

Coill Dubh N.S.  
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## **School Policy for Learning Support**

### **Situation:**

Coill Dubh N.S. is a seven teacher school in a developing area. The Learning Support teacher is Helen Coyne.

### **Belief statement:**

Our school cherishes all pupils equally. To aid them in achieving their true potential, Coill Dubh N.S. sets out to provide a Learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

### **Aims:**

The principal aim of learning support is to optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve improved levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

The following subsidiary aims relating to the provision of learning support services for pupils with low achievement and/or learning difficulties arise the principal aim of learning support.

- To enable these pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level;
- To develop self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils;
- To enable these pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners;
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for these pupils in English or Mathematics;
- To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policies on learning support for these pupils;
- To establish early intervention programmes and other programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning

## **Staff Roles and responsibilities:**

### **Principal:**

#### ***The Principal should:***

- assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on learning support and special needs;
- work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support and special needs;
- monitor the implementation of the school plan on learning support and special needs on an ongoing basis;
- monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with very low achievement;
- assume direct responsibility for coordinating learning support and special needs services or identify a teacher to perform this role;
- oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need;
- keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals;
- help teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support teaching by, for example, providing guidance and advice with regard to teaching methods and materials and encouraging teachers to avail of relevant in-career development.

### **Class Teacher:**

#### ***The class teacher should:***

- implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils, and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties;
- implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and in Mathematics by administering and scoring appropriate screening measures and by discussing the outcomes with the learning support teacher in the context of each pupil's performance in class;
- for each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, collaborate with the learning support teacher in the development of an Individual Profile and Learning Programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets;
- adjust the class programme in line with the agreed learning targets and activities on the pupil's JPLP and maintain a record of pupil's progress towards achieving those learning targets;
- differentiate the class curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all the pupils within the class;
- make parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress;
- seek the approval of the pupil's parents to proceed with assessment.

## **Learning support/ Resource Teacher:**

### *The Learning Support teacher should:*

- assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties;
- develop an IPLP for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents;
- maintain a progress record for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of learning support;
- deliver early intervention programmes and provide supplementary teaching in English and/or Mathematics to pupils in the junior section of the school;
- provide supplementary teaching in English and/or Mathematics to pupils in the senior section of the school who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties;
- co-ordinate the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching;
- contribute to the development of policy on learning support at the whole school level;
- provide advice to class teachers in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning;
- contribute at the school level to decision-making regarding the purchase of learning resources;
- advise the Principal teacher on issues that arise in the day-to-day implementation of the learning support programme in the school;
- consult with the school staff as individuals and as a group on a regular basis;
- meet and consult with parents who have been selected to receive supplementary teaching.

## **Prevention Strategies & Parental Involvement:**

- Whole school policies/approaches to language development
- Whole school policies/approaches to the teaching literacy/mathematics
- Development of policy on Emergent Reading- Language development, Print rich environment, Development of sight vocabulary, Shared book Language experience approach, developing concepts of print through modeling by the teacher and through Collaborative reading activities, Initiating the development of a basic sight vocabulary.
- Development of whole school policy on phonological and phonemic awareness
- Paired reading/C.A.P.E.R./Peered reading projects
- Reading buddies
- Paired Mathematics
- Individualised spelling programmes
- Differentiation in class situation
- Provision of additional support in language development and in early literacy/mathematical skills to pupils who need it.

- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of language, literacy and mathematical skills of pupils in infant classes
- Implementing classroom programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent learning difficulties.
- Provision of appropriate ongoing support in the classroom for pupils for whom supplementary teaching has been discontinued /reduced, e.g. spelling programmes, maths groups, buddy reading
- Provision of additional resources and materials-maths games, maths materials, teacher resources, software, phonological awareness programme, big books, library resources, supplementary reading schemes

### **Early Intervention Strategies:**

#### ***Strategies for preventing learning difficulties***

- development of agreed approaches to language development and math's including progression from class to class.
- additional support in language development for pupils who need it.
- whole school/parent involvement.
- paired reading.
- structural observation and assessment in infant classes to facilitate early identification of difficulties.

#### ***Strategies for implementing early intervention programmes:***

- intervention begins in Senior Infants.
- two instructional terms per year- September to January and February to June.
- lessons take place regularly
- small group teaching
- one-to-one teaching available depending on needs of child and time available.
- core elements of lessons will focus on: Oral Language Development, Phonological Awareness Training, Reading, Writing, Math's language, Math's procedures and concepts.

### **Assessment and Reporting:**

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Portfolios
- Projects work
- Class/homework copies
- Standardised Tests (Micra, MIST, Drumcondra)
- Diagnostic tests. (Aston Index, Schonell)
- Programme planning (IPLP)
  
- Programme Implementation
- Programme review at the end of each instructional term.
- 'Decision is made to continue or discontinue supplementary teaching.

## **Supplementary Teaching**

Supplementary teaching is provided for pupils who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties. Priority is given to those pupils who achieve scores at or below the 12th percentile in literacy and/or numeracy.

### ***Programme Planning:***

The pupils IPLP includes:

- details of the pupil, class, teacher, date programme was started.
- information about assessment- screening, diagnostic and informal.
- additional relevant information e.g. psychological assessments, speech therapy
- learning strengths and attainments
- learning targets
- activities used to achieve these targets
- resources used to achieve targets
- parental involvement

## **Continuing/Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.**

- the decision to continue or discontinue supplementary teaching is made at the end of each instructional term.
- the Learning Support teacher and the class teacher consult about this decision.
- if supplementary teaching is being continued/discontinued, the parents are consulted and their views sought.
- children who no longer receive supplementary teaching are closely observed to ensure progress continues.

### **Monitoring progress:**

- Monitoring progress can be accomplished through meetings between the Principal, Class teachers, Learning Support teacher and parents at the end of each of the two instructional terms.
- Monitoring the school plan can be accomplished through meetings between the Principal, Class teachers and the Learning Support teacher. Issues that can be addressed as appropriate include: Early Intervention, Screen and Diagnostic testing, Selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, Allocation of time, Progress of pupils, Referral for additional support and assessment.

### **Liaising with parents:**

- Where a pupil has been identified as experiencing low achievement on the basis of a low score on an appropriate screening measure, consultation should take place between the class teacher, the Learning Support teacher and the pupil's parents. The parents should be made aware of the concerns of the school in relation to their child's progress.
- If supplementary teaching is being offered, approval should be sought from the pupil's parents and discussions should take place in order to agree ways in which the parents can support the attainment of learning targets that have been set for the pupil.
  
- The Learning Support teacher and the classroom teacher provide several opportunities to communicate with the parents of the children.
- Parents are invited to Parent/Teacher meetings held in February each year.
- The parents are expected to sign the child's homework diary and this provides a means of communication.
- Parents who collect or deliver their children to school can approach the teachers or the teacher can arrange to meet them if necessary.
- Parents can be contacted by phone if necessary.

### **Links with outside agencies:**

- The Principal, Learning Support and the class teacher discuss the problem and whether referral to an outside agency is necessary,
- The parents of the child are invited to discuss this and sign a consent form if necessary.
- The appropriate agency is approached e.g. NEPS for a psychological assessment or the local Health Nurse about physical concerns.
- When the referral process has been completed and a report sent to the school, the parents have the responsibility to see that any recommendation regarding physical problems are carried out.
- The Learning Support teacher and the class teacher consult about any recommendations arising out of psychological assessments.
- If supplementary teaching by a Resource teacher is recommended, an application is made to the local inspector.

### **Review of policy:**

A review and revision of the school plan dealing with Learning Support should take place every 2/3 years taking into account the views of the Board of Management, the Principal teacher, the Learning Support teacher, other teachers on the staff and the parents.