

Special Educational Needs Provision Policy

St.Enda's National School

June 2016

This Policy on Learning-Support / Resource (LSR) Provision in St. Enda's NS, was formulated taking cognizance of the mission statement of the school 'to provide an education of the highest quality in order to enable all individuals to develop to their full potential as persons and to participate fully as citizens in society'.

It is guided by directives contained in the 1998 Education Act; the Learning-Support Guidelines (2000); the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004; and recent DES Circulars, especially Circular 02/05.

1. Background

St.Enda's NS was allocated 0.75 Learning Support Teacher under the General Allocation Model (GAM). The school also has a part-time Resource Teacher. The school has a number of pupils who have been diagnosed as having low incidence learning disabilities and high incidence learning disabilities.

This policy is the SEN Policy for St. Enda's NS, and also contains a section which outlines the policy for Screening, Assessment, Caseload, Selection, Permissions and Review.

2. Aims

The principal aim of Special Education provision, "is to optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school" (LSG: p. 15).

This support may be provided by the class teacher and / or the Learning Support/Resource Teacher (See Appendix 1: The Staged Approach, described in Circular 02/05).

2.1 Subsidiary aims

1. to enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level

2. To develop positive self esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils
3. To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
4. To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English and / or Mathematics
5. To involve parents in supporting their children through effective parent support programmes
6. To promote collaboration among teacher in the implementation of whole school policies on learning support for pupils
7. To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning
8. To guard the self-esteem and self-image of the learner.

3. Principles

Effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

1. Effective whole-school policies and parental involvement
2. Prevention of failure
3. Provision of intensive early intervention
4. Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

4. Roles and Responsibilities.

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared the Board of Management, Principal Teacher, Class Teachers, Learning Support Teacher, Resource Teacher, Parents and Children. It is important that everyone contributes in the planning and implementation of our school plan on Special Educational Needs Provision.

4.1 Role of the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall:

1. Oversee the development, implementation and review of the Special Educational Needs Policy.
2. Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Learning Support and Resource Teachers.
3. Provide adequate funds for the purchase of Learning Support and Resource materials. "Funds provided for these materials should not be limited to the learning-support grant provided by the Department of Education and Science", (Learning-Support Guidelines, p. 47).
4. Provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of Learning Support or Resource Teaching.

4.2 Role of the Principal Teacher

"The principal teacher has overall responsibility for the school's learning-support programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs". (Learning-Support Guidelines, p.38). The Education Act (1998) and the EPSEN Act (2004)

The Principal Teacher is required to:

1. Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on learning-support and special needs in co-operation with the Learning Support and Resource Teachers.
2. Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support and special needs.
3. Monitor the implementation of the school plan on LSR and special needs on an ongoing basis.
4. Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with very low achievement.
5. Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
6. Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.

7. Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning-support.
8. Liaise regularly with the Learning Support and Resource Teachers, “In order to support the implementation of school policy on learning support as outlined in the school plan, the principal teacher should arrange a meeting with the learning-support teacher at least once each school term to discuss the implementation of the school plan on Special Educational Needs Provision” (Learning-Support Guidelines, p. 40).
9. Assume direct responsibility for coordinating Learning Support and Resource teaching and special needs services.

4.3 Role of the Class Teacher.

1. Circular 02/05 demands the implementation of the Staged Approach. Stage 1 of this approach requires class teachers to support their pupils’ learning, in the first instance
2. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her /his class, including those selected for supplementary teaching.
3. The Staged Approach requires class teachers to construct simple, individual plans of support, and to implement this plan for a specified time before referring the child for Stage 2 interventions.
4. This can be achieved by:
5. Grouping pupils for instruction
6. Providing lower-achieving pupils with strategies for reading, spelling and problem solving
7. Adapting learning materials for lower-achieving pupils
8. Liaising closely with their parents.
9. The class teacher plays an important role in the initial identification of pupils who may have general or specific learning disabilities. The class teacher will carry out appropriate screening measures him / herself and / or refer the pupil to the learning-support teacher for appropriate screening.
10. For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, the class teacher will collaborate with the learning-support teacher in the development of an Individual

- Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP) by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.
11. A key role of successful learning-support is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the learning-support teacher.
 12. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of IEPs.
 13. The class teacher should meet with parents to:
 14. Make parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress
 15. Outline the school's practices regarding the administration of diagnostic tests by the Learning Support or Resource teacher and seek the approval of the pupil's parents to proceed with such assessment
 16. Outline the support that is available in the school to pupils who experience low achievement and / or learning difficulties
 17. Indicate to the pupil's parents that a meeting with the Learning Support or Resource teacher will follow the assessment
 18. After the diagnostic assessment, attend, if possible, the meeting between the pupil's parents and the Learning Support or Resource teacher and indicate how the pupil's class programme will be modified in order to achieve the agreed learning targets in the pupil's IEP.

4.4 Role of the Learning-Support / Resource Teacher (LS/RT).

The activities of the Learning Support teacher and Resource teacher should include both teaching and non-teaching duties. According to the Learning-Support Guidelines (2000) "The particular balance that the learning-support teacher achieves between supplementary teaching and consultative activities will depend on the specific circumstances of the school" (p. 32). The Learning Support and/or Resource teachers' activities should include, where possible:

1. Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
2. Provide supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.

3. Research the pupil's specific learning difficulty.
4. Implement recommendations from outside agencies, wherever possible, and liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children in their care.
5. Development of an IPLP/IEP for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents.
6. Maintaining a weekly planning and progress record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of learning support.
7. Delivering intensive early intervention programmes and providing supplementary teaching in English and / or Mathematics to pupils in the junior section of the school (Senior Infants to 2nd Class), caseload permitting.
8. Providing teaching in English and / or Mathematics to pupils in the senior section of the school who experience low achievement and / or learning difficulties.
9. Co-ordinating the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, giving due consideration to:
 - a. The selection criteria specified in this Special Educational Needs Provision policy
 - b. Teachers' professional observations
 - c. Input from parents
10. Contributing to the development of policy on Special Educational Needs Provision at the whole school level
11. Providing advice to the Class Teacher (if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties.
12. Meet with parents of each pupil who is in receipt of Learning Support or Resource teaching to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.
13. Meet with parents of each pupil who is in receipt of Learning Support or Resource teaching at the end of the school year:
14. To review the pupil's attainment of agreed targets
15. To discuss the next instructional term
16. To revise the pupil's IEP.

17. Contributing at the school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the learning-support teacher's room.
18. Liaising with external agencies such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists etc... to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
19. Collaborate with the principal teacher and meet with him / her at least once each school term to discuss issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan on Special Educational Needs Provision, and to the provision of Special Educational Needs.
20. The Learning Support and the Resource teacher should work closely with class teachers to implement school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screening pupils for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching and other forms of learning-support, where it is deemed necessary.
21. The Learning Support and the Resource teachers play an important role in co-ordinating the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching. The Learning Support and the Resource teacher shall:
22. Co-ordinate the administration by class teachers of a whole-school screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and / or learning difficulties in English and Mathematics
23. Consult with class teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment, taking into account the pupils' scores on an appropriate standardised screening measure, agreed criteria for identifying pupils, teachers' own views of the pupils' difficulties and needs and the number of pupils to whom Learning Support or Resource teaching can be provided.
24. In addition to providing supplementary teaching to pupils, the Learning Support and/or the Resource teacher is involved in administering a range of formal and informal assessments and in maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments.

25. The Learning Support and/or the Resource teacher shall conduct an initial diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having low achievement and / or a learning difficulty, based on results of an appropriate screening measure and record the findings of the assessment in the pupil's IEP.
26. Monitor the ongoing progress of each pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching in relation to the attainment of agreed learning targets and short-term objectives that arise from them, and record the observations in the Weekly Planning and Progress Record, or equivalent.
27. Review the progress of each pupil on an ongoing basis.

4.5 Role of Parents

“Parents through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child's learning programmes” (Learning-Support Guidelines, p.52). Parents can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

1. Providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities.
2. Supporting the work of the school.
3. Parents should keep the class teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home. If, following diagnostic assessment, the child has been identified as requiring supplementary teaching, the parents should attend a meeting with the learning support teacher to discuss:
 - a. The results of the assessment
 - b. The learning targets in the child's IPLP/IEP
 - c. The actions to be taken by the school to meet those targets
 - d. The ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home.

4.6 Role of Pupils

“The involvement of pupils in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes is an important principle underlining effective supplementary teaching” (Learning-Support Guidelines, p.54).

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

1. Become familiar with the medium and short-term learning targets that have been set for them and they should be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of such targets.
2. Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets.
3. Develop ‘ownership’ of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.
4. Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

5. Prevention and Early Intervention.

Prevention / early intervention is a cornerstone of LSR.

5.1 Prevention Strategies.

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

1. The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class. (See Plean Scoile for English and for Mathematics)
2. Provision of additional support in language development and relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it
3. Implementation of a whole school parental involvement programmes that focus on developing children’s oral language skills, shared books with children and developing their early mathematical skills
4. Implementation of paired reading programmes involving adults / parents and pupils in the school

5. Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties
6. Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant teacher, the Learning Support and the Resource teacher.

5.2 Early Intervention Programmes.

1. Early intervention is a vital component of the Special Education Provision provision in this school, caseload permitting. Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class teacher and / or by the Learning Support and the Resource teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach, outlined in Circular 02/05 (pp. 21-22), and available here in Appendix 1.
2. Close collaboration and consultation between the class teachers, the Learning Support and the Resource teacher, will identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of pupils for early intervention programmes.
3. Intensive early intervention programmes in the early primary classes is considered an effective response to meeting the needs of children with low achievement.

6. Policy on Screening, Assessment, Caseload, Selection, Permissions and Review.

This section of the policy refers to policy in relation to screening etc in St. Enda's NS.

6.1 Parental Permission.

1. Written parental permissions are required for children to attend learning-support.
2. Written parental permissions are also required for the Learning Support and/or the Resource teacher to undertake individual, diagnostic testing (Circular 02/05).
3. A copy of these permissions will be kept on file

6.2 Initial Screening

Class teachers will carry out the initial screening tests. Class teachers will also correct and record results for both Micra-T/Sigma-T and Drumcondra standardised tests.

6.3 Diagnostic Assessment:

The Learning Support and/or the Resource teacher will discuss each class's recorded results with the class teacher, and carry out further screening tests and / or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary. The results of these tests will be available for the end of year staff meeting.

6.4 Caseload Decisions:

Large caseloads have led to a dilution of Special Educational Needs provision, and this is to be avoided, as is the inclusion of average-achieving pupils on the Learning Support caseload. The Staged Approach (See Appendix 1 of this policy), together with current guidelines (the LSG), and DES directives must inform all decision-making regarding the Learning Support or the Resource teacher caseload.

6.5 Selection Criteria:

The following selection criteria encompass all current guidelines and general good practice.

Pupils assessed as being in the Low Incidence learning disability category.
(Access to Resource Teaching)

The Learning Support teacher will select pupils in accordance with these criteria, stopping at (1) if his / her caseload is full, but will continue on to point (2) caseload permitting, and so on through the selection criteria.

1. Pupils assessed as being in the High incidence learning disability category.
2. Pupils assessed as being in the Mild General learning disability category.
3. Senior Infants identified by the class teacher, through teacher observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments as having difficulty in literacy
4. Pupils in 1st class scoring at/below 57th percentile in the DTEL, Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy Screening – pupils tested end of Senior Infants.

5. Pupils in 1st class scoring at/below 53rd percentile in the DTEN, Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy Screening – pupils tested end of Senior Infants.
6. Pupils from 1st/2nd scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
7. Pupils from 3rd/4th scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
8. Pupils from 1st/2nd scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in numeracy.
9. Pupils from 3rd/4th scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in numeracy.
10. Pupils from 5th/6th scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy.
11. Pupils from 5th/6th scoring at/below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in numeracy.
12. Pupils from 1st-4th class scoring between 12th-20th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy.
13. Pupils from 5th/6th class scoring between 12th-20th percentile on standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy.

EAL Support will be assessed on an individual basis.

6.6 Deploying Resources: The 6 Steps from Circular 02/05.

- (1) Step 1 Circular 02/05, p. 7. A list of every pupil in the school, who has been highlighted as being in need of support, will be compiled by the Learning Support teacher.
- (2) Step 2 Circular 02/05, p. 7. This list will be examined in consultation with Circular 02/05, and each child will be allocated support, as appropriate, under the terms of the Staged Approach.
- (3) Step 3 Circular 02/05, p. 7. A list of members of the teaching staff will be compiled.

- (4) Step 4 Circular 02/05, p. 8. A member of staff will be allocated to support the learning of each pupil identified, taking into account: the Staged Approach; the needs of the pupils; the expertise and experience of the teacher; and practical considerations.
- (5) Step 5 Circular 02/05, p. 8. Pupils with similar needs may be grouped for support.
- (6) Step 6 Circular 02/05, p. 8. A tracking and recording system will be established. Teachers will actively monitor the progress of pupils.
The Learning Support teacher will attend and contribute to staff meetings, and Special Educational Needs Provision will be included on the agenda for staff meetings at least once per instructional term.

7. Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.

Individual programme planning will be carried out for all pupils receiving supplementary teaching. This planning can take the form of an IPLP (Individual Profile and Learning Programme) as outlined in 'Learning support Guidelines', or an IEP (Individual Education Plan) as outlined in 'Guidelines on the Individual Education Process'.

1. An instructional term is generally taken to mean 13-20 weeks of instruction.
2. A review of the learning targets and activities in the pupil's IEP will be carried out.
3. Supplementary teaching will normally be discontinued where the targets have been met and the pupil (on assessment) is performing above the percentile laid down in the criteria for receiving learning-support.
4. The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some pupils (who have made satisfactory progress), in order for the LSRT to provide early intervention / prevention for Senior Infants, after the analysis of the MIST screening test results in February (pupils who have not responded to Stage One interventions by the class teacher, under the Staged Approach).

5. Due consideration will be given to the overall needs of the school.

8. Monitoring Progress.

Monitoring the academic progress of the pupils in this school will be accomplished by:

1. Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties by the class teacher.
2. Formal and informal testing and observation of work by the class teacher.
3. Implementing the school policies on screening and the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in English and / or in Mathematics by administering and scoring appropriate measures:
 - a. Senior Infant pupils: MIST each year in February
 - b. 1st to 6th Class pupils: Micra-T and Sigma-T and Drumcondra Spelling Test each year in December
 - c. 1st to 6th Class pupils: Drumcondra Reading and Maths and Drumcondra Spelling Test each year in May
 - d. Standardised and diagnostic testing by the learning-support teacher.
 - e. Record keeping (Children have a file where records, test results and assessments are kept in a secure filing cabinet in the school office).
 - f. Non-academic progress of pupils in this school will be reviewed informally: for example under the headings of improvements in the pupil's self esteem; school attendance; attitude to learning; attitude to school and general behaviour.

9. Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy.

Monitoring of the SEN Policy is an ongoing and developmental process.

The whole school staff will discuss this SEN Policy at least once a year at a staff meeting, and review as necessary.

Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____[date]

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

