

## **School Policy on Children with Learning Difficulties**

"There are pupils in the ordinary school who have clearly observable difficulties in acquiring basic skills in literacy and/or numeracy or who have some difficulty in learning of a more general nature".

Report of the Special Education Review Committee Department of Education 1993.

These are the people in our school who have access to the learning Support Service.

### Aims

- To enable children with learning difficulties to reach their full potential
- To ensure success for them at what they are doing and give them due recognition for it
- To enhance their self esteem
- To foster realistic expectations of the children at school and at home

### Prevention

Use of teaching strategies, teaching methods and materials in the classroom in order to eliminate difficulties before they arise

### Referral of Pupils for Assessment

1. Pupils are referred to the learning support teacher at the request of class teacher and/or parents
2. Pupils are sometimes referred following the administration of standardized tests in the classroom
3. Learning support is available to pupils from the beginning of senior infants to the end of sixth class
4. Parents are always fully involved in the referral process.

## Assessment

### Stage 1            Informal Assessment

This usually occurs when a class teacher observes a child experiencing difficulty with his/her work. This may include observation of visual/auditory difficulties, language progress and motor co-ordination.

### Stage 2            Formal Education Assessments

#### Norm Referenced/Standardized Tests

#### Criterion - Referenced Tests

At this level pupil's performance is observed and assessed for its age appropriateness Information (Standard Scores/Quotient/Sten) from tests help us to distinguish between

- Above average
- Average
- Below Average

Tests used in the school include the Micra T reading Attainment Test. The Rain Sentence Reading Test The Schonnel Reading Test

The Sigma T Mathematics Test (1-5)

The Non- readers Intelligence Test

#### Administration

#### English

Classes (First-Sixth) are given the opportunity of doing the Micra T Attainment Test every second school year. Senior Infants

attempt it every year Pupils who attain a standard score below 85 are referred to the Learning Support Teacher.

### Maths

The Sigma T Mathematics Test (Levels 1-5) is administered to classes (First - sixth) every second school. Pupils who fall below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile are referred to the Learning Support Teacher. These English and math's tests are administered and corrected by the class teachers.

### Stage 3 Individual Diagnostic Testing

At this stage it is the process of learning rather than the performance that is analysed. Diagnostic tests are used to identify the possible cause of learning difficulties which are obstacles to learning they provide additional information about an individuals strengths and weaknesses in the many different sub skills i.e. reading, writing, spelling and numeracy.

### Diagnostic Tests Include

The Bellfield Infant Assessment Profile

The Basic Number Test W.E.C. Gilham

Pupils with perceptual and/or other learning difficulties who attain higher scores on standard tests may also have access to the Learning Support service.

References - Learning Support Guidelines 2000

(Department of Education & Science).

The standard Reading Tests - Daniels & Diack.

### Parents

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in the remediation of their children's difficulties. They visit the Learning Support Teacher at Parent teacher meetings. They also visit at other times if necessary.

### Internal Arrangements

Generally speaking the learning support teacher withdraws children from their classes for help in English and/or Maths but flexibility with regard to other approaches exists.

### Links With Outside Agencies

In certain referral to outside agencies Educational Psychologist, Child Guidance Clinic Speech Therapist may be necessary.