

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

Rationale

The Learning Support Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed special educational needs (SEN). The term Additional Learning Need is used as an umbrella term within the school to incorporate ALL pupils known to or attending the Learning Support department, including those pupils identified as having SEN.

The policy is part of the teaching system at Bryanston, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual pupil may fulfil his or her full potential. The policy aims, in accordance with the modified Dalton Plan, to equip pupils with the necessary skills to help them become increasingly independent learners and to ensure consistency of inclusive practice across the curriculum.

The policy is implemented in the light of current government guidance in the form of Every Child Matters and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SENCOP), (England, 2001). These are guidance documents only and Bryanston, as an independent school, has no statutory duty to comply with the guidance. Their ethos of effective inclusive practice, however, does inform the school's Learning Support Policy. The school has a statutory duty to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) 1995, 2005 and the Disability Rights Code of Practice.

Responsibility for Policy Implementation

The Learning Support Policy is the responsibility of the school's governing body, the Senior Management Team (SMT), all tutors, hsms and teachers, and all adults working directly with pupils in an educational capacity within the school.

The Head of Learning Support (HLS), Alison Cornelius, has responsibility to ensure effective communication of the additional learning needs of those pupils identified as having such under the school's identification and assessment procedures. She also ensures the school register of pupils with additional learning needs is kept up to date and that, where applicable, access arrangements for external examinations are processed appropriately.

The policy is reviewed annually by the HLS in conjunction with the Head and the nominated School Governor for Inclusion and Learning Support.

All teachers are teachers of pupils with ALN and all teachers have a responsibility to maintain up to date knowledge about the pupils in their care, to ensure their teaching approaches enable all pupils to achieve of their best, and to bring concerns to the tutor.

Tutors ask parents of new pupils whether there has been a history of SEN / ALN and share this with the HLS. They must inform the HLS of their tutorial pupils who

are a cause for concern and must liaise with parents about concerns and actions proposed. Tutors take primary responsibility for communication with parents and the HLS when a formal assessment is required.

The Communication of the Learning Support Policy and Inclusive Practice

The policy is included in the Guide to Bryanston circulated to all staff at the beginning of each academic year and shared with new staff when they are first employed. The Head of Learning Support disseminates the school's SEN policy and practice to new staff and PGCE students as part of their induction programmes. Information relating to the policy or its implementation is shared with colleagues via Common Room meetings, Heads of Department Meetings (via the Director of Studies and the Head of Learning Support, as required), via Learning Support Link Group Meetings held once per term to share good practice and through the involvement of Learning Support staff in subject department meetings, as required. Information is also shared via the Learning Support notice board in the Common Room.

The Learning Support Department

The Learning Support Department is led by the HLS and includes a team of qualified Learning Support teachers, each with specialist knowledge and experience. The HLS manages the department and ensures effective communication between the department and the Common Room. In addition to the responsibilities described above, the HLS supports the Admissions Registrar and the Senior Mistress in matters relating to the smooth transition of new pupils with additional learning needs to the school in line with the Learning Support Protocol for Admissions. All members of the Learning Support department (excepting the part time teacher of EAL) attend a weekly Learning Support department meeting. They all maintain accurate records of pupils' learning activities and outcomes, complete end of term reports, participate in professional development opportunities, contribute towards the development of departmental objectives set out in the annual departmental development plan, and liaise with colleagues and parents about the progress of pupils in their care.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Learning Support Department

The HLS submits a Departmental Development Plan each December to the Director of Studies. The HLS meets annually with the Director of Studies and the Head to review departmental progress against the development plan.

Minutes of the meetings of the Learning Support Link Group are copied to the Director of Studies, to the Head and to the nominated school Governor for Inclusion.

The HLS works in conjunction with the Senior Mistress and the Admissions Registrar to process admissions to the school of new pupils with ALN; and with the Exams Administration Officer during the processing of examinations access arrangements. The actions of the HLS are monitored informally through interaction with these colleagues.

All members of the Learning Support department will participate in the lesson observation cycle from the Summer Term 2010 and all members of the department participate in the school's annual appraisal cycle.

EAL provision is monitored through informal meetings between the part time EAL teacher and the HLS.

In the Summer Term 2010, a pupil evaluation of the Learning Support department will be undertaken.

Identification and Assessment of Pupils with Additional Learning Needs:

Government Guidance and Statutory Requirements

The DDA 2005 (Statutory) defines a disability as being:

- a physical or mental impairment which has an adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities
- the adverse effect of the disability must be substantial (that is more than minor or trivial)

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) produced a list of possible impairments in 2005 which included:

- sensory impairments
- fluctuating medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy)
- dyslexia, dyspraxia (DCD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- the effects resulting from injury to body or brain functions
- mental health conditions and personality disorders.

The cause of the impairment is less important than its effect on the pupil's day-to-day activities.

The Education Act (1996), Section 312, defines Special Educational Needs as a learning difficulty requiring Special Educational Provision to be made. A learning difficulty is also defined as:

1. a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age. (Not just within the same school).
2. a disability which prevents or impedes a child from making use of educational facilities provided for children of the same age in school.

(A very mild difficulty with assessment scores well within the average range would not constitute a special educational need in this context.)

Government guidance, Every Child Matters (2004) (Guidance only) has five main principles:

1. that children stay safe
2. that they are healthy
3. that they enjoy and achieve
4. that they make a positive contribution
5. that they achieve economic well being.

OFSTED has extended this to identify 14 groups of pupils about whom schools should analyse data:

Girls and boys, pupils who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL), pupils with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils, pupils at risk of disaffection and exclusion, other children such as 'sick children', children from families under stress, young carers, travellers, asylum seekers, refugees, pregnant schoolgirls and teenaged mothers, children 'looked after' by the local authority and 'vulnerable children'.

Admissions

The DDA (2005) includes some forms of 'Permitted Selection', including the right of independent schools to decide upon their own admissions criteria. Bryanston, as an independent school, does select pupils on the basis of ability.

Many pupils identified as having learning difficulties have been assessed at prep or previous schools prior to entry to Bryanston. As part of the Admissions Protocol, the HLS and Admissions Registrar liaise with prep school counterparts to request pupils' educational psychologists' and specialist teachers' reports during the Autumn and Spring terms preceding the pupils' first term at Bryanston. On rare occasions where there may be some doubt about a pupil's ability to cope with academic demands at the school, then a pupil may be invited for a pre-assessment prior to Common Entrance examinations.

Information about new pupils enrolled at Bryanston is shared with tutors and teachers via the school's register of SEN accessed via the Bryanston Management System at the start of the academic year, and updated when appropriate.

Tutors are responsible for asking parents of new pupils and the pupils themselves if they have any history of SEN or exams access arrangements, e.g. extra time. He/she must inform the HLS of any history of, or existing, need.

The Identification and Assessment of Pupils with SEN and/or Additional Learning Needs at Bryanston

The majority of Bryanston pupils with special educational needs (SEN) have mild specific learning difficulties of a dyslexic or dyspraxic (DCD) nature, Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD or ADHD); or more rarely, mild Asperger's Syndrome; or a (usually temporary) medical condition leading to an impairment. When a specific learning difficulty, or disorder, necessitates an intervention (e.g. differentiation or exams concessions) and has been identified by an educational psychologist, then the school recognises such pupils as having a special educational need (SEN).

Some pupils' difficulties are characterised by a discrepancy between verbal and non-verbal assessment scores detected during an assessment, yet sometimes these assessment scores lie within the normal range and are not statistically significant enough to warrant concessions in examinations or to be termed as a special educational need. Other pupils attend individual Learning Support lessons to gain study or revision skills and do not have an identified SEN. These pupils are described as having an Additional Learning Need (ALN) rather than a SEN.

How New Concerns are Addressed:

A reasonable concern might be about a difficulty persisting over a period of time, e.g. half a term (a single observation would not really provide enough evidence). The difficulty might take the form of: organisational or communication skills; seemingly persistent literacy difficulties affecting reading, writing or spelling; slow pace of working or handwriting and difficulty completing tasks within the time allowed; persistent numeracy or mathematical difficulties; essay planning and structuring weaknesses; retention and recall difficulties for tests or exams; a clear disparity between a pupil's oral abilities and their written output; co-ordination, gross and fine motor difficulties. This list is not exhaustive and any concern regarding the pupil's ability to make expected progress should be shared with the HLS.

A concern may be raised in one or more of the following ways:

- During analysis of results of Learning Support department Common Assessments for all new pupils in D in the September when they join the school (standardised reading, spelling and timed free writing assessments).
- By the Academic Registrar during analysis of Midyis and Yellis assessments.
- By class teachers and HODs through routine assessment and observations.
- By tutors through regular tutorial sessions and monitoring of pupils' electronic charts, end of term reports and informal liaison with teaching colleagues.
- By hsms (as above).
- By Learning Support teachers' observations of those pupils choosing to work in the Learning Support assignment room, or those for whom they already provide one to one learning support.
- By parents who share their current concerns or a history of need.
- By pupils themselves who recognise a difficulty or challenge and who seek advice from tutors and the Learning Support department directly.

Actions, from Concerns to Provision

The needs of pupils with ALN are met through differentiated teaching approaches within lessons, and for some pupils, through individual Learning Support lessons provided by the Learning Support department. Learning Support lessons are taught during pupils' non-contact assignment periods, avoiding their withdrawal from curriculum lessons.

- Any concern raised with the Learning Support department is always brought to the attention of the pupil's tutor if they are not already informed.
- The tutor may be asked to gather additional information from subject teachers, the hsm and parents to investigate the perceived need.
- Sometimes, discussion of a pupil's needs with their tutor and subject teachers and suggestions of possible teaching and learning strategies is the most appropriate response in the first instance. The tutor monitors the situation and informs the HLS if the concern continues despite a change in approach.
- Often, through experience and knowledge of a family's preference, individual learning support

lessons are arranged at this point, sometimes as a temporary measure but more often as a longer term arrangement. Decisions to move towards individual learning support may come from tutors, parents, the HLS or more occasionally, at the request of the pupils themselves.

- Tutors must always inform parents of the additional cost of Learning Support lessons and gain their consent before lessons can be arranged.
- The HLS will either allocate a pupil to the most appropriate member of the department, or may decide that further investigation is necessary either before or in addition to learning support lessons being arranged. This further investigation usually takes the form of informal assessments to examine reading, spelling, working memory, verbal and non-verbal skills. If these informal assessments indicate that a specific learning difficulty may be present, the HLS may recommend formal assessment by an independent educational psychologist.
- Not all pupils receiving Learning Support lessons have a history of learning difficulties or are a cause for concern in this respect. Some pupils are referred to the department for support with revision or study skills, rather than for support related to a specific learning difficulty.
- The school requires that all applications for examinations access arrangements must be supported by an educational psychologist's report. Assessment by an independent educational psychologist may be arranged by the HLS to take place at the school. Alternatively, parents may prefer to arrange an assessment outside school. This must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person, recognised as such by the school and accepted with the school's agreement. At all stages, it is the responsibility of the tutor to ensure accurate communication between parents and the HLS with decisions confirmed in writing and/or via e-mail. Parents must send a hard copy of the assessment report to the HLS, the tutor and the hsm.
- The needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language are met according to the protocol outlined below.
- Gifted and Talented pupils are identified via separate procedures overseen by the Director of Studies.
- Pupils with medical, emotional or social difficulties or needs are supported through the school's pastoral system, medical provision and counselling service. The Learning Support Department may be consulted about their care or asked to ensure appropriate exams concessions are in place.

Pupils with English as an Additional Language

The needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are identified as part of the school's admissions procedures. Pupils almost exclusively have a high degree of fluency in English but require additional support to develop subject specific vocabulary, and sometimes their written grammar, for their academic study.

The Admissions Registrar refers pupils to the HLS at the beginning of the academic year. The HLS then arranges one to one support lessons for each pupil with the part time EAL specialist teacher, Mrs Felicity Pattenden. These lessons incur an additional charge for parents. As a result the HLS informs tutors of the referral and asks them to confirm arrangements with parents in writing and/or via e-mail.

Pupils follow an individual learning programme, which may include study towards an internationally recognised EAL qualification required by higher education institutions in the UK

and abroad, e.g. the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). The examinations do not take place at school, but rather at exam centres in the UK or with the British Council in the pupils' home countries. Pupils therefore usually take these exams during the school holidays.

The Communication of Individual Pupils' SEN and ALD

Teachers receive class lists at the beginning of each academic year, which denote pupils known to have ALN. Teachers access individual pupil profiles in the SEN section of the BMS (also accessed via the Studywiz Portal), and thus have access to a description of individual needs and suggested inclusive classroom strategies.

If a pupil's needs change part way through an academic year, their profile is updated, their tutor and hsm informed via e-mail by the HLS, and a notice alerting teachers to the change is posted on the Common Room and Learning Support notice boards.

Much communication about pupils' additional learning needs happens informally through the Common Room during break and lunch times, and the fluid and regular communication between the department and the rest of the teaching staff is integral to the department's practice. E-mail is also used as a vital tool for sharing information in this way.

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with Additional Learning Needs

- An individual pupil profile is maintained in the school's SEN register on the Bryanston Management System, accessible to members of the Common Room (also accessed via the Studywiz Portal). These profiles act rather like IEPs (Individual Education Plans) in that they describe the individual pupil's difficulties together with suggested teaching and learning strategies, where appropriate. The school's data for SEN and ALN is therefore stored in its centralised records of all pupil data. Two hard copies of the SEN register exist: one in the HLS's office and one in the Common Room for quick reference by teaching staff. All copies of the SEN register are updated regularly in response to updated assessments or changing needs.
- A pupil record is maintained for each pupil receiving individual learning support lessons. This records individual lesson aims, details of lesson activities and notes on pupil progress.
- Pupils' Common Assessment results, internal and external exam results and individual subject reports are used by the department to monitor progress and set pupil targets for improvement.
- Learning Support teachers have access to individual pupil electronic charts and can track pupils' progress week to week.
- The HLS meets with each Learning Support teacher once per fortnight to discuss the progress of the pupils they teach.
- The Learning Support department meets each week to share good practice and to discuss pupils' progress and concerns.
- Concerns are recorded in the red 'Concerns' book detailing actions to be taken and by whom. The list of concerns is reviewed at each departmental meeting. This book is stored in the HLS's office.

Examinations Access Arrangements

Exams access arrangements are granted by the Head of Centre, i.e. the Head, with their administration carried out by the HLS and the Examinations Officer. It is the policy of the school that exams access arrangements may only be granted if supported by an educational psychologist's report. The JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications), the awarding body, prescribes that the educational psychologist's assessment must have been undertaken during the pupil's secondary education, i.e. from Year 7 onwards. The most common access arrangement is up to 25% extra time in exams, although an assessment report may also recommend use of a word processor. On very rare occasions a different access arrangement may be awarded in response to individual circumstances. A number of criteria must be met in support of each case, as set out in the JCQ's 'Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration' document, updated annually. Tutors are advised that for these access arrangements to be awarded at university, some institutions now require a full adult assessment. This can be arranged at Bryanston for pupils of 16 years and over. At the time of writing, such an assessment may be used as evidence to support an application to the pupil's LEA for a Disabled Student's Allowance, a financial grant. If a pupil has an educational psychologist's report recommending an exams access arrangement, these are put in place throughout the pupil's school career as they sit each set of internal exams, in addition to any external exams. Parents and pupils are advised that whilst access arrangements may appear helpful, they may not always be in the pupil's best interest and are not a substitute for thorough revision or effective exam technique, for which the Learning Support department and subject teachers can provide support.

Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) may qualify for the examinations access arrangement of a bi-lingual translation dictionary in accordance with JCQ regulations.

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