

## **IDS – Teaching and Learning: Visual Impairment Service**

### **Aims**

The Visual Impairment team supports Warwickshire pre-school, mainstream and special schools in making provision for pupils with visual impairment.

### **Staff**

We have 2 fte, 2 pte teachers and a fte TA in our peripatetic team.

### **Referrals**

We receive notification of the medical diagnosis of visual impairment directly from colleagues in the Health Service. This diagnosis usually takes place at the pre-school stage so we are usually aware of pupils well before school age. Parental consent is required before we can accept a referral directly from schools. We make contact with parents and schools within 7 working days.

### **Assessment**

We gain information and advice from parents. We talk to school staff who know the pupil and gather the views of the EP and all relevant professionals. We undertake specialised visual assessments and assess functional vision by observation and monitoring in a variety of situations. We learn from our teaching activities and listen carefully to the views of the pupil. Written assessment reports are provided for school and parents and discussed with pupils whenever possible.

### **IEP recommendations**

The teachers in the service will clarify the educational implications of medical information and advise on appropriate management and adaptation of the classroom and school setting to take account of the needs of the referred pupil. We suggest strategies and programmes for developing visual skills. We also recommend appropriate criteria for measuring pupil progress.

### **Teaching and support in the classroom**

We offer specialist teaching, either individually or in small groups, for pupils at “school action plus”. At the pre-school stage we support a family centred approach based upon play. When the pupil attends school we aim to support learning across the curriculum through all key stages. We teach specific skills related to use of functional vision. These may include compensatory strategies, scanning and tracking techniques, the use of specialist equipment, and study skills. We can also arrange mobility training for pupils whenever this is necessary.

### **Reviews**

We attend the annual reviews in Warwickshire. We can attend reviews for pupils at “school action plus”. We give priority to attending whenever pupils give particular cause for concern and prior to any change of school. We appreciate consultation to set mutually convenient dates and times for meetings.

### **Records**

We maintain a confidential file for each pupil with whom we work. This contains referral and assessment information, IEPs, review notes and minutes, correspondence, professional reports, visit reports, and records of pupil progress. We also record information on visual acuity, print size and environmental requirements.

## **Curriculum resources and equipment**

We can provide booklets and leaflets about specific visual impairments. We loan books, materials and educational toys to pupils, parents and school and can also provide information about sources of appropriate curriculum resources. We advise on the appropriate use of specialist equipment and teaching materials.

## **Partnership with parents**

We meet parents at home and at school and provide a telephone number for future contact. Service information is provided for all parents. We usually maintain long-term involvement with parents and welcome their full involvement in assessment, IEP planning and reviews. All assessment reports and advice are copied to parents. Parents may be introduced to each other and to parent support groups. We liaise with medical professionals and interpret medical information for parents. Staff may attend hospital appointments with pupils and parents. We provide relevant information to parents so that they can make informed choices about their child's education. We will also provide information about voluntary associations and the Parent Partnership scheme.

## **Professional Development**

We provide whole school awareness and training in a way which is sensitive to the needs and wishes of each pupil. We train teachers and teaching assistants to develop and use specific skills necessary for the education of children with visual impairment. This includes training on the appropriate use of specialist equipment. We can offer teaching to raise the awareness of school friends whenever the pupil and parents agree that this might be helpful. We contribute to courses in the Warwickshire Educational Development Service programme.

## **Warwickshire and Regional networks**

We work co-operatively with all the services and agencies involved with pupils with visual impairment and participate in all the regular inter-agency meetings in Warwickshire at the area and county level. We liaise with Support Services for pupils with visual impairment in the West Midlands.