



DORSET HOUSE SCHOOL

Learning Development Policy

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Last review: September 2025

Next review: September 2026

Reviewed by: Sarah Armstrong, SENDCo

Approved by: Governors' Academic Committee

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.

It is recognised that there can be additional safeguarding challenges in relation to SEND pupils and this is addressed in our Safeguarding Policy.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To apply a whole school policy to meet the needs of individual pupils, following the guidelines of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (COP) 0-25 years 2015 for pupils in Reception to Year 8;
- To identify, as early as possible, any child with SEND and/or Additional Needs, inform teachers through the school **SEND Pupil Notes** (updated each term) and **Pupil Profiles**, ensuring their needs are met where possible: **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle;
- To promote effective partnership and involve outside agencies where appropriate;
- To ensure parents are kept informed of their child's individual needs and provision and that there is effective communication between parents and the school;
- To ensure that every teacher and teaching assistant provides Quality First Teaching to pupils identified with a SEND and individual needs;
- To provide high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils taking into account the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the pupils; and
- To ensure pupils can express their views and are part of the target setting process where applicable.

3. DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are defined as the additional needs of some pupils which have to be met in order that they may access the curriculum. The definition for SEN and for disability is derived from the SEND Code of Practice (COP, 2015):

*SEN: A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A learning difficulty or disability is a **significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age**. Special educational provision means **educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from**, that made generally for others of the same age in a mainstream setting in England.*

*Disability: Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘**a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities**’.*

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.

Individual Needs at Dorset House School encompasses pupils with an identified SEND as well as those pupils who do not have an identified SEND but require some additional directed support, mostly short-term.

NOTE:

Pupils who experience difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language (EAL) are not SEND. Such pupils are provided for through specialist teaching intervention under the guidance of the Head of Learning Development (SENDCo). Likewise, pupils identified as Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T) are not deemed to have special educational needs but benefit from 'Quality First Teaching' in class and being directed to, and taking part in, activities recommended by Heads of Department.

4. ADMISSION

We are a non-selective preparatory school which prepares pupils for Pre-tests at 11+ and, in some cases, the Common Entrance (CE) examinations at age 13. Pupils receiving help from the LDD are still candidates for CE. We aim to provide pupils with SEND the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced curriculum. This may also include those pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or a Statement of SEND, if the school can make reasonable adjustments for their inclusion, and those for whom English is an Additional Language (See Appendix 2: EAL Policy). We follow the DfE guidelines to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled pupils. See also our 'SENDA' Three Year Accessibility Plan.

5. ON ENTRY TO SCHOOL

Pre-Prep

Pupils in the Reception class are screened for receptive language skills, using Speech Link (for the assessment and intervention of speech, language and communication needs) res are monitored by the class teacher and LDD.

Year 1 – A reading test is used to assess pupils' ability in applying letter/sound linkage to decode words as well as their level of reading comprehension.

Any prospective pupils, who have been identified by class teachers as having difficulties on taster days, are given a short assessment to establish any problems with phonological awareness, memory, handwriting and numeracy.

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 LDD. Reports from a current education provider, as well as other professionals' assessments, should be presented to the School at this stage.

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 or teacher is concerned about a child's progress, information is gathered and a meeting of all interested parties takes place. The teachers and LDD consider all the information gathered from within the school about the pupil's progress. This will include formative and summative assessment.
- c. Where pupils have a higher level of need we will work in partnership with other specialist agencies e.g. Educational Psychologists; Speech and Language Therapists.
- 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.

7. LEVELS OF SUPPORT

Dorset House follows the staged procedure recommended by the COP when making provision for pupils with SEND. The Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach is followed.

Wave 1: Quality First Teaching. This is the first step in responding to pupils who may have SEND or individual needs. The class teacher will provide differentiated expectations for all pupils and good quality personalised teaching. This will address needs in the classroom. Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from the LDD. The LDD will advise on in-class support strategies.

Wave 2: Some pupils may be withdrawn from class for individual or small group tuition provided by the LDD team and/or other support interventions within the classroom. This is short-term intervention.

Wave 3: Pupils who experience greater or persistent difficulty in acquiring skills that impair their ability to access the curriculum require long-term individual support. An external assessment from an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist would usually have been sought.

All pupils identified with SEND or individual needs are recorded on the Individual Needs Register. Some pupils who have had an external assessment e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and been identified with a specific learning difficulty may not require extra intervention further than Wave 1: Quality First Teaching.

The cost of individual additional lessons in school is borne by the parents. 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 SEND 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 work in partnership with parents/carers and outside agencies in supporting children in their choices.
- b. We believe that the interests of all pupils must be safeguarded.
- c. We actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation. This is our ongoing objective and provision is tailored to particular needs.
- d. All children should have access to an appropriate education which affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential.
- e. However, our educational provision may not always be right for every child. 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.
- f. This would not prevent a child from being successfully included at a later stage.

9. EVALUATION

- Continuous ongoing formative and summative assessments by the Learning Development Department, alongside whole-school assessment procedures, ensure that pupils' progress is tracked and evaluated.
- Pupils have their progress discussed at regular staff meetings and LDD meetings and changes to support are implemented where necessary.
- The LDD has various tests which can be given to evaluate the type and depth of a problem on an individual basis.
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written termly or twice-yearly by the LDD for additional one-to-one and small group lessons. These are shared with the pupil (where appropriate) and all relevant teachers. Subject teachers may help plan a subject based IEP for small groups as well as for individuals. IEPs are evaluated at the end of the term.
- 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 one-to-one support, they will continue to be monitored by the teachers.

10. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

- Parents views on their child's learning are sought.
- IEPs are available for parents to read and discuss.
- Should a parent have a complaint about their child's provision, they can talk to the Head of Learning Development (SENDCo) 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. Pre-Test (Y6) and Common Entrance (CE 13+) candidates may have extra time with the agreement of the senior school subject to:

- an EP or other specialist professional assessment or
- following advice and assessment from our SENDCo.

Where recommended by a specialist professional, a reader and/or scribe can also be provided. With all exam concessions, it must be shown from school records, that this is the pupil's normal way of working in internal assessments and/or in the classroom.

Use of laptops

We will allow a pupil to use their own laptop where that pupil has been identified by the LDD or an external assessment, 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. The student will read and sign a Laptop Agreement which outlines appropriate use of the laptop during school time and be responsible for its care.

12. FUTURE SCHOOLS

Our aim is to ensure that the student's future school will continue to encourage and help the child, meeting their individual needs and the SENDCo will liaise with the senior school SENDCo to enable a smooth transition. 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 Development lessons. Resources are tailored to the needs of individual child. Advice given by other professionals is followed and this may include accessing specific teaching programmes, e.g. Toe by Toe.

14. ROLE OF HEAD OF LEARNING DEVELOPMENT/SENDCo

The School's Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator and Head of Prep Learning Development is Mrs Sarah Armstrong. She works closely with the Head of Pre-prep Learning Development and teachers throughout the school. Contact details: sarmstrong@dorsethouseschool.com. Mrs Armstrong has day to day responsibility for the operation of the SEND policy and co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND, including those who have may have an EHCP.

SENDCo staffing:

Mrs Sarah Armstrong	Head of Prep Learning Development (School SENDCo)
Mrs Jo Truscott	Head of Pre-Prep Learning Development
Ms Sarah Donovan	Speech and Language Therapist

Role of the School SENDCo:

In addition to duties above:

- To maintain the Individual Needs Register and keep it updated termly.
- To keep the Staff informed about current SEND issues.
- To lead INSET on SEND where appropriate.
- To annually review the Learning Development Policy.
- To monitor pupils' progress using school assessment data and specific LDD assessments to identify pupils underperforming.
- To oversee and monitor provision for SEND pupils.
- To oversee provision for EAL pupils.
- To carry out assessments for recommending exam concessions for Pre-Test and CE.

Role of Prep and Pre-Prep Head of Learning Development:

- To assess pupils whose progress is a 'cause for concern'.
- To write an IEP 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 all pupils who have been identified with SEND or additional needs and may require one-to-one additional teaching, 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 where possible, thus ensuring continuity in teaching and learning between the one-to-one 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.

15. STAFF TRAINING

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 and individual needs 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 LDD. To enhance learning for those children on the Individual Needs 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

Contents

- 1. Policy Statement**
- 2. Objectives**
- 3. Identification**
- 4. Provision**
- 5. Role of the AG&T Coordinator**
- 6. Evaluation**

Last review: September 2025

Next review: September 2026

Reviewed by: Sarah Armstrong, SENDCo

Approved by: Governors' Academic Committee

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 and enriching curriculum for all our students. In addition, we will provide opportunities to identify and in turn nurture those who are more able and to 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 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.

3. 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. 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, AG&T 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 form tutors and overseen by the Deputy Head. Lists are dynamic to enable continuous monitoring and updating. It is regularly reviewed and updated.

4. 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. The school will also facilitate the provision of those individuals with special talents and interests by releasing them to attend any outside activities which support those talents and interests.

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

5. ROLE OF AG&T CO-ORDINATOR (Ms L Hutchings)

- Working with Subject Leaders to ensure an effective assessment of children's potential and performance.

6. EVALUATION

All AG&T progress will be monitored by Form Tutors and Subject Leaders 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.
- Exceptional performance will be celebrated via scholarships and awards.

Appendix 2: English as an Additional Language Policy

- 1. Policy Statement**
- 2. Aims**
- 3. What We Will Do**

Last review: September 2025

Next review: September 2026

Reviewed by: Sarah Armstrong, SENDCo

Approved by: Governors' Academic Committee

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; and
- 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; and
- 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 Prep and Pre-Prep Heads of Learning Development 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 e.g. using an electronic translator and extra time. 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.