

Learning Support- HQL



Ensuring students understand the context and the learning expected.

Learning Support at Fernwood strives to ensure that all students make the academic and social progress they are capable of, regardless of additional needs or difficulties, and that as much as possible, we create a "level playing field" of accessibility to all. We aim to remove barriers to learning through developing and communicating strategies to all those involved in learning. Learning Support is recognised through three waves of provision in line with the SEND Code of practice:

Wave 1: Quality First Teaching – providing differentiation, reasonable adjustments, and suitable strategies within the mainstream classroom, in line with information communicated through Provision Plans for each student with SEND. Additional support in the classroom is carefully planned and monitored, and is prioritised by the need of a particular student or groups of students. Where possible, a member of the Learning Support Team is assigned to a particular faculty area.

Wave 2: Small group teaching and intervention additional to SEND provision in the mainstream classroom, OR smaller timetabled classes where elements of the curriculum are taught in a nurture style SEND setting by teachers or Learning Support Leaders who specialise in this type of provision. All students at Wave 2 will have a named key worker. Interventions are designed and set up to meet particular needs of students, or where there are gaps in knowledge or understanding of a particular cohort.

Wave 3: 1:1 provision to ensure those students with the most significant SEND receive the intensive input, support and care that they need to make progress. All students at Wave 3 will have a named key worker. As much information as possible is gathered prior to a student's admission. Transition is through primary school liaison, parental liaison, through face to face contact, and through communication with outside agencies.

Understanding and being able to assess learning needs is a key focus in the development of Learning Support at Fernwood. We do this through a range of activities, such as:

Reading age data, dyslexia screening and visual stress testing, exam access screening and in-house specialist assessment and referral to specialist agencies,

It is also key that students with SEND understand their difficulties in order to develop strategies to make progress, so at key points throughout the school year, they and parents / carers are able to contribute to and be involved in planning provision and communicating teaching and learning strategies across the school consistently.

Focus



Meeting the needs of all learners in order to build confidence, provide challenge and ensure success.

Learning Support philosophy for Learning Challenge can be shown through the findings of annual "SEND deep dives", which is a combination of lesson visits, observations of teaching assistants, work scrutiny and analysis of the progress and attainment of SEND students.

Fernwood's strengths: Bespoke planning for SEND students, learning environment, making the lessons accessible and engaging, targeted questioning, seating arrangements thought about. There are periods of 1:1 support in lessons for weakest learners, even without a TA. All students challenged at their level. Use of reading rulers / laptops. Clear use of provision plan strategies. Careful groupings within class, where seating plans are used they work well. Clear, well-pitched explanations. Positive atmosphere, effective differentiation evident in books. Positive praise and feedback used. Students able to link learning to prior learning, students know their target grade, and what they need to do to get there. Thorough and effective marking. Good use of writing frames, positive feedback. Good use of visual aids. Timing reminders throughout lesson.

From the Deep Dives - Fernwood's areas for development: Every lesson must have a seating plan ready to hand over with brief evidence to show progress over time, and reference to main points on provision plans. Students in key groups such as SEND must be clearly annotated on the plan. Students need to respond to green pen comments to close feedback loop, and progress should be able to be clearly judged by simply looking in a student's book. There should be built-in opportunities for peer to peer support for low ability learners in mixed ability classes. Teachers should be explicit in showing SEND students how to improve their work, with clear feedback on actual progress. Some SEND students had gaps in their work, which questioned engagement and differentiation in some lessons. These were students who flagged up with a deterioration in their P8 score over time. Students with the highest level of need are usually the most disorganised – help with organisation is key to making good progress.

In unstructured times before registration, at breaktime and at lunchtime, the main Study Support area is open for pre-identified students as a staffed "safe haven". There are a range of activities including team games on offer, as well as computers available for guided homework.

Homework Club runs after school 3 evenings a week staffed by the Learning Support team, particularly set up for students who have difficulty with independent working at home, or who need guidance and school facilities.

At Wave 2 and 3 provision, there is at least one formal review meeting a year, often more depending on progress made towards targets and level of additional need. These reviews are led and driven by key workers, who are also in regular contact with the students which they key work, and their parents. All relevant Fernwood staff will also be consulted regarding the reviews, through INSET sessions called "WISDOM OF THE CROWD" where all teaching and support staff are given the opportunity to comment on the content of provision maps, and add / share information about students with SEND.

Challenge



All students know how to improve, progress is reviewed regularly and feedback supports improvement.

All lessons interventions in Learning Support should be rich in formative feedback. Small groups allow detailed progress checks including self / peer / teacher assessment. This is crucial to planning and "tweaking" sequences of interventions, and often revisiting prior learning is needed to consolidate a concept.

All individual interventions have an entry and an exit criteria and ways of measuring progress throughout – please see individual intervention sheets for more details.

In terms of assessing their own learning and being involved in their own improvement, students with SEND and parents / carers are involved in setting holistic targets on their own provision plans, with guidance from their key workers. These could be academic targets, intervention targets or social targets.

Progress of SEND students in mainstream classrooms is measured by the class teacher, with assistance from LSLs. Subject assessments feed into the school's APRI system, where classes or cohorts can be filtered into categories to check and compare progress. This "snapshot" is shared with staff, particularly at KS4, where Progress 8 scores can be highlighted and gaps in progress can be clearly shown across the curriculum.

Assessment



Creating a positive climate of learning, behaviour and engagement.

Both in terms of intervention, and for classroom support, the focus is on "welcome", "aspiration", "the normal way of working" and "clear and robust assessment and target setting". So, every session has a positive start, clear targets are set, adjustments / differentiation are in place, and feedback on progress is given. The learning climate in the Study Support area is always calm and supportive. As a team, we are aware of the stigma that can exist around areas in a school providing extra help, and the reluctance to engage that results from this negative image. We do everything we can to foster a positive environment – the area is very well known in school in terms of the assistance it provides, and students are happy to come and work. The suite of three rooms is purposefully designed to support smaller groups of students, providing a visually stimulating environment and encouraging and promoting achievement.

All intervention sessions are carefully planned and monitored, and formally observed twice a year. Each intervention session has an entry and exit criteria, and progress over the course of the intervention is measured formatively and summatively.

Many of the students who access Learning Support have social, emotional and mental health problems. Although the school behaviour policy is applied consistently, there are a number of students who need some extra support and understanding around this, and the way the policy is implemented for some students requires reasonable adjustments.

Circle Time and Restorative Practice were introduced by SENCO from September 2018, which have had a positive impact on students' confidence, communication and understanding of consequences of actions. The study support area has its own clear set of rules and expectations.

Climate



Developing the language fluency and learning skills students need to access learning and make progress.

All students should have the opportunity to develop language skills and fluency in the classroom. A number of students will need specialist input and intervention around reading, reading for meaning and vocabulary, so that they are able to develop their vocabulary and use of language. All students are categorised into levels of reader, based on a stanine score. Those with the lowest reading ages will receive 1:1 Catch Up Literacy provision. Those at the next level up will receive a group literacy intervention for part of a school year. The focus within these interventions is always to encourage students to "take ownership" of their own learning, by practicing, learning reading techniques and expanding relevant vocabulary. From these interventions, scaffolding and differentiation strategies are developed, modelled and communicated to class teachers. This is often through "SEND Spotlight" presentations, or through termly cross curricular SEND Link meetings, and monitored through work scrutiny, drop ins and more formal analysis of whole school provision such as the recent "SEND Deep Dive". Where possible, Learning Support Leaders who deliver specific interventions in literacy and numeracy will support the same learners in class, so that the right strategies developed in interventions are consistently used in the classroom, and there is a clear two-way channel of communication.

Group working and social skills are key to students being able to access learning effectively, and are essential skills for future learning and the world of work. KS3 Nurture Groups at KS3 address and develop these "soft" skills that all successful students need, through Lego Based Therapy programmes, through book readings and plays, and through team games and activities from "Princes Trust Achieve" award. We identify a cohort of students in Year 9 every year to follow our Pathway 3 curriculum. Students on this pathway receive all lessons in smaller groups, often with LSL support, following courses providing focus on skills that they will need for the next phase of education and life in general. They will receive extra literacy and numeracy lessons as highlighted below, as well as more vocational courses such as Princes Trust (Fernwood Community Garden and "Fermwash" staff car wash business), NCFE Food and Cookery and NCFE Business and Enterprise. The focus is on practical life skills, communication, working with others, and transition into Post 16 education or training. At KS4, we identify a cohort of students deliver "Step Up to English" for small groups of our weakest readers alongside GCSE English Language, in order to expand vocabulary, embed writing techniques and to create an extra literacy qualification. This is a topic-based assessment course at entry level, delivered by the LSL for literacy. "Entry Level Maths" is delivered to the same cohort by the LSL for numeracy. Both these courses aim to provide a more practical, applied group work element to complement GCSEs in maths and English.

Fluency



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Higher Quality Learning



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