

## Special Needs

(Responsibility: Assistant Director of Studies)

The School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is Mrs L Jones (LVJ). Mr. M.V.P. Dillon is responsible for looking after the specific needs of those students for whom English is an additional language. Peripatetic and in-house teachers provide learning support. Copies of the SEN Policy are in the Common Room, the Houses and Medical Centre and on the teachers T drive of the network.

### *Principles*

As an independent institution, Aldenham School follows the principles of the Education Act (1993) and the Code of Practice (1994) regarding Special Educational Needs.

- All students are supported and encouraged to achieve their potential.
- Students with special educational needs receive help according to their needs.
- Parents are involved as partners in the educational process.
- We operate a flexible specialist support system.

We follow the Every Child Matters (DfES 2003) strategy to reduce educational failure and maximise the potential of all children with special educational needs. Our aim is to:

1. Provide personalised learning pathways for each child with SEN
2. Make education more innovative and responsive to the diverse needs of individual children
3. Raise the achievement of children with SEN

The SEN strategy at Aldenham School is based on:

1. Early intervention to ensure that help is accessed as soon as possible
2. Removing barriers to learning by embedding inclusive practice in school and early years settings
3. Raising expectations and achievements by developing teachers' skills and strategies
4. Delivering improvement in partnership

### **Access to the Curriculum**

All students have access to the Aldenham Curriculum, although an individual teaching plan may recommend modifications in response to a pupil's educational needs.

### **Access to Information**

Record sheets are kept in the CR for each pupil entered on the SEN Register. Brief details are also available on PASS. The CR should refer to these for information on pupils' Learning Difficulties and are encouraged to forward their own comments to the SENCO. Teaching staff must treat this information as strictly confidential.

### **SEN stages as reported in PASS**

1. Information is gathered and progress monitored.
2. SENCO is responsible for managing SEN provision as noted in PASS.
3. SENCO is responsible for managing SEN provision specified in SEN Statement.

### **Provision.**

Specialist tuition is offered to pupils with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, pupils for whom English is not their first language, and pupils with difficulties in Maths.

Support takes the form of small group study skills, open access science support and individual tuition for maths, EAL and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

### ***Identifying pupils with specific learning difficulties.***

Pupils in the senior school have usually been assessed before arriving. However a specific learning difficulty can be indicated by a discrepancy between general intellectual ability and a particular area of learning. This is often shown by a wide variation of scores in Midyis and Alis skills testing or by performance in class and exams. There are some who join us without having been identified as needing support, either because their difficulties are very slight or because their difficulties are masked by above average intelligence. These can remain hidden for many years.

A common indicator is a discrepancy between spoken and written language, which may be caused by dyslexia (difficulty with the written word.) Although this is a difficulty with a specific skills area, it affects every area of the curriculum, directly through difficulty with reading/writing/processing verbal information and indirectly through low self-esteem.

Pupils with a specific learning difficulty who are coping in the classroom without specialist support (stage 1) are likely to be above average in both intelligence and commitment. Although compensating for their difficulties sufficiently to produce an average academic performance, they may be significantly underachieving.

More common is the pupil who manages his difficulties badly, due to the frustration of seeing less able peers achieve superior results and they become demotivated from a constant sense of failure. Performance is likely to be erratic and the pupil will probably be easily distracted from task. Behavioural difficulties are a common secondary problem.

Pupils who are identified as a cause for concern can be referred to the Learning Support Department for an internal assessment for SpLD/Dyslexia.

### **Some common indicators of specific learning difficulties are:**

hesitant and inaccurate reading; inaccuracy when response depends on reading; inaccurate spelling; poor syntax; disregard for punctuation; untidy presentation of work; inappropriate capital letters; poor organisation of writing, work, files, equipment, self; slow reading and writing; poor co-ordination; poor spatial awareness; difficulty with sequences; difficulty following instructions; memory problems.

If you think a pupil may be underachieving you should discuss your concerns with his/her housemaster or tutor, and with the SENCO

### *Support for Pupils*

#### **Supporting the Dyslexic learner in the classroom.**

**Always consult pupils about their individual learning difficulties and strengths and discuss how best to support them in class. Ask housemaster/ LVJ for information.**

#### 1. Reading

- Check glasses are worn if needed.
- Books should be held open flat; it is more difficult to track across curved surface.
- Read text aloud to/around class so words can be heard as well as read.
- Discuss difficult topics before reading. List key words, providing an overview.
- Tell pupil in advance what pages will be read so he can prepare.
- Allow use of tape of text, where possible, (e.g. literature).
- Explain tasks in advance so pupil knows what to look for and can make notes.
- Ensure that tasks are written down for reference while reading.
- Encourage use of highlighters, notes, underlining of text where possible.
- Dyslexic pupils may be very easily distracted.

#### 2. Copying

- Pupils should sit at the front, facing the board directly.
- Use different coloured pens, headings, etc. on board to help pupils find their place.
- Read text on board aloud so that it is heard as well as seen.
- Provide a copy or allow another pupil to make a carbon copy.
- Allow use of key words, diagrams, mind maps, lists, etc.
- If text must be copied in full, allow time for this.

#### 3. Spelling

- Comment on content before accuracy.
- Praise any effort to be neat and accurate.
- Give pupils a list of subject words to learn, in advance if possible.
- Set realistic goals. Focus on more common/important words.
- Tell pupil and ET teacher what needs to be learned.

#### 4. Writing.

- Encourage planning.
- Encourage verbalisation of ideas before writing, where possible.
- Allow diagrams, tables, lists, instead of continuous prose, where possible.
- Written prep. might take the dyslexic much longer than others to complete.
- Tell pupil if work falls below his usual standard.

#### 5. Revision.

- Check that revision topics have been correctly written down.

- The dyslexic is likely to need more time, and so more notice, to revise than others.

#### 6. Confidence.

- Praise where possible; dyslexics often feel demotivated due to repeated failure.
- For the dyslexic, achievement is often a poor reflection of effort.
- Acknowledge difficulties but never excuse poor effort.
- Encourage pupil to ask for help. He may need more support than others.
- Give credit for oral responses whenever possible.

#### 7. Giving verbal information.

- Try to give information in more than one mode, e.g. visual & auditory.
- The dyslexic may process less verbal information in one go than others.
- His understanding of verbal instructions may be relatively limited.
- Check that you have his attention when giving instructions.
- Ask him to repeat instructions back to you.
- Ask him to write instructions down to aid memory.
- Write instructions on the board, e.g. page no., as well as saying them.

### **Learning Support and the Use of ICT in Subject Lessons**

For some pupils, it is appropriate to use ICT to support their learning. These pupils will usually be given permission by external examination boards to use a laptop PC in public examinations and the same criteria apply to their use in normal lessons. Permission is only granted when the Head of Learning Support agrees that the use of a laptop PC will improve a pupil's access to learning, when the use of a laptop PC does not impinge on Health and Safety and when the subject teacher agrees to its use.

In all cases the following procedures must be followed; use of ICT must not occur beforehand:

- Parents or guardians write directly to the Head of Learning Support to request permission.
- Assessment of need is carried out to evaluate the best way of using It to support learning
- Permission is agreed, details are entered in the Learning Support Register and
- Housemasters/HODs/teachers are informed. Any criteria for use are defined in agreement between the Head of LS and individual teachers.

These procedures do not apply in cases where pupils have been given permission by subject teachers to use laptop PCs at specific times, such as when completing coursework, as agreed with the Head of Department. Misuse of the laptop in lessons will result in the agreement being withdrawn for a period of time agreed with the Director of Studies and parents will be informed.

*2007*

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