

As the name might suggest, Learn Different offers an educational environment that varies in many ways from standard schools in Singapore. Founder, CEO and educator, SHARON SOPHIE SOLOMON, describes some of the differences.

# Learning Differently

## What was the inspiration for starting Learn Different?

The initial inspiration came from my own challenging experiences at school. When I began as a learning support facilitator, I saw myself in many of my students: the teacher's nightmare, the parent's dilemma. When learners' needs are not being met, they act out. Sometimes in frustration, sometimes just to be heard. The students who were coming to me felt safe and no longer had to fear recrimination. That's when I decided we needed to take the concept further and start an academy.

## Is Learn Different like any other school, or is it a place where children go in addition to a "regular" school?

It's a school, registered with the Council for Private Education, with three service offerings. The full day programme, the **Academy**, offers a well-researched and established curriculum that gives teachers time to nurture learners and teach subjects in depth. It's an inclusive school that respects the diverse learner – because no two people learn in the same way – and supports their needs and talents. We never have more than 15 students in a classroom.

There is also our **Integrated Therapy** department, consisting of three occupational therapists, a speech therapist and an art therapist; and our **Learning Support** department, supporting students in maths, language and literacy, science and Mandarin.



The Academy is supported during the day by the two other departments. That way, parents aren't shuffling their kids around after an exhausting day to get to a therapy or tutoring session.

## What types of students attend the school?

We have a lovely mix of students from Singapore and across the globe. Some require an element of support, but all work according to their abilities. Students who are working beyond the norm are placed in accelerated programmes, while those who have difficulties in a specific area work closely with a support teacher to get the fundamentals in place.

## What methodologies do you employ?

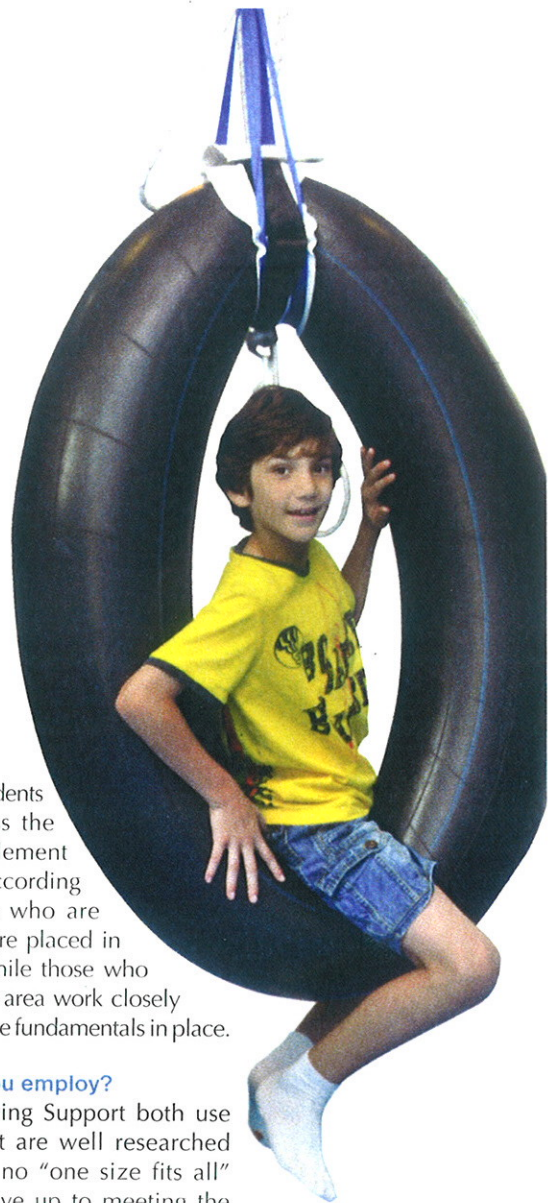
The Academy and Learning Support both use various methodologies that are well researched across the globe. There is no "one size fits all" approach, as long as we live up to meeting the needs of today's (and tomorrow's) learner. First rule of thumb for any educator: get down on your knees and see the world through the eyes of the child in front of you. Second, do your research. Third, hire the right people. Fourth, spend time speaking with parents.

## Tell us a bit about the teaching body. What are the teachers' backgrounds?

Our faculty is made up of professional educators with relevant degrees in the required field of practice and experience. But that's not enough. They are passionate and love what they do. That's not obtainable in any university, workshop or vitamin supplement. They get it and they care. Learn Different is nothing without its staff.

## Best thing about the campus location?

The lush grounds we occupy, the surrounding greenery, a resident hornbill every late afternoon, our mini eco-playground, a few century-old trees, a strong family of staff, our spacious cooking studio, a library of 3,000 titles and our kids who make the place come to life; and we're only five minutes away from Orchard Road. 📍



Learn Different is at 10 Winstedt Road, Block C #01-16. Call 6836 1128 or visit [www.learnifferent.com.sg](http://www.learnifferent.com.sg)