

KINGSTON ST MARY C OF E VA PRIMARY SCHOOL



PARENT GUIDE TO DYSLEXIA

This leaflet outlines the provision for children experiencing Literacy difficulties, including Dyslexia at our school. It will help you to understand who can help and how this help and support can be accessed.

Further information can be found in the Somerset Core Standards for Children and Young People with Cognition and Learning Needs.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty (or difference) - SpLD - which affects up to 1 in 10 people. It is a combination of strengths and weaknesses which affects the learning process. In very simple terms it is a difference in the way that the brain processes information. This means that children who have dyslexia learn in ways that are different from other children. It often runs in families and boys and girls are similarly affected.

As a school, we have adopted the definition of dyslexia described by Sir Jim Rose in June 2009. '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 speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no 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.

A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.'

Indicators of Dyslexia:

There are many persisting factors in dyslexia, which can appear from an early age. These include:

- Obvious 'good' and 'bad' days, for no apparent reason,
- Confusion between directional words, e.g. up/down, in/out,
- Difficulty with sequence, e.g. coloured bead sequence, later with days of the week or numbers,
- A family history of dyslexia/reading difficulties.

At Primary school age, you may notice your child:

- Has particular difficulty with reading and spelling.
- Puts letters and figures the wrong way round.
- Has difficulty remembering tables, alphabet, formulae etc.
- Leaves letters out of words or puts them in the wrong order.
- Still occasionally confuses 'b' and 'd' and words such as 'no/on'.
- Still needs to use fingers or marks on paper to make simple calculations.
- Has poor concentration.
- Has problems understanding what he/she has read.
- Takes longer than average to do written work.
- Has problems processing language at speed.

Primary school age non-language indicators:

- Has difficulty with tying shoe laces, tie, dressing.

- Has difficulty telling left from right, order of days of the week, months of the year etc.
- Surprises you because in other ways he/she is bright and alert.
- Has a poor sense of direction and still confuses left and right.
- Lacks confidence and has a poor self image.

What should I do if I think my child has dyslexia?

Speak to your child's Class Teacher about your concerns. Teachers are available for brief discussions at the beginning or end of the day. An appointment can be made via the School Office (01823 451353) if a more detailed discussion is needed. You may also want to talk to the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Fiona Robinson. Fiona usually works at the School on Thursdays and can be contacted via the School Office to make an appointment or to discuss your concerns.

What school staff will do:

The Class Teacher will begin to fill out a Literacy Difficulties Tracking document and make reasonable adjustments within the curriculum. These may include breaking down instructions and learning tasks, giving thinking time, providing desk top and visual aids, using coloured overlays or coloured paper and using assistive technology, such as iPads or Clicker 7.

The SENCO will carry out an observation in class and complete some assessments to identify what is happening and why. The assessment should help establish the pupil's strengths, development needs and what kind of support they might benefit from.

Progress will be carefully monitored and reviewed. If concerns continue, one of the following interventions may be deemed appropriate:

Spelling Detectives

ILI (Individualised Literacy Intervention)

Numicon

If, having completed the intervention, the difficulties remain, a referral may be made to Duncan Hughes, Learning Support Advisor, who would carry out a full diagnostic assessment to identify whether the pupil has dyslexia.

What can I do?

Be understanding:

Remember that your child will be working harder than their classmates or siblings because of the processing difficulties associated with short term memory. This means that they may come home exhausted or frustrated and possibly angry with themselves and others.

Be encouraging

You have a tremendous influence on your child's attitude to learning. Remind them that everyone is good at something and even though they find some things difficult, they have other strengths. □

Be supportive

It is important to liaise with school. Share your concerns with the Class Teacher and discuss ways to tackle problem areas together. It is not your child who is a problem, nor is it dyslexia. If your child can learn in the way that suits them, then school work will not be as difficult.

Be patient

Try to avoid failure at home. Allow time to relax – your child will be tired after trying to keep up all day. Give hints and reminders – being tired makes short term memory worse. Try doing homework in

short blocks of 15 - 20 minutes to improve concentration.

Be positive

Encourage and praise your child for all the things they do well. Be calm and encouraging. Give praise or rewards for effort rather than achievement.

Be organised

Establish a routine, with rest periods. You know your child and what suits best. Create a clutter-free homework area at home to help with focus and concentration. Plan for breaks during homework, breaking large tasks down to manageable chunks. Make sure you are familiar with your child's school timetable so you can help with daily organisation. Colour-coding different subjects or a timetable may be useful and help your child to pack the correct coursework, books and equipment each day.

Further advice can be found at www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Strategies for supporting reading, spelling, handwriting, organisation and memory to use at home can be found at:

<http://www.parentchampions.org.uk/resources/top-tips-on-reading-handwriting-spelling-memory-and-organisation/>

For more information

The British Dyslexia Association:

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/parent

The Dyslexia SpLD Trust:

<http://www.parentchampions.org.uk/resources/understanding-dyslexia-booklet/>

