

George Abbot School

VI Specialist Centre

2019-20



Enabling Access

There has been a Specialist Centre for students with vision impairment within George Abbot School since 1992.

The aim of the VI Specialist Centre is to provide a supportive learning environment for VI students in which their independence is promoted and where they can achieve their full potential both academically and socially. All students will have an EHCP with vision impairment as primary need and places are offered on the highest need, location and the number of available places.

VI students are fully included into mainstream but may require specific, targeted support in order for them to be fully included within their lessons alongside their fully sighted peers.

Students have been given access to and have received training so that they can readily use ICT in their lessons. Laptops have helped enable some students to work alongside their peers and record notes so they have information to refer back to and support their own learning. This also demonstrates the support the VI centre carries out in developing students into confident, independent learners.

PSSS Joint Monitoring Visit Spring 2018

How the Specialist Centre supports VI students

The students access the curriculum through modified and adapted curriculum materials. This may be in the form of enlarged, bold text and pictures or diagrams, and/or braille and tactile diagrams which are tailored to the student's individual needs.

The students are supported by Qualified Teachers of Vision Impairment (QTVI) and/or qualified teachers working towards QTVI status (TVI), and specialist support staff.

With appropriate support and understanding the impact of a student's vision impairment can be minimised or removed altogether.

Students at the school make good progress, access the wider curriculum and develop skills that help with their overall independence. The students spoken to were positive about their experiences in school and had been supported in making important decisions regarding the next steps in their education.

PSSS Joint Monitoring Visit Spring 2018

It may be helpful to think of support from the Specialist Centre staff as involving two main strategies:

- **Access to learning.** The emphasis here is on providing the VI students with experiences and resources to provide the most direct route to learning through ensuring the curriculum is accessible across the full range of subjects and activities by modifying into specifically required large print and/or braille formats (in either electronic or hard copy) to meet individual needs; and/or supporting the VI students within the classroom. Mainstream subject teachers ensure differentiation of the curriculum if required.
- **Learning to access.** The emphasis here is on encouraging the VI students to develop the skills to access the curriculum independently and to provide opportunities so that the students develop the ability and confidence to become an independent learner.

The intention is to plan the balance between these two strategies to develop over time from 'access to learning' to 'learning to access' so that VI students become increasingly less reliant on adult support as they grow older. Students are encouraged to become an advocate for their own learning needs.

To facilitate curriculum access, the VI Specialist Centre also provides in-class support, appropriate technology and the provision of low level vision aids.

Many of the VI students need access to the "additional" curriculum. This may include:

- keyboard skills for touch typing
- mobility training
- independent living skills (ILS) training
- braille code teaching

These are taught within the weekly timetable rather than treated as optional extras and any decisions as to what lessons students should be withdrawn from and for how long are made in consultation with parents, students and subject staff and are reviewed regularly.

Tutorials

All students with a VI have a tutorial session with a member of staff in the Specialist Centre. This provides the opportunity to:

- discuss their work
- discuss any problems that have arisen in lessons, especially those in which they are not supported
- check students' progress with their individual targets
- review and set new targets
- enable students/staff to discuss any other concerns
- discuss choices for GCSE/A level selection

Contact with parents

The Specialist Centre believes that communication and a good working relationship between the Specialist Centre, parents and the students is vital for successful achievement in learning. Contact may be in a variety of ways:

- Parental visits to George Abbot prior to students' transfer
- Phone calls and e-mails
- Letters
- Discussion with parents at Annual Reviews, on Progress Monitoring days and whenever deemed necessary.

The school encourages positive inclusion for all students with vision impairment in all aspects of school life including clubs and societies, such as chess. VI students have also taken part in school drama and music productions, school trips and DoE Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

For further information, please contact Ms Anita Line, Head of Centre

aline@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk

Resources and Information

Physical & Sensory Support (Surrey)	<p>Educational advice and support for CYP with Vision Impairment</p> <p>https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/teachers-and-education-staff/educational-advice-and-support/send/physical-and-sensory-pss-support-service/physical-and-sensory-support-key-contacts</p>
Sight for Surrey	<p>Sight for Surrey is an organisation commissioned by Surrey County Council to provide habilitation training for Surrey CYP. As part of their charitable status Sight for Surrey's Children's Recreation programme offers a wide range of opportunities that addresses the different interests, ages, abilities and needs of the children, young people and their families</p> <p>https://www.sightforsurrey.org.uk/</p>
Calibre Audio Library (Young)	<p>Provides a subscription-free service of unabridged audio books for adults and children with sight problems, dyslexia or other disabilities, who cannot read print.</p> <p>https://www.youngcalibre.org.uk/</p>
Guide Dogs	<p>Guide Dogs Children's services including CustomEye Books, advice and provision of Guide dogs.</p> <p>https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/</p>
LOOK!	<p>The National Federation of families with vision-impaired children</p> <p>www.look-uk.org/</p>
Scarlett's Eyes	<p>A network for parents and professionals to support parents and families of CYP with vision impairment</p> <p>https://www.throughscarlettseyes.com/</p>
RNIB National Library Service	<p>Provides a wide choice of fiction and non-fiction books in audio, braille and giant print for adults and children.</p> <p>https://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people-free-time/reading-and-writing</p>
VICTA	<p>Vision Impaired Children Taking Action - support and information to parents, carers, young people with a vision impairment and organisations. VICTA also offers grants to individuals, groups and research projects.</p> <p>www.victa.org.uk</p>