

Dyslexia - Information For Parents

NB: Dyslexia is also known as 'Specific Learning Difficulty' – SpLD

What is dyslexia?

- *'Dyslexia is a learning difference which primarily affects reading and writing skills. However, it does not only affect these skills. Dyslexia is actually about information processing. Dyslexic people may have difficulty processing and remembering information they see and hear, which can affect learning and the acquisition of literacy skills. Dyslexia can also impact on other areas such as organisational skills. It is important to remember that there are positives to thinking differently. Many dyslexic people show strengths in areas such as reasoning and in visual and creative fields'. **British Dyslexia Association.***

Can school give a formal diagnosis of dyslexia?

- No- School cannot carry out an assessment to diagnose dyslexia, as this can only be done by a specialist teacher, with additional, specific training (Level 7 OCR qualification). An Educational Psychologist is also qualified to assess a child for dyslexia, however we seldom use the Educational Psychologist's time in school for this purpose. Any online test claiming to be able to give a definitive diagnosis is incorrect, online screeners are **indicators only**.

Can school carry out a screen for dyslexia?

- Yes - In school we use various assessment tools such as DEST/COPs/Nessy Dyslexia Quest, to provide an assessment which will **indicate** if the child has areas of weakness which are common to dyslexia. The assessment includes phonological awareness, verbal memory, verbal processing speed, visual sequential memory etc. The assessments may also indicate particular areas of strength, which can then be helpful as a strategy for learning.

What should I do if I have concerns about my child's learning/literacy skills?

- If you have any concerns about your child's learning, please meet with the class teacher to discuss this further.
- You can also make an appointment to meet with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator – SENDCO, (Vanessa Barrett). You may wish to do this during the SENDCO Surgery appointments which run twice a term (please see the school newsletter for details).
- If a teacher has concerns about your child's learning, they will discuss this with you and liaise with the SENDCO, to arrange for further assessment.

What happens after the school screening assessment?

- The class teacher will share the results of the assessment with you and provide you with a copy of the assessment/report. The class teacher will discuss the intervention and strategies that will be put into place to support your child's learning.
- We use several literacy interventions in school, The Five Minute Box, Nessy Reading and Spelling, SIDNEY, Phonographix, paired reading and precision teaching. We also support with daily 1:1 reading and key words, alongside small literacy groups

How will I know if my child is making progress?

- The class teacher will meet with you through the parents evening process, to keep you informed of progress.
- You can also make an appointment to meet individually with the class teacher or with the SENDCO.

Who can I contact for information on dyslexia and obtaining a formal diagnosis?

- If you would like further information regarding dyslexia, obtaining a formal diagnosis or specialist tutoring, please see the organisations below:
- British Dyslexia Organisation <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
- Dyslexia Research Trust, Reading, Berkshire <https://www.dyslexic.org.uk/>
- Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre, Farnham, Surrey <https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/>
- Nessy Reading, Writing and Spelling <https://www.nessy.com/uk/>
- Patoss (Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties) <https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/>
- Hampshire Dyslexia Association <https://www.hantsda.org.uk/>
- The Dyslexia SpLd Trust <http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/>

Does my child need coloured overlays or special glasses for reading and writing?

- "Visual Stress" is where processing of text is atypical. This can lead to reading difficulties, headaches and other visual problems when reading text.
- Visual stress is not the same as dyslexia, although the two conditions can commonly occur together.
- Words on the page wobble, move, are ghosted, blurred, overlap or have a 3D appearance.
- They can see shapes appearing on the page.
- They find the white of the page very bright.
- Their eyes jump between lines, difficulty tracking along the page.
- Private tests are offered by some optometrists or opticians to help find out which colour filter will be most effective. **Leightons Opticians, Camberley Branch** offers this service. <https://www.leightons.co.uk/eye-care/colorimetry-visual-stress>
- Crossbow Education - further information <https://www.crossboweducation.com/about-us>

Will my child get extra time or support in school assessments?

- Occasionally children require extra time or specific support in school assessments, such as SATS in key stage 2. This would only be considered if the child routinely received such support during daily lessons in school.
- In such a case, the head teacher, class teacher and SENDCO would also be involved in making this decision.

Tips to support your child with home learning

- Help your child to organise their resources, help them to plan and talk through the task first.
- Allow additional 'thinking' time.
- Break information up into smaller 'chunks'.
- Your child may have to work harder and struggle to remember facts or instructions.
- Ask the class teacher for a **Paired Reading** leaflet, to support reading at home.
- Read regularly with your child and to your child. Listen to audio books together in the car.
- Read rhymes and listen to/sing rhyming songs together.
- Use coloured overlays/coloured paper if your child finds this more comfortable than black print on white background.
- Use a sans serif font on all printed materials, such as Verdana, Arial or Calibri and make sure the font is at least 12 point or above.
- Provide highlighters so learners can track text that has been read, or highlight important pieces of information.
- Use multisensory ways of learning (e.g. games/plastic letters to spell words/different coloured pens/saying letter sounds when writing/tracing letters in sand/paint).
- Try to make homework tasks fun, or turn them into a game (e.g. put spelling words on post –its round the room and find them).
- Try to avoid negative battles over homework if your child is tired or agitated. Talk to the class teacher if homework is becoming a problem.

Good Apps to support home learning

- Squeebles Apps (spelling/times tables) – create your own spelling list, record your voice, hear it played back, earn rewards.
- Nessy Apps (8 Apps including Hairy Letters, Hairy Phonics) - great for phonics.
- Handwriting/letter formation Apps such as; Little Writer and Writing Wizard.
- Dyslexia friendly reading books- Barrington Stoke <https://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/>