

PRIOR'S FIELD SCHOOL

GODALMING SURREY

GSA BSA Girls' Boarding and Day 11-18

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SEN POLICY

DEFINITION

The guidance offered in the Education Act, 1996 and SENDA, 2001 states that:

“Legally a child is defined as having special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which needs special teaching. A learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age. Or, it means a child has a disability which needs different educational facilities from those generally provided by schools for children of the same age in the area.”

Within the context of Prior's Field School, Learning Support encompasses all elements of the pressures of learning for every pupil. This includes support for those who experience conceptual difficulties with words or numbers.

Most pupils will experience difficulties with academic work at some time in their school career and they will address these with individual help from subject teachers. The aim of the Learning Support Department is to provide the most appropriate support for the pupil so that she can access and benefit from the educational provision at Prior's Field.

We recognise, however, that there will be a minority of pupils who constantly under-achieve in reading writing, spelling and/or numeracy, because of difficulties resulting from sensory or physical impairment, ADD, ADHD, dyslexia etc. At Prior's Field we describe these as “specific learning difficulties”.

We also recognise that the most appropriate learning environment for pupils with specific learning difficulties is alongside their mainstream peers, where they have access to a normal, broad and balanced curriculum and the entire range of school activities.

We aim to identify pupils with specific learning difficulties as early as possible in order to provide appropriate learning support. In their first term at Prior's Field, year 7 pupils are screened using a professional software package. In addition, the school uses the MidYis systems and CAT tests. Pupils joining the school in the Lower Sixth are also screened.

Learning support is not viewed as a single teaching approach, rather a whole school approach. Staff throughout the school are aware of the specific needs of those pupils with specific learning difficulties and, where appropriate, are involved in the planning and implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Learning support is underpinned by understanding and positive support from the staff of Prior's Filed. In class support strategies will be utilised by subject teachers where appropriate.

Where we cannot cater for those more complex/severe needs, we recommend for these pupils a school with greater provision.

OBJECTIVES

Prior's Field is an academically selective school which welcomes all children who can make the most of the opportunities offered and who can flourish in the caring environment we provide. Treating every pupil as an individual is important to us, and we welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Department can offer the support that they require. We do not, however, have the facilities to offer highly specialised and intensive treatment.

We advise parents of children with special educational needs to discuss their daughter's requirements with us before she is registered to sit our entrance exam. Parents should provide a copy of any Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report so that the school is fully informed of the pupil's needs and special arrangements can be made, if required. It is the responsibility of the parent, not the previous school, to provide information and reports. Failure to supply this information will prevent the school from providing appropriate support.

ADMISSIONS

In line with the SEN Code of Practice, entry to the school is the same for all pupils applying for places. However, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities may require special consideration and treatment and, if appropriate, adjustments will need to be put in place. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisors the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their child once they have accepted the offer of a place and before she becomes a pupil at the school.

Some pupils, whilst not having a specific learning difficulty which requires academic support, may have been diagnosed as having a condition which prevents them from reaching their full potential without some form of support and mentoring. For example, ADHD, ADD or Asperger's Syndrome.

Our Learning Support Department is staffed by fully qualified specialists who are able to support each pupil with a specific learning difficulty in a number of areas such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. The Head of Learning Support co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates the work of this team. The school supports a multi-disciplinary approach, to maximise the educational provision for pupils with special educational needs. Alongside the SLT and boarding staff, the Learning Support Department works with speech and language therapists, audiologists and other professionals.

PRINCIPLES

1. All pupils at Prior's Field have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
2. Learning support is provided either in small groups or individually to those who have been identified as having specific learning difficulties.
3. Departments will outline how they intend to meet the needs of such students in departmental handbooks and schemes of work.
4. The Head of Learning Support works closely with departments to ensure that the needs of pupils are known and met.
5. The School aims to use appropriate teaching methods and resources that take into account the pupils' learning styles and individual needs.
6. Pupils will be placed in small sets where this is possible and appropriate.
7. Appropriate support will be given to pupils with specific learning difficulties at end of unit tests and examinations.
8. Pupils will be recorded on a central school register which is maintained and monitored by the Head of Learning Support and shared with all staff.
9. Staff will have opportunities to attend in-service training sessions to increase their knowledge and understanding of this area. The Head of Learning Support provides additional support to staff on an individual or small group basis.
10. The school pastoral system incorporates strategies to support all special needs.

IDENTIFICATION

The ways in which specific learning difficulties may be identified are through subject teachers feeding back on work in lessons, written work and homework; internal monitoring systems and school tests and examinations. Parents may also offer information such as Educational Psychologist reports. In addition, the school screens pupils on entry.

Any suspicions or concerns will be referred immediately to the Head of Learning Support who will begin a process of formal identification by:

- Collating information from teaching and pastoral staff
- Discussing possible difficulties with the pupil. The school will always consult with pupils first about potential decisions affecting them.
- Liaising with parents to discuss further assessment and diagnostic testing. Prior's Field recognises the crucial role that parents have to play in their child's progress.

The Head of Learning Support will arrange for pupils with identified or suspected learning difficulties to be assessed by a specialist in order to identify the areas that require support. If professional assessment is recommended and parents wish to action the recommendations, the school will offer to arrange the assessment and organise payment. Advice will be given on appropriate specialists, if required. Parents then pay for any assessment directly to the specialist.

The school provides specialist learning support to pupils either individually, or in smaller groups, at least once each week. It is necessary to make a charge for this tuition, which is added to the pupil's school bill. Pupils are also offered support with study skills and organisational problems. The Head of Learning Support will work closely with parents to help her overcome the barriers that her difficulties present.

Each pupil is profiled and every member of staff who teaches her, along with pastoral staff, form tutor and Head of Year, will receive a copy of any assessment report which briefly summarises the results, the difficulties encountered and how these will affect classroom and academic performance. The profile also includes recommendations for staff that might be relevant in the classroom. Copies of the profile are placed on the pupil's file and held centrally by the Head of Learning Support for monitoring and tracking purposes.

These profiles are reviewed regularly by the Head of Learning Support who receives feedback from all staff.

The Learning Support Department prepares Individual Education Plans for each pupil, receiving individual or group support, setting achievable targets. The pupil, together with her parents and teachers reviews the plan regularly, and the pupil is encouraged to take ownership of it and to set her own targets. A copy of the most recent IEP is sent home to parents when school interim and full reports are sent home, generally three times each year. Before this, the pupil and Head of Learning Support will review and agree targets and the Head of Learning Support will comment on progress. Parents then have the opportunity to comment on the IEP and return it to school or request a meeting.

NB: Identification and assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties follow the principles and procedures of the SEN Code of Practice 2001, or any other code in force at the time.

MONITORING AND REVIEW SUMMARY

- a) Regular reports are written for those receiving support lessons and these IEPs accompany the report sent to parents
- b) The Head of Learning Support liaises with Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Opticians etc. when necessary.
- c) The Head of Learning Support will review previous assessments to advise on the possibility for the concession of extra time in examinations. In some cases, for example, if the previous report is too old, a further formal assessment may be required. Other examination concessions, such as the use of a word processor, still need the recommendation of an Educational Psychologist. No internal or

external assessment will be carried out without prior discussion and permission from parents.

- d) Parents are encouraged to support the arrangements made for their daughter and to feel involved in the plans that are made.
- e) The Head of Learning Support will track the progress of pupils with specific learning difficulties to ensure that the expected progress is being made; challenging targets are being set and any barriers to learning have been identified and addressed.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

We recognise that some children with special educational needs may also have physical disabilities. Parents and prospective parents of disabled children can obtain copies of Prior's Field's Accessibility Plan from the website. This shows the ways in which we plan to make our buildings progressively more accessible to disabled pupils, parents and visitors.

PUPILS WITH STATEMENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS

Pupils with statements are closely monitored and their statements formally reviewed annually with the pupils, parents, Head of Learning Support, Head, any teaching assistant and specialists.

HEAD OF LEARNING SUPPORT ROLE

The role of the Head of Learning Support will include:

- Maintaining the SEN register.
- Liaising with subject staff about progress of pupils
- Organising additional resources.
- Identify staff development needs and provide in-service courses and access to information.
- Regularly updating staff on changes to pupils' needs and support in meeting these needs.
- Liaising with external agencies and feeder schools when necessary.
- Teaching supported pupils and organise additional support staff when required.
- Organising and supporting the assessment of specific learning needs.
- Interviewing pupils and agreeing targets with them.
- Liaising with parents.
- Organising and conducting annual reviews for any statemented pupils.
- Overseeing the reporting of pupil progress to parents.
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Learning Support Policy and reviewing it annually in consultation with SLT.
- Liaise with the Co-Ordinator for Exceptionally Able pupils

Prior's Field also recognises that some pupils have exceptional talents and abilities in distinct areas of the curriculum. The development of these pupils can be accelerated or enhanced and, to that end, the school also has a Co-Ordinator for the Exceptionally Able. The emphasis here is on the use of enrichment materials and activities, rather than

acceleration through the syllabus. This is determined by the approaches and procedures within each department.

This policy is monitored by the Head of Learning Support, Deputy Head Curriculum and Head. It is evaluated/reviewed annually. A copy is available on the school website and in information to prospective parents.

Next Review Date: Spring 2010