



## **DORSET HOUSE SCHOOL**

### **LEARNING DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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Approved by: Matt Thomas

## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

At Dorset House School, we are committed to providing a learning environment that enables all our pupils to experience success in learning and attain their full academic potential. For some pupils their capability to learn is influenced by the presence of a learning difficulty. Many of these students are bright, enquiring individuals who can learn successfully if a variety of strategies are put in place. *We aim to meet the individual needs of all pupils and where possible, provide additional support for them.*

## **2. OBJECTIVES of Learning Support Policy**

- To apply a whole school policy to meet the needs of individual pupils, following the guidelines of the 0-25 SEND 2014 Code of Practice (COP) from Reception to Year 8.
- To foster an atmosphere of encouragement, acceptance and respect in which all pupils are able to make the best possible progress and thrive.
- To identify, as early as possible, any child with special educational needs and disabilities and to ensure their needs are met where possible.
- To promote effective partnership and involve outside agencies where appropriate.
- To ensure parents are kept informed of their child's additional needs and provision and that there is effective communication between parents and the school every step of the way.
- To ensure that every teacher and teaching assistant is a teacher of pupils identified with a SEN.
- To provide high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, as the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN.
- To ensure pupils can express their views and are part of the target setting process where applicable

## **3. DEFINITION OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY**

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are defined as the additional needs of some pupils which have to be met in order that they may access the curriculum. SEND provision can be considered as falling under four broad areas; Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, Mental and Emotional Health; Sensory and/or Physical (2014 COP). These needs can be temporary, transitory or enduring.

## **4. ADMISSION AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY**

We are a non-selective preparatory school which prepares most pupils for the Common Entrance examinations at age 13. Pupils receiving help from the Learning Development Department are still candidates for Common Entrance. In a few cases, pupils with more complex specific learning difficulties can be catered for on the understanding that they move to an appropriate senior school without the need to take the Common Entrance exam. We aim to provide pupils with special educational and disability needs (SEND) the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced curriculum alongside their peers. This may also include those pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan (or a Statement) and those for whom English is an Additional Language - EAL - (See Appendix 2: EAL Policy). We can confirm that we already follow the DfE guidelines to

make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled pupils from 1 September 2012. See also our 'SENDA' Three Year Accessibility Plan.

## **5. ON ENTRY TO SCHOOL**

- Pupils in the Reception class are screened for possible learning difficulties using the SIDNEY programme (Screening and Intervention for Dyslexia and Numeracy in the Early Years). This is repeated in Year 1 and any problems monitored carefully and addressed where applicable.
- Pupils entering at a later stage usually spend a day with their Year group. When obvious difficulties are identified, they will be tested by the Head of Learning Development/Junior SENCO. Reports from a current education provider and where applicable, outside school assessments, should be presented to the School before children spend a day with us.

## **6. FOLLOWING ENTRY TO SCHOOL (and throughout school life)**

- a. The school applies the Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle to ensure that all pupils are monitored carefully.
- b. If a parent, teacher or other professional is concerned about a child's progress, information is gathered and a meeting of all interested parties takes place. Following this an assessment can be made using a dyslexia screening test or another form of screening if thought appropriate.
- c. When special needs are identified and assessed, an appropriate level of support will be suggested by the Head of Learning Development/Junior SENCO.
- d. Children whose progress gives only mild cause for concern are monitored frequently.
- e. Parents are encouraged to be involved at every stage of identification.
- f. After consultation with parents the Head of Learning Development/ Junior SENCO may at this stage feel that an outside assessment e.g. by an Educational Psychologist, should be sought.

## **7. LEVELS OF SUPPORT**

Teachers give differentiated support in the classroom through a range of strategies including extra support in class where possible. This is arranged by the class or subject teacher and the Learning Development Department. The appropriate member of the Department will advise on in-class support strategies.

Where further support is needed, help can be given out of the classroom on a predominantly one-to-one basis in the Learning Development Classrooms. The cost of these additional lessons is borne by the parents. Small group lessons are also given here.

The amount and type of extra help given varies with the child's needs and timetabling.

We regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered, such as Dyslexia or Working Memory difficulties.

There are many opportunities to work with pupils who have exceptional gifts and potential in a range of areas. Children identified as high achievers will be given additional support in the classroom (through extension work and differentiated learning) plus other support as appropriate so that their talents are developed to the full. (Please refer to our Able, Gifted and Talented Policy – Appendix 1 - for further details.)

## **8. OUR INCLUSION POLICY**

The Key Principles:

- a. We believe that, with the right training, strategies and support, nearly all children with additional needs can be successfully included in mainstream education.
- b. Our provision offers excellence and choice and incorporated with views of parents and children.
- c. We believe that the interests of all pupils must be safeguarded.
- d. We actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation. This is our ongoing objective and provision is tailored to particular needs.
- e. All children should have access to an appropriate education which affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential.
- f. However, mainstream education will not always be right for every child all of the time. If we felt, even after seeking to remove barriers to the best of our ability, we could not offer the opportunity for a child to reach his/her personal potential in this environment, then we would inform parents that the present situation would need reviewing. This might not only be for the benefit of the child themselves, but also for his/her peer group.
- g. This would not prevent a child from being successfully included at a later stage.

## **9. EVALUATION**

- Continuous ongoing formative assessments by the Learning Development Department, along with whole-school summative assessment procedures, ensure that pupils' progress is tracked and evaluated (see LD Handbook for detailed list of assessments).
- Pupils have their progress discussed at staff meetings and changes to support are implemented where necessary.
- The Learning Development Department has various tests which can be given to evaluate the type and depth of a problem on an individual basis.
- IEPs (Individual Education Plans) are written termly or twice-yearly by the Head of Learning Development/Junior SENCO. These are shared with the pupil (where

appropriate), parents and all relevant teachers. Subject teachers may help plan a subject based IEP for small groups as well as for individuals

- Outside help will always be sought when deemed necessary.
- If after discussions with parents and teachers, it is felt a pupil no longer requires the additional 1-1 support, they will continue to be monitored by the teachers.

## **10. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

- Parents' views on their child's learning are always sought
- IEPs are discussed with parents.
- If a member of the Learning Development team considers it beneficial, or if the parent wishes, a parent may be present at a one to one lesson with the specialist teacher.
- Should a parent have a complaint about their child's provision, they can talk to the Head of Learning Development or the Headmaster (See Complaints Policy).

## **11. EXAM PROCEDURES**

Some pupils with specific learning difficulties can receive extra time in school tests and end of year school exams. Common Entrance candidates have extra time with the agreement of the senior school to which they have applied. Where needed a reader and/or scribe can also be provided.

### **Use of laptops**

We will allow a pupil to use their own laptop where that pupil has been identified by an Educational Psychologist as requiring one as an aid to access the curriculum. The pupil would be required to use the laptop appropriately and when they are able to touch type confidently. The School is under no obligation to provide such a pupil with a laptop to be used in this way.

## **12. FUTURE SCHOOLS**

Our aim is to ensure that the child's future school will continue to encourage and help the child, meeting their individual needs. Parents are advised by the Headmaster about appropriate schools.

## **13. OUR PROGRAMME**

We use a number of strategies for helping these pupils and as no two children are the same, neither are any two lessons. However, we use multi-sensory, highly structured, cumulative and thorough teaching methods in all Learning Support lessons. Our resources are numerous and include:

- Sound Linkage
- The THRASS Scheme
- Alpha to Omega
- Many games/teaching aids from companies including Smart Kids

- Learning Development Aid, Easylearn etc. and a host of in-house materials specific to Dorset House.
- Toe-by-Toe
- Computer programmes - Wordshark, Numbershark
- Dyslexia Institute Maths Programme (DIMP)
- The Nessie Programme
- Elklan Language Builders

#### **14. ROLE OF HEAD OF LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND JUNIOR SENCO**

- To assess pupils whose progress is a 'cause for concern'.
- To make an IEP (Individual Education Plan) for any child identified, ensuring that all members of staff are aware of it and can access it, and that the targets set are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.
- To write Pupil Profiles for pupils who have an external assessment and identification of SEND in the first instance which can be accessed by all teaching staff.
- To communicate regularly with the Headmaster, teachers and parents regarding the progress of identified pupils.
- To give extra help in the form of one-to-one or group lessons outside the classroom on a regular basis, for as long as is considered necessary.
- To support in classes such as English where possible, thus ensuring continuity in teaching and learning between the 1-1 and class lessons.
- To regularly review IEP targets with the pupil, where appropriate, and ensure their understanding of the support provided.
- To support and advise teaching assistants in the management of identified pupils by offering advice and assessment
- To liaise with outside agencies.
- To maintain the SEND register and keep it updated termly.
- To keep the Staff informed about current SEND issues.
- To be involved in INSET where appropriate.
- To review policy.

#### **15. STAFF TRAINING**

##### **INSET**

All staff are given in service training on special needs to keep them informed of any changes, procedures and materials to enhance their expertise. In service training may take the form of half day training or as part of a staff meeting. External specialists may be used. Teachers and Teaching Assistants will be supported where possible in attending external courses which will enhance teaching pupils with SEND where possible.

#### **16. WHOLE SCHOOL PROVISION**

It is our aim to ensure that every teacher provides an appropriate environment and employs suitable teaching methods to enable the best possible individual progress in conjunction with the Learning Development Department. To enhance learning for those children on the Learning Development Register, the Department places great importance on working to develop communication and co-operation with class and subject teachers to plan, discuss and deliver

agreed strategies and to help match tasks, resources and methodology to the needs of the children.

## **Appendix 1: Able, Gifted and Talented Policy**

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- 1. Policy Statement**
- 2. Objectives**
- 3. Definition of Able, Gifted and Talented**
- 4. Identification**
- 5. Provision**
- 6. Evaluation**

Date of policy: May 2015

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Prepared by: Audrey Moncrieffe, Head of Learning Development

Approved by: Matt Thomas, Headmaster

## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Dorset House School strives to ensure the development of Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T) students to their full potential. We believe that all children are entitled to an education that will enable them to develop their full potential, be that intellectual, physical, aesthetic, creative, emotional, spiritual or social. All students have individual needs, which puts personalised learning at the heart of our teaching and learning. We are committed to providing a sufficiently challenging curriculum and enrichment programme for all our students. In addition, we will provide opportunities to identify and in turn nurture those who are more able and develop their abilities.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF AG&T POLICY**

- To apply a whole school AG&T policy to meet the needs of individual pupils from Reception to Year 8.
- To foster an atmosphere of encouragement, acceptance and respect in which all pupils are able to make the best possible progress and thrive.
- To identify, as early as possible, any child with AG&T and to ensure their needs are met where possible.
- To promote effective partnership and involve outside agencies where appropriate.
- To provide high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, as the first step in responding to pupils who have AG&T.
- To provide a rich and stimulating environment with opportunities for identified pupils to develop their abilities within and outside the school environment.
- To ensure pupils express their views and are part of the target setting process where applicable.

## **7. IDENTIFICATION**

An able or talented pupil is identified using a variety of methods. The specific procedure will vary according to subject area. Dorset House believes that students have individual needs and that their abilities should be recognised within departments rather than within a global list. Lists should be dynamic to enable continuous monitoring and updating. Departments identify their Able, Gifted and Talented students through obtaining as much information about individual students as possible and will include elements of the following:

- Teacher nomination as a result of observation and superior performance in class;
- Assessment results;
- Specialist teacher identification;
- Superior performance in VR and NVR, Reading age and other standardised tests;
- Dance, music or sports accreditation.



However, AGT pupils may also display the following characteristics which will may not be evident in summative assessments exemplified above:

- Fluency, flexibility, and originality of thought.
- Adaptation to the shaping of novel situations encountered in the external environment.
- The capacity to sort out relevant and irrelevant information associated with a particular problem or areas of study or performance.
- The capacity for high levels of interest, enthusiasm, fascination, and involvement in a particular problem, area of study, or form of human expression.
- Self-confidence, a strong ego and a belief in one's ability to carry out important work, freedom from inferiority feelings, drive to achieve.
- Curious, speculative, adventurous, and "mentally playful" willing to take risks in thought and action, even to the point of being uninhibited.
- Maintaining an openness to self and external criticism.
- Be adept at finding patterns and relationships, reasoning, abstracting and generalising and record these in creative ways.
- Produce correct answers to complex questions intuitively; they may not see the point of recording methodology and therefore be resistant to putting pen to paper to explain how they get there.
- Be easily frustrated and resistant to repetitive tasks but may be passionate about a particular subject or aspect of the curriculum and be able to concentrate on this for long periods of time.
- Have a wide and sophisticated vocabulary, communicating thoughts and ideas well verbally.
- Show great sensitivity or empathy, strong feelings or opinions.

Subject-specific criteria are found in Subject Handbooks.

Departments identify Able, Gifted and Talented students on a continuous basis. This information is collated by the Able and Talented Co-ordinator (Head of Learning Development) and is made available to all staff via the GA&T Register which is regularly reviewed and updated.

## **8. PROVISION FOR AG&T PUPILS**

All students have individual needs. Dorset House School is committed to providing a sufficiently challenging curriculum for all students. Each curriculum area has in place a programme of provision to ensure that there is challenge for the most able students. Departments are encouraged to use thinking and problem solving, to teach higher order and study skills and to deliver teaching in a range of learning styles.

### **In-class learning opportunities may involve:**

- Enrichment – adding breadth and range to a pupil's attainment and progress through activities that consolidate and widen the pupil's knowledge, skills and understanding;
- Challenge – providing activities and experiences which engage interest, encourage speculation, generate enthusiasm and stimulate thought and action at a high level;
- Independent Learning - allowing pupils to organize their own work, to carry out tasks unaided, evaluate their work and become self-critical.

- Extension – providing opportunities for pupils to increase the depth of their knowledge, skills and understanding;
- Differentiation –modifying the learning experiences of able and talented pupils so as to promote opportunities for them to engage primarily in higher-order thinking; and by using pace and acceleration skilfully.
- Specialist teaching – providing teaching that utilises the particular skills and expertise of individual teachers;

#### **Out of class learning opportunities may involve:**

- Extra-curricular clubs
- Music or sports practice and performance, or competition opportunities
- Special events, for example field trips or residential trips
- Providing out-of-school activities within the community
- Challenge projects
- Visits by experts
- National schemes/competitions/festivals

### **9. ROLE OF AG&T CO-ORDINATOR (HEAD OF LEARNING SUPPORT)**

- Collating and monitoring the A&T Register;
- Working with Subject Leaders to ensure an effective assessment of children’s potential and performance;
- Liaising with Subject Leaders in supporting staff in the development of learning experiences to challenge the abilities and talents of pupils in their classes/subjects to enable them to maximise their potential;
- Collating evidence of school wide activities/challenges for the A&T from Subject Leaders.

### **10. EVALUATION**

All AG&T progress will be monitored using the following:

- Continuous ongoing formative assessments along with whole-school summative assessment procedures, ensure that pupils’ progress is tracked and evaluated.
- Pupils have their progress discussed at staff meetings and with parents ensuring changes to support are implemented where necessary.
- Outside advice will always be sought when deemed necessary.
- There will be appropriate intervention if problems such as underachievement are identified.

## Appendix 2: English as an Additional Language Policy

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### 3. What We Will Do

#### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Dorset House School aims to:

- Develop the individual abilities of each child in a secure, caring and friendly environment where they are happy and motivated to learn and to appreciate the benefits of healthy living and physical fitness.
- Encourage participation, enjoyment and success in all areas of the school's curriculum to create a well-rounded, confident child who shows respect, tolerance and compassion towards people and the environment.
- Help children develop self-worth and maturity so they are equipped to deal with life's challenges and are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Create a strong partnership between parents, children and staff to foster social awareness and to allow all members of the school community to feel valued and appreciated.

Dorset House School occasionally welcomes pupils for whom English is not their first language. These children will be given appropriate support to enable them to achieve their academic potential and integrate fully with school life.

#### 2. AIMS

- To welcome pupils of other nationalities/cultures where English is not the first language.
- To make integration into the new environment as smooth and positive as possible.
- To offer language support and learning opportunities to meet the needs of the individual both within the classroom and in individual lessons.
- To effectively monitor the development of language and extend or alter the help given as appropriate.
- To ensure that pupils are able to progress to their maximum potential and quickly gain access to the full curriculum.
- To recognise that the multilingualism of our EAL students enrich our school and our community.

#### 3. WHAT WE WILL DO

We will achieve this by treating each pupil as an individual as this is the key to ensuring that progress in language skills is achieved at an appropriate rate. We appreciate that some children will benefit most from individual, 'one-to-one' tuition from the first opportunity, whilst others will learn most

effectively from total immersion within the classroom. The factors that determine need will include the 'level of English', the age of the child (often younger children are able to learn very naturally from their peers), personality, individual learning style and the demands of the curriculum at their level of entry.

Class teachers and the Head of Learning Support/Junior SENCO will make an assessment of the child's needs within the child's first days at school and progress and any change to his/her requirements will be regularly monitored. Where individual lessons are required, they will cover the four elements of language – speaking, listening, reading and writing. The emphasis is on building confidence and learning through fun in a relaxed environment. Vocabulary is an immediate priority whilst grammar is introduced gradually. Initially, the aim is to focus on the day to day language of life and particularly the classroom. Written and spoken exercises are an important part of all lessons and we also include games and computer programmes to extend skills and for motivation!

As the child progresses, the balance of vocabulary and grammar will alter and the focus will move to more complex areas of language. Where appropriate there is liaison between the EAL tutor and subject teachers to target specific subject related vocabulary. EAL students may also benefit from support from specialist staff to help with the demands of examinations. Where appropriate they may be offered help with reading exam papers and in some circumstances it may be considered appropriate to offer a scribe. Extra time may be offered in some examinations where it is felt that the student would otherwise be disadvantaged due to limitations in reading and writing speed and where they would therefore be unable to demonstrate fully their knowledge of a subject. Within the classroom, teachers will offer EAL students every encouragement to participate in lessons as fully as possible. Differentiated exercises will be provided as appropriate and, because class sizes are small, teachers can offer some individual help.

Of course, many of the most valuable lessons in language will take place in the playground! Children communicate quite naturally despite the barriers of conventional language and through games and growing friendships.

In order to ensure that EAL students are valued by the wider school community, we will make sure that children have opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and in learning by allowing them to use their first language when it will be beneficial to their learning and communication needs. We will celebrate diversity through displays, assemblies and the curriculum and we will encourage parents/carers to participate in EAL students' learning. Where possible, we will encourage EAL students to sit additional Common Entrance examinations in their first language and we will actively seek out opportunities for them to use their first language in ways that benefit the school community as a whole, such as participating in external competitions or taking part in extra-curricular activities such as Mandarin classes or Spanish Club.

Every year, the school plays host to a small number of EAL students from abroad. This enables our full-time students to hone their linguistic abilities and to gain some knowledge of other cultures. These placements have always been extremely successful and Dorset House School is constantly looking for ways to expand our hosting programme.