



Special Educational Needs

Vision Statement

We begin with the premise that God intends all children to work towards an understanding of their destiny in Him.

We acknowledge that each child is unique and that the parents carry the ultimate responsibility before God for their children's development. The school will endeavour to work with the parents in seeking to provide the appropriate atmosphere, teaching and range of experiences: these should enable every child to develop physically, mentally and spiritually to reach their God-given potential at each stage of their life. This will involve strengthening weaknesses and developing specific talents.

Mission Statement

For children with special educational needs we will: -

- a) Assess
- b) Diagnose
- c) Write individual programmes, where necessary
- d) Provide support
- e) Supply differentiated learning materials

The Special Needs Co-ordinator will work with teachers and parents to: -

- a) Liaise
- b) Advise
- c) Support
- d) Co-ordinate contacts with outside agencies
- e) Keep an up-to-date Special Needs register

We will seek to provide in-service training for all staff involved in the teaching of special needs children.

We value the place of prayer, so will encourage children to seek God for themselves, recognising that God's power is made perfect in weakness and that He can give knowledge and understanding.

It is our desire to foster an attitude of appreciation in gifted children, so that they recognise that their gifts are God-given and are for the good of the whole community.

Special Needs Referral Policy

The aim of the Special Needs Referral Policy is to provide a clear procedure for dealing with specific areas of concern in individual pupils. Referral forms A and B are used to facilitate this policy.

Stage 1 – Form A

The first part of the form is filled in by the teacher, expressing concerns about a child's difficulties or specific gifting.

In the case of spelling, reading or maths difficulties, the Bangor Dyslexic test will be administered.

Depending on the results of this, it may be felt advisable for the Special Needs Co-ordinator to give the Aston Index test to further diagnose the problem. Other tests will be used where necessary. (See separate sheet on tests)

In the case of a child's special talent or gift being recognised, suitable tests will be given, where appropriate. It may be necessary to provide extension materials or to arrange other teaching or experiences.

Stage 2 – Form A

The Principal and/or the Head of Lower or Senior School will arrange a case conference (after any necessary consultation with other teachers) with the parents, the class teacher and Special Needs Co-ordinator to decide on further action. It will be decided how often to review the child's progress. The second part of the form is filled in by the class teacher. A copy of this form should be in the child's folder in the Special Needs department as well as in the class teacher's folder of profile cards.

Following these discussions, a child is often withdrawn for one-to-one help or classroom support/extension. In some cases, a child's timetable needs to be reviewed with special educational programmes being written.

Stage 3 – Form B

Occasionally it may be necessary to employ the expertise of outside agencies. Form B will be used to record consultations and recommendations. This form will be filled in by the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

It is the parents of children attending independent schools who must apply for any child to be 'statemented'. These statements are reviewed annually.

Further Parental Contact

In the Junior and Senior departments, termly reports are given to parents. In the Infant department, an annual report is written. Clearly, more frequent reporting may be required in some cases.

Termly interviews with parents may be important where children have severe problems.

Assessment of Pupil's Special Educational Needs

Name of child:			
Date of birth:			
Class:			
Teacher:		Special Needs Co-ordinator:	
Date when concern first noted:			
Concerns:			
Tests:			
Parent contact:			
Recommendations:			
Review:	Half-termly	Termly	Annually
Date of first review:			
Outcome of review:			
Further recommendations:			

Form B

Record of the Involvement of Outside Agencies

Name of child:	
Date of birth:	
Class:	
Teacher:	Special Needs Co-ordinator:
Parental contact:	
Outside agencies involved:	
Dates of contact:	
Results of consultations:	
Recommendations:	
Strategies:	

God's Heart for Children

Jesus clearly loves all children, regardless of their ability. We read in Scripture that God wants children: -

- a) To be brought up to love Him with all their heart, soul and strength (**Deuteronomy 6:5-7**)
- b) To learn to praise Him (**Psalm 8:2**)
- c) To obey their parents (**Ephesians 6:1**)
- d) To be part of His Kingdom (**Matthew 19:14**)

A teacher's attitude to less abled and gifted children should reflect Jesus' heart for them. These children should experience the same Kingdom atmosphere of righteousness, peace and joy not frustration, failure and loneliness.

In an academic world where so much emphasis is placed upon paper qualifications, we must, in our Christian schools, put a right emphasis on character and spirituality. There is a place for all children in the Kingdom, so each should be given a place and a function. The gifted should be encouraged to develop and use their gifts for the good of the whole community, while the less able should be supported and given respect and honour.

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

This parable shows that different people will be given different gifts and talents, but each one should develop them to the full to give glory to God. Our challenge is to identify strengths and weaknesses in our pupils at an early age, so that we can train and encourage them to reach their full potential in every area of their lives. The role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the children must not be overlooked or underestimated. Whilst all children should be prayed for regularly, the less able children should be prayed for concerning their learning disabilities.

God's Heart for the Weak

Dictionary definition of 'weak':

Feeble, frail, lacking strength, defenceless, fragile, often unwise, easily influenced, simple.

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| Psalm 41:1 | Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble. |
| Psalm 72:13-14 | He will take pity on the weak and needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in His sight. |
| Psalm 82:3 | Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless: maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. |
| Acts 20:35 | In everything I (Paul) did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak ... it is more blessed to give than to receive. |
| Romans 14:1 | Accept him whose faith is weak without passing judgments on disputable matters. |
| Romans 15:1-2 | We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should look to please his neighbour for his good to build him up. |

- 1 Corinthians 1:27** God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.
- 1 Corinthians 8:9** Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14** And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.
- Romans 8:26** In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, we do not know what to pray for, but the Spirit intercedes for us ...
- 1 Corinthians 1:25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.
- 1 Corinthians 12:22-24** ... those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment.
- 2 Corinthians 11:30** If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10** 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- 2 Corinthians 13:4** ... He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in Him, yet by God's power we will live with Him to serve you.
- Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are ...
- Hebrews 5:2** He (high priest) is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since He Himself is subject to weakness.
- Hebrews 11:34** (Heroes of the past) whose weakness was turned to strength and who became powerful in battle.

Conclusion

Everyone at some time in their life experiences weakness of some kind whether in work, ability, character or faith. It is clear that God has grace, patience and love for the weak; He exhorts His people to look on weakness in a similar way.

We are collectively the body of Christ so therefore the weak are very much a part of us. We should be seeking to strengthen and support them. Our attitude to them is very important as we should be reflectors of God's image. The weak may fail at times but God does not call us to success but to faithfulness and obedience to Him.

GOD'S HEART FOR THE GIFTED

Dictionary definition of 'gifted':

Exceptionally clever, possessing natural talent.

'Gifted children may benefit from an outside volunteer mentor who provides enrichment activities. We must teach such students that their special gifts must be used for the benefit of the community. Use them to teach other students or to take on special leadership roles.'

Harro Van Brummelen

- Daniel 1:4-5** The king called for ... young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well-informed, quick to understand and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He (Ashpenaz) was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.... They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.
- Daniel 1:17** To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.
- Deuteronomy 8:18** Remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth ...
- Exodus 35:35** He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, designers, embroiders in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers – all of them master craftsmen and designers.
- Exodus 36:1-2** So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded. Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work.
- Philippians 2:3-4** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Conclusion

It is clear from Scripture that God gives some people special gifts, and these should be recognised and used for the good of the whole body. Just as Daniel and his friends were set aside for special training, so we should look to identify special gifts in the children we teach; then, where possible, to give these children extra training to develop their God-given talents.

IDENTIFYING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

One of the most common problems we identify nowadays relates to Dyslexia.

A. DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is a neurological dysfunction causing an inability to accurately process spoken, written or symbolic language. It is in no way related to intelligence. Whatever the cause or nature of the condition, the degree of difficulty should be revealed by assessment.

Symptoms and Patterns in Dyslexia

1. Co-ordination difficulties
 - Gross motor movements e.g. walking, skipping, balancing
 - Fine motor movements e.g. fastening buttons, tying laces
 - Hand/eye co-ordination e.g. catching a ball, pencil control
2. Behavioural problems
 - Tiredness
 - Shyness, slow reaction, withdrawal
 - Poor concentration and attention
 - Confusion and frustration, even anger
 - Inferiority, sense of failure, low self-esteem
 - Over-activity, restlessness
3. Perceptual difficulties
 - Auditory -
 - Incorrect sequencing of sounds
 - Spoonerisms, e.g. par-cark
 - Difficulty in distinguishing vowel sounds
 - Forgets what he/she is going to say
 - Struggles to learn times tables
 - Struggles to repeat a sequence of letters as in spelling words
 - Visual -
 - Inability to form a visual picture of a word
 - Loses place when reading
 - Poor conception of space so bumps into things
 - Confusion of letters e.g. b d p
 - Reverses words e.g. saw, was
 - Omits or inserts letters
 - Confuses small words, e.g. of, for, from
 - Difficulty in reading line to line
 - Capital letters used wrongly

Omits punctuation
Difficulty in reading line to line
Capital letters used wrongly
Omits punctuation
Struggles to write neatly, especially from the board

4. Other indicators

Confuses left and right
Finds concepts such as up/under east/west hard
Struggles to learn to tell the time
Struggles to recite, days, months, seasons, alphabet, etc

Teaching Dyslexic Children

Despite the above struggles, dyslexic children are often gifted in some specific area, e.g. sport, artistic talent. Try to identify these strengths to build the child's self-esteem. Repeatedly tell them how much God values them for who they are as people.

Pray:

- For hearing, understanding, sight, perception
- Against confusion and fear
- For healing and wholeness
- For determination and perseverance to overcome

Practical help:

- Sit the child in front of the class
- Use different coloured chalks/pens on the board
- Write on paper rather than expect them to copy from the board a lot
- Give more time to complete tasks
- Give less but clearly defined homework written in a book for parents to see
- Mark work for content and not always for spelling and neatness
- Use bookmarkers for reading, possibly coloured glasses or sheets over the print
- Let the child read aloud for understanding
- Teach phonic skills
- Give systematic teaching
- Set realistic goals
- Encourage, encourage and encourage
- Provide tools such as calculators, charts, tables for certain tasks

- Give as much individual help as needed but encourage the child to develop their own strategies to overcome their difficulties
- Repeat new information and instructions
- Give one or two instructions at a time

Remember:

- A dyslexic child tires quickly because of the extra effort involved in learning
- Whilst being able to read something, the child may not understand it
- Learning foreign languages are often a challenge
- A dyslexic child's performance is inconsistent
- The child often lives with a nagging uncertainty
- A dyslexic child finds it hard to listen and take notes at the same time
- Reading music or interpreting symbols present a challenge
- When feeling unwell, learning is particularly difficult for a dyslexic child

Every child matters to God and we should reflect that in our teaching. God has no favourites, but He does treat us all differently. This needs to be communicated clearly to children as their perception of the way in which they are taught, disciplined, etc in school may be different. Our curriculum and activities should be continually under review to ensure that every child's needs are being met to the best of our ability. We, as teachers, will never be perfect but we can often improve our practice.

B. ATTENTION DEFICIT / HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

AD/HD is a condition first described in 1902 to describe children (and adults) whose level of attention, impulsiveness and/or hyperactive behaviour is such as to interfere with their daily functioning; it is probably due to a complex interplay of biological, psychological and social factors.

Symptoms

1. Inattention — not listening, no attention to detail, easily distracted, lack of organisation, does not follow through on instructions, reluctant to apply themselves to tasks requiring sustained effort, forgetful, loses things, get sensory overload, short-term memory weak, easily bored
2. Hyperactivity — fidgeting, excessive running about, talks excessively, continually 'on the go', difficulty in playing quietly
3. Impulsiveness — cannot wait their turn, blurts out answers, wants things now, intrudes on others

Teaching AD/HD Children

- a) Positive engagement — make tasks stimulating and achievable, hands-on experience
- b) Positive atmosphere — lots of encouragement
- c) Positive interactions — warmth, friendliness, empathy, unconditional love, humour
- d) Positive attention - reinforce good behaviour
- e) Communication — clear, short instructions, train children to ask if they are unclear
- f) Differentiation — in content, expectations, speed, multi-sensory teaching
- g) Self-esteem — design tasks for success
- h) Routine — can be over-stimulated so calm, predictable routine

Book: 'Managing Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder in the Inclusive Classroom' by John Alban-Metcalfe and Juliette Alban-Metcalfe ISBN 1-85345-749-9

C. ASPERGER SYNDROME

Asperger Syndrome is a form of autism, a condition that affects the way a person communicates and relates to others. It is a developmental condition affecting the way the brain processes information. People suffering from it are usually average or above average in intelligence.

Symptoms

1. Difficulty in communicating — they may speak fluently but they may not take much notice of the reactions of people listening to them; they may continue to talk regardless of the listener's interest so may appear insensitive.
They can be over-precise or over-literal so jokes often are challenging.
2. Difficulty in social relationships — they may want to be sociable and enjoy human contact but they find it hard to understand non-verbal signals, including facial expressions.
3. A lack of imagination and creative play — they may excel at learning facts and figures but find it hard to think in abstract ways. Literature or RE can present problems.
4. Special interests or obsessions. They like to arrange or memorise facts about a certain subject, e.g. train timetables, dolphins. These interests can be strengths too.
5. Love of routines — change can be upsetting. They can become anxious or upset if the normal routine changes.

Life Skills for Children with SEN

- Communications skills
- Social skills
- Decision making
- Daily living skills
- Numeracy and reading
- Practical and vocational skills, creativity
- Developing autonomy and self reliance
- Physical fitness

For all the children in our care, God has a plan for their future.

Left-Handed Children

The majority of children are right handed so often left-handed children find themselves to be at a disadvantage when learning joined writing, craft work, etc. Apart from this they are as able as any other child.

Ways to help a left-handed child:

Position a left-handed child so that they have room to write, i.e. sit a left-handed child to the left of a right-handed child.

- Let a child slant his paper to the right.
- Model movements for the left-handed child.
- Check that from an early age a child is forming his letters correctly.
- Pencils and pens are preferable to biros.
- Arrange for the computer mouse to be on the left.
- Buy left handed scissors.
- Let the children begin from the opposite side of material when sewing, weaving, etc.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”