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St. Joseph's National School, Ballymitty **Special Educational Needs Policy**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the provision of additional learning support to pupils with special educational needs in Ballymitty N.S. under the New Model of Special Education Provision 2017. It will fulfil the requirements of DES circular 0013/2017 - Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation.

Ballymitty National School is a mainstream primary school, catering for a full cross section of children. Current enrolment is 144. The school currently has the following staffing to cater for children with Special Education Needs:

- ❑ 2 Special Education Team Teachers (SET)
- ❑ 1 Shared Special Education Teacher – (2 days per week)
- ❑ 2 Special Class Teachers for pupils with Autism in An Choill Mhór and An Choill Bheag
- ❑ 2 Special Needs Assistants – (SNA) – Mainstream Classes
- ❑ 4 Special Needs Assistants – (SNA) – An Choill
- ❑ 1 Special Needs Assistant – (SNA) – Mainstream (Infant Hour allocation)

2. Guiding Principles for Inclusion

All children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our pupils to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. As far as possible, therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to children's diverse learning needs and
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children.

3. Aims

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

We will endeavour to:

- Enable these pupils to participate in the full curriculum.
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.

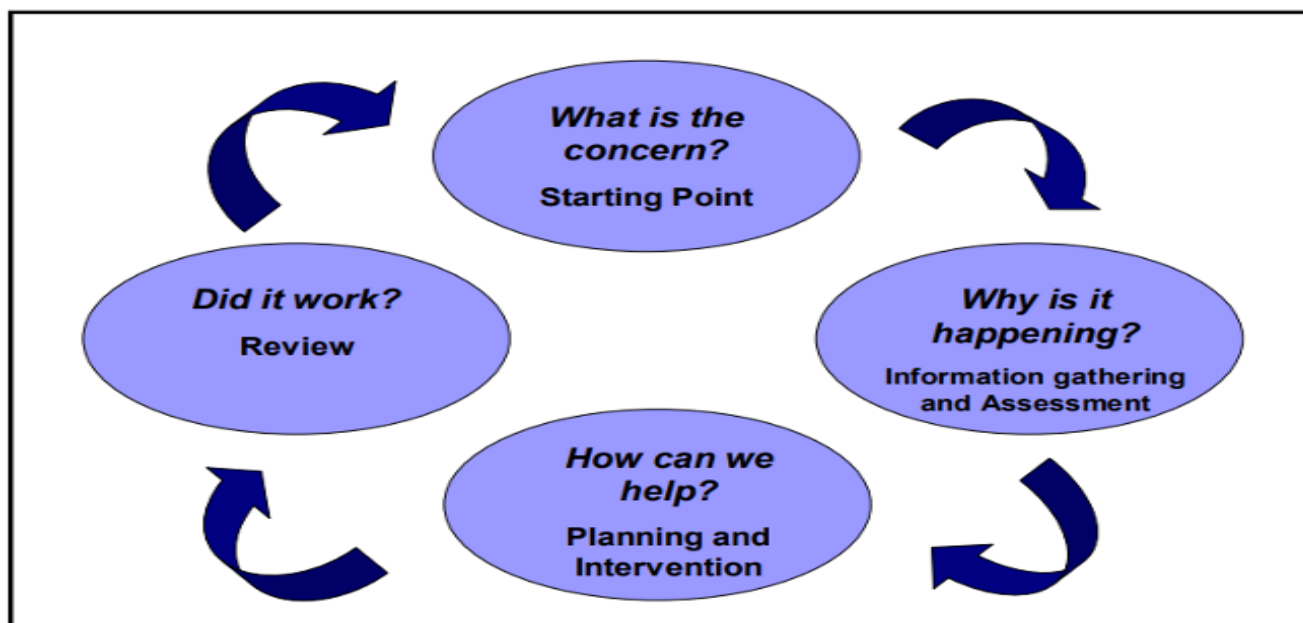
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- Involve parents in supporting their children.
- Collaborate with colleagues in order to maximise learning.
- Establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.
- Support pupils with low achievement and or learning difficulties through a team approach that involves the pupils themselves, their teachers, parents and relevant support personnel.

4. Identifying pupils with Additional Needs -The Staged Approach

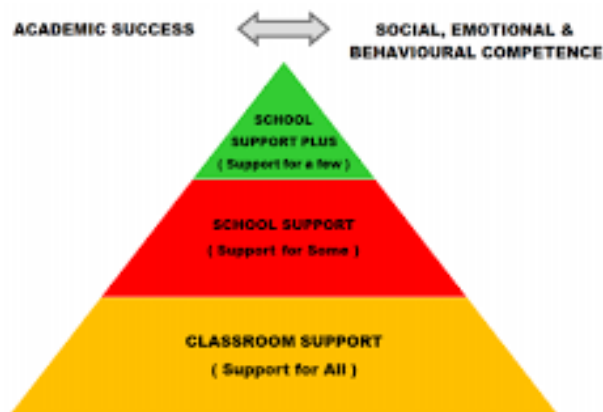
In Ballymitty National School, we use the Continuum of Support framework, as set out by the Department of Education, to identify and support pupils with additional needs. As in the framework, we recognise as a school that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. Using this framework helps Ballymitty N.S. to implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring and progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



The Staged approach, as recommended shall be implemented as follows:



Stage 1 - Classroom Support

If a class teacher (or parent) has concerns regarding a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development, a classroom support plan is devised which aims to meet the pupil's identified needs within the normal classroom setting. Teachers would also complete a checklist based on other areas which may be impacting on the pupils learning e.g. vision, hearing, classroom environment etc. as per the resource pack for teachers under the continuum of support. (If concerns remain after a number of reviews (usually at least two school terms) Stage 2 may be implemented. The parent/guardian is informed about this intervention and signs the Classroom Support Plan.

Stage 2 - School Support

At times, support at classroom level is not enough and the pupil requires a higher level of intervention. School Support is when a child receives extra support from a special education teacher (SET) on a particular skill area for a specific period of time. Where possible, the strategies set out in the School Support Plan will be implemented in the normal classroom setting. The SET, in conjunction with the class teacher, plans the intervention and records it in a School Support Plan which is printed and filed in that pupil's file. The plan is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. (usually devised in Sept/Oct and reviewed in February and June. Parents are consulted about this intervention and will sign the School Support Plan and reviews.

Stage 3 - School Support Plus

Pupils who require support at School Support Plus level are pupils who have been diagnosed with a special educational need, who are involved with outside agencies or those whose needs cannot be met at Classroom Support or School Support level. These pupils require targeted, intensive support from a special education teacher (SET) over a longer period of time.

As far as is possible, the strategies set out in the School Support Plus Plan (SSPP) will be implemented in the classroom but it may require withdrawal in small groups or on an individual basis. The SET, in conjunction with the class teacher, the special needs assistant (if relevant) and the parent/guardian, will prepare a SSPP which is filed in that pupil's file. The plan is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. SSPPs consider the deficits that the pupil is experiencing because of their special educational need. The SSPP will also outline any care needs that the pupil is presenting with. The management of the SSPP strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher and the SET.

Identification of Needs through the Continuum of Support Process

Classroom Support	The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A Classroom Support Plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by: • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures /assessments • Basic needs checklist • Learning environment checklist • Pupil consultation – My Thoughts About School Checklist • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills A Classroom Support Plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.
School Support	At this level a School Support Plan is devised and informed by: • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A School Support Plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.
School Support Plus	This level of the continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include: • Teacher observation and teacher designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment

	Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc. Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A School Support Plus Plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.
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5. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of SET is a collaborative responsibility shared by all - The Board of Management, Principal, Class teachers, SET team, SNAs, parents and children. In attempting to achieve the above objectives the Board of Management, Principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

The SET team is deployed according to need and to relevant expertise and commitment. They work closely with the class teacher providing targeted support. Pupils may be withdrawn from the mainstream class for supplementary teaching for a specific length of time or support may be given in smaller groups within the classroom setting.

The Role of the Board of Management

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of SET policy
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for special education teachers
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SET
- Provide adequate funds for the purchase of materials for SET
- Members will be knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision – funding, equipment and personnel.

The Role of the Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of SET provision. This involves:

- Working closely with the SET Team and keeping the Board of Management informed about the working of this policy
- Encouraging members of staff to participate in training to help them increase their knowledge and skills in the area of SET
- Consultation with SET teachers on a regular basis and liaising with the SENO with regard to SET/SNAs
- The Principal regularly communicates with outside services for example National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in order to arrange services for children in need and to monitor their progress
- Meet with class teachers to discuss any concerns regarding individual pupils
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and 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

The Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the education of all pupils in his/her class, including pupils with special educational needs. Accordingly, it is the role of the class teacher to:

- Provide a stimulating and supportive classroom environment in which all pupils are respected and valued.
- Plan lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom, including adapting teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern.
- Implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, including cooperative teaching and learning, collaborative problem-solving activities, heterogeneous group work, differentiation, interventions to promote social and emotional competence, and embedding IT in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Use a variety of appropriate teaching methodologies and approaches, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction.
- Develop pupils' interest, attention, concentration using appropriate teaching strategies.
- Differentiate lessons by:
 - Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs.
 - Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests.
 - Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs.
 - Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of IT.
 - Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly.
- Gather information and assess pupils presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support.
- Develop and implement Classroom Support Plans for pupils in receipt of Classroom Support.
- Meet with parents/guardians regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- Collaborate with the SET, and SEN Coordinator as appropriate, to develop Individual Support Files or Group Support Files for pupils in receipt of School Support.
- Meet and collaborate with the SET, parents/guardians and other relevant staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus.
- Plan collaboratively for the teaching of literacy and numeracy with the class's SET to ensure that the needs of all pupils in the class are being catered for and record the planned differentiation in the mainstream class teacher's ongoing short-term planning.
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching are not absent for the same subject/activity during each session.
- Coordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with special educational needs within the class(es) to which they are assigned.
- Liaise with and seek advice from their SET and the SEN Coordinator as required.

The Role of Special Education Teachers (SET)

The role of the Special Education Teacher (SET) is to provide an education that meets the needs and abilities of pupils assessed as having specific additional needs and/or pupils who are experiencing low achievement as documented in standardised and/or diagnostic assessment results.

It is the role of the SET to:

SET Co-ordination -

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- Maintaining a list of pupils who receive supplementary teaching and or special educational services and support the implementation of a tracking system at whole school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.
- Helping to co-ordinate the caseloads/work schedules of the SET team.
- Devise timetables in collaboration with class teachers and principal.
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs.
- Development of SSP/SSPPs for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher and parents.
- Liaison with the network of external agencies to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Arranging with Board of Management / Department of Education to provide comfortable accommodation and to research and purchase appropriate resources – books, software, Maths equipment.
- Co-ordinating the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in line with the selection criteria specified in our school plan and input from teachers and parents, while also taking account of the Staged approach.
- Take responsibility for the safe storage of psychological assessment reports.
- Liaise with the NCSE Special Educational Needs Organiser (National Council for Special Education), in consultation with the Principal, regarding all aspects of special education needs provision.
- Guide the implementation of the Exemptions from the Study of Irish process for qualifying pupils in consultation with the Principal and as per the terms of Department of Education Circular 0054/2022.
- Select pupils for psycho-educational assessment in consultation with the Principal, class teachers and support teachers, and Ballymitty School's assigned NEPS Psychologist (National Educational Psychological Service).
- Liaise with external professional agencies to procure assessments of pupils with special educational needs, in consultation with parents/guardians.

Planning:

- Ensure high level consultation and cooperation with the relevant class teachers.
- Collaborate with the class teacher in planning schemes of work for in-class and withdrawal support.
- Assess the needs and progress of pupils with special educational needs, including engagement with external professionals and professional reports in relation to those pupils.
- Develop School Support Plans and School Support Plus Plans for relevant pupils in consultation with other partners in education, including parents/guardians, and in liaison with other staff working with the pupil.
- Set specific, time-related targets for each pupil, agreeing these with the class teacher and parents/guardians, and making these available to the Principal.
- Complete appropriate short-term planning.
- Meet with and advise parents/guardians and/or class teachers.
- Provide advice to class teachers in such areas as behaviour, emotional regulation, classroom management strategies, differentiation, adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, IT and other related matters.
- Participate in pertinent continuing professional development and contribute to school-based decision making regarding the acquisition of additional SET resources and materials.

Teaching:

- Engage in co-teaching in the mainstream classroom in forms best suited to maximising support for all pupils, in particular those pupils with identified literacy and numeracy needs.
- Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils who experience low achievement, in the mainstream classroom or in the support teaching room, in accordance with the school's selection criteria.
- Implement agreed programmes of learning that address a pupil's social, emotional, behavioural or other needs.
- Coordinate and assist in implementing agreed literacy, numeracy and other programmes throughout the school, e.g. Literacy Lift Off etc.

Assessment:

- Assist in the administration of screening/standardised assessment and the inputting of results on Aladdin.
- Administer, or oversee the administration, of diagnostic assessments.
- Analyse screening, standardised and diagnostic assessment results.
- Use the results of assessment to inform planning and teaching.

Record Keeping:

- Organise and file the records of pupils with special educational needs in line with school policy.

The Role of the Special Class Teacher for Children on the Autism Spectrum

At present, Ballymitty N.S. operates two Primary Classes (4 to 12 years) for children on the autism spectrum, known as An Choill. In An Choill, we provide a high quality and positive educational experience, including access to a wide-ranging curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to our pupils' learning needs. We work to:

- Ensure that each pupil develops to his/her potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm.
- Enhance the pupil's communicative and social skills.
- Facilitate meaningful inclusion in the school community.

The special class teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of our pupils in An Choill.

The role of the An Choill teacher is to:

- Be the main point of contact for the pupil's parents/guardians.
- Prepare a School Support Plus Plan, in consultation with parents/guardians, and in liaison with other staff working with the pupil.
- Initiate a review of the School Support Plus Plan at agreed intervals in consultation with the relevant education partners, including the mainstream class teacher where relevant.
- Coordinate the supporting work of the SNAs on an ongoing basis.
- Engage in agreed long-term and short-term planning to complement the School Support Plus Plan.
- Liaise with the mainstream class teacher, where relevant, to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate.
- Liaise with the mainstream class teacher to identify and implement accommodations that the pupil may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate.

- Lead the review of each pupil's progress at the end of each school year, in consultation with the relevant education partners, and including an assessment of the suitability of the child's continued placement in An Choill.

The Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA):

SNA support is provided specifically to assist schools to cater for the care needs of pupils with additional needs in an educational context, where the nature of these care needs have been outlined in professional reports as being so significant that a pupil will require adult assistance in order to be able to attend school and to participate in education.

Primary care needs which are considered significant and which may require SNA support are:

- Assistance with feeding.
- Administration of medicine.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds.
- Care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties.

If a child has been granted access to an SNA on the basis of primary care needs, the SNA will often perform secondary care associated tasks. These include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms.
- Assistance with the development of a Personal Pupil Plan (PPP).
- Assist teacher in maintaining a journal or behavioural data.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements.
- Attending meetings.
- Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy (OT, speech & language, physio) under the direction of qualified personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, visits or trips where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

The quantum of SNA support provided to a school is decided by the National Council for Special Education in accordance with Department of Education policy. The provision of a quantum of support to Ballymitty gives us the autonomy and flexibility to manage our allocation of SNA support in order to utilise this support to the best possible effect. It allows us to target support to those pupils who have the greatest degree of need at any given time, recognising that the level of need that a pupil may have may be variable over time. Ballymitty National School is in a position to use our educational experience and expertise to manage the level of support which has been allocated to us to provide for the care needs of identified pupils as and when those needs arise and to provide access to SNA support for all pupils who have been granted access to support.

SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal. The work of SNAs is monitored by the Principal on an ongoing basis and modified accordingly by them.

In circumstances where a pupil is accessing SNA support, and where a parent/guardian feels that their child is not receiving sufficient SNA access in school, the parent/guardian should raise this concern in the first instance with the Principal.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. Parental engagement is enhanced when parents are consulted in relation to their child's needs and strengths, on the supports and strategies being developed to support their child, and when they are involved in regular reviews of progress. The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities to engage with parents/guardians and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

In addition to consultation around the individual needs of their child, parents also value receiving good information on the nature and type of special educational needs provision available at school. We consult with parents/guardians when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with special educational needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their child in transitioning through the school.

Parents/guardians can prepare for and support our school by:

- Supervising, assisting with, showing an interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding withdrawal for support teaching.
- Talking positively about school and schoolwork.
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their child's learning.
- Helping their child to develop their organisational skills.
- Helping their children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the child for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

The Role of the Pupil

Pupils who are in receipt of SET teaching should, as appropriate:

- Become familiar with the medium and short-term learning targets that have been set for them and they should be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of such targets.
- Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets.
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participation in appropriate assessment activities, including self- assessment.

6. Assessment & Screening – identification of children needing SET teaching.

All pupils are screened annually, using appropriate assessments, as follows (note that these will be subject to change as new research and best practice becomes available):

Class Level	Test	When
Junior Infants	Enrolment information; Class & SET Teacher observations and assessment	Throughout Year
Senior Infants/1 st and 2 nd	PM Benchmark Assessment Prior to literacy lift-off or other interventions	Sept/Oct And later
Senior Infants	MIST	Nov
2 nd and 4 th	NNRIT (New Non Reading Intelligence Test)	Nov
Senior Infants	Drumcondra Tests of Early Literacy & Numeracy	May
1 st – 6 th Class	Drumcondra Standardised Reading, Spelling and Maths Tests	May
Other	Boxall profile (Nurture Groups)	

- The screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the Class Teacher, SET Teachers and the parents concerning the pupil's performance, and SET teaching may be offered.
- Pupils who have not made sufficient progress following classroom interventions will also be considered.
- New pupils will be identified based on enrolment information for example information passed on from previous schools and from outside agencies e.g. speech and language.
- The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils from Senior Infants to Second Class are given priority in the allocation of SET
- In Junior & Senior infants, pupils are identified using teacher and SET teacher observations and assessments
- Access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher.
- Children above the 25th percentile are not normally entitled to SET teaching??

7. Some factors used when considering pupils for SET

Below are some of the factors used when allocating SET time. This is not in order of priority and is not an exhaustive list. It is also important to note that allocation will change as needs arise throughout the school year.

- Junior/Senior Infants and First class – early intervention programmes for low achievers in English based on class teacher's observations and recommendations.
- Children performing below the 10th percentile in standardised test of achievement in English.
- Junior/Senior Infants and First class – early intervention programmes for low achievers in mathematics based on class teacher's observations and recommendations.

- Children performing below the 10th percentile in standardised test of achievement in mathematics.
- Pupils performing below the 20th percentile in standardised test of achievement in English.
- Pupils performing below the 20th percentile in standardised test of achievement in Maths.
- Arrangements for providing supplementary teaching to pupils in the senior section who experience high incidence learning difficulties and have low attainment levels
- Pupils presenting with social, emotional or behavioural needs.
- Pupils presenting with gross and or fine motor difficulties.
- Pupils with EAL.

8. Diagnostic Assessment and Reporting

The judgement of the class teacher is an important factor in the selection of pupils for diagnostic assessment. The class teacher will contact the parents to make them aware of the school's concerns about a pupil's achievement and seek their permission to proceed with the diagnostic assessment, which may lead to supplementary teaching. (End of Stage 1)

The objectives of the diagnostic assessment conducted by the SET team Teachers are to identify strengths and learning needs of an individual pupil.

The following diagnostic tests are currently in use in this school:

- Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA)
- York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC)
- Dyslexia Screening Test
- Test of phonemic awareness (Sound Linkage programme/Heggerty)
- Primary School Assessment Kit – Language (EFL)
- NNRIT – New Non-Reading Intelligence Test

Outcomes of the assessment are interpreted in consultation with the class teacher. The most appropriate form of intervention for the pupil is considered. The results of the diagnostic assessment are recorded on an SSP/SSPP. The programme is planned in consultation with the class teacher and the pupil's parents. Progress will be reviewed at the end of the instructional term. Decisions will be made at this point on continuing or discontinuing supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher and pupil's parents.

9. Programmes in Use to Support Pupils with Additional Needs

Ballymitty N.S. uses a wide range of programmes to meet the needs of our pupils and we are always adding new and innovative programmes to enhance teaching and learning. We use of the following programmes:

<u>Literacy</u>	<u>Numeracy</u>	<u>Speech & Language</u>
• Literacy Lift Off • SNIP Literacy Programme	• Plus 1 & Power of 2 • Perform with Time • Numicon • Living maths	• Colourful Semantics • Lámh

• Newell Literacy Programme • Nessy Reading and spelling • Dcode Dyslexia • Fuzzbuzz • Heggerty • See and Learn • Edmark Reading Program • Hornet Literacy Primer, Word Wasp & Toe by Toe • Stareway to Spelling • TTRS • Accelerate/Write		• Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) • Rapid Prompting Method (RPM) • See and Learn
<u>Motor Skills</u> • Smart Moves • Move and Write • Move Well Move Often	<u>Social</u> • Weaving wellbeing • Lego club • Social stories • Zone of regulation • Friends for life • Teacch Autism	<u>Other</u> • Primary Movement (NDT) • Sensory Circuits • Nurture Groups

10. Transition Planning

In Ballymitty N.S., we place a lot of emphasis on supporting pupils to manage transitions. In June of each year, a transition programme is completed at whole-class level for all pupils to help the pupils make a successful transition to their new class. The transition programme can include any of the following:

- A visit to the new classroom.
- The new class teacher will visit the class and engage in an activity with the class.
- The class is introduced to the new line up area on the yard.
- A question and answer session is facilitated with the new class teacher or with pupils from the year group that the pupil is moving to.

Some pupils with special educational needs may need some extra support to aid their transition to a new class. The transition plan for these pupils may include the following:

- Communication Passport
- Social story
- New class teacher works with the pupil with special educational needs in a small group
- One to one pairing sessions with the new class teacher and pupil with special educational needs
- A transition booklet.

A transition plan may also be prepared for pupils who are transferring from preschool or another primary school to Ballymitty N.S., or from Ballymitty N.S. to another primary school or to a special school.

For a pupil with special educational needs transferring to post-primary school, a transition plan may include the following:

- A visit to the new school as part of a large group and a follow up visit in a smaller group.
- A meeting with relevant post-primary staff to communicate pertinent information.
- A review by a NEPS psychologist.

11.Provision for Exceptionally Able & Gifted Pupils

Ballymitty continually strives to meet the needs of all its pupils, including our exceptionally able and gifted pupils. Giftedness is recognised as a special education condition in the Education Act (1998) and the NCCA *Exceptionally Able Students: Draft Guidelines for Teachers*, 2015 identifies such students as those who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students. In general, children who are considered gifted may have been assessed by a psychologist and found to have a high level of intelligence, that is an IQ score of 130+, or achieving at the 98th percentile or above.

In our school, we aim to make additional provision for pupils who are exceptionally able in academic areas, namely the top five percent of the general primary school population.

A range of strategies may be used to identify exceptionally able and gifted pupils:

- Annual standardised assessment
- Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NVRT) and Verbal Reasoning Test (VRT)
- Psychological assessment
- Teacher observation
- Parental requests
- Referral by other individuals, schools or organisations.

From 2nd Class onwards, pupils who score at or above the 98th percentile in standardised assessment will then complete the NVRT/ VRT and British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) to gain a more definitive guide of their ability. Where a teacher observes pupils displaying exceptional ability in a specific academic area, further assessment may be carried out to establish giftedness.

Where a teacher observes children displaying exceptional ability in a specific academic or non-academic area the parents/guardians will be informed of outside agencies suited to the development of the pupil's giftedness, for example the Dublin City University Centre for Talented Youth.

Pupils in our school who are identified as functioning in the top five per cent of the general school population will be catered for within their mainstream classroom through the provision of differentiated programmes of work. Opportunities may also be provided for pupils to work together in small groups outside the classroom on subject areas of particular interest to them, with the support of a special education teacher (SET). Such Extension Groups will work collaboratively over a period of weeks and topics addressed may include Art, Science, Maths, History, debating, chess, and problem solving.

12.Assistive Technology

Assistive technology may be grant aided by the Department of Education to individual pupils whose degree of physical and/or communicative disability is such that without technological support it would not be possible for them to access the school curriculum. Further details as to how assistive technology is organised in Ballymitty, can be found in our Assistive Technology Policy.

13.Diversity Awareness

In Ballymitty National School we are committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated. Throughout the school year we run a series of information days/weeks to raise awareness and develop understanding of disabilities that impact some of our pupils.

Our diversity awareness activities include:

- Every March we celebrate World Down Syndrome Awareness Day. We mark this day by wearing odd socks. We talk about Down Syndrome at school assemblies and share information with our families on School Story.
- April is Autism Acceptance Month. We run our school's Autism Acceptance Week during the month of April. We host an Autism Acceptance Assembly, organise class-based activities, share lots of videos and everyone wears something blue on the Friday of that week.
- October is Dyslexia & ADHD Awareness Month. Again, we host an Information Assembly on Dyslexia & ADHD, organise class-based activities, share lots of videos and include a special element for parents/guardians during the week.

14. Success Criteria

The schoolwide implementation of this policy will result in:

- The effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in our school and the successful meeting of their diverse learning needs.
- Pupils with special educational needs being identified and assessed in a timely manner.
- The effective schoolwide implementation of the Continuum of Support.
- The provision of high- quality teaching and learning experiences to those pupils most in need of additional support.
- High quality communication and collaboration between school personnel, parents/guardians, and external agencies.
- Positive progress in the learning of our pupils with special educational needs and in their sense of themselves as learners.

13. Ratification & Communication

This Special Educational Needs Policy was ratified by the Board of Management in 2022 following consultation with staff and parents/guardians. It has been made available to school personnel via our Google Shared Drive and is published on the school website.

14. Monitoring & Evaluation

The implementation of this Special Educational Needs Policy will be monitored by the Principal, and Board of Management, in consultation with school staff and parents/guardians. It will be reviewed every two years.