



LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENTAL HANDBOOK



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Section 1 – Introduction

Bedstone College

Bedstone College is an independent, co-educational boarding and day school for children aged 4 – 18. With a student population of around 200 and more than 80 staff, it is genuinely able to offer very individual support and learning for every child.



There is a strong family atmosphere and ethos – no-one gets ‘lost’ or overlooked. Students experiencing problems or displaying unacceptable behaviours are quickly identified and dealt with. Good behaviour is the norm and this rubs off on new students joining us. Even those who have had difficulties in other learning environments or have been school avoiders typically fit in well at Bedstone and gain much from the school.

Non-selective and inclusive, one of our core strengths is finding and bringing out the very best in each child; whether that be in the classroom, on the stage, on the sports field or in other realms. Not all children are destined for a Russell Group University but all have talents. Bedstone brings them to the fore and enables children to reach their potential.

Learning Support

Approximately 15% of the school population currently access Learning Support (LS) on a regular basis for help with a range of learning difficulties. Lessons are offered 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 student 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 students at any time. Raising self-esteem is seen as key to removing barriers to learning for many of our students, and as such, we feel it is important that all our students are given every opportunity to experience academic success and to enjoy the experience of learning with us. Learning Support has Faculty status within the College.

Staff

The Department has two members of staff. Jamie Lowe (JGL), Head of Department, full time and Teresa Chilles, part-time (one day per week).

Mr Jamie Lowe

Head of Learning Support, Specialist Teacher / Assessor
MA (1st Class Honours), French, Edinburgh University

Dip RSA SpLD (Dyslexia), Hereford and Ludlow College
PGD Inclusion and Special Educational Needs, Edgehill University
PGCE, Oxford Brookes University
CPT3A, Real Training

Mrs Teresa Chilles

Part-time Specialist Teacher / Assessor
BSc Chemistry
Dip RSA SpLD (Dyslexia)
PGCE
AMBDA

Section 2 – Assessment and Referral

Initial Assessment and Referral

All new students are invited for an informal discussion with the Head of LS on entry to the Senior school. If necessary they are then assessed following this discussion using the Bangor Dyslexia Test and the Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT). Further assessments may then need to be carried out depending on the outcome of these initial assessments.

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

If it is thought that a student 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 students 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 building. Keys are held by JGL and Mrs Paula Davis (Headmaster's PA).

Assessment Materials

The Department has a wide range of standardised testing materials, which include but are not limited to:

Literacy and Numeracy

Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA)

Letterchains and Wordchains

Detailed Analysis of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)

Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP)

The Dyslexia Screening Test (DST)

The Vernon-Warden Reading Assessment

The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT4)

Digit Memory, Dyslexia Action

Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)

Intelligence

The Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT)

Raven's Matrices

The British Picture Vocabulary Test (BPVS)

Behaviour and self-esteem

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The Boxall Profile

Visual Stress Assessment Pack

Individual Education Plans

Individual Education Plans (IEP's) were introduced in January 2009 to help with individual target-setting. These are updated at the start of each term, when specialist teachers set new targets to be covered in individual lessons and also targets for teaching staff generally. IEPs are then circulated to all teaching staff and sent to parents.



Section 3 – Exam Access Arrangements

Exam access arrangements

At the end of Year 9, all students in learning support undertake a series of standardised assessments in order to establish eligibility for differentiated exam access arrangements at GCSE. Exam access arrangements which are available include:

Coloured overlays

Coloured paper

Extra time up to and over 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 and TC are the named specialist teachers who are registered with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) to carry out assessments for exam access arrangements. Students 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 student's file in the Headmaster's PA'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, we may arrange for these to be produced under a private arrangement with parents.

Section 4 – Tuition and Resources

Tuition



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

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

Resources

Learning Support is based in its own building and each member of staff has their own teaching room. There is also a large store-room for resources, which include (but is not limited to) the following:

*Alpha to Omega
Auditory memory training
Beat Dyslexia
Dragon Naturally Speaking v11 Premium (1 license)
The Dyslexia Institute Maths programme (DIMP)
Dyslexia Rules!
Get Revising!
Hickey Teaching Programme
The Key Stage 3 Learning Kit
The Key Stage 4 Learning Kit
Lucid Comprehension Booster and Expansion Pack
Megawords
Nessy brainbooster
Nessy fingers (touch typing course)
Nessy Tables (web-based application – multiple licenses
Numbershark
Reading Comprehension in Varied Subject Matter
Read and Write Gold v10 (1 license)
Speed Up! Handwriting Programme*

Starspell
Stride Ahead
The Ginn Handwriting Programme
The Nessy Learning Programme (3 licenses)
Toe by Toe
Units of Sound
Various games and puzzles
Visual and Auditory memory training
Wordshark

Students 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 students to learn how to use them independently.

The Department has two networked PCs, each with a 23” touchscreen monitor and a dedicated departmental iPad loaded with a range of educational apps specifically designed to assist students with SpLD. WiFi is available throughout the LS building.

A collection of c.100 Barrington Stoke and similar books for reluctant or struggling readers is held in the school library and is available to all students

Section 5 – CReSTeD status and Recent Developments

In February 2013, the LS Department and school invited an inspection by the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Students (CReSTeD). CReSTeD judged that the learning support provision for students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) was of a sufficiently high standard to merit the award of Dyslexia Unit (DU) status to Bedstone College. This prestigious status is only shared with 37 other schools nationwide. CReSTeD hold a database of schools which meet its standards of provision and promotes its schools to parents, local authorities and the Ministry of Defence. 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.

In 2013-2014, JGL completed the OCR Level 7 Diploma in Teaching and Assessing Learners with Specific Difficulties qualification, the “gold standard” in the field of specialist dyslexia teaching.

Section 6 – Annual Learning Support Conference

Since 2011, The Department has hosted and organised an annual conference on Inclusive Education aimed at Learning Support professionals. This event has covered a range of topics from Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia to behaviour management. It has grown into probably the

largest event of its kind in the West Midlands, and provides a valuable source of additional income for the department.