

Case Study: Learning Programme: John (Post Primary School)

John is 15 years old and is functioning within the moderate general learning disability range. John is in second year in a class of 24 students. John's school organises the class groups in mixed-ability settings. His class is following a range of Junior Cycle/Certificate subjects and they are participating in the Junior Certificate Schools Programme.

The school is characterised by an emphasis on collaboration, led by the principal and the management team, the special educational needs co-ordinator and subject departments. The special education teacher meets each subject teacher to discuss the implications of John's PLUs for their subject, and how John's learning can best be facilitated. They agree on the building and maintaining a portfolio of work for him. In school, collaboration is exemplified by his English teachers. John's year group is divided into two English classes. Both teachers work very closely together on their subject programme, and collaborate to organise events for film studies, or when a local storyteller or poet comes to visit.

John's timetable is modified in order to integrate the teaching and learning of his PLUs with the mainstream timetable. The aim is to work within the resources available, to keep withdrawal to a minimum and to maximise John's learning with his year group. As John has an Irish exemption, during Irish classes he meets with his special education teacher and his SNA. This time is used for some one-to-one tuition in his PLUs, to discuss John's progress, problems that may have arisen, possible solutions and to plan for the week ahead. Otherwise John's learning takes place in the mainstream classroom with his classmates.

While John has good short-term memory, and is good at remembering and following instructions, he struggles to retain information over time. He has good attendance at school and behaviour isn't an issue for John but he can get easily distracted and frustrated when unable to do class work.

John is good at drawing and enjoys working on the computer. His ability to write is very limited and using a computer is something he does with greater ease than writing. To support John's learning, he has a laptop and specialist software. He uses word processing in a range of short projects, for example he designed an advertisement to sell some of his pups. He loves using the internet to look up images of dogs and although John is unable to read to a functional level, he asks the teacher or a peer to read the accompanying text with him. He locates images of dogs on the internet and pastes them into Microsoft Word. The pictures are then combined with common basic vocabulary. John has good conversational and social skills and is popular with his peers.

Adapted from the *NCCA Level 2 Learning Programmes Guidelines for Teachers* (2014) available at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/2887cd7e-5dd0-4b4e-946d-ff1966c7958d/Case-Studies.pdf>, pp. 67-72