

What is Dyslexia

- Dyslexia is a learning **difference**, a combination of **strengths and weaknesses** which affects the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy.
- Dyslexic learners are often very creative; they are good at problem solving and 'thinking out of the box'.
- Dyslexic learners may also have accompanying weaknesses in short term memory, sequencing and the speed in which they process information. These are skills that everyone needs if they are to learn effectively in the classroom. They are also key skills for life.
- Dyslexia doesn't mean that the child is unintelligent or lazy.
- Many dyslexics are high achievers - Einstein, Richard Branson, Picasso, Edison, Bill Gates, Keira Knightly, Steven Spielberg to name but a few.
- 10% of the population are likely to be on the dyslexic spectrum.
- Dyslexia often runs in families

What we do if we think your child is Dyslexic ...

- Mrs Dickens, SENDCo, can screen, analyse and organise the best provision for any pupil who has this learning difference.
- Children whom we consider to be a risk of dyslexia will initially be screened at the end of Year 2 (or whenever necessary). Reasons for being considered at risk could be because a pupil has not made **expected progress** in Literacy; there is a **family history**; their teachers have noticed characteristics of dyslexia; **parental request**.
- The screening test we use may indicate that your child is **at risk** of being on the **dyslexic spectrum**. This does not mean that there is something 'wrong' with your child but that they have **specific differences in the way they learn**. It is not a question of having or not having dyslexia but being somewhere on a dyslexia continuum, in other words it could be quite a mild difficulty, or it could be more complex. Neither is there a 'cure'. In dyslexia friendly schools the focus has changed from establishing what is wrong with children in order to make them 'better', to identifying what is right in the classroom in order to *enhance the effectiveness of learning*. What we as teachers and parents need to do is to analyse the type of need within the dyslexia spectrum and to **provide the best possible learning environment** for the child to overcome the difficulties they may be experiencing.

- Following the screening, Mrs Dickens will analyse the results and any specific areas of weakness will be identified. She will contact the parents/carers and teachers outlining the strategies required to support the individual.
- Dyslexic children are taught strategies to help them address their individual learning differences and to **become independent**.
- Being an **Inclusive Dyslexia Friendly School**, the whole-school environment and teaching strategies support all dyslexics, however, class teachers will also follow the recommendations of the SENDCo about an individual child.

Through their school career a dyslexic child may ...

- Appear bright and able, but unable to put their ideas down on paper
- Show a discrepancy between receptive and expressive language
- Have areas in which they excel, particularly in drama, art and debating □ Be clumsy
- Act as the 'class clown' to mask what they see as their academic failure
- Become withdrawn and isolated, sitting at the back and not participating
- Be able to do one thing at a time very well but can't remember an entire list
- Demonstrate short term memory limitations, for instance finding it hard to remember arithmetic tables, the alphabet or classroom instructions
- Looked 'glazed' when language is spoken too quickly
- Go home exhausted at the end of a normal day because they have had to put so much effort into learning
- Have a poor sense of direction and confuse left and right □ Show difficulty tying shoe laces and dressing.
- Hesitant or laboured reading
- Omit lines or repetition of the same line - loss of place in text □ Muddling words that look alike, e.g. 'no' and 'on' □ Have difficulties in saying multi-syllabic words.
- Have problems understanding difficulties
- Confusion b, d, p
- Messy work, for example, curled pages, crossings out and badly set out
- Handwriting that looks heavy and laborious
- The same words spelt differently in the same piece of work
- Confusion between upper and lower case letters
- Find difficulty with the concept of letter name and sound

How can you help?

- Ensure your child has an up to date eye and ear test.
- Share your concerns with the class teacher and support staff.
- Be patient and supportive when helping with homework. If your child has difficulties with homework explain to the class teacher.
- Be positive and encouraging about their efforts.
- Don't overload them
- Don't ignore signs that they have had enough.
- Don't expect immediate answers, give thinking time.
- Establish a 'can do' culture; don't be afraid to use 'tough love', setting small targets may help.
- Give one instruction at a time and be prepared to talk through it or repeat it.
- Give them time to adjust to new routines.
- Support self-organisation; use checklists of things they need to remember every day (these could be in a photographic/ visual format).
- Use coloured overlays / rulers.
- Use buff paper instead of white.
- Use visual thinking strategies.
- Give guidance about how to tackle tasks systematically. Dyslexic children often need to be taught many things that other children pick up without specific adult help. This might include: how to tidy a drawer; put their toys away; get dressed; look for something they have lost; pack their school bag; tie a tie or shoelace. Adults need to recognise the importance of taking time to teach these skills in a systematic and repeated regular routine.

Where can you find more information and support?

- <http://www.beingdyslexic.co.uk/>
- <http://www.cornwalldyslexia.org.uk/>
- <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/>
- <http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/>
- <http://www.parentchampions.org.uk/>
- <http://www.parentchampions.org.uk/resources/understanding-dyslexia-booklet/>