



**We do our best to: Use Our Head, Have a Heart, Give a Hand**

“I came so that they could have life – indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.”

*John 10:10*

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## Dyslexia Policy

At Kingston St. Mary, we are working towards becoming a Dyslexia Friendly school. Being a Dyslexia friendly school not only helps us to meet the needs of dyslexic pupils, but also the needs of pupils who have delayed Literacy skills. Indeed, evidence suggests that all children who are taught using dyslexia friendly methods benefit and that, in essence, more children are able to benefit when dyslexia friendly methods are adopted throughout school.

**WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?** In Somerset, we use the working definition of dyslexia adopted within the Rose Report (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.

We understand that dyslexia falls within the umbrella term of ‘specific learning difficulties’, which also encompasses other learning needs such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), speech and language difficulties, autism spectrum condition (ASC) and dyscalculia. A pupil with dyslexia will have clear strengths and interests which they will be encouraged to develop at Kingston St Mary. We will also support them in overcoming the barriers to their learning.

We recognise that a child’s self-esteem and confidence goes hand in hand with successful learning. We are aware that pupils with dyslexia are likely to experience higher levels of stress than their peers and that this may impact on their learning and emotional wellbeing. Therefore, there is a strong focus on celebrating successes, however small, in all classrooms and we have a designated member of staff who provides additional pastoral support.

Pupils with dyslexia have access to the full, broad and balanced curriculum. Staff are aware of the importance of using multi-sensory strategies to promote learning and pupils access the

curriculum through differentiated tasks, outcomes and resources. All staff are mindful of managing the needs and self-esteem of dyslexic children in their marking and feedback.

We have high expectations of all children and the achievement of pupils is seen as everybody's responsibility. We achieve this through encouraging partnerships with parents and engaging pupils in their own learning. There is an on-going programme of training to update staff's skills and targets aimed at developing expertise in, and understanding of, dyslexia are reflected in the school's SEN development plan.

We aim to ensure a smooth transition for pupils with dyslexia between classes and arrangements are made for pupils with dyslexia taking school tests ('Access Arrangements').

## DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY CLASSROOMS

It is our aim that our school building becomes dyslexia friendly. This includes not just our classrooms, but also our entire school building, including our entrance, library, school hall and corridors.

Our classrooms:

- Are arranged so that during lessons dyslexic children sit in an appropriate place (ie near the teacher and can see the interactive whiteboard clearly)
- Enable all children to have enough room to write comfortably
- Have a visual timetable
- Have clearly labelled resources, which use pictures and symbols as well as words as needed
- Have key words and concepts on display which are referred to during lessons
- Use colour tinted backgrounds on the interactive whiteboards and staff write in dark-coloured sans serif fonts. Blue pens are used to write on the class whiteboard.
- Avoid the need for copying from the board or provide alternatives.
- Use pastel-coloured paper for worksheets, handouts, letters and information (where relevant) with an accessible font and layout (see **Written Materials** below). Coloured paper exercise books available.
- Have a range of manipulatives easily accessible and the children encouraged to use them
- Have a range of dyslexia friendly resources, including coloured overlays, word mats, magnetic letters etc ready at hand in 'dyslexia friendly toolkits.'
- ICT is used to support pupil's learning (laptops, ipads etc.)
- Encourage collaborative learning and peer support.
- Have interactive displays, which may include photographs and pictures, word lists and topic vocabulary.
- Provide planning tools and exemplars.
- Are appropriately lit and well-ventilated to provide a comfortable learning environment.
- Are tidy and well-organised, with distractions minimised.
- Have water readily available throughout the day.

### Written materials

- We use a sans serif font such as Sassoon Primary Infant or Comic Sans, with a minimum font size of 12/14.

- Text is well-spaced with a line between paragraphs or information boxed up to make it easier to read.
- We write headings and important points in bold or highlight them to make them easier to scan.
- We present written information as concisely as possible, using bullet points, images or diagrams when possible.
- We use short, simple sentences using the active rather than passive voice.

### **Classroom Displays:**

- Cream or pastel coloured paper is used to display information
- Care is taken to ensure that displays are not too complicated or busy.
- Text is in lowercase using a sans serif font.
- Matt laminated sheets are used to reduce glare
- Reference is made to display information during class teaching.

## **TEACHING STRATEGIES**

No two dyslexic children are alike and the difficulties they experience will vary greatly. Therefore, our teaching styles must reflect children's differing needs. These can include:

### **Presenting and / or giving instructions:**

- Giving the 'big picture' at the beginning of the lesson.
- Reminding children of existing knowledge and building on what is known.
- Giving clear, step-by-step instructions. As a general rule, give no more than three pieces of information at one time, repeating the instructions as necessary.
- Checking for understanding by asking children to repeat the instructions or explain what has been said.
- Using 'signalling' language can help clarify instructions e.g. "First; secondly, finally".
- Using visual prompts to clarify explanations and giving handouts where necessary
- Having key vocabulary for the lesson available.
- Using the whiteboard as little as possible for copying.
- Allowing more time for tasks such as getting out books, getting started, completing work.
- Reviewing what has been taught, identifying the key points and ideas, making links to other work.

### **General:**

- Using a range of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic /tactile learning approaches in lessons to introduce and consolidate teaching
- Allowing enough time for pupils to process information - whether reading, writing or verbal response task.
- Encouraging various ways of recording information e.g. mind maps, spider diagrams, bullet points, including ICT.
- Giving verbal feedback wherever possible and including symbols alongside or in place of the written word when marking.
- Ensuring teachers' handwriting is legible and worksheets are produced in dyslexia friendly fonts.
- Giving time to organise equipment before lesson and clear away at the end.

### **Writing, including spelling:**

- Teaching a cursive script to help with hand writing and spelling.
- Using multi-sensory methods to reinforce letter writing (e.g. interactive whiteboard/ ipads) and spelling.
- Giving differentiated spelling lists and target-marking.
- Encouraging spelling out loud using letter names (as appropriate) and always allowing time for repetition/over-learning.
- Teaching the spelling of subject specific words. Giving pupils a list of subject specific words for reference.
- Using writing frames to help organise and get thoughts down on paper e.g. Story boards, mind maps, tables, linear plans.
- Not demanding a complete re-write of work and creating a 'checklist' of what to look out for. E.g. spelling errors, commas, full stops, capital letters, and apostrophes.
- Exercising sensitivity in marking of spellings, in particular. Correction of spellings will be focused primarily upon high frequency words.

### **Reading:**

- Providing reading books that are at an age appropriate interest level, whilst being at the correct reading level for the individual child.
- Not asking pupils to read aloud without preparation.
- Explaining the meaning of unfamiliar words, including subject specific words.
- Helping with study skills such as skimming, scanning, selecting key words
- Providing coloured reading rulers for children who find words "move around" and encouraging the use of highlighters to pin point key information in text.

### **Confidence building**

- Nurturing strengths.
- Praising effort.
- Setting achievable targets.
- Encouraging independent learning.
- Not minimising difficulties – recognising, understanding and tackling.
- Having a clear routine and well-organised classroom
- Printing off information for the dyslexic child, rather than expecting them to copy/search for information from the whiteboard.

Reviewed Autumn 2025