



Notting Hill Preparatory School

3.4 Policy for Learning Support (EYFS & KS1-3)

Reviewer responsible: Deputy Head (Director of Studies)	Date of last review: 10/18
Reviewed by: MM and SSk NM	Date of next review: 09/19

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

Rationale: context

Notting Hill Prep is a proudly mixed ability, mainstream school, non-selective at entry in Reception. This gives a unique character to the school, strength to our community and to our teaching.

A commitment to offering Learning Support provision is shared by Governors, Senior Management and teaching staff, as being true to our school ethos.

We tend to attract a proportion of children with specific learning difficulties, which in turn, gives us a wider range of pupil needs.

Prospective parents embrace our inclusive ethos knowing that, wherever possible, we will accommodate a child's needs – we do not like to turn away or deselect.

The character and context of our school also shape the way we respond to the differing needs of our pupils.

Our Learning Support provision is in harmony with the inclusive ethos of our school, as part of a holistic approach which strives to look at the whole child.

NHP's Thinking School approach, with its emphasis on metacognition which includes fostering hardy learning dispositions, complements and validates the pedagogy culture of the department.

1.1 Aims of Learning Support Department at NHP:

- To enable all children to access the curriculum, and the wider aspects of school life, to the fullest extent
- To enable all children to thrive within the [mainstream] classroom
- To identify a child's educational needs as early as possible and monitor the children's progress through continued observation, teaching and assessment
- To involve and inform parents at every stage in supporting their child's education and to incorporate their experience, knowledge and views
- To maintain a close working relationship with the Pastoral Care department [noting how slender the boundary often is between emotional and academic need]
- To ensure that all children feel valued and supported within the school community, and have a positive self-image
- To measure the effectiveness of our Learning Support provision in achieving these aims

1.2 Learning Support Provision at NHP

Falls into four main categories:

- Cognition and learning
- Communication and interaction
- Social, emotional and mental health (see Policy for Pastoral Care)
- Sensory and other physical needs

1.3 How the Learning Support Department works

The Department is led by two Heads of Learning Support who coordinate the work of their team. They are supported by a team of qualified Learning Support teachers.

The Heads of Learning Support work closely together as one team to ensure the smooth transition of children from one building to another, as well as providing ongoing information, advice and support to parents through regular meetings, curriculum evenings and workshops.

1.3.1 Working with parents

We believe that good communication and cooperation between teachers and parents is crucial. We are committed to working in partnership with families and will make every effort to communicate with parents and work with them closely to ensure that all children are achieving their potential.

Parents provide valuable insight and knowledge about their children. We expect parents to share information about their child so that where appropriate, we can identify their children's needs early, and make reasonable adjustments to meet them.

Therefore, upon joining the school we ask that, where applicable, parents share the results of Educational Psychologist or Speech and Language reports, or any other evidence that relates to their child's needs, as well as any relevant family history.

The school can also draw upon Nursery Reports and evidence from our Reception Team's home visits before children enter Reception. For children looking for entry after Reception, evidence can be found in reports we source from their schools. This information is shared with teachers and the Learning Support Department.

We also recognize that being a parent of a child with learning difficulties can be difficult and traumatic. Our teachers are expected to show due sensitivity to their feelings.

1.3.2 Working with other teaching staff

The Learning Support Department works with the teaching staff at NHP to accommodate children's learning through inclusive teaching and making reasonable adjustments in the classroom.

The Department also provides professional development for staff, in terms of workshops and good practice sharing during meetings. The aim is to share awareness of how specific learning difficulties might manifest themselves, and to share teaching strategies which will help teachers accommodate them.

1.4 Teaching Model

The focus of the team's work is teaching children, either in small groups or 1:1. Like other teachers, their efforts are focused on planning, teaching, in-class support, assessing, reviewing and reporting.

1.4.1 A graduated model

*"All teachers are teachers of pupils with educational needs. Teaching such students is therefore a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response."
(In line with Section 76 of Children and Families Act, 2014)*

At NHP, high quality differentiated teaching is the first step in responding to children who may require support.

It is the class/subject teacher's responsibility to monitor a child's progress and to plan and deliver lessons that are accessible to every child, making reasonable adjustments where necessary.

If teachers feel a child would benefit from further support, they contact the appropriate Head of Learning Support, who will observe the child and decide what the next step will be, and whether outside assessments are desirable.

If we have concerns about a child's progress, we will contact the parents, keeping them consulted and informed at every stage. Parental consent is sought for internal Learning Support screenings.

Pupils may experience a learning difficulty at different points in their schooling. For example, learning needs may only become apparent when the pace of the curriculum and the attendant workload intensifies in Year 5-6.

We observe and assess regularly (for example, a concerning standardized score profile could initiate an enquiry) so that we can respond quickly and effectively, and so that no child falls through the net.

1.4.2 Identification Assessment and of Learning Difficulties

The early identification of a pupil's needs is vital, so that the best support can be put in place.

The triggers for intervention are when a child:

- Makes little or significantly less progress relative to their peers even when classroom-based teaching approaches are targeted at a child's identified area of weakness
- Shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematical skills that result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas
- Presents persistent emotional and/or social difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school
- Has sensory or physical issues, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
- Has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum

The following information will be considered when identifying a child's needs:

- Attainment and progress levels in standardised tests and work samples
- Observation in class and in less structured situations
- Impact of class interventions/teaching
- Attendance and behaviour
- Parental observations and input
- Internal psychometric assessments carried out by Heads of Learning Support (with consent from parents)
- Developmental checklists
- Information from external agencies (educational psychologists, speech and language therapists etc.)

1.4.3 Investigation and Planning

When a child has been identified as requiring learning support, NHP will follow an "Assess, Plan, Do, Review" model

1. Review the day to day teaching the pupil is receiving.
2. Provide an assessment of child's needs and progress.
3. Collaborate with parents and teachers on how needs can be met. Depending on the need and the year group, top ups, small group support and extension is offered as well as one to one lessons in literacy and numeracy. There is an extra charge for 1:1 or 1:2 lessons provided by the Learning Support Department

4. Develop a plan which outlines the desired outcomes of support and how it will be provided in the school* or with outside agencies.
5. Communicate with staff, teachers and TAs involved in implementing the plan/providing support.
6. Work in partnership with parents, pupils and teachers to meet needs
7. Work in partnership with teachers to measure effectiveness of intervention against the specific needs and targets sets for an individual child (in the context of the child's ability to make progress in the classroom)
8. Meet for (at least) a termly review with parents to assess their child's progress. These reviews will address any changes needed to provision. Meetings are supplemented by regular information exchange: e-mails, parents' evenings etc.)

*Learning Support teachers make their lesson plans 'public' on the school network. The personalized learning targets for the children receiving 1:1 and small-group teaching are written into the plans, reviewed and updated. Being public, the plans can be shared with class teachers who can work on the same targets with the children, making it a deeper process.

1.5 Learning Support 'tutors'

The school is looking to build its Learning Support tutor model, where a Learning Support teacher is assigned to a year group or groups.

The teacher thus become the 'tutor'; for their group/s. A key part of the tutor work is to be inside the classroom, helping children and using the evidence gained to help teachers teach *all* pupils better.

This way, over time, the 'tutor' gets to know the developmental needs of children in their assigned year group and the curriculum demands.

The tutor support model is:

- Teach (small-group and/or 1:1) to the individual targets set for that child for a number of weeks
- Observe the children in the classroom during a pre-assigned week
- Feedback to the form/subject teacher/s after the in-class visits

1.6 Intensifying support

If it is felt that despite support, a pupil is still significantly behind the academic expectations of their year group, and further exploration is required, Heads of Learning Support will recommend to parents that they take their child for assessment by an Educational Psychologist.

To this end, the school will present the parents with a selection of Educational Psychologists with whom we have a confident working relationship.

The purposes of the Educational Psychologist's assessment are to get:

- A definitive statement of whether a child has a specific learning difficulty
- An assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Concrete advice as to how the child's specific learning needs can be supported by teachers (we always ask parents for consent before sharing an EP report with teachers)

As part of their assessment, the Educational Psychologist may refer parents to other agencies which offer more intensive, focused support than NHP can provide.

Such a recommendation may also come from a Head of Learning Support (for instance, where parents are reluctant to spend the money required for an Educational Psychologist's assessment).

The Heads of Learning Support coordinate the following outside agencies for further assessment and provision:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Educational Psychologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Behavioural Optometrists
- Audiologists
- Early Years Intervention Team/Behaviour Intervention Team
- Touch Typing Tutors
- ASD specialists
- Visual Perception Specialists

In every situation where a referral has been made, the Head of Learning Support joins up the provision, liaising between specialist, Educational Psychologist, teacher and parents for an ongoing assessment of a child's needs, and to evaluate/measure the success of any intervention.

The involvement of specialists need not be limited to children on the Learning Support Register. Please refer to **Pastoral Care Policy** for further details.

1.7 EHC Plan

In a small percentage of cases, where a pupil is not making expected progress despite receiving ongoing support, the parents may request an EHC plan (Educational Health Care) from the local authority. *However, in most circumstances, it is difficult to qualify for extra funding.*

2.1 Recording and Tracking

A comprehensive list of children who currently receive, or have received, Learning Support, is kept up to date by the Heads of Learning Support.

A tracking document is prepared for each child, listing the type and length of any intervention a child has received in their NHP career, along with a Pupil Profile with personalized targets for each child.

2.2 Measuring the impact of intervention

The Heads of Learning Support use a range of evidence to assess and track the impact of their department's interventions, or the interventions they have put in place via other specialists. They are always looking to see how much progress a child has made against specific targets, within specific timeframes, in response to support.

Review is a continuous process, in which class/subject teachers, and where applicable, members of the Pastoral Care Department, play a pivotal role.

The review evidence may be:

- **Quantitative** – standardized scores and exam results, senior school outcomes
- **Qualitative** – reviewing teaching and learning targets
- **Wellbeing** – the extra confidence and efficacy gained by children who feel they can cope better in class with/after support; improved behavior of children who feel better equipped to learn and thrive in the classroom (hence the close synergy between Learning Support and Pastoral Care Departments)

We recognize that confidence and self-worth can be easily eroded in a child who has learning difficulties. The wellbeing benefits of intervention, the feeling of 'I can do it now' are very important to us.

3.1 Reasonable adjustments

Should there ever be circumstances in which NHP has made all reasonable adjustments and exhausted all appropriate strategies but remains unable to meet the child's needs, the school may, following consultation with parents, recommend they send their children for appropriate support via an external agency, or withdraw their child from NHP for the latter's welfare. In this latter instance, an alternative schooling environment may be more suitable in meeting the child's needs at this time.

3.2 Repeating a year

In cases where a child is falling significantly behind their peers and they are young for their year (a July or August baby), or is experiencing emotional difficulties which are better served by retention, it may be recommended that they repeat a year.

Such a decision will only be taken **in exceptional circumstances** - after a detailed investigation of the facts, consultation with the parents and a thorough examination of the pastoral impact upon the child. (See **Policy for Able Children**)

3.3 Transition Arrangements

When children with specific learning difficulties leave NHP, the relevant Head of Learning Support will liaise with the ongoing school, passing on information about the child's specific educational needs (including access arrangements) and completing transfer documentation as required. This information is also sought by senior schools when they request references about children. In sharing all such information, the school will have due regard for its statutory responsibilities under Data Protection legislation.

3.4 Access Arrangements for examinations

We strongly advise parents to take into account JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) regulations when extra time in exams is recommended in their child's educational psychologist's report (EP report). We also advise them to ensure the EP report is up to date for these purposes: in practice, most schools require that the report has happened within two years preceding the entrance examinations.

Extra time

Although - technically - JCQ only regulate access arrangements for public examinations (GCSE and A2), their strict rules have led many senior schools to apply the extra time regulations in their entrance exams. NHP is reluctant to allow children to become reliant on extra time while at NHP, if this arrangement will not be permitted at a later stage.

Currently, JCQ awards 25% extra time to candidates with 'below average' reading or writing speeds or with measures of cognitive processing abilities which impact on speed of working. 'Below average' means at least one relevant standardised score of below 85 or at least two scores below 90. The discrepancy between the different scores is no longer a factor.

When a child qualifies for extra time, it is given in all relevant NHP examinations. Teachers are also required, where possible, to give extra time in significant tests to allow children to get used to the accommodation.

The Head of Learning Support Year 4-8 is required to collate evidence for ongoing schools to demonstrate that extra time has been consistently given and used productively.

Laptop Use

NHP facilitates laptop dispensation when it is recommended in an EP report. The rapid acquisition of touch typing proficiency is encouraged in this instance, to give the child sufficient time to benefit from working this way whilst at NHP. Children need to 'graduate' to the required level of touch typing proficiency for an NHP classroom.

Once 'graduated', parents provide personal laptops for their child's exclusive use at home and school. Children will be expected to bring their laptop to every lesson, ready for use; it is essential to be able to demonstrate to senior schools that this is the child's normal method of working for them to get the same dispensation in school entrance exams.

In exceptional circumstances, laptop use in lessons is allowed without an EP report. In these cases, internal diagnostic assessments will be carried out to measure the child's speed and legibility of handwriting.

Evidence is gathered to demonstrate that this is the child's preferred method of working (in line with JCQ regulations) However, we warn parents that without an EP report, there is less certainty that ongoing schools will permit the use of a laptop in entrance examinations (although they are sometimes inclined to allow it if we can prove that using a laptop has become a child's customary way of working).