



Learning in England ∞ Learning Support

7 > What is Learning Support and what can be done if you have a child with Learning Needs?

Needs may be serious, arising because of physical or mental disability, autism, being deaf or blind. We know different types of schools which may be able to accommodate your child. They may be state-funded or fee-paying; they may be mainstream schools or special schools. These schools will have specialist teachers who can support your child's learning, and facilities that are suitably established, or adapted, so he or she can get around and take part in all that the school has to offer.

“At our mixed independent school, we supported children both with physical and psychological needs such as blindness and autism; and children with learning needs mainly related to the process of learning. One example was a pupil who was with us from Year 7 through to the Upper Sixth, who was completely blind. There were two part-time teachers who consulted with his subject teachers before each lesson, to make sure that the resources he needed were put into Braille.

Then when homework and classwork had been completed by him, in Braille, the work was transcribed back into text, for the subject teacher to mark.

It is a tribute to that pupil and the team of teachers around him, that he was able to gain top A level grades and a place to study Philosophy and Economics at Oxford University.”¹

Less serious needs may be to do with the process of learning. Children who are Dyslexic, Dyspraxic or Dyscalculic may be supported within mainstream education. All state-funded schools and many fee-paying schools will have a Learning Support Department. Children may be accompanied to some lessons by a Support Teacher or taken out of lessons so he or she can have individual or small group tuition to address the need.

¹ Felicity, Philosophy teacher, in an independent school, in Oxfordshire



Specialist Learning Support Teachers help a child to understand his or her learning difficulties and provide strategies to address them.

Sometimes, parents will organise short term tuition, at home, from a Learning Support Tutor, who provides strategic support. We can help with finding specialist tutors.

There are many resources in English schools which are available to support different needs. We expect that you will come to us when you know what your child's need is. You may already have seen an Education Psychologist. We see our role is to help you to analyse the support you have found and to complement or enhance that provision, to help you follow your plan through. You may consider it valuable to have a recognised form of academic assessment that adds to what you already have. We can undertake this assessment of your child, for you. Please see our Information Document on Assessment.

In Oxfordshire, the Local Education Authority will be the first port of call and has a good programme which can be found on their website.

We know of mainstream, as oppose to specialist, schools that have provision for children who are profoundly deaf, or blind or need to use a wheelchair. We have Specialist Tutors and Home-School Advisers whom we can recommend to you, to support your child's learning, whatever the need is. You may like to have a chat with us, with no obligation.



How do we decide whether to send our child to a school which specialises in meeting the need he has or having tutoring at home?



An informed decision will be based on

1. the child's need. The Educational Psychologist's Report will establish the need and make recommendations.
2. our Assessment which complements the EP Report, as we consider not only academic ability but his motivation, character and hopes. Our Assessment is encouraging as it helps a child to see all that he *can* do rather than revealing what he cannot do.
3. weighing up the need, recommendations, our Assessment and what the school can offer. If there is a need in every subject then having a school-wide approach, such as was provided to the blind pupil described above would be best. If the need is only in one subject, tuition at home, may be all that is required.