

Whole School Policy for Learning Support

Ainm na Scoile: Kiltiernan N.S. Kilcolgan, Co. Galway

Uimhir Rolla: 17645R

Date of most recent draft: April 4th 2011

Situation: Kiltiernan N.S. has 3 mainstream teachers and one Learning Support Teacher shared with Gort B.N.S.. There are presently 71 pupils on roll.

1. AIMS

- The principal aim of learning support in our school is **to optimise the teaching and learning process, in order to serve pupils with learning difficulties**, to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving Kiltiernan N.S.
- This can be achieved most effectively through **implementing our whole school policies, approaches and teaching methodologies which target the learning needs of the lowest achieving pupils.**
- We aim **to set aside time for collaboration between the Learning Support teacher, class teachers and parents so that targeted, effective and focused intervention** can take place in both the classroom and Learning Support room and at home.
- We aim to **develop classroom-based learning to support children who attend learning support and those who are just above the cut-off point** i.e. >25th percentile in English/ Maths.
- We aim to support children **to participate in the full curriculum** for their class level.
- We aim to develop **positive self-esteem and positive attitudes** about school and learning **by designing successful learning experiences**, by planning work that **develops the child's independence in the learning process.**
- We aim to **develop the children's ability to monitor and evaluate their own learning** through routine consultation, writing and drawing activities
- We aim **to provide supplementary teaching to those children most in need** in the areas of Maths and English, in consultation with their parents
- We aim to **provide on-going advice and support to parents** to help them support their child's learning in Maths and English, at key stages in the children's school life i.e. Induction Meetings, transition from room to room, at P.T.M's.
- We aim to **set aside curricular planning time at every staff meeting to develop collaborative planning and sharing of methodologies among all members of staff**

- We aim to **establish early intervention programmes** (annually targeting Senior Infants as a unit or within a classroom context) and other programmes e.g. reading Buddy systems, D.E.A.R. and computer software to enhance every child's learning, to reduce and prevent difficulties in literacy and Maths.
- We aim to develop the children's awareness of themselves as individuals, his/her own dignity and in doing so respect the individuality and dignity of his/her own peers. We want to develop the children's ability to acknowledge, accept and celebrate difference.
- We aim to provide space in which it is safe to learn, to make mistakes, to ask questions, to express opinions and to grow. The aim of Kiltiernan N.S. is to provide a happy, secure, appealing and effective learning environment in which each child will become numerate and literate, curious and caring. We aim to develop the child's ability to become independent and take responsibility for his/her own learning.

- We want to further develop each child's sense of responsibility for his/her own choices so that he/she can participate fully in the wider world and therefore become aware of the unique and significant contribution he/she can make by providing each child with learning opportunities and the environment that helps to develop these values.

2. STAFF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Principal Teacher:

- The principal has **overall responsibility** for the development and implementation of the school's policies on learning support and special needs.
- **Works with teachers and parents** in the development of this school plan i.e.
 - **Prevention** (buddy reading, well-stocked class libraries, consistent teaching approaches and methodologies) and
 - **Early intervention programmes,**
 - **Carefully designed and supportive homework policies (shared/ paired reading) and**
 - **Induction meetings for new parents to centrally involve them in their child's learning**
 - **Formal and informal parent-teacher meetings** maintaining good home/school links
- **Co-ordinates and monitors the implementation of the school plans.**
- **Monitors the screening and selection of pupils with greatest need** for supplementary teaching **using whole school assessment tools**
- **Co-ordinates the learning support service** in the school **or oversees the co-ordinator: meeting the learning support teacher once per term to discuss implementation of the school plan.**
- **Liaising and keeping teachers and parents informed** of the **external assessment services** and the procedures to be followed **in initiating referrals** i.e. psychological services, speech and language and occupational therapists, etc.
- **Facilitates sharing of methodologies, teaching strategies, in-career development by all staff** through a **dedicated time slot during staff-meetings** for Special Needs issues and **attendance of courses** in the area of special needs/learning support.
- **Facilitates support by Learning Support teachers of class teachers** working with children who **no longer avail of Learning support/ children of parents who do not consent to supplementary teaching outside the classroom**
- **Oversees maintenance of records and tracking systems on pupils with greatest need, oversees maintenance of I.P.L.P.'s/ I.E.P.'s**
- **Ensures that class teachers are centrally involved in the preparation and implementation of I.P.L.P.'s /I.E.P.'s**
- **Helps co-ordinate caseloads and work schedules** of learning support/resource teachers
- **Arranges for classroom accommodation and resources as appropriate and ensures awareness among all staff** of the effects of general and specific learning disabilities.
- **Liaising with the principal of the base school** (Gort B.N.S.) to ensure that
 - There is **good communication and flexibility in arrangements** re. Screening and testing, staff-meetings, tours, developing I.P.L.P.'s, meetings with parents and outside agencies
 - **Sharing of resources and information** on issues and approaches re. Special Needs is made easier.

B. Class Teacher:

- **First line of responsibility for all the children in his/her class**
- **Providing pupils with special needs with extra tutoring** in key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- **Ensures that grouping according to ability** and **differentiating learning materials** are employed to meet the needs of all the children in the classroom
- **Collaborates with the Learning Support teacher** in developing and implementing the I.P.L.P. and **using consistent approaches and methodologies** to support the weakest children in the classroom
- **Centrally involve the child in his/her own learning** through careful questioning, creating a supportive environment for developing oral language and literacy, using appropriate assessment methods i.e. running records, self-evaluation techniques, peer testing etc.
- **Maintains communication with parents formally and informally** to ensure good home/school co-operation

3. Learning-Support Teacher

Collaborates with the principal teacher to develop and implement the whole school learning support policy by:

- **Helping to co-ordinate the overall services** for children in receipt of supplementary teaching
- **Meeting on a termly basis** with the principal to discuss issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan
- Offering **advice** in day-to-day implementation of the plan

Collaborates with class teachers by:

- **Implementing and developing the school plan re. L.S. in the following areas:** prevention policies, intervention programmes, screening, interpreting the results of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching
- **Reporting progress, raising issues and consulting** with class teachers at termly staff meetings
- **Planning I.P.L.P.'s** i.e. planning classroom activities based upon agreed learning targets as specified in the I.P.L.P. of each pupil
- **Monitoring and recording progress** of each pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching i.e. I.P.L.P.'s, specifically learning targets
- **Supporting children who are just above the cut-off point** in each classroom by advising and where possible providing suitable resources for classroom-based activities
- Supporting **children who are having their support reduced/discontinued** as above
- Supporting children **whose parents do not consent** to learning support as above **i.e. formal intervention**
- **Identifying children** who have general or specific learning disabilities

Co-ordinating selection of pupils for supplementary teaching by:

- Administration of whole school screening programmes to identify pupils with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy
- Consulting with teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment using the following input: pupils' scores, agreed criteria for selection, teachers' own views of the pupils needs and difficulties, and the optimum number who can receive learning support
- Identifying the type and level of support required to meet the pupil's needs

Provision of Supplementary Teaching

- Devise and implement **early intervention programmes** that involves **delivering intensive small-group or one-to-one** tutoring in English or Mathematics to pupils in Senior Infants to Second Class in the classroom/learning support room
- **Supplementary teaching to pupils of greatest need** in the senior section of the school i.e. Third-Sixth Class
- **Maintain a record of attendance** of pupils at learning support sessions
- **Work intensively with pupils** towards agreed learning targets set out in I.P.L.P.
- **Complete weekly Planning and Progress Record** sheets for each pupil allocated to L.S.

Collaborates with Parents by:

- **Providing general information** to parents re. Learning support services in the school
- **Seeking consent** for diagnostic assessment
- **Meeting with parents of children selected for diagnostic assessment, if requested by parent**
- **After initial diagnostic assessment, meet with each pupil's parent to discuss the results, options open to them and actions to be taken by the school**, advising how targets can be attained through support carried out at home
- **On-going communication with parents** of each pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching to positively affirm the child's efforts, the parents support and anticipate difficulties and support and advise where these may arise
- **Review each child's progress** at the end of each instructional term, revising the I.P.L.P. in consultation with parents where necessary
- **Consult with parents when supplementary teaching is being reduced or discontinued** and advise on ways in which support can be given at school/ home
- **Demonstrate techniques and strategies** to parents that will enable them to help with their child's development in areas like oral language, reading, writing and maths
- **Collaborate with outside agencies** e.g. home/school liaison teachers on ways in which they can support their child's learning at home

- **Formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of outcomes**, making them available as required to class teachers, parents, principal...
- **Initial diagnostic assessments identified** as low achievement/ learning difficulty
- **Monitoring on-going progress** of each child
- **Review progress** at the end of each instructional term

Role of learning Support Teacher in a Shared Post

Contributes to the development and review of a policy document that specifically addresses how supplementary teaching is can best be offered in both schools by:

- Looking at the **whole year and within each term** so that the **maximum support** can be given to the children selected in both schools,
- **Provision should be given fairly and in co-operation/collaboration** with both principals
- **Provision should be planned with reasonable flexibility** which acknowledges the L.S.T.'s demands across two schools **i.e.** yard-duty, lunch-times/breaks/travel time, leave/absences, tours, in-service/training etc.
- **Attend meetings convened by the principal of the base school**, attended by the principal of this school
- **Consult with staff of each school at least once a year** to discuss developments, progress of learning support provision
- **Intensive supplementary teaching be provided three to four times per week on alternate mornings and afternoons** to maximize the benefit to the children in both schools acknowledging that the optimum time for concentration is the earlier part of the day.

D. Parents

Through their unique knowledge of their own child they have much to contribute to their child's learning programmes:

- **Collaborating:** with class teacher and learning support teacher on developing I.P.L.P.'s
- **Sharing information** that would enhance the teachers' understanding of how their child learns, their interests, goals and resources in supporting the child.
- **Supporting the work of the learning support teacher and class teacher** at home using consistent approaches
- **Reinforcing positive and encouraging messages** to the child about his/her progress and his/her achievements.

E. Pupils

- **Become familiar with setting and working towards** agreed short-term learning targets
- **Contribute to the selection of texts, learning materials and resources relevant** to attaining their learning goals
- **Develop ownership of strategies and skills**, applying them **consciously** to their own learning i.e. verbalizing their thinking/drawing or writing their thought processes, approaches, methods
- **Contribute** verbally or in writing to their **own evaluations of their progress**, participating in appropriate assessment activities, including **self-assessment**

F. Board of Management

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of the school policy **on learning support and special needs services generally**
- **Ensures adequate classroom accommodation** and teaching resources for L.S.T.
- **Provides a secure facility for storage of records** relating to pupils in receipt of special needs and learning support

3. EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Senior Infants has been identified as a focus for targeted intervention. The context of this intervention will be determined on the basis of the children's needs, annually. Withdrawal of the Senior Infant class by the Learning Support teacher or withdrawal of the Junior Infant group and/or First Class by the class teacher will be considered. Working collaboratively for all or part of an Instructional Term will also be considered. The content of the work will be on the teaching methodologies promoted by Orton & Gillingham and the Newell Programme, reinforcing the approach used by the class teacher.

Plan of Work Scheduled for 2011

Class	Instructional Term	Area of Focus
Senior Infants	September-May	Literacy

4. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND REPORTING

1. Class Teacher administers and interprets the standardized tests in the final term.
2. Application of cut-off scores (See section 6 for detail)
3. Consultation between class teacher and parents. Consent sought.
4. Consultation between class teacher and learning support teacher.
5. Diagnostic Assessment by L.S.T.
6. Programme (I.P.L.P.) developed in consultation between parents, L.S.T. and C.T.
7. Programme implemented in learning support room and classroom for agreed duration of instruction.
8. Review.
9. Discontinuation/Continuation: In collaboration with class teachers, parents and pupils.

5. PRELIMINARY SCREENING

Junior Infants: Checklists published in the Drumcondra English Profiles are used to help identify and assess children in the areas of Oral Language (88-9), Emergent Reading and Writing skills (pg. 97) and on PCSP websites etc. Feedback on these results are given at P.T.M.'s in November so that parents can be made aware at the earliest point of difficulties their child may be experiencing.

Senior Infants: MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) administered in the fifth term of the child's school life/ second term of Senior Infants by Class Teacher. Tests are corrected and standardized by Class Teacher and then discussed with the Learning Support Teacher and principal. Children with difficulties are identified. The class teacher informs parents of the children identified and advice is given regarding the resources available to the child in the school. Consent for supplementary teaching for the children identified as most in need is sought by the class teacher. If consent is not given, parents sign a form to acknowledge that support was offered and a copy is kept on file. Priority is given to children at this level as part of our early intervention strategy. Supplementary teaching will continue to be offered even if consent is not initially forthcoming. Withdrawal in small groups will be utilized if deemed necessary.

First-Sixth: Drumcondra Maths and English tests are administered in the final term by class teachers. These results are communicated in comment form to parents in Summer Reports. Children identified as requiring supplementary teaching are identified for both literacy and numeracy.

Criteria for Selection for Learning Support

- **Literacy: Children will be prioritised for withdrawal with a performance at or <12th percentile**
- **Early Intervention: Senior Infants**
If there is space and time children from 1st-6th class who have performed at/ below 25th percentile in English will be met also before numeracy is considered
- **Numeracy: Priority will be given to children who perform at or <12th percentile for withdrawal**
- **Early Intervention**
If there is space and time, children from 1st-6th classes at/ below 25th percentile will be met for Maths

6. DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Diagnostic assessment is carried out by the Learning support children on children **whose parents consented** to having their child receive supplementary teaching. The purpose of this assessment is to establish an area of work for targeted, focused support complimented by work in the classroom.

Testing Methods used by Learning Support Teacher:

Neale Miscue Analysis, 'Get Reading Right': Jackson Phonics Test, Dolch List: High Frequency Words, Phonological Awareness Checklist, 100 High Frequency Spellings, free writing, drawing for comprehension, Maths Miscue Analysis, etc.

7. SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING:

Supplementary teaching will be provided to pupils who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties as outlined above in **Section 5**, under the subheading '**Criteria for Selection for Learning Support**'.

In planning the timetable for learning support, the school will seek to ensure that pupils who are withdrawn from their mainstream class will not miss class lessons in the same subject repeatedly.

Pupils will not receive homework from the learning-support teacher unless prior arrangement has been made with class teacher.

Class teachers and the Learning Support teacher will monitor the content and amount of homework and classwork especially in the areas of teacher designed testing in Spelling, reading, writing areas, Maths activities, strategies for teaching and testing number facts and in Litríú for children who have difficulties in Literacy and Maths.

8. Continuing/Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching:

Continuation of a pupil will be determined according to progress in achieving goals set out for an instructional term by all partners in the I.P.L.P. as outlined in Section 2: '**Staff Roles and Responsibilities**'.

9. Monitoring Progress:

- **Short term/on-going assessment:** Teacher observation and notes in relation to short-term objectives i.e. reading time on an analog clock so that class teaching and supplementary teaching continue to be responsive to the pupil's needs.
- **End of each instructional term:** More detailed review of progress to date with reference to each individual child's I.P.L.P. The focus of this review would be to see what level of support is required, the form it should take and a revision of learning targets where necessary.

10. Liaising with Parents:

The importance and necessity for co-operation and collaboration with parents is acknowledged in Kiltiernan N.S. Every child's learning is enhanced by the interest, support and ambition of his/her parents. Parents concerns regarding their child are listened to and responded to, to the best of our ability. **Parents are regarded as partners with our staff in the education of their child.** Parents are **invited, guided and supported** in giving their child **home-based support**, supplementing the work we do here. Communication and collaboration is planned for in the following ways:

- **Day to day:** Informal meetings, appointments made in advance, and notes and observations from home/school in the child's Homework Journal
- **Induction meetings** for new parents outlining school policies and advising parents on how to help their child adapt to school life here
- **Information meetings:** paired/shared reading, developing children's oral language, motivating their child to read, homework support, developing specific mathematical concepts especially in the area of Time and Measures, Money, etc.
- **Special weeks, events and competitions** celebrating areas of the curriculum, especially English i.e. Book Week, Write-A-Book, MS Readathon,
- **Parent/teacher meetings:** Class teachers and Learning Support/Resource teachers
- **Graduation Masses, sacramental celebrations**
- **Newsletters** from the principal and Parents' Council
- Regular meetings between **B.O.M. and Parents' Council**

11. Links with outside agencies:

- Learning Support Teacher/ Resource teacher in collaboration with the principal makes initial contact with parents, liaises with outside assessment agencies
- Make arrangements for additional educational provision for children diagnosed with special needs

12. Review of Policy:

- Our school policy will be routinely reviewed on an annual basis to assess the success of our implementation at our final staff-meeting attended by our Learning Support teacher and Resource teacher
- It will be ratified by the Board of Management

13. Cluster Situation:

Issues to be considered annually: *Proposed Agenda*

- Co-ordination of the services across the two schools each year: consultation between the two principals and the Learning Support teacher
- Adherence to criteria for selection within each school
- Continuance and Discontinuance procedures
- Arrangements for intensive early intervention programmes and prevention programmes
- Supplementary teaching arrangements for the senior section of the schools
- Consultation arrangements and how to facilitate them
- Substitution for absences
- Yard duty
- Travel
- Resources: funding and sharing where appropriate to maximize breadth of resources available to both schools