

Dyslexia

Friendly

Statement

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Dyslexia friendly statement

Being an effective school and being dyslexia friendly are two sides of the same coin. Effective schools enjoy strong leadership, value staff development and pay close attention to the quality of teaching and learning. These are schools in which all pupils are important, regardless of ability or difficulty. Crucially, more children are successful when taught using dyslexia friendly teaching methods – and while dyslexia friendly techniques can be successfully applied to children who are not dyslexic, this does not work the other way round. (Taken from Achieving Dyslexia Friendly Schools Publication).

In order to meet the needs of all our pupils within our Multi Academy Trust (MAT), we are actively working to retain our 'Dyslexia Friendly School Status' for all schools within the Trust, first gained for all schools in 2016. We believe that this will not only continue to benefit our pupils with dyslexia, but also have a significant impact upon other pupils whose Literacy skills are not appropriate for their age.

What is Dyslexia?

According to the Dyslexia institute, dyslexia can be defined as: '... a combination of abilities and difficulties which affect the learning process in reading, writing, spelling and sometimes numeracy.'

Children with dyslexia frequently have weaknesses in short term memory, sequencing and processing information – skills everyone needs to learn effectively in a busy classroom. What may start as a learning difference quickly becomes a learning difficulty if dyslexia goes unrecognised and the teaching is inappropriate.

However, if those with milder forms of dyslexia are identified early and given the opportunity to learn the way they learn best, they may cease to have special educational needs. The skills and strategies which dyslexic children need in order to learn can be taught, and what is good for the dyslexic learner is good for everyone.

Aims of all staff are to promote:

- good inclusive practices, matching teaching to the way the children learn
- the support of children with mild to moderate learning difficulties without SEN provision
- minimal frustration and less behaviour problems,
- confident parents and children

Assessment and intervention

All teachers have responsibility for dyslexic children. Early identification of children's difficulties, whilst highlighting their strengths and enabling an appropriate intervention programme to be developed in consultation with SENCo, is paramount to the progression of children within the Academy. However, by making having Dyslexia Friendly classroom and teaching styles the needs of more children, including those with and without SEN, are met. Early intervention is essential to offset a pattern of failure, low self esteem and declining motivation.

All staff have access to the following resources specific to identifying and supporting children on the Dyslexia spectrum

- Dyslexia Indicator checklists:
- Quick dyslexia checklist
- Dyslexia Indicator for Parents
- Dyslexia Indicator for teachers

Dyslexia Friendly Classrooms

Throughout the Small Schools Multi Academy Trust, we recognise the importance of the working environment for children with Dyslexia. They may already be having difficulties with listening, hearing, looking, sitting still, concentrating, writing and finding things they will need. If their classroom environment works against them, no matter how hard they try, they will not succeed. Therefore classrooms:

- Are arranged so that the dyslexic child can sit near the front and have eye contact with the teacher.

- Have, where possible, children with dyslexia sitting alongside well motivated children or a study buddy.
- Are organised so that distractions are kept to a minimum,
- Are equipped with clearly marked and neatly arranged resources
- Have Interactive whiteboards which are set to an off white coloured background with a text colour which doesn't contrast too greatly.
- Allow all children to access support materials to promote self-help skills, e.g. key word mats, place value mats, HFW lists, punctuation pyramids.
- Have resources available for pupils with dyslexia to record their ideas without endless writing e.g. ipad voice recording, cameras, laptops for typing.

Teaching Strategies

Everyone has an individual learning style. Dyslexic children seem to process information differently. Understanding how they learn best, and being flexible enough to adapt teaching approaches are vital factors in enabling dyslexic children to learn effectively in the classroom. Therefore within the MAT, we employ the following teaching strategies supportive of dyslexic children:

- Make expectations high for intellectual stimulation, but reasonable for written responses
- Be prepared to explain things many times in a variety of ways, individually if necessary
- When looking at a child's work, we try to understand the reason for their mistakes and give them a chance to explain their difficulties. Target marking is personalised and specific to the child's individual needs.
- Ensure that written materials are accessible
- Ensure that work is scaffolded and differentiated to allow all children a sense of achievement.
- Be slow, and deliberate when giving instructions, allowing time for the meaning of the words to be absorbed and questions asked by the children.
- Where possible, we use multisensory methods of learning, including over learning – intervention methods are used to support classroom learning.

- Use visual prompts and mnemonics
- Enable dyslexic children to show their interest, knowledge and skills, despite their difficulties with writing
- Give guidance about how to tackle tasks systematically – flow charts, mind maps, grids, bullet points, paragraph starts, writing frames
- Watch out for signs of tiredness and fatigue
- Watch out for signs of falling confidence and self-esteem

Additionally, we employ the following dyslexia friendly methods to help dyslexic children with reading and writing:

- Presenting new words in small batches
- Cursive handwriting starting from the line
- Use of ICT when appropriate
- Check that children are keeping up, and not just sitting passively during shared reading and writing activities
- Provide alternative forms of recording
- Use a structured phonic programme – initially Jolly Phonics sounds and actions then letters and sounds scheme of work.

Partnership with parents

We acknowledge that maximum participation by parents/carers is essential in engendering positive attitudes to dyslexic learners. We will help to allay parent's fears for their child's education by understanding their concerns and pursuing strategies to help. Concerns identified by the school will be discussed with the parents at the outset. Parents are kept up to date about Parent Partnership initiatives through post and the display board.