

The Learning Support Department at Durham Johnston 2021

Inclusion and support for all students is integral to our ethos at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School. Our Learning Support colleagues work closely within our wider Inclusion Team, including a very effective and highly regarded Student Support Centre. You will be working with a team who are very committed, conscientious and who genuinely care about our students.

Learning Support provide excellent, well-tailored provision for a range of students, many with complex and challenging needs. We have high expectations for our students and have worked hard to establish rigorous systems that are embedded in departmental planning and, increasingly, quality first teaching of our students with special needs in their 5 or 7 years at the school.

Learning Support consists of a team of five well-qualified and experienced staff who also work alongside colleagues in the Student Support Centre, provision in the school that supports our most vulnerable students. There is an experienced and very conscientious Learning Support 2nd in Department and Learning Support Assistants with specialist knowledge and significant experience.

The Learning Support Department, currently led by a significantly experienced and highly conscientious 2nd in Department consists of a team of four well-qualified and experienced staff who collaborate closely on a daily basis with specialist colleagues in the Student Support Centre. This allows us to offer outstanding provision within school that supports our most vulnerable students.

The department has worked hard to establish positive and supportive relationships with parents and carers and as a result we have a good reputation with a wide variety of external agencies. A key part of our school improvement planning relates to ensuring that SEND provision continues to be improved and refined.

SEN provision in school

The educational needs of most of our students are met through carefully structured work in the classroom, balancing support and challenge for children of all abilities. Some students, however, encounter a variety of learning difficulties. We undertake liaison with primary schools to identify appropriate support strategies during transition, and then monitor and assess individuals throughout school. Our primary partners are excellent and relationships are very strong.

With the graduated approach and the plan, do, review cycle, the department can meet a wide range of needs. We offer in-class support, 1-1 withdrawal and small group teaching. This allows the delivery of Fresh Start phonics in Year 7, literacy support in Years 8 and 9, bespoke ASD/ASC programmes and other appropriate individualised support.

All curriculum areas are supported with student pen portraits and support plans for those who require them. We believe every teacher at Durham Johnston is a SEND teacher and whole school training and regular SEND updates reflect this.

Training

There are multiple opportunities for additional training throughout the year. Some of our students have specific and complex needs which often require detailed training be it medical or physical. We liaise closely with the Local Authority's SEND advisory team who provide wider training needs

Enrichment

The team effectively support students during social times in the day and our weekly homework club after school is well attended by students from a variety of backgrounds. We receive regular positive feedback from external agencies and families on the support given and promotion of student achievement at Homework Club. Students feel safe here and engage positively with an environment conducive to learning fostered by the support they can access from staff. There is an active after-school film club, which attracts many of our younger SEND students and we are committed to making all aspects of our curricular and extra-curricular offer accessible for all students.