

Learning Support policy

This policy has been written and reviewed by the Learning Support Coordinators (LSCO) at The British School of Amsterdam. It has been written with due regard to the [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years](#) published by the UK Government's Education and Health departments (January 2015), in so much as can be allowed for in our situation as an international school.

The policy will continue to be monitored and evaluated according to changes in the code of practice as and when they arise. It is a working document which reflects the ethos and practice within the school in relation to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

1. Definitions

- A pupil has Special Educational Needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her
- A pupil has a learning difficulty if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority or others the same age
- High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority. Special educational provision is provision or training that is additional to or different than others of the same age
- A pupil has a disability if they have 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,' ([Equality Act 2010](#)). This may include sensory impairments and long term health conditions. A pupil with a disability may have SEN if the disability prevents or hinders him or her from making use of school facilities.
- At The British School of Amsterdam, we use the term *Learning Support (LS)* to refer to SEN provision.
- Learning Support may also refer to support given to the most able pupils (those who are operating at a significantly higher level than the expected outcomes of their peers), but this is **dealt with more fully in the Most Able Pupils Policy.**

2. Principles

- The British School of Amsterdam is non-selective and wherever possible provides support to children who have mild to moderate educational needs. We are an inclusive school encompassing the needs of all pupils; those who require learning support, most able pupils, and those for whom English is an additional language
- We focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning. The School's philosophy is to include pupils with special educational needs within a regular classroom setting and occasionally through a modified curriculum

- We aim to ensure those with SEN are given every opportunity to achieve their potential. We have high ambitions and set aspirational targets
- Participation of pupils and parents in the decision making is important. Decisions are informed by the insights of parents and those of the pupils themselves.
- Early identification (identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision) improves long term outcomes
- Class or subject teachers are responsible for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including pupils receiving support from teaching assistants and learning support staff

3. Identifying pupils with SEN

- The identification of SEN is built into our overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils
- Class and subject teachers make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. This is used to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances. It can include progress in areas other than attainment e.g. personal development or social skills
- Teachers and teaching support staff will be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early
- Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviour does not necessarily mean a pupil has SEN. Where there are concerns there should be an assessment to see if there are any causal factors
- Identifying and assessing SEN for pupils whose first language is not English requires care. We look carefully in different areas of learning or development to establish if lack of progress is due to limitations in their command of English or if it arises from SEN or a disability. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English are not SEN
- We recognise that there are four broad areas of need to be planned for:
 - Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
 - Cognitive learning difficulties, including specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia
 - Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
 - Sensory and /or physical needs
- We recognise that needs often cut across these different areas and that also needs may change. We aim to provide support that is based on a full understanding of strengths and needs and seek to address them using interventions targeted at areas of difficulty
- Information from previous schools will be sought for all new pupils at the school and we will ensure we share information as pupils move through each stage of our school

4. Supporting pupils with SEN

- We have developed a graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils with SEN (to replace School Action and School Action Plus)
- Parents' views and concerns and those of the pupils themselves are listened to and valued
- We will review and, where necessary, improve teachers knowledge of SEN most frequently encountered and build on their understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils

5. Learning Support stages

Stage 1: (including monitoring and observation)

- Observation of a pupil by teaching staff for possible special educational needs which may impact on their learning that may require Learning Support
- May involve identified outside agency input with no intervention in school
- In class intervention and/or differentiation within classroom
- Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSCo) involvement
- Parents informed and pupils monitored
- Due to the very young age of children starting school in the Nursery and Reception, arrangements may be slightly different in terms of the time given to observation (which is increased) at this young age. This is due to the fact that at this age and stage it can be hard to tell whether issues are developmental (and will be grown out of) rather than more significant and needing support. At this age they may be a quarter of their lifetime younger than their class peers. An exception to this however is Speech and Language issues that involve a stammer or selective mutism.

Stage 2: (including in-class support)

- A concern about a pupil's progress is identified and shared with the Learning Support Coordinator (LSCo). This is recorded on a Record of Concern form
- LSCo and teacher consider all information about the pupil's progress. This will include a discussion with the pupil (if age appropriate) and their parents. For higher levels of need we would ask parents to pay for an assessment with a psychologist or other professional.
- Identify areas of strength and difficulty, any parent concerns, agreed outcomes and next stages. A record of this plan, the Learning Support Plan, will be sent to the parents and included in the pupil's learning support folder
- A date for reviewing the progress will be agreed
- Parents, pupil and teaching staff will be clear about how they will help the pupil reach the expected outcomes

Stage 3: (including external support / small groups)

- Possible referral to outside agencies for in depth analysis of underlying barriers to achievement
- Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, we take action to remove barriers of learning and put effective learning support provision in place. This learning support provision takes the form of a review cycle in which earlier decisions and actions are revisited and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and what supports them best. This is the graduated approach. It draws on more detailed approaches, more frequent reviews and more specialist expertise to match interventions to the needs of the pupil.
- Teacher and LSCo agree in consultation with the parent (and pupil if age appropriate) adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as expected outcomes and a clear date for review, usually once per term. The Learning Support Plan (LSP) will identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school
- All teachers and support staff who work with the pupil will be aware of the LSP

- Copy of the LSP sent to parents and put in pupil's learning support folder
- Class or subject teachers remain responsible for the plan, working closely with education support staff and learning support staff
- LSCo will support the teacher in further assessment and effective implementation of support strategies
- A review with parents will assess the impact of the interventions along with the view of pupils and parents. The class teacher and LSCo will revise the support in light of the pupil's progress
- A record of the review will be sent to parents and kept in the pupil's learning support folder

Stage 4: (including specific 1-1 support)

- Where a pupil continues to make little or less than expected progress or where they continue to work at levels substantially below those expected of the age group, despite support and interventions put in place, the school will advise parents to involve an external specialist such as a psychologist to make a more detailed assessment of need
- The above also applies to a pupil new to the school where initial assessments and observations indicate that they are working at levels substantially lower than expected
- Parents will be consulted and advised of the possible necessity for 1:1 support to facilitate appropriate level of curriculum access. This level of support has an additional cost. The cost is pro-rata for the number of hours of support received

Considerations

- The School reserves the right to advise that a pupil be educated in (or moved to) a more appropriate educational setting in a situation where a pupil is consistently failing to make progress after every effort has been made to facilitate this. We recognise that we are not a special school and that for some, a pupil's academic or behavioural needs may be more appropriately met in a special setting. The decision to advise removal to a different school is only ever made in consultation with the head of school
- Pupils with special needs of such severity that it is felt inappropriate for them to undergo SATs tests may be disapplied. This will only ever be done in consultation with the class teacher and head of school
- In very exceptional circumstances a child who is unable to cope with the demands of his/her peer group may be held back a year. This decision will only ever be taken in consultation with the Management Team, LSCo, class teacher and parents.
- In exceptional circumstances a child may only be admitted to the school under the proviso that a Learning Support Assistant is funded for him/her by the parents. At times this may also be a condition of continued education at the BSA for pupils whose SEN are identified only after admission
- In real terms, the school recognises that pupils whose needs are such that they would require 100% support to access the curriculum may not be best placed within our mainstream setting and we would work with parents to look at alternatives

6. The role of the Learning Support Coordinator (LSCo)

- To oversee day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the Learning Support Policy and coordination of provision made to support pupils with SEN
- Provide professional guidance to colleagues and work closely with staff, parents and outside agencies
- Advise on Learning Support
- Liaise with parents of pupils with SEN
- Maintain the Learning Support Register and ensure that the records of all pupils with SEN are kept up to date
- Work with pupils in the situation most beneficial to the child. This may be by withdrawing the child from class, 1:1, or occasionally simply by support or advice to the rest of the pupil's support team
- Maintain the LS resources at each site.
- Keep up to date with current policy and practice in the UK and the Netherlands.

7. Parental involvement

No intervention will take place at Stage 2 or above without parents being informed and invited to discuss the needs of their children. By working in partnership with parents we would hope that we can achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. We have an open door policy so that parents can ask for an appointment at any time to discuss their child's progress and of course can meet at any parents evening.

8. Outside agencies

Pupils involved with support from outside agencies can continue with this support but, as far as possible, this support will be outside lesson time. Speech and language therapy and Occupational therapy sessions can take place within the school day, and in the Senior School after lessons. (see Appendix 1)

9. Learning Support in the Senior School

Whilst the Senior School follows the same 4 stage pathway for support, there are specific differences in the way support is coordinated and delivered. Following transition or arrival at the Senior School a variety of data is collated to allow the provision of appropriate support and intervention to be provided for pupils.

This data will include

- KS2 SATs scores in English and Maths
- CAT tests (Held within school in September/October)
- Reading and spelling scores

For pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) there will also be some testing of language skills (Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing). These scores will help inform decisions in terms of a pupil's placement in the EAL groups.

The data will provide some indication of the type and frequency of intervention and support that an individual pupil might require. Pupils will be asked about their areas of strength and deficits and which strategies and types of support they feel will help them best.

Pupils who have been found to have a likelihood of dyslexia, using the school's screening process, will be offered an individual programme to support their learning and combat specific learning challenges.

Support will be provided in line with the stages outlined above. Progress will be measured at regular intervals throughout the year with outcomes shared with both pupils and parents. Targets will be amended to meet a pupil's new requirements or, if good progress has been made, intervention will end.

1-1 support and support from Learning Support Assistants (LSAs)

The Senior School has a team of experienced Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who have areas of particular specialism so that it is likely that any student receiving support at any level will work with a variety of LSAs depending on their particular specialisation.

Homework Club support

A homework club is provided for three evenings after school until 5.00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The homework club is fully supervised and provides a way of pupils receiving additional support.

A number of subject areas also provide clubs before and after school to support with individual subject areas. The days and times of these sessions are provided for parents at the beginning of the school year.

Special arrangements for examinations

Pupils can be tested for Special Exam Arrangements from the end of Year 9. Special exam Arrangements are not given automatically because of a diagnosed condition. The student needs to meet the criteria set by the exam board. The arrangements last for two years and then a student needs to be re-tested.

Students who have English as an additional language cannot be tested for Special Exam Arrangements until they have been in the English School system for at least two years but they are automatically provided with a dictionary and 10% extra time in all examinations with the exception of English.

Students can be tested on request or following teacher recommendation.

10. Transition between School Sections

Close co-operation and open communication are essential in providing effective transitional arrangements for all pupils, especially who have special educational needs. As an all through school, we recognise the importance of a careful transition plan between the various phases and sites of the school.

Whilst processes must be different for pupils within the different school environments, there is continuity within systems to ensure that parents are clear regarding the nature of support that is offered to their children.

As pupils move from one phase of the school to the next, opportunities are given for the pupils to experience life in their next phase of education. In the younger years, this involves Step Up day and also specific visits for pupils with SEN. In Year 6, pupils have a number of opportunities to share more formally in the life of the Senior School. Parents at all transitional stages are invited into the school for tours and question and answer sessions.

If more detailed transition arrangements are required, the LSCos from the School sections meet to discuss any issues and to plan for successful transition.

The LSCo from the receiving School can attend Learning Support Plan review meetings within the current School section if required and this ensures that a pupil's needs are understood upon transfer.

Levels of support are categorised in the same way so that parents can be clear regarding the nature and extent of additional support that their child receives. Support from outside agencies is provided by the same team allowing consistency and security.

Staff (including LSAs) from the receiving school section spend time in the current School section during the summer term in order to get an even clearer picture of each pupil's abilities and challenges and this will help formulate any Learning Support Plans going forward. Whilst the Senior School does not provide a Learning Support Plan, it does design, if required, personalised programmes and an opportunity for pupil voice. Parents are welcome to come in and discuss their concerns and how their children might best be supported.

11. Record keeping

All school records that the school keeps are automatically confidential within the context of school use, and should not be shared with other parents or staff outside of the school without the parents' consent. (Exceptions are with specific child protection concerns where family involvement may endanger a child - see CP Policy)

All records pertaining to Learning Support Plans, children's progress and Learning Support meetings will be treated with confidence and will be made accessible to staff involved in the provision of education for that child on a need to know basis. Children who are on the Learning Support Register will have a specific file including these documents kept securely in the relevant Learning Support Coordinators' care.

Appendix 1; Outside Agency Support across the School

At the British School of Amsterdam we work successfully with a number of outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Some services are available in school from specialist therapists who are able to use the school's facilities and location to provide their services but are not contracted by the school. Parents are able to buy in their services if they proceed with a referral from the Learning Support Department. Often fees for such services can be partially or entirely reclaimed via health insurance.

Professionals to whom we can refer pupils to be seen in school are:

- Child Psychologist (English and Dutch)
- Speech and Language Therapists (English, Dutch, French, Spanish and some Portuguese)
- Occupational Therapists (English and Dutch)
- Sensory Integration Therapists (English and Dutch)
- Play Therapy/Counselling/Parenting advice (English and Dutch)

The school is also linked to an Ouder Kind Centrum (in Amsterdam Zuid) where an OKA (Ouder Kind Adviseur) is able to work with families who request referral to them for a range of issues including: parenting issues, toilet training, sleep, diet, setting boundaries, behavioural difficulties etc.

The school also has two School Doctors provided by the Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdienst (GGD, the Dutch Municipal Health Service). One is available for children between the ages of 4 and 12 and one from 12 to 18. Prior to the age of 4 children can be referred to their own neighbourhood Consultation Office (Consultatie Bureau). Health checks are conducted by the School Doctor Service for all children in the year they turn 5 and in the year they turn 10. Other appointments (for example for questions about vaccinations, diagnoses, referral to other professionals) can be made by the school doctors. In that event meetings between parents and the doctor take place at the GGD location itself (currently Theophile de Bokstraat).

We also work closely with Edwin Herzberg (trainer in relation to Child Protection and safeguarding issues) and where necessary, with Veilig Thuis (Safe House - Child Social Services) and Bureau Jeugdzorg (Youth Care Office).

Over the course of time, the School has referred pupils to the following outside school services for:

- Speech and Language Therapy in a language not provided by those listed above
- Physical Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Parenting support via Triple P and the Opvoed Poli
- Child and Educational Psychologists outside School
- Visio
- The Auditologisch Centrum
- Dyslexia tutoring
- Expat counsellor
- Homestart
- De Bascule (for autistic children)
- De Kabouterhuis
- Optometrists
- The Feurestein Centre
- VTO vroeghulp
- Buurt Sociaal Team

The School also has contact with various special schools and units in and around Amsterdam, either to provide support for pupils within our school or in order to support parents in the rare cases that we feel the school is not able to meet ongoing needs of a pupil with additional needs.

Our aim at every stage is to work in a three way partnership between parents, outside agency and school to provide the best care for each child and enable each child to reach his or her potential. We work on the principle that parents themselves are involved in this process and in the majority of cases the parents will be the ones who have first contact with the support worker to set up appointments/assessments and (if indicated) therapy.

Although outside agencies already working with children are welcome to come to observe the pupils with whom they work in school, the School cannot provide the location and facilities for every such professional to provide their services in school. It is therefore only those who work with agreement of the Heads and LSCos who are able to use the School as a base for their work. In all cases, however, the School is happy to liaise and meet with professionals supporting our children and families.

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