

Whole School Policy for Pupils with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

This policy was revised in September 2011 in line with the School's Policy Review Schedule which ensures all policies are kept up to date and replaces that updated in 2010.

The Whole School refers to all staff and students at Lavant House in the junior and senior school which includes: the Early Years/Foundation Stage (EYFS), Pre-Prep School (Key Stage 1), Prep. School (Key Stage 2); Middle School (Key Stage 3); Senior School (Key Stage 4) and the Sixth Form (Key Stage 5).

Aims

The Pupils with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Policy, known as the Learning Support, is an integrated part of the School's overall teaching policy which aims to help each girl reach her academic, sporting, musical and artistic potential. We try to identify those girls needing support as early as possible and thereafter provide specialist tuition, teaching to each girl's strengths while remediating their weaknesses, in order to develop self-confidence and a positive attitude to work.

Admissions and Special Needs

We welcome all children who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer and can flourish in the caring environment of Lavant House. Treating every child as an individual is important to us, and we welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Department can provide them with the support that they require. We do not however, have the facilities to offer highly specialised and intensive treatment.

We advise parents of children with special educational needs to discuss their child's requirements with Lavant House before she sits our entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision for her. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request, for example for extra time or other special arrangements.

On Entry

Each pupil with a special educational need requires special consideration and treatment. If appropriate, adjustments will need to be put in place. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their child once they have accepted the offer of a place and before she becomes a pupil at the school.

Staffing

The Learning Support Department is staffed by teachers holding recognised qualifications to teach students with Specific Learning Difficulties from primary age through to A level, using well researched and proven multi-sensory methods. The Department's activities are co-ordinated by Mrs Sue Jones who has provided Learning Support at the school since 2003.

The Code Of Practice

We follow the code's main principles summarised as follows:

- The needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs, (SEN), are addressed and there is a continuum of needs and provision.
- Children with SEN require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education.
- The needs of most pupils will be met in mainstream teaching and without statutory assessment or statement of SEN. Children with SEN should be educated alongside their peers in mainstream schools to the fullest extent possible.

The Learning Support Co-coordinator provides assistance to parents, form and subject teachers as well as members of the Learning Support Department in order to identify each child's needs, assist their teachers and organise one-to-one teaching or small groups as appropriate.

Partnership With Parents

Parents are encouraged to work together with the School to identify and support the needs of their daughters. No child starts individual lessons without the permission of the parents who are responsible for providing the costs of tuition and assessment by specialist teachers and/or an Educational Psychologist.

Principles Of Provision By Lavant House Learning Support Department

The Department provides support and specialised teaching on a one-to-one basis during school hours to those students identified and assessed as needing help with reading, spelling, maths and study skills.

All girls will be screened on entry using the LUCID Rapid Dyslexia Screener programme. Should this highlight a potential problem, parents will be invited to discuss the result with the SENCO. Initially, support and monitoring of progress may be sufficient action but parents may be asked to have their daughter formally assessed by an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher to ascertain the level of difficulty. Furthermore, for pupils studying for external exams (GCSE and A Levels) a formal assessment is essential in order to obtain evidence of need for special exam arrangements such as extra time, use of a reader, amanuensis or a lap top computer.

Initial enquiries are made to the Learning Support Co-coordinator, either by the parents, form or subject teacher and the child is then assessed, initially by a member of the Learning Support team, with permission of the parents. The Department aims to assess each child as quickly as possible and implement the Code of Practice within a month of the first enquiry.

The child's specialist teacher works closely with the form or subject teacher in order to:

- Plan a programme of work and define accessible targets. Teaching plans for all children are kept in the Department and are available at any time to parents and teachers.
- Identify a lesson time within the school timetable which will be least disruptive to the child.
- Give advice on the best ways to manage the pupil in the form room.
- Maintain an exchange of ideas and progress reports on an informal basis throughout the year.

Identification:

Some girls enter the School with an identification of need already having been made by an Educational Psychologist or another professional but the School has introduced a screening policy in September 2010. All girls will be screened on entry to the School using the LUCID Rapid Dyslexia Screener. Should this highlight a potential problem, parents will be invited to discuss the result with the SENCO. Initially, support and monitoring of progress may be sufficient action but parents may be asked to have their daughter formally assessed by an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher to ascertain the specific nature of the difficulty.

In line with paragraph 5.11.SEN Code of Practice 2002, we do not regard identification of need as a single event but rather a continuing process.

Referrals to the Learning Support Department may be made at any time by teaching staff as a result of concerns observed in the classroom or because of girls' poor performance in tests or exams.

Girls, or their parents, may request intervention from the Learning Support Department.

Procedures:

Provision for girls with a learning difficulty or disability is a matter for the School as a whole. All members of staff have important day- to- day responsibilities and are expected to be aware of the learning needs of all the girls that they teach and to take reasonable steps to address each girl's need.

All girls with identified special educational needs and those who have received support from the Learning Support Department are listed on the Learning Support Register which is distributed to all members of the teaching staff. All teachers are expected to access this in order to keep fully informed of the nature of each girl's specific learning difficulty.

Disabled Students:

Reasonable adjustments to the curriculum and an inclusive approach to teaching and learning will aim to include students with disabilities. Specific arrangements will be made for students with hearing or visual impairment, following the advice of expert agencies. Parents are urged to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would need to be put in place well in advance of application for a place in the school.

Statemented Pupils:

Lavant House School will comply with the requirement to conduct an Annual Review of Statement, in conjunction with LEA advisors, for all girls with an LEA statement of need.

Intervention:

Girls requiring additional help will attend lessons in the Learning Support Department individually or in small groups. They are withdrawn from the School timetable in agreement with subject staff, parents and the pupil's wishes if possible. Core curriculum subjects are usually avoided. Some girls from the same forms attend with a rolling programme to minimise the effect of missing a particular subject.

Specialist teachers liaise with girls' Form and Subject teachers in order to plan a programme of work and define accessible targets. An Individual Education Plan will be drawn up to include Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timed (SMART) targets. Girl's progress is monitored on an ongoing basis and targets are reviewed termly. Pupils are encouraged to participate in target setting.

Decisions on the continuity of lessons are based on the pupil's ability to access the curriculum without support. Girls are encouraged to be independent learners.

As well as encouraging parents to discuss the child's needs and progress informally at any time during the year, each member of the Department tries to attend a parent-teacher evening twice a year, at which time parents, who have been unable to meet the specialist teacher earlier, can discuss the child's progress and satisfy any queries they may have.

Physical Accessibility

We recognise that some children with special education needs may also have physical disabilities. Parents and prospective parents of disabled children can obtain copies of Lavant House school's Accessibility Plan and Disability Policy on request from the school office. This shows the ways in which we plan to make our buildings progressively more accessible to disabled pupils, parents and visitors.

English As A Second Lanaguage

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Lavant House, pupils must be fluent English speakers. We may recommend that some children, whose first language at home is not English, receive individual tuition in English as an additional language.

Staff Training

Our teaching staff receives training on the learning needs of pupils with special education needs and disabilities.

Charging Policy

Specialist learning support assessments and lessons are charged as extras. Current rates are available on the school website.

Our charges for individual tuition in English as an additional language are also listed on the school website.

Conclusion

The Learning Support Department at Lavant House has grown over the last 15 years from a staff of one, teaching seven pupils, to a staff of two teaching between thirty and forty pupils at any one time, reflecting the School's active interest and commitment to providing effective support for girls whose problems can be wide-ranging and demanding. Our results show the progress those students can make; most of the students receiving learning support achieved A-C grades in English and Maths in the GSCE examinations.

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