



Dyslexia Friendly Policy

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March 2023	Policy updated	Anna Willington, SENCO
March 2021	Policy updated – added some clarity around stages 1, 2 and 3 and referred to having high expectations	James Bancroft and Anna Willington, SENCO
September 2019	Policy updated	James Bancroft and Anna Willington, SENCO
March 2018	Policy written	Sharon Valente, Inclusion Manager

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DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY POLICY

Definition

'Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing and spelling. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are not clear cut-off points. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves markers of dyslexia.' **J Rose (2009)**

Dyslexia occurs in people of all backgrounds and of all abilities. It is estimated that as high as 20% of the population may be affected, with 4% of these having severe difficulties. Children with dyslexia may experience difficulties with:

- Short term memory
- Long term memory
- Processing and retrieving words and information
- Phonological awareness
- Sequencing or rote learning
- Auditory memory
- Spatial awareness
- Direction – left and right
- Organisation
- Fine motor skills

However, if children with dyslexia are identified early and are given opportunities to continue learning in a more individual way, they may not need to be placed on the special educational needs register. The skills and strategies that children with dyslexia need in order to learn can be taught.

Our aims

At Wistaston Church Lane Academy, we aspire to be a Dyslexia Friendly School. Not only does a dyslexia friendly ethos help us to meet the needs of pupils with dyslexia, but also the needs of pupils who have difficulties with literacy skills. Strategies which work well for learners with dyslexia work well for everyone. We recognise that a child's self-esteem and confidence go hand in hand with successful learning. Our children are made aware of the nature of the barriers that some people may have to learning and how different strategies can help to overcome these.

Our aim is to enable children with dyslexia to manage their learning through quality first teaching. We want to work with children and parents to develop a positive mindset so that children don't see dyslexia as a label or as a reason not to achieve. We have high expectations of all children and all children are expected to work as hard as they can at school and at home.

Identification of Dyslexic Tendencies

The school's policy for assessment and identification of children's Special Educational Needs (SEN) is set out in the SEND Policy.

Stage One

Initially the class teacher takes responsibility for recognising the possible signs of dyslexia and putting steps in place to identify the specific nature of the difficulties the child is having, though a parent/carer or someone else involved with the family (e.g. social worker, health visitor) may have brought concerns to the teacher's notice. The teacher, with help from within the school where appropriate, adapts learning and teaching approaches to ensure the learner's needs are met appropriately. A record should be kept of the approaches that are put in place. Parents are consulted, but without serious concerns being raised. Other possible barriers to learning such as vision and hearing should be ruled out at this stage. Teachers may also request a child is assessed for visual stress. Visual stress is the discomfort people can feel when looking at texts. The child may complain of headaches, or letters 'jumping' on the



page. Using the correct coloured overlay/paper can reduce this stress and the child may not need further intervention. Please note that the overlay colour needs to be formally assessed by the school. **All of the strategies used are part of quality first teaching and so the child's needs will be met. However, a child may be placed on monitoring at this point if the teacher feels this is necessary.** See *Quality First Teaching in the Cheshire East SEND Toolkit*.

Stage Two

If progress is limited, it is the teacher's responsibility to work with the SENCO to arrange for a preliminary Dyslexia Screener (using Nessy) to be carried out. A copy of this will be sent to parents and a discussion with the class teacher will be arranged if dyslexia is considered likely. Note that this is not a diagnosis of dyslexia and consideration should be given to whether the term is appropriate. Areas of difficulty are highlighted and an appropriate intervention programme is developed. Interventions will then be of an individualised nature though not necessarily conducted on a one-to-one basis as this may not be appropriate. If they haven't been already, **a child will be placed on monitoring at this point by the class teacher. After a term, the child should move to a SEN Support Plan if little or no progress is made, or removed from monitoring if progress has been made at their individual level.**

See the strategies for supporting children with very specific difficulties affecting literacy skills in the *Cheshire East SEND Toolkit (Graduated Approach for Schools, p2)*.

Stage Three

If progress is very limited and problems are more complex and persistent or if the child becomes highly demotivated, at this point a SEN Support Plan will be written for the child by the class teacher. If, after two termly cycles of 'Plan, Do, Review', strategies work effectively, then the child may be removed from the SEND register altogether. However, the class teacher and SENCO may agree that the Nessy screener is repeated. Depending on the outcome of the screener, additional specialist help may be necessary. Nessy suggest that the two most important screening results are Phonological Awareness and Rapid Naming. A red result in one of these areas and two others (three red results) would suggest that specialist support may be needed.

See the strategies for supporting children with very specific difficulties affecting literacy skills in the *Cheshire East SEND Toolkit (Graduated Approach for Schools, p4)*.

Private Dyslexia Assessments

A parent may choose to pay for a dyslexia assessment privately. This may result in further suggestions of how to target the child's individual needs. The school advises parents to speak to the class teacher and/or the SENCO before taking this step as dyslexia assessments can be expensive and what is observed at school may not reflect what is seen at home. Parents should note that a professional diagnosis of dyslexia does not mean that the child is placed on the SEND register if strategies are already working effectively. A SEN Support Plan will be written when the child is at Stage Two only. School will not pay for a private dyslexia assessment unless the child has met the criteria in Stage Three.

What changes after a dyslexia diagnosis?

We endeavour to use dyslexia friendly teaching strategies at all times and so a diagnosis may not mean that provision for a child will change. The diagnosis does not bring extra funding to school and does not mean that additional teaching support will be offered. We recognise that the class teacher knows the child best. The suggestions in the diagnostic report may help teachers to provide quality interventions and targeted support but the class teacher may decide that this is not appropriate.

Assessment

Teachers and colleagues constantly track and monitor pupils' progress. When setting work and marking work, teachers and teaching assistants are mindful of managing the needs and self-esteem of all children, including those with dyslexia. They may only make a limited number of corrections on a piece of work. Where appropriate, colleagues will try to give verbal feedback as well as written feedback. The setting and marking of spellings is done sensitively. For instance, the



correction of spellings will be focussed primarily on high frequency words and particular letter strings.

Provision for children with dyslexic tendencies

No two children with dyslexia are alike and the difficulties they experience may vary greatly. Therefore, our quality first teaching must reflect children's differing needs. These may include (depending on age and availability):

- Exploring a wide range of recording styles for children
- Use of ICT to aid recording, such as talking tins, iPads, laptops
- Use of ICT to develop phonic and reading knowledge. The school subscribes to Nessy as a key intervention strategy and this is used on a case by case basis. Nessy should be used at home, as prescribed, to have the best impact on the child. If it is not used, the Nessy licence may need to be used by a different child.
- Use of Toe by Toe and Word Wasp.
- Use of pictorial cues.
- Visual timetables.
- 25% additional time in assessments, if the teacher feels this is appropriate. For Year Six SATs the decision is based on a set of criteria that are decided by the Standards Testing Agency, not the school.
- Use of reading books at an age-appropriate level, whilst being at the correct reading level for the individual child
- Use of precision teaching to help improve sound and word recognition
- Off-white tints on IWB presentations

Other dyslexia friendly strategies are recommended in the Cheshire East SEND Toolkit. Class teachers will also follow recommendations from dyslexia assessments with best endeavours.

Dyslexia Friendly Classrooms

Dyslexia friendly classrooms:

- Are arranged so that during lessons children with dyslexia sit in an appropriate place for the child, the teacher and for those around them.
- Have clearly labelled resources
- Have water available during the day using a water bottle from home
- Have a range of dyslexia friendly resources ready at hand, such as word lists, spelling and handwriting prompts.
- Have interactive displays
- Are appropriately lit and well-ventilated to provide a comfortable learning environment
- Are tidy and well-organised