes of the pupil.

The schools Learning Support Co-ordinator is E.A. Grant, who will be responsible for the day to day operation of the Learning Support Policy.

### **Identification and Provision for Pupils Requiring Learning Support**

A child has Special Educational Needs if she has a learning difficulty, which calls for special provision to be made for her. A child has a learning difficulty if she: -

- Has a significant greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, within St. Catherine's School.
- Has a disability, which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of the educational facilities of the kind, provided for children of the same age by the School. [Types of disability are listed in the information folder given to all staff.]

Learning Support provision means educational provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the child's age within the school.

The Learning Support Department keeps a register of all the children with special educational needs within the School. This register is based on the information received from a range of sources, which may include any or all of the following: - teaching staff, formal and informal screening, parents and outside agencies. The register will detail steps taken to meet the needs of individual pupils and \*records/monitoring will inform the School's approach at the next stage. If the School recommends further formal assessment by outside agencies, work records/testing results of the pupil, will be made available. The responsibility for keeping such a record is a school responsibility, which will be undertaken by the Learning Support Co-ordinator. Any concerns about a pupil emerging from her work in the School should be passed on to the Learning Support Co-ordinator, as soon as possible.

\*Please refer to Record Keeping and Pupil Performance Monitoring Document.

We shall adopt the two stage system of intervention [School Action/School Action Plus] for special educational needs recommended by the 2001 Code of Practice.

#### **Stage 1 -SCHOOL ACTION / EARLY YEARS ACTION**

School Action starts with the initial identification and registration of a child's special educational needs, the gathering of basic information about the child, taking early action to meet the child's needs within her normal working environment and the monitoring and reviewing of progress made.

This stage may be initiated by an 'expression of concern', that a pupil is showing signs of having special educational needs. The key people at this stage will be the Form Tutor, subject teachers, parents and sometimes professionals such as health visitors,

physiotherapists, psychologists etc. At this stage information on the pupil will be gathered, bearing in mind the specific expression of concern. The pupil will be included on the Learning Support register. The information gathered will include academic performance, observations about the pupil's behaviour and progress, National Curriculum attainments [where appropriate] and parental contributions. At this stage special help should be provided within the normal curriculum framework. Special provision might include increased modification and differentiation of classwork and homework to meet the needs of the individual child. It might also include the use of setting/grouping within a particular subject. The provision may also take the form of individual withdrawn support, group support, or in-class support. Parents will be informed.

The child's progress will be monitored and reviewed in the light of any special provision. Records will include the nature of the concern and action to be taken including the setting of targets to be achieved. The review will focus on the progress made by the child, the effectiveness of the special help and future action. It is likely that the majority of pupils requiring support will be at this level.

The outcome at School Action level may be that the pupil continues at this stage, or the pupil no longer requires special help, or that she moves to School Action Plus.

### **Stage 2- SCHOOL ACTION PLUS / EARLY YEARS ACTION PLUS**

At School Action Plus the Learning Support Co-ordinator takes the lead in assessing the pupil's learning difficulty and planning, monitoring and reviewing the special educational needs provision, working with the pupil's teachers and ensuring that the pupil's parents are consulted.

The trigger for School Action Plus may be either a decision at School Action review where, following discussions about an initial concern between teachers and parents, the Learning Support Co-ordinator considers that greater support is necessary. The key people at this stage will be the Learning Support Co-ordinator, form tutor, subject teachers and parents. The Learning Support Co-ordinator will review all the available information and seek any additional, relevant information.

If it is felt that progress is still a cause for concern then, at this stage, advice will be sought from outside agencies who will, after seeing the pupil and liaison with the Learning Support Co-ordinator, provide or suggest the appropriate help required. It is likely that a relatively small number of pupils requiring support will be at this stage.

At this stage the Learning Support Co-ordinator, working closely with the pupil's teacher, will share responsibility for the pupil with the external specialist support services relevant to the pupil's needs. Such support will come from, among others peripatetic teachers, educational psychologists. and the Health Service

The support provided may well include further modification and differentiation of classwork and homework, in-class teacher support, short-term withdrawal to concentrate on numeracy, literacy, catching up with work, extra help with examination coursework/homework and study skills support.

A termly review will be conducted by the Learning Support Co-ordinator or a delegated member of staff in consultation with the pupil's teachers and parents. Part of the review process will include the annual testing/assessment of progress for spelling and reading if

appropriate to the learning difficulties experienced. It may also include test results from other departments or outside agencies, if required. These tests will give information on progress made and the effectiveness of the individual education plan. On review, pupils at this stage may continue at School Action Plus, revert to School Action level, or no longer need special help, or require further intervention by outside agencies. The Learning Support Co-ordinator will inform the parents of the decision made. A new IEP will be written.

### **Statementing**

For a very small minority of pupils, progress through School Action Plus may not provide adequate or appropriate support. After consultation with the parents, teachers and outside agencies the school may need to make a request to the local education authority for a statutory assessment. Parents also have the right to request an assessment at this stage. If this situation should arise the pupil should continue to be supported through School action Plus. If a Statement of Special Educational Needs is set by the L.E.A. they will arrange annual review meetings. The Learning Support Co-ordinator is responsible for gathering information regarding the general progress of the pupil, in consultation with the pupil's teachers. Such information would then be used at the annual review meeting.

The Learning Support Co-ordinator will provide all the staff with a list of the names of pupils receiving support by the end of September in each academic year. This register will give brief information as to which of the stages a pupil is at and will be amended as and when necessary. Additional information will be provided, if available, for teaching staff in order to encourage and develop a whole school approach when dealing with SEN/LDD pupils.

### **Individual Education Plans**

Strategies employed to enable the child to progress will be recorded within an Individual Education Plan [IEP]. The IEP will include information about:

- The short term targets set for the child
- The teaching strategies to be used
- The provision to be put in place
- When the plan is to be reviewed
- Outcomes to be recorded when the IEP is reviewed

The IEP will only record that which is additional to, or different from, the differentiated curriculum and will focus upon three or four individual targets that match the child's needs and have been discussed with the child and the parents. The IEP will be reviewed at least twice a year and parents' views on their child's progress will be sought. Wherever

possible, the child will also take part in the review process and be involved in setting the targets.

Where individual education plans are drawn up by the Learning Support Department, copies will be given to the Headmistress, Deputy Head, parents and to class/subject staff for their information/records. In response to the whole school policy for Learning Support, targets and/or teaching methods set on individual education plans will be given to all the pupil's teaching staff via the staff information booklet, so that they may be included in lesson planning.

### **Staffing Arrangements**

Each Department has a responsibility to liaise between their department and the Learning Support Department. The provision for learning support should be discussed regularly at departmental meetings so that a flexibility of provision can be maintained. Learning support time is used to deliver the individual education plans. Such support, in the main, takes the form of in class support, modification and differentiating of curriculum tasks, catching up with written work, performance of examination coursework, advice and help with revision, help with numeracy and literacy. In general these Individual Education Plans are delivered in class but pupils may also be withdrawn for short periods of time to concentrate on specific targets, such as spelling handwriting and reading. The learning support teacher may also provide help within the classroom where necessary and/or appropriate to the needs of the pupil.

The Department when required provides information to other schools when some of our pupils relocate or decide to continue their education elsewhere. Similarly, the examination boards also sometimes require information.

### **In-service Training**

The school is committed to the training and professional development of members of the staff. Requests for INSET or training courses are made to the Headmistress for consideration. The Learning Support Co-ordinator attends courses on SEN and details of these are passed on to all staff, usually via staff briefings/meetings. The Learning Support Co-ordinator will offer in-service training for staff as and when appropriate.

### **Parents**

The School has excellent links with parents. The Learning Support Department, building on these links seeks to involve parents at every level of Learning Support assessment. Parents are encouraged to contact the Learning Support Department regarding any problem related to their child's progress.

## **More Able Pupils**

The School recognizes that highly able children have particular educational needs also and subject departments design programmes to meet such needs.

As a school we recognize that our gifted pupils may require an educational provision that is in addition to that normally provided. The School attempts to cater for their needs on a curricular level by ensuring that adequate extension work is planned. In addition pupils showing a particular gift or talent in a specific subject area are encouraged to broaden their knowledge and develop their skills further by studying in greater depth and by undertaking personal research. [For convenience these pupils are recorded in the Learning Support Register].

## **English as an Additional Language**

Fundamentally, EAL is a different issue from SEN, as are the needs of bi-lingual pupils. However, it is recognised that a child may need EAL support, and may also have a special educational need. [For convenience these pupils are recorded in the Learning Support Register].

## **Governors**

Governors have a duty to ensure that the SEN/LDD policy of the school is adequate and is being implemented. They work in co-operation with the Headteacher to determine the School's policy and approach for children with special educational needs, establish the appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and maintain a general oversight of the School's work.

## **Admissions**

Pupils with special educational needs are admitted to St. Catherine's School according to the same criteria as other pupils, provided that admission is compatible with:

- The provision of efficient education for the children with whom he/she will be educated
- The efficient use of resources

## **Special Facilities/Units**

There are some limited facilities for pupils who are physically disabled but not a specially designed unit. However, the school is committed to the integration of pupils with a wide range of needs and their involvement in the whole life of the School, in line with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **Complaints**

If any parent wishes to express concern about the provision being made for their child, they should do so firstly to the class/form teacher. If at any stage the parent feels their concern has not been addressed they should then refer their concern to the SENCO, in conjunction with the Head of Year and /or the Deputy Headmistress. If the problem remains, the Head teacher will become involved and then the Governors of the school.

### **Evaluation**

The work of the Learning Support Department is evaluated on a regular basis, through the Performance Management process both within the Department and more generally in staff meetings arranged to discuss the progress of individual pupils. The School's internal monitoring of pupils also highlights specific problem areas, which may require addressing.

The aim of the school's provision for SEN/LDD children is to allow them to make the maximum progress possible. The implementation of clear and effective assessment procedures is vital to the evaluation of our policy.

Reference was made to the following:

- Code of practice 2001
- DfEE: Excellence for all children [1997]
- E.A. Cowne: The Senco Handbook [1998]
- DfEE: Meeting Special Educational Needs: A programme of Action [1998]

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