

## **EDUCATION AND WELFARE PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH STATEMENTS AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES (LDD)**

As a Learning Support Department, we recognise that each child is an individual with their own specific learning differences. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, as long as we can provide them with the support they require. We do not, however, have the facilities to offer highly specialised and intensive support.

At Blundell's we aim to ensure sympathetic treatment, individual support and a positive approach, focusing on the learning difference with its positives rather than any negative associations connected with a learning disability. It is not unusual for LS pupils to gain the highest grades in both GCSE and A level examinations. Above all, pupils who receive support from the Learning Support Department (LSD), are taught to think of themselves as Blundellians, developing confidence and expertise in as many areas as possible. There is also close liaison between the LSD, the English department and other subject teachers, as we strive to support our students in all aspects of their learning.

Although we currently have no pupils with statements of Special Educational Need, where a pupil is accepted into the School who is known to have such a statement, we will guarantee to meet their needs.

There are four Learning Support teachers (listed below) who between them have a wide-ranging involvement in the boarding and extra-curricular life of the school, bringing to their role an excellent understanding of the different pressures, routines and challenges of the school year. The Department is staffed every day and may be easily accessed by pupils, although not every teacher will be in school for the whole of each day.

**Mrs Alix Rhodes (Head of Learning Support)**

**Miss. Helen L. Youngs**

**Mrs. Victoria R. Griffiths**

**Miss Annabel Harbut**

The LS Department exists to provide:

- A caring and sympathetic environment in which the pupils and their parents feel free to express concerns and difficulties
- A programme of study individually designed to develop strengths and build up skills and knowledge, supported by an IEP (Individual Education Plan)
- An environment in which each pupil can develop in confidence, skills and attainment
- Support for colleagues both in general terms and specifically related to individual students
- Support with coursework, revision and examination techniques as well as specific support with aspects of the curriculum encountered but not understood in all subject areas studied.
- Support which is not restricted to timetabled lessons; we are available to help students at other times which may be more convenient to them, such as lunchtimes and after school.

Pupils at Blundell's School may have special educational needs as a result of one or more of the following:

- General learning difficulties
- Specific learning differences
- Particular difficulties with literacy/numeracy/other skills
- Emotional, social or behavioural problems
- A physical disability
- Speech or language difficulties
- A medical or health problem

The Department for Education and Employment's Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of Special Educational Needs and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (part 4) as amended by SEN and Disability Act 2001 is very much taken into account when considering assessment and provision for children who seem to have special needs. Each pupil with a special educational need requires special consideration and treatment. If appropriate, adjustments will need to be put in place. We will discuss thoroughly with parents the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their child once they have accepted the offer of a place and before s/he becomes a pupil at the school.

### **Identifying those who need Learning Support**

For those students entering Blundell's Senior School from the Preparatory School, there is a continuity of Learning Support between the Departments. Parents will be contacted by letter asking them if they would like their child to be seen in Learning Support.

For those pupils joining us from other schools, every effort is made to continue learning support by liaising with parents and the Learning Support Departments of their previous schools. We rely on parents providing full, clear and transparent information about the levels of support their children have been receiving, and opening the dialogue with us before arrival so that suitable human resourcing can be put in place before arrival. Where this information has not been provided (but emerges later on in the pupil's time here), we do our very best to provide appropriate support, but we recommend good communication from the start so that the pupil receives the best possible continuity and educational provision.

Students who enter the Senior School from another school without parental notification of previously diagnosed learning difficulty or disability will often be identified by colleagues through one of the processes below; these often highlight patterns or results where there may be areas of concern for further investigation:

- Entrance examination scripts (particularly English)
- NFER Vocabulary and Comprehension tests in Year 7 and Year 9
- MidYIS tests in Year 7 and Year 9
- English Department colleagues based on written work assessment
- Subject teachers during Common Room Mark Order Meetings
- Director of Studies, House parents or tutors, when comparing current attainment in internal examinations or routine work to MidYIS potential

This concern is registered by the Head of Learning Support and opinions sought from other members of the Common Room involved with the pupil. Parents are informed, and brought in to the discussion. Depending on the individual circumstances, the situation is then monitored or, with parental consent, initial assessments are begun.

An informal assessment will then be made of both the difficulties and suggestions for remediation. At this point, parents will be sent a short report and support provision, if necessary, will be offered. For pupils in Years 10 or above, if the difficulty could qualify the student for special access arrangements in examinations, or if the results do not produce a clear picture of the difficulty and hence way forward, an Educational Psychologist's assessment may be recommended to the parents and we can assist with all the arrangements to do this, and to disseminate and discuss the results.

### **Consent to provide Learning Support**

Consent forms, detailing the fees payable termly, are sent out at the start of the academic year to parents whose children are not already receiving Learning Support at Blundell's. They are accompanied by a personal letter offering a recommendation as to the frequency of support, a parental questionnaire, and information about the Learning Support Department. These forms allow parents to decline the support if they so wish.

If replies are not received within four weeks, a follow-up letter will be sent, and House parents informed. If there is still no response, parents will be contacted by telephone before the end of the first half of term. Students who have received support in the previous year and who have arrived for support sessions will be seen in the meanwhile.

Although assessments and IEPs will indicate the most appropriate level of support, parents can request to vary this, where there is availability of time and staffing. This can be increased in frequency above the recommendation or they may choose to reduce the support.

### **Access Arrangements in Public Examination sittings**

In public examination, access arrangements are additional provisions or circumstances permitted during coursework assessment and terminal examinations. They are applied to those pupils whose special educational needs have implications for the way they need to be assessed. The purpose of access arrangements is to provide pupils with opportunities to demonstrate their attainment; they must be designed and applied to enable pupils to fulfil assessment criteria needs

Examination at GCSE or above leads to formal qualifications used for entry to further study, training and employment. They are conducted by external examining bodies. The examination conditions under which pupils are required to demonstrate knowledge and skills are specified in an examination syllabus and any adaptations or modifications are at the discretion of the examining body. The examining body needs to know a pupil's assessment needs before permission may be given to apply a special arrangement. The Learning Support Department, in conjunction with the School Examination Officer, prepares and presents to the examining body the evidence which can demonstrate a pupil's learning difficulty and related assessment needs. A statement of Special Educational Need or an Educational Psychologist's report does not in itself guarantee the provision of special arrangements.

Pupils who may need special arrangements in examination must also be on the Learning Support Register at School Action Plus. This means that they must be obtaining support either from the school or from a recognised external agency. Generally an IEP will be in place and this will form the evidence for support.

**Examples of access arrangements:**

- Extra time allowances
- Use of rest periods
- Use of reader/scribe/amanuensis
- Use of additional evidence for example, transcripts
- Use of mechanical or technological aids such as a work processor
- Alternative accommodation arrangements in invigilation procedures for example within the school or in a hospital
- Use of modified forms of communications e.g. yellow examination papers

The list is not exhaustive, and other arrangements may be deemed necessary, but approval will always be required from the examining body.

Additional charges may be applied especially where an external invigilator has been employed. These charges may be absorbed by the school where a child is in receipt of support at the “full support” level or may be defrayed to parents in other circumstances depending on individual situations and by agreement with the School Bursar.

The school makes separate provision for those children whose first language is not English, for gifted children or those with special talents, and for children who have physical handicaps.

(Reviewed June 2011)