

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY



'All teachers are teachers of children with special needs.'
SEN Code of Practice (2001)

Introduction

St Hugh's provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all children. The school is non-selective, and committed to a policy of inclusion; one in which the teaching, learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all children, including those with special educational needs are paramount.

We offer whole school support and advice to help resolve difficulties and promote positive solutions for pupils experiencing barriers to learning. Children may need **'additional or different'** help to that given to other children of the same age. Children who are identified as 'gifted and talented' are also catered for and there is a separate policy for these children.

In order for the curriculum to be accessible to all children, teachers take account of the information disseminated by the Learning Support Department at St Hugh's. The Department is overseen by the SENCO who is supported by the Learning Support Team working in the four sections of the school; Nursery, Pre-Prep, Middle School and Upper School.

Strategies employed by the Learning Support Department include:

- Identification and assessment of individual needs.
- Designing and implementing individual learning programmes
- Working with and advising colleagues, both academic and pastoral.
- Liaising with outside agencies
- Communicating with parents

We aim to fulfil the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act of 2001 and follow the guidelines in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that all pupils, whether or not they have a learning difficulty, have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that is differentiated to meet their individual needs.

- To ensure early identification, assessment and provision for any pupil who may have special educational needs.
- To enable all staff to play a part in identifying pupils with special educational needs and to take responsibility for recognising and addressing those individual needs.
- To encourage the whole school community to demonstrate a positive attitude towards special educational needs.
- To help each pupil to realise their full potential and to optimise their self esteem.
- To offer advice and support to teachers responsible for each pupil's progress.
- To encourage an effective parent-school partnership, one that implements a joint learning approach at home and at school.
- To liaise effectively with outside agencies and to disseminate information gleaned from interaction with them.
- To follow the SEN Code of Practice which recommends a graduated approach whereby appropriate strands of action are matched to the individual pupil's needs.
- To encourage and support pupils to participate in all decision making processes that occur in their education, taking into account their views and personal targets.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

The Code of Practice (2001) states the following definition of Special Educational Needs:

'Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:-

- a) Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b) Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local educational authority.
- c) Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at a) or b) above or would so do if the special education provision was not made for them. Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Special Educational provision means:

'For children of two or over, educational provision which is *additional to*, or otherwise *different from* the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA other than special schools in the area.

It is important to note that our school's SEN policy is guided by the Code of Practice as required by Part IV of the 1996 Education Act, but it is not governed by the Code of Practice.

The SEN Discrimination Act 2001 states that it is unlawful for responsible bodies to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person for a reason that relates to the person's disability.

This could mean:

- **Changes to policies and practices**
- **Changes to course requirements or work placements**
- **Changes to the physical features of a building**
- **Provision of interpreters or other support workers**
- **Delivery of courses in alternative ways**
- **Provision of material in other formats**

Key Individuals involved in SEN policy

- **Governors** – At present there is no designated governor for SEN. This is to be reviewed 2011/2012
- **SLT** – From September 2011, the SENCO is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- **SENCO** – The SENCO is responsible for the day to day running of the Learning Support Department and for the coordination of provision, liaising with external agencies and the dissemination of information to all staff.

Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs

Admissions

As a non selective school, St Hugh's welcomes children of all abilities who wish to make the most of the opportunities offered. Treating every child as an individual is important to us and we welcome pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, providing that we can give them the support they require. We do not have the facilities or personnel to provide highly specialised and intensive treatments.

As part of the admissions procedure, parents are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the Admissions Registrar so that we are aware of needs. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or medical reports in order to allow an informed decision. Extra time in examinations will not be allowed in the Upper School without such supporting evidence. Children are often assessed whilst they are at St Hugh's in consultation with parents.

If during the admissions procedure it becomes evident that a pupil has a learning difficulty or disability, then it may be appropriate to test further and to investigate the specific needs of the pupil.

Classroom Teaching

It is the aim of the Learning Support Department to identify a pupil's special needs early. However, not all children making slow progress have special educational needs. Slow progress needs to be addressed by careful differentiation and monitoring. Appropriate intervention prevents the difficulties becoming more complex and addresses low self esteem which is probably the most damaging barrier to learning.

The following recommendations may be made for a child experiencing lack of progress:

- Monitoring by the Learning Support Department and placing on the Learning Support register.
- Group booster lessons
- Individual lessons
- Formal assessment by an Educational Psychologist.

Tutors and Form Teachers

Form Teachers, YR-Y6, and Tutors, Y7-Y8, are the designated staff members for Learning Support pupils to enable them to discuss any difficulties or concerns they may have. Liaison with the Learning Support Department enables them to follow up where appropriate.

Screening Procedure

In the Cottage Nursery, progress is monitored in the specific areas of language and literacy, mathematical skills, physical skills, hand eye coordination and personal and social skills. Close communication between Nursery and Reception ensures that any difficulties, weaknesses or delay are noted. This information is also passed to the SENCO who will monitor progress and may place the child on the Learning Support Register along with appropriate information.

In Reception, pupils are screened using a Baseline Assessment. If this assessment detects any concerns, not felt to be developmental, then the child will be screened by the 'Lucid Cops' cognitive assessment tool which is a computer based, standardised diagnostic test, providing a graphical profile of a child's cognitive strengths and weaknesses and which can be used to identify difficulties they are likely to encounter in their learning. This information can be used to develop Individual Education Plans. At this stage parents are kept informed and consulted regularly about their child's progress.

At Key Stage 1, testing follows the same pattern as above; the first test being carried out at the beginning of the school year. Anomalies such as weak phonological awareness and related skills are reported to the Learning Support Department and advice can be given to the class teacher. The child will be placed on the Learning Support Register and progress monitored. Parents are kept informed and consulted on their child's progress.

Read, Write, Inc, (RWI) screening is done at the beginning of every academic year and the information is used to group children according to ability. These assessments are also used to inform teachers about a child's progress and alert teachers to any difficulties or delay.

In the Middle and Upper Schools, assessments in the form of CAT testing and twice yearly assessments of reading and spelling ages are carried out. Teachers with concerns about the progress of any pupil are asked to use the referral process, details of this appear later.

Parental Expression of Concern

Either during the admissions procedure or subsequently, parents may express concern about their child's progress. This will first be dealt with by the class teacher or the Head of Section, but the help of the Learning Support staff may be required to provide further information.

Assessment carried out by the Learning Support Department:

This may be initiated by the teaching staff, parents, admissions procedure, or screening. The Learning Support may carry out additional assessments, such as the Harcourt Assessment to indicate the possibility of a specific learning difficulty. If it is indicative of such a difficulty, then in consultation with the parents an assessment by an Educational Psychologist will be sought. Examination concessions in Upper School will not be permitted without such a report providing evidence. In Middle

School, examination access arrangements are based on evidence of reading ability and writing skills and they are permitted on condition that they are reviewed annually.

Physical Disability

We recognise that some children with learning difficulties and disabilities may also have physical difficulties.

A register of medical conditions and disabilities is available from the school Matron. Generally these pupils are not added to the Learning Support Department register unless the child is experiencing difficulties with learning.

Every effort is made to ensure that a child with a physical difficulty is afforded the same educational and social opportunities as an able bodied child.

English as a Foreign Language

It is expected that pupils attending St Hugh's will be fluent English speakers. We do however recognise that some children may speak another language at home.

Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs at St Hugh's School

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole. In addition to the school's governing body, the Headmaster, SENCO and Learning Support team and all other members of staff have responsibility. All teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs.

Central to the work of every class and every subject is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation that takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the pupils. The majority of pupils will learn and progress well within these arrangements. However there are pupils who do not make adequate progress. They are not closing the gap between the child and the child's peers; they can not prevent the gap from getting wider; there is not adequate improvement in self help, social and personal skills and behaviour; and they have a restricted access to the whole curriculum.

If they are significantly outside the expected range, they may have a specific learning difficulty.

In line with the SEN Code of Practice, the Learning Support Department adopts a graduated approach to the provision for pupils with special educational needs. This approach recognises that there is a continuum of special needs requiring a different

level of support depending on the specific need. This may be met within the classroom, in small groups, in one-to-one lessons or by seeking the help of external specialist agencies.

The following table outlines the different stages of action:

	STAGE 1 <i>(Differentiated learning in class)</i>	STAGE 2 <i>(Differentiation + small group support)</i>	STAGE 3 <i>(Differentiation + individual help)</i>	STAGE 4 <i>(Individual help + extra support or advice from external agencies)</i>
Assessment and Planning	In class teacher assessment and screening tests.	Teacher assessments, screening tests. In-school whole class assessments	In-school individual assessments	External assessments by Ed Psych or other
Grouping for Teaching Purposes	Grouping strategies used within classroom	Small groups used for out of class activities – according to specific need. Eg spelling, maths, reading etc	Individual tuition to support IEP targets.	In addition to individual tuition to support IEP, programme drawn up by external therapist.
Human Resources	Class teacher and teaching assistant with advice from LS as necessary	Learning Support Department	Learning Support Department	Learning Support staff in liaison with external therapist.
Curriculum and Teaching Methods	Differentiation within lesson. Use of VAK teaching methods. Other adjustments to teaching methods as necessary.	Specific reinforcement or development of particular skills through carefully differentiated activities and materials.	Individual programme devised and delivered to support specific targets.	Individual programme devised and delivered to support specific targets.

The Learning Support Department's role is as follows:

- School Action, Stage 1; General advice on teaching and learning styles, differentiation and materials.
- School Action, Stage 2; Booster groups will be managed by the Learning Support Department.
- School Action, Stage 3; Learning Support will assess the pupil and put in place an IEP. Progress is assessed twice yearly.
- School Action Plus, Stage 4; where the advice of external agencies is sought, the Learning Support Department's role is to liaise and to disseminate information.

Referral Process

Where there is a concern about a pupil, after an initial informal discussion with the Learning Support Department, staff are requested to use the referral process. Copies of the flow diagram and the questionnaire are included at the end of this policy. It is important that the process reflects the graduated approach and that the continuum of need and provision is acknowledged.

Referral should be underpinned by evidence that despite having received differentiated learning opportunities, progress is not being made; the pupil is significantly outside the range expected for that age group.

In Pre-Prep, any concerns with literacy; reading, writing or spelling, should be first discussed with the Co-ordinator for RWI. A review of the grouping arrangements should then be undertaken and monitored. For other concerns, such as behavioural attention, speech and coordination, the first contact should be with the Learning Support staff in Pre-Prep and the Head of Pre-Prep who will alert the SENCO. Using information gleaned from Lucid Cops and pupil's baseline assessments, it may be decided that Stage 2 intervention might be appropriate. If progress continues to be inadequate then short individual sessions may be arranged and an IEP will be drawn up.

Parents will be consulted and kept informed of any action taken.

In Middle and Upper Schools, the procedure is the same. After an initial expression of concern, the questionnaire is completed and evidence to support the concern submitted. Further testing may be done at this stage by the Learning Support Department and results discussed with the relevant staff. Action may be in the form of a short-term booster group session to address any specific difficulties. If progress is not made, then one to one sessions may be put in place. It is the policy of the Learning Support Department that these one to one sessions should not take place in lessons that are examined at Common Entrance. The timetable for one to one

sessions is prioritised so that Y8 take the vacant slots before school, at lunch-time and coffee break, during non-examined subjects and after school. The next priority is Y7 and so on. It may be that some children in younger years have to come out of a lesson, but we do everything we can to avoid it.

The child is placed on the Learning Support register and an IEP is drawn up. If progress is not being made, or if there is a suspicion that the child might have a specific learning difficulty, such as Dyslexia, then expert advice will be sought.

Individual Education Plans

Examples of IEP forms are provided at the end of this policy.

An IEP is used to plan the intervention for pupils who are having the support of the Learning Support Department, usually those having one to one lessons with qualified staff. The IEP sets out:

- The nature of the pupil's learning difficulty or disability – outlining their strengths and weaknesses
- Specific learning targets, focusing on three or four key objectives for each area.
- The materials and resources to be used, including any special equipment or provision within the classroom or at home
- The staff involved and frequency
- The time scale within which the work is carried out, review dates.
- Monitoring and assessment
- Recommendations for the classroom including teaching strategies and approaches.
- Suggestions for home support.
- Brief summary of information contained in reports such as Educational Psychologist's report, speech and language therapy.
- The success criteria for the targets.

IEPs are formally reviewed twice yearly, in February and June. Parents are invited to discuss the content of the new IEP in September and to meetings to review the progress of their child in February and June. Three private meetings per year are offered, but we always welcome contact with parents at any time if they are worried about their child. New IEPs are sent out in September, the review and a new IEP sent out in February and the final review sent out in June.

At present, the child does not contribute to the IEP, but we would like to review this during 2011/2012.

The IEP informs the individual lesson plans used by the Learning Support Department staff and they include clear objectives, assessment criteria and evaluation. These in turn inform the next IEP.

Monitoring and Record Keeping

Individual Education plans, any specialist reports, communications between school and parents, and evidence of progress are all kept in the filing cabinet in the Learning Support Office and in the child's file in the Upper School Staff Room or the Middle School Staff Room. A copy will also be kept in the Headmaster's file.

Minutes of meetings and telephone conversations with parents are written up, copies sent to the Headmaster and any relevant staff and are also kept in the filing cabinet. Any assessment scores are also kept in the child's file.

A summary of any specialist report will be posted on the staff intranet and can be found in the Learning Support folder. A hard copy will also be given to relevant staff. This is to enable staff to accommodate the needs of the child in their planning and differentiation, assessment and evaluation.

A member of the Learning Support staff will attend the briefing meetings held before Parents' Evenings and regular contributions will be made to staff meetings and individual departmental and key stage meetings.

Learning Support Register

The Learning Support Department maintains a register that gives details of all pupils who have been alerted as having special educational needs. Pupils who are being monitored are included on the register. It outlines their weaknesses, type of support given, who will be the point of contact and whether there are any assessments by outside agencies. The register is published in booklet form and distributed to all staff at the beginning of the academic year. It is updated regularly throughout the year.

Exams concessions

An assessment by an Educational Psychologist is needed for the awarding of extra time, reader or scribe. If extra time is awarded, then it should be applied to school examinations in order for the candidate to become familiar with using the concession.

External agencies

Aspire Psychologists are used as our consultant psychologists though there are other practices available. We also work closely with Mrs Caroline Parry who is the designated NHS Speech and Language Therapist. We also make contact with other agencies, such as PCAMHS, when appropriate and we seek expert advice on such topics such as Autism.

Where the advice of an external agency has been sought, the Learning Support Department will disseminate the relevant information to the teaching staff by posting a summary on the Teachers' drive on the Intranet. The pupil's IEP will reflect the advice given by the external agency and this too is available for all staff.

Statutory assessment

If a request is made of a statutory assessment to an LEA in accordance with the Code of Practice, the school will provide information and evidence that is required.

Where the evidence presented to the LEA suggests that the child's learning difficulties have not responded to the relevant and purposeful measures taken by the school and external specialists, they may call for special educational provision to be put in place through a statement. Statements will be reviewed annually with all agencies involved with the education of the child in attendance.

Training and Development

The Learning Support Department takes advantage of training opportunities whether formal or informal. We recognise the constantly changing nature of approaches and knowledge in this field and aim to increase our expertise.

We contribute to the Whole School Development Plan and hope to move into larger premises as soon as the opportunity presents, as we recognise the sensitivity of our role and the increased need for more teaching space. We will organise INSET for staff at St Hugh's when appropriate.

Staff

Mrs Maryssa Stott, BEd, Cert Ed, Dip.SpLD

Mrs Suzanne Dams, BA, PGCE

Mrs Sally Strange, BSc, PGCE (Maths)

Mrs Clare Berry, BA

Mrs Netty Lings

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Maryssa Stott

Head of Learning Support