



BEDSTONE COLLEGE
LEARNING SUPPORT
DEPARTMENTAL HANDBOOK

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Section 1 – Introduction

Learning Support

Approximately 15% of the school population currently accesses Learning Support (LS) on a regular basis (currently 37 individuals) for help with a range of learning difficulties. Lessons are offered primarily on a one-to-one basis, although small group tuition is also available as is classroom support for class teachers. The ethos of the LS Department is to offer enjoyable and stimulating lessons in a friendly and supportive environment which help to address whatever particular difficulty any scholar is experiencing with their learning. Although we exist primarily to support those who have identified areas of weakness, the department is available to offer support to all scholars at any time. Raising self-esteem is seen as key to removing barriers to learning for many of our scholars, and as such, we feel it is important that all our scholars are given every opportunity to experience academic success and to enjoy the experience of learning with us.

Staff

The Department has four members of staff. Jamie Lowe (JGL), HoD, full time, Joy Armstrong (JA) and Karen Mitchell (KM) both work two mornings per week and Diana Bradfield (DB) who works within the Department for three lessons per week.

Mr Jamie Lowe

Head of Learning Support

MA (1st Class Honours), French, Edinburgh University

PGD Inclusion and Special Educational Needs, Edgehill University

PGCE, Oxford Brookes University

Mrs Joy Armstrong

Part-time Teacher (8 hours per week)

MSc

PGCE

DIP RSA (Dyslexia)

Mrs Karen Mitchell

Part-time Teacher (8 hours per week)

DIP RSA (Dyslexia)

Ms Diana Bradfield

Part-time Teacher (3 lessons per week)

Cert Ed

Cert SpLD

Section 2 – Assessment and Referral

Initial Assessment and Referral

All new scholars are invited for an informal discussion with the Head of LS on entry to the secondary school. If necessary they are then assessed following this discussion using the Bangor Dyslexia Test and the British Picture Vocabulary Scale. Further assessments may then need to be carried out depending on the outcome of these initial assessments.

New entrants to the prep school are assessed and referred if necessary by their class teacher. Pupils experiencing difficulty are also identified through the regular Mark Order meeting system. Scholars or parents may also self-refer at any time.

If it is thought that a scholar may need some help or support on a regular basis then parents or carers will be informed and asked to give their consent. There is a charge for regular LS lessons, and LS staff will make a recommendation as to how many weekly lessons may be needed and over what timescale. Any changes in provision will be discussed and agreed by parents.

Ongoing Assessment

Teachers have access to a wide range of assessment materials which are used to inform them and their scholars of progress being made and also to support applications for exam access arrangements. Although standardised tests are seen as more reliable and informative than Reading and Spelling ages, these are still used by some departments within the College and are therefore recorded biannually in September and April using either the Schonell's tests or the Kirklees sentence comprehension test. Completed tests are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the LS office adjacent to ER1. Keys are held by JGL and Ms Paula Davies.

Assessment Materials

The Department has a wide range of standardised testing materials, which include:

Literacy and Numeracy

- Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA)
- Letterchains and Wordchains
- Schonell's graded word recognition test
- Schonell's spelling test
- The Access Reading Test
- The Dyslexia Screening Test (DST)
- The Vernon-Warden Reading Assessment
- The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT4)

Intelligence

The Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT)
The British Picture Vocabulary Test (BPVS)

Behaviour and self-esteem

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Individual Education Plans

Individual Education Plans (IEP's) were introduced in January 2009 to help with individual target-setting. These are updated in discussion with the scholar after each Mark Order meeting, when the scholar will have the opportunity to highlight any subject specific areas of difficulty. Once the IEP's are in regular use across the department, it is planned that copies will be held in the Senior Common Room and be accessible to all staff. It is also planned that copies of IEP's will be sent to parents at the start of each term. When not in use, IEP's are stored in the students' files in the locked filing cabinet in the LS office.

Section 3 – Exam Access Arrangements

Exam access arrangements

At the end of Year 9, all scholars (including those with no prior history of need) are screened using the Wordchains and Letterchains standardised tests to establish eligibility for differentiated exam access arrangements at GCSE. Those receiving LS and any identified by this screening will then be asked to take a further series of tests to establish evidence of need. Exam access arrangements which are available include:

- Coloured overlays
- Coloured paper
- Extra time up to 25%
- Oral language modifier
- Reader / scribe
- Supervised rest breaks
- Word processors

Testing will normally be carried out during normal LS lesson time, although where detailed evidence is required (for example for a reader or scribe), there may be an additional charge to parents. Those identified as needing extra time who are not currently receiving regular extra support will be encouraged to join LS for the duration of their GCSE courses.

JGL, KM and JA are the named specialist teachers who are registered with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) to carry out assessments for exam access arrangements. Scholar must complete a data protection disclaimer prior to the application being made on the OCR Interchange website. All documentation supporting the application and the disclaimer should be filed in the scholar's file in the Headmaster's secretary's office prior to the commencement of the relevant exam series.

Psychological Reports

When psychological reports are needed, for example the Army Education Service sometimes request reports when they are supporting families in paying for LS, KM may produce those reports under a private arrangement with parents.

Section 4 – Tuition and Resources

Tuition

In consultation with the scholar (and sometimes parents), the LS teacher will establish what extra tuition may be of benefit to the scholar. This is recorded on the IEP and reviewed every four weeks. LS has no set scheme of work since each scholar receives an individually tailored programme of study. Lessons should be fast-paced, varied, enjoyable and should always offer the scholar opportunities to experience success. Structured cumulative or pupil centred approaches are recommended.

Generally, lessons in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are skill-based, whereas lessons in Key Stages 4 and 5 they are more likely to focus on coursework and exam preparation. This is arranged in consultation with the class teacher.

As Head of department, JGL is also responsible for the delivery of the school's Cross-Curricular Studies (CCS) programme to 3B. This subject is taught to the B set in Year 9 while the A set are learning German. The scheme of work for CCS is included in the appendices of this document.

Resources

Learning Support is based in Exam Room 1 (ER1) and the adjacent office. LS also uses the Seminar Room from time to time.

LS have a large range of resources stored in ER1 and the store cupboard which includes the following:

- Alpha to Omega
- Auditory memory training
- Megawords
- Nessy brainbooster
- Nessy fingers (touch typing course)
- Numbershark
- Reading Comprehension in Varied Subject Matter
- Speed Up!
- Starspell
- Stride Ahead
- The Dyslexia Institute Maths Programme
- The Ginn Handwriting Programme

The Nesy Learning Programme
Toe by Toe
Units of Sound
Various games and puzzles
Visual memory training
Wordshark

Scholars in KS3 and 4 who struggle with spelling are encouraged to use the Aurally Coded English (ACE) Spelling Dictionary (LDA), and in KS1 and 2 are given the “500 Word Book” (Learning Materials Ltd, Wolverhampton). LS have support materials for both of these resources which help scholars to learn how to use them independently.

The Department has two standalone PC’s and a black and white laser printer.
A collection of 40 Barrington Stoke books for reluctant or struggling readers is held in the school library and is available to all scholars
Six teacher’s books offering advice on various aspects of SEN are held in the Senior Common Room.

Section 5 – Future Development

The Learning Support department plans to develop in the following areas over the coming year:

Internet and Network Access

Governors have given approval to LS’s request to provide a link to the school network and the Internet in ER1 (March 2009). This will enable scholars to access their homeareas and various valuable resources on the Internet while in ER1. Scholars will also be able to bring laptops to their lessons.

CReSTeD Status

JGL is aiming to put together the documentation that will enable Bedstone to register with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils (CReSTeD) as having a specialist Dyslexia Unit. This is the second highest classification under the CReSTeD system, and currently only two other schools in Shropshire (Ellesmere College and Ercall Wood) have this status. No schools in Herefordshire, Powys or Staffordshire have CReSTeD status, although there are 3 in Cheshire, 3 in Gloucestershire and 2 in the West Midlands. For further information, see www.crested.org.uk.

Gifted and Talented Provision

During the academic year 2009-2010, LS is running a pilot programme for a Year 11 scholar who is particularly able, but who has been under-achieving. In consultation with the Director of Studies, we are currently looking at how such a scheme might be developed in future.

Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP’s)

This year, a number of scholars have been referred to LS with behaviour and attention difficulties. In response, we have worked on developing Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP’s) with these scholars. We will be looking to extend this service, and are planning to offer scholars a brief period of involvement with LS to develop agreed strategies for improving behaviour and attention with scholars, and implementing IBP’s which can then be shared with all teaching staff.

Development of IEP's to Include Goal Attainment Scales (GAS) and rollout of IEP across the College

JGL is currently looking at ways in which GAS can be used to provide quantifiable data on the attainment of goals and targets used in Learning Support's IEP's. GAS is a system currently being rolled out by Birmingham City Council's Children and Young People's Team which offers a way of producing standardised scores to measure the effectiveness of specific interventions with children and young people. If successful, it may be possible that IEP's using GAS could be rolled out across the school to enhance and strengthen the tutoring system.

Learning Support for All

It is very much in the ethos of the Department that Learning Support should be accessible to all scholars, regardless of ability or attainment. We aim to continue to develop awareness of our service across the school community, and to ensure that all scholars and staff are aware that we are available to support inclusive learning throughout the college. In particular, we aim to offer support to all scholars, free of charge, whenever they may experience learning difficulty.