



THE LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

The Department currently comprises the Head and Deputy Head of the Department who are both full time, qualified teachers and eight full time plus two part time Learning Support Assistants. The Head of Department is also the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator - SENCo. The Learning Support Department works from Chapel House, which is set slightly apart from the main area and is in a quiet and pleasant part of the school. It is well resourced, and includes an interactive white board, two interactive plasma screens, Ipads and specialist resources. There are five rooms able to be used for both one to one and small group teaching of pupils, including a dedicated office for the Head of Department.

Gordon's Learning Support Department has the experience and expertise to provide for pupils with a very wide range of barriers to learning, alongside those pupils for whom English is a second language. The provision is in line with the revised SEN Code of Practice (2014) and County policy. The Learning Support Register is regularly reviewed, updated and distributed to staff and Individual Education Plans are compiled twice yearly for statemented and EHCP students.

As well as Learning Assistant support in class, pupils might also attend some small group sessions for spelling, comprehension, reading, numeracy or social skills. A number of students also receive one to one teaching and or mentoring in specific areas from either a Learning Support Assistant or specialist teacher. In addition to the expertise within the department, we also make full use of colleagues available to us in the outside agencies who specialise in supporting pupils with additional needs.

The Deputy SENCo takes responsibility for English as an Additional Language and there are two well-qualified LSAs who take KS3/4 and KS5 students for 1:1 sessions once their needs have been established through in-depth assessment. Further qualifications such as IELTS and KETS are encouraged and supported through after school clubs.

The department acts as a repository for specialist information and support for teachers with regard to the individual needs of the students. LSAs and the Deputy Senco are encouraged to have specialist areas of expertise as well as operating as part of a team, with CPD being a priority for all in the Learning Support.

Exam Access Arrangements are a large part of the Learning Support Department from Y7 – Y13 and this takes priority in the mock and real GCSE / GCE weeks in the school year. The SENCo runs the assessments, which are in place to establish need according to the JCQ rulebook.

Vocational courses are the responsibility of the Learning Support department for Y10/11 students who prefer a hands-on option at KS4, and we work with a variety of other local schools and colleges to be able to offer courses from Catering to Animal Care.

The department aims to be at the cutting edge of SEN thinking and support so that new initiatives such as the use of exam reading pens for students in KS4/5 are welcomed. LSAs act as liaison and contacts to each student on the LS register on a half-termly basis creating a positive open door policy. Pupils, parents and colleagues alike are all very welcome to call in for a chat or to seek advice whenever they feel the need.