

Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School

The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day school or schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.



SENIOR SCHOOL STUDY SKILLS POLICY

This policy was updated in May 2014 to take account of the Draft special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years – April 2014 and renamed the Study Skills Policy. This Policy was renamed as the Learning Support Policy and reviewed in 2009. Formerly as the Special Educational Needs Policy it was reviewed and minor amendments made in Spring 2006 to recognise the development of SEN Provision from September 2005 in the appointment of separate SENCOs in the Senior and Preparatory Schools.

Introduction and Aims

Our Learning Support Policy is part of our whole school learning and teaching policy which aims to provide equality of opportunity and a wide and varied curriculum for each pupil in order that she may attain her potential as far as possible. It is an integral part of all teaching and it is important in all our policy statements. We aim to identify pupils with additional learning needs as early as possible and support them thus enabling them to access the curriculum fully.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator in the Senior School is Miss Caroline Cross and in the Preparatory School, Mrs Tish King-Fretts.

Entrance Requirements (Cross Ref to Full Admissions Policy)

St. Catherine's is a school with high academic standards where the majority of girls study nine subjects at G.C.S.E. Entrance up to 14+ is by St. Catherine's own entrance examination supported by school reports. In the Sixth Form, entry is on the basis of school reports and G.C.S.E results (5 subjects at Grade A/B).

St. Catherine's is sympathetic to admitting girls with SEN if their verbal reasoning and/or perceptual reasoning score indicates that they will be able to cope with the curriculum without undue stress.

If a girl has already been diagnosed as having an SEN upon entry to the school, for example, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, Asperger's, a full report from an outside agency is required, together with a report from the previous school.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years

As it states in the Draft Policy, (April 2014), "A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, that is, provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age."

We have adapted the Code of Practice to meet our individual circumstances and we retain the main principles which may be summarized as follows:-

- The needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs are addressed and there is a continuum of needs and a continuum of provision.
- Children with an LDD require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education.

The Head of Study Skills advises subject teachers on the best way to assist pupils with additional learning needs in the day to day environment of the classroom

However, provision for girls with SEN is a matter for the school as a whole. It is therefore important that we all appreciate our individual roles in fully and successfully implementing the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.

Identifying SEN in our School

In January preceding entry to Upper Three, students applying for a place at St Catherine's Senior School sit an Entrance Paper and three core subject papers: English, Maths and Science. These papers are scrutinised by the SENCo (Head of Study Skills) to identify whether or not a student may have a Learning Difficulty and Disability (LDD). This may be indicated in a number of ways, for example, a timing issue on any or all of the papers, a particularly low score in the mental arithmetic section of the maths paper, misreading of questions, spelling difficulties, poor comprehension on the English paper, or messy handwriting, etc. This information is collated and shared with the Headmistress, Director of Studies and the Senior House Mistress. Where an offer is made, the Headmistress will meet with the parents and discuss any issues which have been identified as a result of scrutiny. At this stage, the parents will meet with the SENCo to discuss the most appropriate course of action for the child.

Transition

In the summer term preceding September entry to Upper Three, the Heads of Study Skills (Academic Mentoring Department) from the Prep and Senior School meet to discuss students making the transition from the Prep to the Senior School. At this stage the Head of Study Skills in the Prep School discusses students who have had or are currently having support, as well as those students whose parents are considering an Educational Psychology report once their daughter has settled into senior school. The Head of Study Skills reads the reports on students coming from other educational establishments, and where additional information would be useful, will contact those schools. We operate an 'open door' policy where parents are encouraged to contact the department, should they have any concerns. All reports, are saved into the SEN area on our school management system (SIMS) to ensure accessibility for teachers.

Screening

Upon entry to Upper Three (Year 7), all students are screened; our approach is inclusive so screening includes those who have already been identified as having an LDD. As part of this screening process a range of informal are used, together with two, standardised assessments. The following areas are informally assessed: copying from the board, listening to instructions, working memory and visual memory. The following areas are assessed using standardised tests: spelling and handwriting speed. In addition, the English Department conducts a spelling and vocabulary assessment which is graded, and students are given a creative writing task to do and this too is marked and graded. This information is collated, and sent to the Head of the Senior School, the Director of Studies and the Senior House Mistress and her team as well as the Heads of Department.

A letter is sent out to the parents of students who have identified as a result of this screening process, inviting them to meet with me on parents' evening. At this time, a decision is made as to whether to monitor the child until half-term or the end of term or whether to proceed with a more in-depth assessment, either internally by a Specialist Teacher or externally, using an Educational Psychologist. Parents are encouraged to discuss and involve their child in the decision making process.

All students new to the school in years Lower Four to Lower Sixth are also screened using informal and standardised assessments. This information is collated and disseminated to Heads of Department and the pastoral team.

Monitoring Process throughout the Academic Year

We monitor the learning needs of our students on a regular basis throughout the school in the following ways:

- School Housemistress Meetings: weekly – girls causing concern
- HoDs meetings; minutes of meetings are emailed to Head of Study Skills for reference.
- HoDs meetings and staff meetings – Girls Causing Concern are raised at these meetings and where appropriate, followed up by the Head of Study Skills, i.e. if it is perceived to be an academic concern.
- Head of Study Skills attends English meetings on a regular basis and where this is not possible, liaises closely with the Head of Department;
- Study Skills Meetings with HoDs or department representatives are held termly.
- Feedback from reports, from SHM, student and Head Teacher.
- All U3 students and any girls new to the school are screened upon entry to the school.
- Exam scrutiny of Entrance Papers.
- Summer exam scrutiny. Where staff have concerns, papers are called and initially scrutinised across three subject areas; English, History and Biology.
- Assessment - St Catherine's Assessment Grade - students have regular assessment across all subject areas - i.e. at least once a term. This system teaches to monitor pupil progress and identify pupils who are not making progress as expected.

As it states in the Draft Code of Practice this might manifest in the following ways:

Progress which:

- “significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.”
- “fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress.”
- “fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers.”
- “widens the attainment gap.”

Staffs are fully aware that persistent or disruptive behaviours do not necessarily mean that the child has SEN. However, where concerns about behaviour or the emotional state of the student are raised, this is considered and information from screening and examination scrutiny is collated. If it is felt that an undiagnosed learning difficulty might be causing these difficulties then an in-house, Specialist Teacher Assessment is advised.

When a student has experienced bereavement or difficulties in their social interactions with another student or students, this information is shared with the pastoral team and the whole school staff as appropriate.

English as an Additional Language

The Head of Study Skills is sent a list of overseas students upon their entry to the school. All girls undertake an examination prior to entry to assess their proficiency and ability to access the curriculum. They are encouraged to immerse themselves in school life, while care is taken to respect their cultural identity. In exceptional circumstances, in close liaison with the Head of Boarding and the Head Teacher, specific EAL lessons can be arranged. However, where a student is having difficulty accessing the curriculum, care is taken to collate information to assess whether it is an LDD or EAL issue.

Partnership with Parents and Student

Parents are seen to be vital and active partners and are involved in the process of identifying, assessing and meeting pupils' special educational needs.

Parents are encouraged to feel they can approach the school about any concerns they may have about their daughter's progress. The wishes and feelings of pupils are represented in the arrangements that are made to meet their needs. This involvement is essential for the effective implementation of the Study Skills Plan.

Prior to the implementation of the Study Skills Teaching Plan (SSTP), the plan is emailed to the parents and child for them to approve and, if appropriate, request alterations. The teaching plan is discussed with the student prior to the commencement of lessons to ensure that she feels that the aims and objectives will meet her learning needs. Study Skills lessons are not undertaken if the child is resistant and/or feels that the lessons will not be beneficial. In this case, we will continue to monitor the child and maintain close communication with parents. Further discussion will be undertaken with the student in order to ensure that effective support is in place, either through additional lessons or in terms of the classroom environment.

When a student has had an internal assessment or an assessment from an external agency, the Head of Study Skills will meet with the parents to discuss the content of the report, the way in which the information will be shared with staff, intervention if advised and the monitoring process. Wherever possible, the student is invited to attend the meeting together with the School House Mistress.

In addition to these meetings, parents have the opportunity to meet with subject teachers every other term. When there is not a parents' evening the parents are provided with subject reports together with a sheet enabling them to comment upon content and raise any concerns.

Method of Intervention

The Draft Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (April 2014) advises that SEN support "should take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised" in order to enable the student to

make good progress and achieve his/her full potential. This involves Assessment, planning, Doing and Reviewing.

1. Assessment

Assessment takes place through examination scrutiny of common entrance and core subject papers; it occurs again through the screening process of all girls entering Upper Three (Year 7) and any girls in other years, new to the school.

In addition to screening, students undergo a grammar and spelling assessment and they are given a creative writing task to do within a specified time. This information is collated and where appropriate, a meeting is requested with parents to discuss a course of action. Where a student is being monitored as a result of concerns raised by staff, student, or parents, information will be sought from her subject teachers through an internal report - this may relate to attainment, attitude or behaviour or all three.

At this stage, a further, in-depth assessment may be conducted either by a Specialist Teacher within the Academic Mentoring Department or by an external agency, e.g. an Educational Psychologist. We have a list of Educational Psychologists who are happy to come to the school to conduct an assessment. Prior to any in-depth assessment, parental consent is always sought.

Assessment by the Head of Study Skills might include:-

- **GORT-5 – Reading Comprehension and reading rate, fluency and accuracy.**
- **WIAT-T-UK - Spelling**
- **TOWRE 2.** Test of word reading efficiency
- **Detailed Assessment of Handwriting Speed (DASH)**
- **WRAML – Working memory.**
- **CTOPP – phonological memory and rapid naming.**
- **WRIT (to assess verbal and non-verbal reasoning)**
- **British Picture Vocabulary Scale (B.P.V.S).** (A test which measures receptive language).
- **Maths Assessment - standardised**

2. Plan

Once the report has been produced, parents (and where possible, the student) meet with the Head of Study Skills to discuss the recommendations contained within the report. A decision is made as to whether or not these recommendations can be met within the classroom, with support from home. Where appropriate, Study Skills lessons are offered. There is an additional cost for these lessons; they take place on a weekly basis. These lessons usually focus upon a range of study skills which include; planning and structuring, using evidence from the text, use of topic and transition sentences, question reading, reading strategies, reading comprehension monitoring strategies, revision strategies and examination technique.

3. Do

Each Study Skills Teaching Plan contains two to three targets which are agreed with the parent and child. The Plan is emailed to parents and to the child and if they are happy with the plan and feel that it meets their needs then the plan is implemented. Where appropriate, alterations may be made in the light of comments made by parents and/or the student. Teaching lists are compiled each half-term and emailed to Heads of Department and the pastoral team. These lists include information pertaining to teaching targets contained within the Plan. The Study Skills Plan is reviewed half-termly or at the end of a course of lessons. The date of the starting and completing the plan is included on the plan, together with success criteria.

If it is felt that the needs of the student can be met within the classroom then the Head of Study Skills may advise on resources and an approach that will benefit the student. Generally, the strategies implemented are designed to complement and support all learners to foster inclusivity. We are an iPad school so students who have difficulty writing information down are encouraged to use their iPad to take pictures of the board. Resources are shared electronically so that the student may annotate. Students who need additional support to access information because of their LDD are provided with the necessary equipment, e.g. Read, Write, Gold, Dragon Naturally Speaking.

4. Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions are evaluated by the Head of Study Skills, parent and child at the end of the Study Skills Teaching Plan. In addition, the views of teachers are sought and comments made on the child's subject report. At this point a decision will be made about whether further lessons are appropriate. We encourage the student to implement the strategies she has been taught. On occasion, the student will return for further one to one tuition as she progresses through the school and the work becomes more challenging.

Requesting an Education, Health And Care Assessment

Currently there are no students within the school who require an EHC Plan. However, the school is aware that this may be considered where, despite intervention from the school, the student has not made the expected progress.

C Cross
Head of Study Skills
Academic Mentoring Department

May 2014

Senior School Headmistress's signature:

Date:

THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED IN 2016/17