



# jass in Special Schools

A Guide to Delivering the Junior Award Scheme for Schools in **Special Schools**



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## **About this Guide**

**This guide gives you an overview of the Junior Award Scheme for Schools, an award for children aged 10-14 years to recognise and record their wider achievement and support their transition from primary to secondary school. The award was launched in 2010 and in 2013/14 over six thousand pupils took part in JASS.**

The guide is the result of our “Raising the Bar” Project, our work supporting the delivery of JASS in special schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians. This project has been generously funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Henry Duncan Awards.

Examples from special schools are used throughout this guide to help you plan its introduction into your school. They illustrate the creative ways teachers have supported pupils to complete activities for each section of JASS.

Whilst developed using the experience of Scottish special schools, JASS is equally applicable to other curricula and is already used throughout the UK.

## **Contents**

- 1. About JASS**
- 2. Introducing JASS into your school**
- 3. The four sections of JASS**
- 4. Evidence and accreditation**
- 5. Step by step guide to delivering JASS**
- 6. Pupils’ experience of JASS**
- 7. Teachers’ experience of JASS**
- 8. Acknowledgements**

# 1. About JASS

## Overview

**The Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) is a progressive learning programme for 10 - 14 year olds which has been designed to recognise wider achievement. It can support pupils' transition from primary to secondary school but in practice can be introduced at either primary or secondary stage.**

In special schools JASS has been used with wider age groups. This guide has been developed using the experience of special schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

### In summary, JASS:

- provides a structured, accredited, learning programme which is suitable for pupils with a range of Additional Support Needs
- is a flexible and inclusive programme which can be tailored to the interests and abilities of individual pupils
- gives participants the opportunity to have fun and to achieve
- aims to develop skills and build confidence
- can be used as part of the formal and informal curriculum

*“Some pupils have become far more confident in their own abilities and have learnt not to be scared of unknown experiences. A lot of success for all our pupils was achieved through JASS.”*

**Royal Blind School, Edinburgh**

## How it works

**JASS develops the whole individual by rewarding effort in four key areas:**

**Adventure:** involves completing an outdoor activity or challenge

**Get Active Stay Active:** encourages regular physical activity

**My Interests:** involves exploring a personal interest

**Me and My World:** involves working for the good of the community or the environment

The completion of all four sections leads to the participant obtaining either a Bronze, Silver or Gold award. The JASS programme is progressive over these three levels, with an increasing level of commitment required when repeating the four sections to achieve the higher levels.

	My Interests	Get Active, Stay Active	Me and My World	Adventure
<b>Bronze</b>	8 hours over school term	8 hours over school term	8 hours over school term	3 hours
<b>Silver</b>	12 hours over school term	12 hours over school term	12 hours over school term	5 hours
<b>Gold</b>	18 hours over 2 school terms	18 hours over 2 school terms	18 hours over 2 school terms	8 hours

JASS can also be started at Silver or Gold level if this meets the needs of the participant. Each participant's JASS programme should be tailored to their abilities to ensure they can complete the required four sections at their pace.

## Suitability

**JASS has been used very successfully in primary, secondary and special schools across Edinburgh and the Lothians, who teach pupils with a range of disabilities and Additional Support Needs including;**

- learning disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs
- severe/profound and complex learning difficulties, including pupils with significant physical and sensory impairments
- visual impairment, including those who have additional support needs and those with complex multiple disabilities

## JASS and the Curriculum for Excellence

**JASS is designed to fit with the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland and to support pupils to become successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Our evaluation shows teachers believe JASS supports interdisciplinary learning and helps them meet the objectives of the Curriculum for Excellence.**

**Confident Individuals:** At Pinewood School teachers believe pupils have grown in confidence as a result of taking part in JASS. Having noticed a pupil who was shy was not being heard during team work, the teacher put them in charge of activities for the Award's Adventure section. As a result the pupil took an authoritative role and gave instructions, when previously there were too many leaders and nothing was happening!

**Effective Contributors:** Redhall Primary School has used JASS to support their pupils learning around Health and Wellbeing. A 'Cooking for JASS' block was created for the My Interests section, with pupils learning to cook a simple meal – a skill for life.

**Successful Learners:** At Gorgie Mills School JASS has given pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties a structure. This has helped them develop their organisational skills, such as record keeping and sending emails. Pupils have also taken pride in, and responsibility for updating, their own JASS Achievement Files.

*"The school has had success in improving the level of attainment for young people...  
...Staff have introduced new awards such as the Personal Achievement Award  
and the Junior Awards Scheme Scotland."*

**Education Scotland Inspector's Report August 2014, Oaklands School.**

## 2. Introducing JASS into your school

### Planning

**Integrating JASS into the curriculum has proven to be the most effective model of delivery. Schools have successfully incorporated JASS into their four yearly planning cycle. This helps teachers make links naturally, for example between the themes for the year and the four sections of JASS.**

**Timetabling JASS into the Curriculum:** Woodlands School has allocated a 2 hour IDL (Interdisciplinary Learning) slot for JASS on a Friday afternoon for S1 and S2 pupils, with the year groups being mixed to support new friendships. Blocks are completed for 3 of the sections of JASS on a rotation basis, with Adventure taking place over 4 weeks for 1 day a week. The change of atmosphere created by doing JASS activities at the end of the week has benefited both pupils and staff.

*“We don’t want it to be an add on, the kids get so much out of it.”*

**Woodlands School**

*“With JASS being part of the curriculum they were able to be more active at school due to set activities being planned and appropriately supported.”*

**The Royal Blind School**

## Delivery

**The four JASS sections are designed to fit within one academic year, but the time taken to complete the Award can be adapted.**

In mainstream schools pupils complete some of the JASS sections within their own time and some within school hours. This approach can also be used in special schools, or adapted as necessary. The majority of pupils in special schools in Edinburgh have completed the four sections of JASS within school hours, with the option available for pupils to be accredited for any activities they do out of school.

**A whole primary school approach:** Oaklands School delivers JASS across the whole primary department. They’ve found JASS to be a flexible and inclusive award and have adapted it to suit the needs of their pupils with severe/profound and complex learning difficulties, including significant physical and sensory impairments. Pupils complete two sections per year, enabling them to complete their Bronze Award by the end of Primary 2, then progress to their Silver Award in Primary 3 and their Gold Award in Primary 5.

**Starting at Gold Award Level:** Teachers at Gorgie Mills Secondary School have found starting with the Gold level and running it over 2 years works best for their pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The lack of repetition of sections at different levels helps keep pupils interested and motivated.

**JASS as part of the informal curriculum:** At Pilrig Park School JASS was initially delivered as a period at the end of the day, but is now embedded in the curriculum. Parents have also been encouraged to highlight any out of school activities their children are doing that could count towards JASS. The school run a range of clubs which offer pupils the opportunity to undertake activities for each section of JASS. Teachers believe JASS motivates pupils, such as those who would not normally take part in physical activity.

Whilst JASS is usually delivered to a class it can also be successfully delivered on a 1:1 basis.

**1:1 delivery of JASS:** Teachers from the Hospital and Outreach Teaching Service have used JASS as a way to engage with pupils excluded from mainstream school. They believe the activities undertaken for JASS have supported pupils to expand their social circle and develop new life skills, resulting in them feeling more confident and included.

### 3. The four sections of JASS

To achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold level of JASS a participant should complete each of the following sections.

#### 1. Adventure

The intention of the Adventure Section is to take groups of participants outside their 'comfort zone' to work as part of a team. This section is meant for outdoor activity, if possible outwith the school grounds but also easily deliverable in school. This section gives pupils the opportunity to improve their interpersonal skills and self-confidence through, for example, problem solving or developing new skills.

At their school camp Redhall School pupils worked as part of a team during outdoor activities, helping each other with harnesses, helmets and offering support to each other. For example, a pupil unable to do certain activities took her friends hand and helped them round an obstacle course. A significant learning outcome was that pupils realised it was okay to ask for help and make mistakes, and that they shouldn't feel bad about it.

Teachers in the PE and Outdoor Education Department at the The Royal Blind School have used JASS as a tool to develop their outdoor education programme. They have developed an innovative orienteering programme which meets the needs of their pupils and challenges them in many different ways. Orienteering has proven to be both very popular with pupils and a great activity to do as part of school trips, in the school grounds and indoors.

#### 2. Get Active, Stay Active

The aim of this section is to encourage young people to get involved in sport or physical activity as a means of staying fit and developing a healthy lifestyle.

At Pinewood School the PE and dance teacher asked her pupils to choose taster sessions. They chose basketball, football, go-kart bikes, cross country running, fitness, boxercise, tennis, dodgeball and dance. She believes these sessions boosted pupils confidence as they realised they were good at different things. She highlighted this by creating a chart on which pupils placed targets for themselves, which they could move as they progressed.

At Oaklands School completion of the Get Active, Stay Active section of JASS is seen as a great way to recognise the achievements of pupils taking part in the MOVE (Movement for Learning and Life) programme. This programme has been shown to improve functional mobility skills and empower children who have complex physical and learning disabilities to better direct their own lives. The deputy head teacher believes this recognition of pupils' wider achievements is one of the main benefits of JASS and is heightened by the fact JASS is an award used in mainstream schools, potentially by siblings.

### 3. My Interests

**This section is intended to encourage participants to try a new hobby or pastime or to be accredited for something they are already doing. This section gives pupils the opportunity to develop a new skill, improve their self-confidence and learn how to set and achieve goals.**

At Pinewood School a teacher working with a pupil with Autism took the time to find out what he liked, as he wasn't able to choose an activity. She realised that he loved planes and memorising facts. For his My Interests section he memorised pictures of planes and created paper aeroplanes. He then made and painted a foam modelling kit of a plane.

At Pilrig Park School pupils have taken part in a range of activities for JASS organised by the school. These include taking part in their Look Good Feel Good Salon and Drama Club. Pupils now realise that taking part in extra-curricular activities will enhance their chance of achieving an award, which the school in turn recognises at an assembly celebrating wider achievement.

*"I like being a member of the Drama Club because it's good fun and it counts towards my JASS Award!"*

**Pilrig Park Pupil.**

### 4. Me and My World

**The intention of this section is to support and encourage young people to make links to their community and to get involved with things they care about. The aim is to give pupils the opportunity to develop teamwork skills and contribute to the wider community**

At Pilrig Park Secondary School teachers plan clubs and options to tie into JASS and engage the harder to reach children. The Art teacher invented an 'Advertising Club' which involves pupils making healthy eating posters to advertise the school tuck shop as well as posters for the school show. Others took part in options branded as 'Enterprise' and have grown in confidence as a result of taking on new roles. Participants were fully involved in collating, assembling and taking orders and serving ice-creams. The teacher believes that JASS has encouraged pupils to take on things they wouldn't otherwise do, and that their confidence has grown as a result of doing something, enjoying it and being happy in their decision making.

As part of Prospect Bank School's 'Neighbours Near and Far' project Dancebase (the National Centre for Dance in Edinburgh) worked with pupils to devise an audience participation dance. Senior citizens from the local community were invited to the school for a fun afternoon of singing and dancing. As well as taking part in the singing and dancing, pupils took responsibility for getting tables organised, baking for the event and greeting visitors.

Visit our website at [www.jassschools.org.uk](http://www.jassschools.org.uk) to find out more in our Case Studies Section.

## 4. Evidence and accreditation

### Evidence

Each participant is given their own JASS Achievement File which is used to record the following:

- planning before the start of the programme
- level of participation
- start and finish date for each section
- activities and targets set
- recording of participants feelings after the programme
- evidence collected
- teacher/mentor's comments and signature to confirm completion

It's important that pupils are involved in decision making and planning where possible for each section to allow them to have ownership of their JASS programme. Any targets set must be achievable and take into consideration the abilities of the young person. Target setting enables participants to reflect on and enjoy their achievements. Teachers report that pupils often achieve in ways that weren't obvious at the time of setting the target.

*"This is the spirit of JASS – making the award meaningful for each pupil and genuinely inclusive, by ensuring activities and planning take into account pupils level of understanding"*

**Redhall School.**

The method of record keeping can be adapted to meet the needs of the young person to ensure it is meaningful for them. Pupils can write or draw on the personal details and planning page in their achievement file and create their own activity logs.

Prospect Bank School have successfully adapted the JASS achievement file using Boardmaker, a design programme that enables teachers to make and adapt materials for pupils who use picture communication symbols. Each section of their JASS file utilises picture symbols and chat sheets to enable pupils to choose activities and talk about their feelings, their targets and what they've learnt.

At Pilrig Park School the teacher in charge of JASS keeps track of activities completed by pupils for JASS, by recording the clubs pupils have signed up for, their attendance and a running total of the hours they have completed.

In addition to supporting pupils to fill out their achievement file in a format that suits their needs, at least one piece of evidence should be added. Teachers should encourage pupils to include more than one piece of evidence, particularly for the Silver and Gold level. As JASS is a very flexible programme there are many ways to present evidence, including:

- photos of pupils taking part in activities or of display boards
- leaflets
- drawings or posters made by pupils
- video clips, using mobile phones or similar technology, and other visual or verbal evidence stored on a DVD or online

An activity planner and log sheet, designed by pupils or downloaded from the JASS website ([www.jassschools.org.uk](http://www.jassschools.org.uk) under Resources) is also a great way to evidence when and how activities have been completed for each section.

## Accreditation

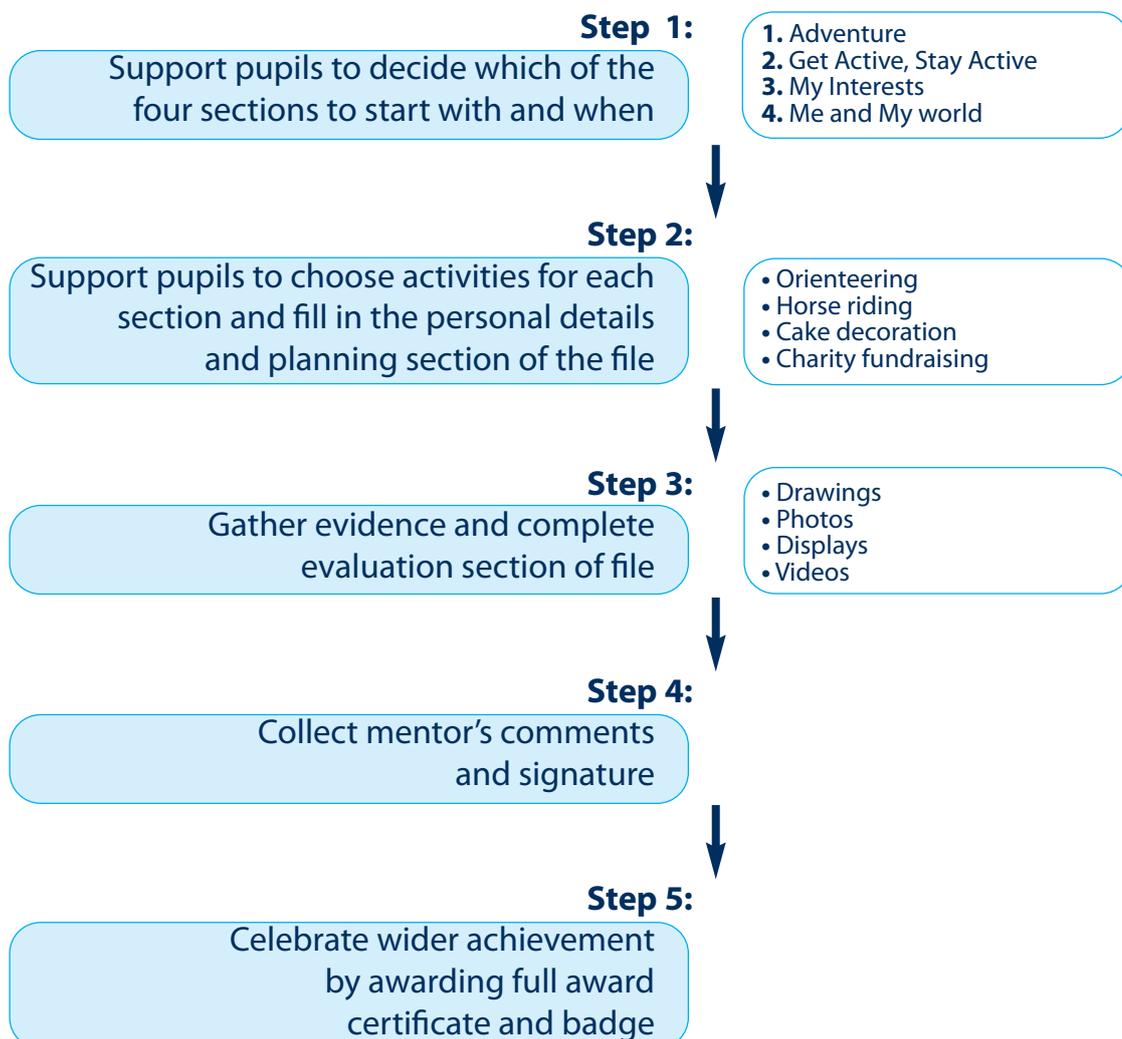
The awarding of four separate sectional certificates by teachers on the successful completion of each section of JASS encourages and motivates pupils to complete their full award. A full award certificate and badge should be presented when all four sections of one level of the award are completed. Many schools do this as part of their end of year assembly celebrating pupils' achievements.

Whilst it is important to keep delivery of JASS simple and easy to manage, it's also essential that some quality control is exercised. A senior teacher or JASS Champion should 'dip sample' achievement files to ensure that requirements are applied consistently and comprehensively.

*"Our pupils have mixed levels of understanding however where relevant pupils did acknowledge their own success and could describe what they achieved and why they gained their certificate."*

The Royal Blind School

## 5. Step by step guide to delivering JASS



## 6. Pupils' experience of JASS

Our evaluation of JASS has shown it is well received and respected by teachers in both mainstream and special schools. But most importantly, the pupils who take part in JASS overwhelmingly report that it has helped them develop new skills, grow in confidence and become more active.

The following quotes are taken from participants' answers to evaluation questions in the JASS achievement file.

**Question:** What are you looking forward to doing for your JASS Programme and why?

*"I'm looking forward to working as a team because I need skills for later on in life"*  
*"Getting out of school and exploring the local area"*

**Question:** What do you want to achieve by doing this activity?

*"To get fitter through regular exercise (walking or running)"*  
*"Learn about a charity, find out how we can help, organise a fundraising activity"*

**Question:** I am proud of the following achievements...

*"I now work better with other people."*  
*"I did well because I learned new skills such as teambuilding, sharing with others, leadership and thinking."*  
*"I did really well. I learnt how to pipe icing on to a cake properly."*  
*"Learning how to drive a go kart and playing water polo and building a dam."*  
*"Staying safe, being in a team, writing, trying new sports and making new friends"*  
*"Skiing, tennis, football, camping and orienteering"*

**Question:** My targets for the future are...

*"Going to mainstream school"*  
*"I want to improve my throwing"*  
*"Swimming to the deep end and back with no floats"*

**Question:** I have been challenged by...

*"Water polo games, crossing the river, identifying the nature sounds"*  
*"Skiing because my teacher pushed me to try it"*

## 7. Teachers' experience of JASS

- All the teachers currently using JASS in special schools would recommend it to other teachers working in special schools and with pupils with Additional Support Needs, as they believe it to be a flexible and inclusive award that recognises pupils' achievements.
- Teachers report that the majority of participants have developed new skills or interests, become more active and have grown in confidence. They have also worked as a team and felt a sense of achievement as a result of taking part in JASS.
- A key challenge for teachers has been finding a way to integrate JASS into their timetable. They have found allocating time slots for JASS activities into the formal and/or informal curriculum the most effective way of delivering JASS.
- JASS motivates participants to try new activities and the gathering and recording of evidence prepares them for awards in secondary school.
- Teachers found networking via a steering group of participating schools in their local authority the most effective way to share best practice.

## 8. Acknowledgements

**We'd like to thank all of the schools whose contribution to the steering group and evaluation of the "Raising the Bar" project have informed this guide;**

Braidburn School, Edinburgh  
 Gorgie Mills School, Edinburgh  
 Hospital and Outreach Teaching Service, Edinburgh  
 Kaimes School, Edinburgh  
 Oaklands School, Edinburgh  
 Pilrig Park School, Edinburgh  
 Pinewood School, West Lothian  
 Prospect Bank School, Edinburgh  
 Redhall School, Edinburgh  
 St Crispin's School, Edinburgh  
 The Royal Blind School, Edinburgh  
 Woodlands School, Edinburgh

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