

DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

At St. Nicholas, we are proud to be 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 are able to benefit and that, in essence, more children are able to benefit when dyslexia friendly methods are adopted throughout school.

We also recognise that a child's self-esteem and confidence goes hand in hand with successful learning. Therefore, our children are made aware of dyslexia and positive role models are discussed and displayed around school.

WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

In Staffordshire, we all use the British Psychological Societies definition:

'Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities.'

Children with dyslexia may not only experience problems with reading and spelling, but they may also experience other 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

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:

- ✓ Exploring a wide range of recording styles for children
- ✓ Use of ICT to aid recording, such as talking tins, talking postcards, alphasmarts
- ✓ Use of ICT to help develop phonic and reading knowledge, such as e-books and specific dyslexia centred software
- ✓ Use of pictorial cues
- ✓ Use of visual timetables
- ✓ The use of our marking policy which includes symbols alongside/in place of the written word

In order to increase the confidence and enjoyment of learning for a dyslexic child, we employ a whole range of methods. Some of these methods include:

- Use of reading books that are at an age appropriate interest level, whilst being at the correct reading level for the individual child.
- Organising reading buddies
- Printing off information for the dyslexic child, rather than expect them to copy/search for information from the whiteboard
- Use of precision teaching to help improve sound and word recognition
- Use of speed reading techniques to improve reading fluency and word recognition

All children (and adults) will have preferred learning styles i.e. ways of learning that they rely more strongly on. Learning styles are divided into:

Auditory ... *where the learner relies more heavily on what they hear.*

Visual ... *where the learner relies more heavily on what they see.*

Kinaesthetic ... *where the learner relies more heavily on they do practically.*

Further information on the different learning styles can be obtained from school.

In school, we use a learning style questionnaire with pupils so that they are aware of how they learn best. This can help us find the best way to teach a dyslexic child. At St. Nicholas we support children to develop their less dominant learning styles also and teach strategies to increase learning capacity in these.

DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY CLASSROOMS

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

At St. Nicholas we adopt many of the principals set out by Staffordshire, for achieving a dyslexia friendly classroom. Our classrooms:

- Are arranged so that during lessons dyslexic children sit in an appropriate place
- Have clearly labelled resources, which use pictures and symbols as well as words
- Have water readily available throughout the day
- Use colour tinted backgrounds on the interactive whiteboards
- Use coloured paper for worksheets, letters and information
- Have a range of dyslexia friendly resources ready at hand in 'dyslexia friendly toolkits'
- Have interactive displays, which can include talking postcards, word lists and topic vocabulary, photographs and pictures
- Are appropriately lit and well-ventilated to provide a comfortable learning environment
- Use writing shapes and coloured overlays
- Are tidy and well-organised
- Have easily accessed ACE dictionaries and ICT (talking tins, laptops and spell checkers etc.)

IDENTIFICATION OF DYSLEXIC TENDENCIES

All teachers are responsible for identifying dyslexic tendencies. Teachers and Teaching Assistants have been trained using the Inclusion development Programme (IDP). At St. Nicholas we also employ a wide range of assessment methods, and have a number of pupil tracking and monitoring procedures in place.

If a teacher is concerned they can:

- Refer to the SENSS booklet 'Achieving a Dyslexia friendly Classroom'
- Complete the IDP dyslexia checklist
- Consult with parents
- Speak with the Senco

In some cases, where the parents, class teacher and Senco feel it is appropriate, the Senco can arrange for SENSS to carry out further assessments with the child. This may result in further suggestions of how to target the child's individual needs which will be included on the child's 'Individual Education Plan'.

ASSESSMENT

Teachers and staff are mindful of managing the needs and self-esteem of Dyslexic children in their marking and feedback.

Where a child has known difficulties or Dyslexic tendencies, then teachers will exercise sensitivity in their marking of spellings particularly. Correction of spellings will be focussed upon high frequency words primarily.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Of course, parental support is key to helping a child overcome any dyslexic barriers. Parents are given strategies to help their child at home, and parents are always welcome in school to discuss any concerns they may have. At St. Nicholas we have also held coffee mornings and drop-in sessions to give parents an opportunity to find out more about dyslexia and ways in which they can help their child.

The Parent Partnership also offers an excellent support service to parents. Parent Partnership produce a variety of information on Dyslexia and also the SEN procedures in school. This information is free to parents, and is readily accessible in the school foyer opposite the office.

LEADERSHIP

The school lead for Dyslexia is the Senco, Mrs. Evans, and she is in school Monday-Wednesday to address any questions or concerns parents may have.

Dyslexia Friendly teaching is a termly staff meeting agenda item and the Senco reports to SLT termly. The Headteacher provides termly updates regarding the school's SEN offer and Dyslexia provision as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors. The school SEN Governor who is Mrs. Richards, is responsible for overseeing the strategic development of SEN and Dyslexia Friendly and works in close partnership with the Senco and SLT.

As and when other school leaders review their policies, it is expected that the commitment to, and arrangements for, Dyslexia Friendly approaches is included in any reviews.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The first step for any parent who has a complaint is to come into school and speak with us. Often simple misunderstandings can be easily sorted.

Initially, parents should ask to speak with the class teacher who will usually be able to rectify the problem. It may be that, following an initial meeting, the Senco may become involved. If parents are still unhappy they can speak with the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher. The next step would then be to inform the Governors and The Local Education Authority, for which a further policy is available.

Policy review date: July 2016

Presented and agreed by governors: