



LEARNING DEVELOPMENT UNIT

POLICY/HANDBOOK

2019 – 2020

School Year 2019-2020

Heads of Department: Mrs K. Hearn
Mrs L. Moore

Department Staff: Mrs W. Jeffs - Maths
Mrs. C. Wray - SaLT

Learning Support Staff: Mrs. R. Bryant (Resistant Materials/Food Tech focus)
Mrs D. Camp (Prep. School)
Mrs S. Carter
Mrs K. Griffiths (EFL focus)
Mrs C. Wray

Number of Pupils:

Number in Unit	31		
Senior	12 Boys	13 Girls	
Junior	2 Boys	4 Girls	

Number of pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP):

6

(Junior: 2, Senior: 4)

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT UNIT (L.D.U.)

At Stoke College, the L.D.U. works with pupils who have some kind of learning difficulty/disability. The pupils attending L.D.U. have a range of specific learning difficulties and disabilities including dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome and autism.

Currently 25 % of the school population receive help from the L.D.U. These pupils are on School Action (S.A.), School Action Plus (S.A.P.), or have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.) or Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). They are withdrawn from non-core subjects for up to 3.5 lessons per week at an additional cost; and are taught either individually or in small groups according to their needs.

Some other pupils do not receive specialist teaching from the L.D.U. even though they are on S.A. or S.A.P., The reason for this is that either some pupils have received help from the L.D.U in the past and no longer need it or the parents do not wish or cannot take up the place offered due to financial reasons. These pupils are, however, monitored by the department and the aim is for their needs to be met within the classroom setting.

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

AIMS:

1. To increase the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
2. To enable the pupils to benefit fully from the mainstream curriculum offered by Stoke College despite their learning difficulties/disabilities.
3. To have pupils' weaknesses minimised or overcome.
4. To improve the pupils' self esteem and confidence.
5. To assist the pupils to reach their full potential.
6. To assist the pupils to prepare for their G.C.S.E examinations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase the pupils' literacy, numeracy and thinking skills by using a structured, multi-sensory teaching programme.
2. The pupils should be able to progress through school accessing the full curriculum.
3. Pupils should have the opportunity to sit external examinations and be empowered to succeed to the best of their ability.
4. To liaise between pupils, staff and parents.

2. ETHOS

The L.D.U. staff believe that a Specific Learning Difficulty or Learning Disability is not an excuse but that it is a problem that can be dealt with providing effective strategies are used. Pupils are taught in a sympathetic way and are encouraged to discuss their fears and difficulties so that ways of resolving them can be found.

The department encourage all staff to acknowledge effort as well as achievement in academic and non-academic areas of school life, so that the pupils' strengths are recognised, celebrated and built upon.

3. STAFFING

The Unit is staffed by qualified and experienced teachers. A limited amount of in-class support can be provided by these staff if necessary. If more extensive support is required for the core subjects, then an LSA is employed by arrangement with the school and the parents. The pupils with an EHCP may have support funded by the LEA. The LSAs are encouraged to take part in in-service training to develop professional skills and competencies. The Unit works as a team, there is a strong sense of community and members of the Unit provide great support for each other. (The role of the Learning Support Assistant, see section 10) Bi-weekly Departmental meetings are held for both L.D.U. and LSA staff.

4. CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS AND ISSUES

There is close liaison and co-operation between the Unit and all other departments in the school. The L.D.U. operates an "Open Door Policy" for staff and pupils where issues are discussed, suggestions given and these are followed up on either a formal or informal basis. The L.D.U. provides in-class support for particular pupils or follow up work in the Unit where appropriate. The L.D.U. staff give staff of other departments an overview or an oral detailed picture of each pupil's learning difficulties, strengths and weaknesses, and the ways in which these will affect the pupil's learning.

After assessment of a pupil, the L.D.U. staff give subject teachers recommendations regarding these pupils e.g. methods of teaching and differentiation of work and access to a copy of their Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.). They receive a copy of the EHCP pupils' I.E.P. for their files.

Pupils who are causing concern are discussed at staff briefings which occur 3 times a week. However, issues that arise between those meetings can be discussed at any other time. The nature of the concern and necessary actions are agreed and recorded for all staff.

5. ASSESSMENT

On the trial day the pupil is interviewed by a member of the L.D.U. staff and assessment takes place, in the form of a reading (Neale Analysis of Reading Ability or WRAT 4), spelling (Vernon Spelling test or WRAT 4) or numeracy test (WRAT 4) Pupils are re-tested the following May/June and in subsequent summer terms to assess progress. Occasionally pupils are tested more frequently but generally, we believe that more frequent testing is not beneficial for two reasons. Firstly, pupils can become too familiar with particular tests and secondly pupils may become demoralised if progress is disappointing. An I.E.P. is formulated in consultation with pupils and parents where necessary, with between 2-5 targets. These are reviewed termly, half-yearly or yearly and amended accordingly to the number of lessons they receive.

If staff/parents feel it is necessary, an Educational Psychologist's report may be requested at a later stage.

Numeracy skills are assessed on the use of the four rules for number, telling the time and any other topic giving cause for concern. Assessment is made using the WRAT 4 Maths Test.

Pupils are regularly tested informally and assessment is made by the teacher according to attainment/non-attainment of the target(s) set in I.E.P.'s which may or may not include department-set tests, as appropriate.

In the L.D.U. provision for each pupil can be discussed with the parents at any time and alterations made if necessary. (See Access Arrangements Policy.)

6. EHCP PUPILS

The EHCPs are reviewed annually. The review forms part of the school's process of continuous assessment and fulfils the following functions:

- To fulfil the statutory duty of the Education Authority
- To ensure that the interests of the pupils are considered and met by suitable educational programmes
- To provide a means whereby the school can formally assess the effectiveness of the educational provision and arrangements for learning support
- To facilitate communication and dialogue between school, parents and other professionals as well as key staff within the school

In order to achieve these functions the review process is be organised as follows:

- The dates for review meetings of all statemented pupils are planned during September each year. The dates are circulated to the relevant authority, parents and the L.D.U.
- Details of the proposed review meeting and the form for information gathering, along with an invitation, if appropriate, are circulated to parents, the education authority and all key professionals (including teachers) who work with the pupil
- Relevant documents are circulated to those invited to attend the review meeting so they are received one week before the meeting
- Hold the review meeting at the relevant time
- The completed review documentation including the new I.E.P is then circulated to all the relevant people. The new I.E.P will be circulated to the relevant subject teachers
- Access Arrangements will be applied for accordingly.

7 ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

Pupils who have Specific Learning Difficulties/Learning Disabilities will be required to have a full assessment carried out by an Educational Psychologist of the parents' choice, prior to taking their GCSEs. This assessment needs to be carried out at the end of Year 9 or the beginning of Year 10. This will provide the Evidence of Need required by the Awarding Bodies and the work done in the L.D.U. will give the History of Provision. An assessment done by a Specialist Teacher is not acceptable under Stoke College's Policy; however, parents can be provided with a recommended specialist whose qualifications record is shared with Stoke College before any assessment takes place.

If a pupil has already been assessed by an Educational Psychologist the parents will consult with L.D.U. staff to discuss the next stage.

On completion of the report pupils may be awarded a reader, scribe, word processor and/or extra time according to their difficulties. This has to be agreed by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ); the LDU will follow the protocols established in Chapter 7 of the JCQ Publication “Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments”.

Parents will be informed of the results and the subsequent provision.

Parents with younger children may be encouraged to have them assessed by an Educational Psychologist after consultation with the L.D.U. staff, but this is not compulsory.

8. DEVELOPMENTAL MARKING POLICY

Written work which is set within the department is always marked with the pupil so that they can see where they have made mistakes and can be shown how to improve their work. Constructive, positive comments are given orally and a short positive phrase is written in their exercise books. Mistakes are analysed and recorded so that they can be addressed. Ideas for improvements are discussed, strategies given and pupils are encouraged to use them in their next written task. Spellings are sent home to be learnt and tested the following week/lesson. For spellings, marks are given only to show how a pupil has performed in a certain task and never for comparison with others.

9. TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Pupils are taught in a structured, multi-sensory way building on their strengths to improve their weaknesses.

Junior pupils in Peake, Attenborough and Goodall classes are taught with a teacher/pupil ratio of 1:2(max). They are usually withdrawn from non-core subjects or some English lessons to attend the L.D.U. They can have a maximum of 3.5 lessons per week. Not all pupils need this amount. Initially pupils are taught literacy skills according to their needs. Alphabet sequencing, phonic works, handwriting, all aspects of basic comprehension, listening and memory skills are covered plus creative writing, if required. Mathematics support is tailored to individual needs.

Senior pupils are taught with a teacher/pupil ratio of 1:4(max). They are either withdrawn from their 3.5 French lessons per week or, if they are coping with French, they may be withdrawn from non-core subjects for a maximum of 3 sessions. With parental permission this can be flexible.

The senior L.D.U. revises, practises and builds upon the foundation of literacy and numeracy skills taught in the Prep School.

Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are taught handwriting, reading for accuracy, meaning and pleasure, all aspects of comprehension, spelling, proof-reading, note-taking, essay writing and study skills. Mathematics concentrates on consolidation of the assessed basic skills.

In Years 10 and 11 pupils apply what they have learnt in Years 7, 8 and 9 to their G.C.S.E. assessments. The L.D.U. staff play a more supportive role by helping pupils to organise their research projects and teaching them revision and exam techniques. Consolidation work to help with acquiring English skills is also given. Access arrangements for GCSEs are applied for as necessary.

10. THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) aim to support pupils with special educational needs to gain access to the curriculum. They work with pupils in mainstream lessons and occasionally in the Learning Development Unit in very specific ways.

In class, the LSA ensure that the pupil has understood instructions that they have been given and checks that she/he will be able to tackle the task in hand. If necessary, information may be read and explained to a pupil. Help may be offered with the planning and organisation of a task, particularly if it is a written piece of work, and equipment may be provided if it seems to be lacking. Some pupils may need help with the presentation and layout of their work. The LSA may scribe for the pupil to ensure that she /he keeps pace with the rest of the group. At an appropriate time in the lesson, the LSA may discuss the work with the pupil, explain concepts and provide opportunities to practise new skills.

Some LSAs work with pupils on individual programmes designed to meet very specific objectives. This work may be carried out in the Learning Development Unit. The objectives may relate to literacy and/or numeracy skills and they will generally include study skills. LSAs may be involved in drawing up appropriate IEP targets for pupils.

LSAs are expected to keep records of all their work with pupils, including observations about the way pupils learn, strategies used, and their usefulness, and any other clues about pupils' learning styles, and they are an ideal source of information on these matters. They are also able to indicate whether reading material is within the reading capacity of a pupil. Any matters arising from these observations can be presented for discussion at the weekly LSA departmental meeting.

The Learning Development Unit aims to build on the strengths and interests of individual members and there are opportunities for LSAs to participate in in-service training to develop professional skills and competencies. The Unit works as a team, there is a strong sense of community and members of the Unit provide great support for each other.

The Learning Support Assistants at Stoke College possess these qualities and skills:

- Sympathy towards children with SpLD
- Awareness of their educational and emotional needs
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Willingness to follow a programme devised by the Unit
- Ability to work independently and willing to undertake new challenges
- Awareness of the need of confidentiality
- Ability to draw up support materials to supplement lesson material