

## **Whole School Policy for Learning Support in St. Stephen's BNS**

### **Situation**

St. Stephen's is an inner city mainstream boys' primary school catering for children from mixed social and cultural backgrounds.

St. Stephen's has 425 pupils on the school register at the present time.

We have 24 full time teachers in the school

- 1 Principal
- 16 class teachers
- 1 Home/School Co-Ordinator
- 5 Support Teachers
- 2 Language Teachers

The following resources are available

- 5 Support Teachers
- 2 Language Teachers
- 1 HSCL
- 4 Fulltime Special Needs Assistant
- 1 Infant Day SNA
- 1 Classroom Assistant

Support Teachers	Mrs. Kirwan Mrs. Musgrave Mrs Hatten/Ms Widger Mrs Mulvaney Ms Power
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Language Support	Mrs King Ms. Kenny
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Home/School	Mr Fahy
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Special Needs Assistant	Mrs. Nolan Mrs. Carton Mrs. O Regan Mrs. Madigan Mrs. Crowley
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Classroom Assistant	Mrs. Doyle
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## **Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested persons on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and to fulfill our obligation under the Education Act 1998.

## **Ratification And Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Stephen's in January 2016 \_\_\_\_\_. A copy of the policy will be made available to teachers, parents of Special Education Needs Pupils and other parents on request.

## **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

In St. Stephen's we are dedicated to helping each child to achieve his **individual potential**. The provision of a quality system of Learning Support is integral to this commitment. We aim to foster a spirit of inclusion among children of all abilities.

## **Aims**

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to

- 1) Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English, Maths and Social Skills.
- 2) Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level and become independent learners within their own ability.
- 3) Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
- 4) Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of this policy.
- 5) Involve parents in supporting their children's learning.

## **Selection Policy**

The following categories of pupils will receive supplementary teaching under the terms of the General Allocation Model outlined in DES Circular 02/02. Two teachers have been trained in Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, Dyslexia tutor and Social Skills. Reading Recovery covers children from 5 years + 8 months up to 6years +8months – this means four boys per day for 20 weeks approximately.

Maths Recovery covers boys in first class- four/six boys per day for 14 weeks and in-class team teaching in First Class on a rota system.

1. Pupils who have been diagnosed as having Low Incidence Learning Disabilities.
2. The pupils chosen for Reading Recovery & Maths Recovery Interventions.
3. Priority is given to pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised tests in English.
4. Early intervention in literacy up to second class.
5. Priority is given to pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised tests in Maths.
6. Early intervention in Maths up to second class.
7. Pupils requiring social skills intervention are identified.

Depending on the case load in each grouping and available resources, children diagnosed as having High Incidence Learning Disabilities and scoring above the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile may be included. If necessary, we may operate a rota system.

### **Provision of Supplementary Teaching**

- The primary work of the Learning Support Teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above.
- The school year will be divided into two instructional terms of approximately 20 weeks each.
- The maximum caseload at any one time will be 30 pupils.
- Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency.
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the pupils in consultation with the class teachers.
- The learning support teacher in consultation with the class teachers decides the size of the groups, taking into account the individual needs of pupils and the overall caseload.
- One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective and caseload permits.
- For children with resource hours and other children on Stage Three the class teacher and the learning support teacher meet to devise Individual/Group IEP's in consultation with the principal and parents.
- Each pupil in L.S. will have a pupil profile and a teaching record. **Individual**

### **Education Programmes**

The individual learning plan will be in accordance with the criteria as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000. The plan will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include-

Details from Class teacher

Assessment Results

Other relevant information e.g. reports from other agencies

Learning strengths and attainments

Priority learning needs

Learning targets

Class-based learning activities

Supplementary support activities

Home support activities

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation and the keeping of planning and progress records. A copy of the plan is available to all relevant class support personnel. A copy of the plan will be available to parents if required.

A detailed review will take place at the end of the instructional term. The learning support teacher and/or class teacher may meet parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

The L.S. teacher will maintain relevant records in individual files.

### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of Learning Support is a collaborative responsibility shared by

Board Of Management

Principal

Special Education Teachers

Language Support Teachers

Parents

Child

All are expected to contribute in the planning and implementation of the plan.

### **Role of Board of Management**

- To oversee the implementation of the Learning Support Policy and the provision of adequate resources, accommodation and storage.

## **Role of Principal**

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on learning support and special needs.
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support and special needs.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on learning support and special needs.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for resource teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with very low achievement and the most needy.
- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating learning support and special needs services.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with low achievement and learning difficulties.
- Oversee the development of Pupil Profiles.

## **Role of Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her/his class including those selected for supplementary teaching. In implementing the school policy the teacher should

- Make parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress.
- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and prevent, where possible, the emergence of learning difficulties.
- Implement the school policy on screening and selecting pupils for support teaching in English and Mathematics from Senior Infants to Sixth Class by administering appropriate screening measures – Renfrew, MIST, The Drumcondra English and Maths Tests, Quest English and Maths, Maths Recovery Screening Test.
- Be alert to the possibility that some children may have a specific learning difficulty and bring it to the attention of the S.E. T.

- Collaborate with the S.E.Ts. in the development of an Individual Education Plan and Pupil Profiles by identifying appropriate targets and organising classroom activities to achieve these targets.
- Modify class programmes to suit the needs of the pupils. Use differentiation.
- Where there is an SNA outline their duties clearly.
- Where possible attend meetings between SET and pupils' parents.

### **Role of Support Teachers**

- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
- Develop programmes for pupils who are selected for learning support in consultation with the class teacher and parents.
- Deliver early intervention programmes and provide supplementary teaching to pupils from Senior Infants to Second Class.
- Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the senior section of the school who experience low achievement.
- Liaise with class teacher on individual pupils' needs and progress.
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychologists to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching.
- Liaise with principal, teachers and parents on individual needs and progress.
- Conduct diagnostic testing.
- Maintain and renew pupil records which are stored in the office and in the Learning Support rooms.

## **Parents**

Support for and participation in their child's learning.

Attend P/T meetings

To collaborate in the planning, development and implementation of their child's learning plan.

To enter into a partnership by signing a copy of the above.

## **Pupils**

It is important for pupils to have an input into the development, implementation and review of their own learning. By doing so they can;

- ❖ become more independent as learners
- ❖ become aware of different learning styles
- ❖ become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs
- ❖ enjoy success and evaluate their progress-complete oral/written questionnaire
- ❖ excel at and enjoy many curricular and extra curricular activities which would not be practical in the mainstream class due to class size
- ❖ develop the skills and strategies taught during supplementary teaching and apply these strategies and skills in the mainstream class situation

## **SNA**

SNA works under the direction of the class teacher/support teacher.

## **Provision of Resources**

Resources for the provision of learning support include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language materials.

A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic screening, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.

Learning support materials will primarily be used in the L.S. room.

The resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with LST.

## **Success Criteria**

The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways;

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual education programme
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of learning support based on positive assessment results

- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting the child's learning needs
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupils' progress
- Enabling the pupil to move away from learnt dependence

### **Timetabling**

The provision of special needs teaching is in addition to regular teaching.

Time allocated per child will depend on the demands on the service and the hours authorised by the SENO/ or priority of needs.

Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend except where a pupil has been exempted from a subject by the DES.

Likewise the school will endeavour to ensure that pupils do not miss classes they particularly enjoy such as Art, P.E., or Computer.

### **Continuing /Discontinuing Support Teaching**

In general children should stay in supplementary teaching if they are at/below the 10th percentile.

Following the end of the instructional term, a decision is made to continue/discontinue supplementary teaching.

*Criteria on which the decision is made includes-*

Has the pupil achieved some/all of the targets set?

Will the pupil be able to cope independently/ semi-independently in the classroom learning context?

A decision to continue will result in a revision of the pupil's IEP and pupil profile.

The decision making process will involve consultation between the class teacher, learning support teacher and parents.

Account will also be taken of the overall learning demands in the school.

Where discontinuation occurs the class teacher monitors the progress of the pupil- (Stage 1)

### **Guidelines**

The following procedures are being implemented as a means of responding effectively to pupils' individual learning needs. We in St. Stephen's use the Staged Approach as per Department Guidelines.

## **PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties are

1. Development and implementation of agreed approaches to language development and to teaching other aspects of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression from class to class. (See Plean Scoile for Maths and English.)
2. Provide additional support in language development and relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it when resources allow.
3. Encourage parents on the importance of involvement in their child's learning.  
-Junior Infant Induction Meetings, Formal /Informal Parent Teacher Meetings and involvement in Pupil Profiles.
4. Implementation of paired reading programmes involving parents/adults and pupils in the school.
5. Implementation of Maths for Fun Programmes involving parents/adults and pupils in the school. These programmes will run for four weeks in a particular class.
6. Class based intervention by class teacher resulting in provision of additional teaching.
7. Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by class teacher.
8. In-class team teaching
9. Specific Social Skills Programmes

### **Differentiation**

Access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher.

### **Inclusion**

The goal of inclusion is to enable all pupils to belong within an educational community that values their individuality. This school attempts to promote inclusion through:

Modifying activities.

Allowing all children to participate in oral work.

Allowing all children the opportunity to participate in group work.

Providing appropriate tasks and practical work.

We respect and embrace the inclusivity of pupils with special needs in our school while also respecting the health and safety of our school community.

## **Early Remediation and Identification**

### **Junior Infants**

Some of the boys attend St. Stephen's Pre-School. For boys who do not attend St. Stephen's Pre-School, the Home School Co-ordinator invites the parents and children to an induction session of one hour in a Junior Infant classroom.

The class teachers use their own observations and teacher designed tasks to identify Speech and Language Problems, Learning Difficulties and Home Environment Problems.

The Home School Liaison Co-Ordinator visits each home to build up a rapport between school and home, to familiarise with the home situation and to help the parents to develop an awareness of their role as the child's primary educator. The

HSLC reports to the teacher on any significant needs or problems. The class teacher may also refer any concerns to the HSLC who will then visit the home, monitor the settling in of the child at school, social interaction with other children and any difficulties with homework/schoolwork. Where allocated, a child may receive support at Stage Three. In class team teaching of Ready Set Go Maths/ Maths Recovery. Renfrew Language Screening Test-September and May/June. The Aistear Programme is an integral part of Junior Infants.

### **Senior Infants**

Following a report from Junior Infant teachers and taking into account the senior infant teacher's own assessment, pupils are referred to the Learning Support Teacher in October. Boys are also selected for the Reading Recovery Programme. Attention is paid to oral language development, knowledge of letter names and sounds, rhyming skills and letter formation. The Maths Support Teacher will help develop conservation of number, Maths language, sequencing and addition. Sound Linkage is used in Terms 1/2 as an in-class intervention.

Pupils are tested with Schonell Word Reading Test followed by four weeks of Literacy Lift Off. Team based in class intervention in reading, writing and phonics.

In the second term the Mist Test is administered to all Senior Infant pupils. This will help to evaluate the skills achieved by the pupils so far and to identify those with problems. The Mist Test, along with teacher observation, will help decide the pupils for Learning Support help in First Standard. Maths Learning Support for first class will be delivered through the Maths Recovery Programme- individual and in-class. All Senior Infants are assessed in June using M.R. assessment test. Pupils are selected according to the results and teacher consultations.

### **First to Sixth Class**

Class teachers will carry out the initial screening tests and correct them. The Drumcondra Reading Test and Maths Test are the standardised tests being used in St. Stephen's. They are administered in April/ May. Diagnostic tests are then administered, in consultation with the class teacher, to each any pupil who is deemed to need further assessment. The English tests are the Daniels and Diack Spelling Test, Schonell Spelling Test, Rain Sentence Reading Test, Quest and Schonell Silent Reading Test. The Quest Maths Diagnostic Test and Maths Recovery Screening Test will be used for screening. These tests will help decide the boys who need support teaching. The final decision is based on test results and the observation of teachers. All new pupils are also tested.

Learning targets will be identified and an IEP will be drawn up for boys who have resource hours. The Learning Support programme is divided into two instructional terms and progress will be reviewed so that pupil needs and new learning targets may be identified.

At all times there will be consultation with the class teacher. A record of each pupil's progress is kept and the class teacher gets a report. Pupil changes may occur during the year, depending on progress made by learning support pupils or lack of progress by pupils in the main class. Parental permission is sought for diagnostic testing and written permission is required before a child can receive Learning Support or Resource help.

Second and Fourth Class pupils are screened in Mid-September with the NNRIT (Non Reading Intelligence Test). The NRIT helps to identify pupils with possible learning difficulties by comparing the child's innate ability and his performance in the Standardised Tests.

A meeting is held with the NEPS psychologist in September - Principal, SET's H.S.L.C. Priorities for the school year are identified and targeted. Other meetings during the school year will be held when needed. Where appropriate, other agencies may be involved – HSE, Social Workers, School Nurse, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, School Counsellor/Play Therapist, Welfare Officer.

The PAT PROGRAMME (Phonological Awareness Programme) is being taught in the school from First Class to Sixth Class. This programme is designed to help children to read, spell and write phonetically regular words. The aim is to give children a quick and easy entry to reading and spelling. The daily ten-minute programme provides intensive work on Reading, Spelling and Handwriting all within the same activity.

From September to February, St. Stephen's introduced the Literacy Lift Off Programme (Testing as before) in First Class. This is a team based in-class intervention which targets reading, writing and phonics. Parents are involved by reading with their son.

## **Implementation And Review**

The implementation of this policy began in September 2004.

The policy was reviewed in June 2006.

It was again reviewed in 2008.

It was reviewed again in June 2010.

Review 2013.

This copy was reviewed in January 2016

Scoil Stiofan Naofa,  
25 Sraid Phadraig,  
Portlairge.

St. Stephen's De La Salle,  
25 Patrick Street,  
Waterford.

Dear Parents,

We have English Learning Support Classes for pupils from Senior Infants to Sixth Class.

Classes are for pupils who need extra help in English.

Please sign the form below and return it as soon as possible.

Thank you,  
Support Teacher.

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**Learning Support Classes**

\_\_\_\_\_ has permission to attend English Learning Support Classes.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ does not have permission to attend English Learning Support Classes.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents,

We have Maths Learning Support Classes for pupils from Senior Infants to Sixth Class.

Classes are for pupils who need extra help in Maths.

Please sign the form below and return it as soon as possible.

Thank you,  
Support Teacher

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**Learning Support Classes**

\_\_\_\_\_ has permission to attend Maths Learning Support Classes.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
\_\_\_\_\_ does not have permission to attend Maths Learning Support Classes.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Three Stages**

Stage 1	Classroom intervention	
Stage 11	Learning Support	below 10th percentile classroom intervention fails
Stage 111	Low incidence Mild General Learning Disability Specific Learning Disability (Severe) Borderline General Learning Disability (Some) Those offered Resource Teaching prior to this	

### **Type of Support**

School decides on best type of support

one to one  
group ( those with similar needs)  
in class  
A mix of all three

### **Screening System**

Identification & Testing

Tests            Drumcondra            MIST            QUEST-English, Maths

Maths recovery Tests, (1:1) (2:1) Tests

Renfrew Language Tests

Schonell Word Reading

PM Benchmarking Kit

Checklists    Health Board  
                  Connors Parent Form (Long Version)  
                  Connors Teacher Form (Long Version)

How to address Behaviour problems/ Social interaction-Continuum of Support  
Tracking System of those getting support in our school.