

Halstead CP School

Dyslexia Policy



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1. Introduction

This document was produced to support the Special Educational Needs Policy.

2. Definition of Dyslexia

Halstead Community Primary School recognises the following definitions of Dyslexia:

‘Dyslexia is evident when accurate or fluent word 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. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.’

British Psychological Report (BPS, 1999)

Consistent with the recommendations from Rose (2009), Kent’s policy is that persistent difficulties with reading and spelling are best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category.

Identifying dyslexia does not rely on identifying a particular profile of cognitive skills. Indicators that a child is at risk of finding reading and spelling particularly difficult could include:

- difficulty in processing the sounds in speech
- difficulty in linking sounds to written letters
- difficulty in short term or working memory
- difficulty in processing information about letters and sounds quickly

Failure to grasp these underlying ‘phonological processing’ skills is almost universally agreed as being the underlying difficulty for children who find learning to read and spell particularly hard. Some children may also have additional difficulty with visual memory, visual discrimination or sequencing and with fine motor skills.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) emphasises expectations for identifying SEN in schools and the assessment of children’s progress (Sections 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, and 6.19).

Kent recognises well established research evidence which demonstrates that dyslexia can occur in children of all abilities (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling & Scanlon, 2004). The identification of dyslexia does not rely on identifying a discrepancy between a child’s overall cognitive (reasoning and problem solving) skills and his or her levels of attainment in English.

Dyslexia is referred to in the SEND Code of Practice as a specific learning difficulty. Section 6.31 (p98) of the Code notes that;

“Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.”

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It is important to note that a specific learning difficulty (that might be seen in attainment scores depressed in one area but not others) is not in conflict with the fact that the discrepancy model of identifying dyslexia has been discredited. For example a child may have a relatively good level of mathematical attainment but find reading and spelling very difficult and have low attainments in comparison to their peers in this area. This does not equate to saying that a child's underlying ability is high and that therefore their low reading score is a sign of dyslexia – which would be a fallacious argument.

'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 may also have accompanying weaknesses in short-term memory, sequencing and the speed at which they process information.'

The British Dyslexia Association 2006

Combining these two definitions focuses on pupils' word level skills but accepts that other difficulties may occur, in conjunction with, or as a consequence of, dyslexic difficulties. This policy recognises that research evidence continues to present fresh or conflicting ideas in relation to English difficulties and dyslexia; it has attempted to reflect the most recent evidence.

Halstead Community Primary School recognises the need for culture-fair identification of dyslexic-type difficulties, which takes into account, language, culture, socio economic status, race and gender.

The Inclusion Manager and class teachers may be of the opinion that a child has specific difficulty or be displaying dyslexic tendencies, but will not be able to give a diagnosis.

3. Aims

Halstead Community Primary School aims to:

3.1. view dyslexia as a 'specific learning difference', which incorporates a range of strengths and weaknesses, as well as different learning styles and preferences

3.2. recognise that learning problems will arise if dyslexia is not recognised and teaching is not appropriate

3.3. meet the diversity of the needs of dyslexic pupils through appropriate provision within a mainstream setting; dyslexic pupils spend the majority of their time in the classroom and are the responsibility of all teachers and Teaching Assistants; individual differences in learning style will be noticed and teaching adjusted accordingly

3.4. provide high quality support for dyslexic pupils by:

- raising awareness and understanding of dyslexia within school;
- establishing clear assessment and intervention procedures which enable early intervention and ongoing monitoring;
- providing a needs-based combination of teaching adjustments, in-class support and withdrawal programmes
- ensuring that parental concerns are acknowledged and addressed; and
- increasing training opportunities for teaching and non-teaching staff

4. Practice

4.1 Promoting parent partnership

- 4.1.1 Parents' concerns regarding their child's progress will be acknowledged and investigated; appropriate evidence will be collected to inform subsequent discussion, and further assessment may be carried out within school
- 4.1.2 Parents will be invited to regular reviews of progress in relation to their child's provision mapping when learning programmes will be discussed
- 4.1.3 Parents will be supported and advised on the nature of their child's difficulties, and may be directed to appropriate voluntary organisations or external agencies
- 4.1.4 Staff will respond positively to any distress or anxiety that parents may have
- 4.1.5 If there is disagreement between the school and parents on the level of concern, the student will be monitored over an agreed period of time and another meeting convened
- 4.1.6 The first point of contact within the school is the class teacher

4.2 Noticing diversity and early intervention

Teachers and Teaching Assistants will be encouraged to notice learning differences and to adjust their teaching and support accordingly.

4.3 Identifying barriers to learning

4.3.1 When considering dyslexia there may be show evidence that:

- fluent and accurate word reading and/or spelling has been learnt incompletely
- difficulties are persistent and progress (often minimal in relation to level of intervention) has been made only as a result of much support that is additional and different

4.3.2 It is recognised that pupils of all abilities may experience learning difficulties of a dyslexic nature; however, in some cases a pupil's cognitive skills will exceed English skills; placement of pupils in low ability groups will not be decided on the basis of their English skills only; teachers will ensure that curriculum content is appropriate to the pupil's level of understanding and interest.

4.3.3 It is accepted that phonological skills have a central role in the development of reading and spelling; research evidence suggests that approximately 80% of dyslexic pupils have

problems with phonological processing; however, phonological difficulties will not be used as the defining feature of dyslexia as some dyslexic pupils have secure phonological skills.

4.3.4 Screening and assessment of word level skills will be central to an assessment of dyslexic difficulties; however, other skills often associated with dyslexia that can affect learning outcomes will be investigated; these will include organisational ability, motor difficulties, sequencing, retention and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

4.4 Pupils with EAL and pupils from ethnic and cultural minorities

In relation to pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), teachers will ensure vigilance in identifying learning difficulties and responding to them; interpretation of data will take full account of learning opportunities that have been available.

4.5 Adjusting teaching

4.5.1 The school regards dyslexia as primarily a mainstream issue; teaching will need to be adjusted throughout a pupil's school career and needs may change as a pupil matures

4.5.2 Pupils with dyslexic difficulties will be provided with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which is differentiated by presentation, pace, level and outcome to meet individual needs; this will include differentiated materials and tasks to suit their learning profile

4.5.3 The class teacher's responsibility will focus mainly on facilitating access to the curriculum, with advice from the Inclusion Manager, who will have overall responsibility for ensuring that pupils are provided with structured, systematic teaching as appropriate to help develop their reading, writing and spelling skills

4.5.4 Some pupils with dyslexic difficulties will require special arrangements for QCA Statutory Assessment at the end of Key Stage 2

4.5.5 It is recognised that good progress in English skills is often linked to structured, systematic teaching programmes that occur regularly and frequently, and often involve a multi-sensory approach; these may be delivered individually or within small groups; the Inclusion Manager will ensure that there is an appropriate balance between a student's need to pursue such an individualised withdrawal programme with their entitlement to access a broad and relevant curriculum

4.6 Provision and resources (See Appendices 1 and 2)

4.6.1 Halstead Community Primary School recognises that there is a continuum of learning difficulty. This will be met by a corresponding continuum of resources. Pupils on the SEN/Additional Support register will be supported through a needs led combination of differentiated resources and tasks within lessons, additional support from TAs, and possibly a withdrawal programme.

4.6.2 A range of intervention programmes will be delivered, including published material; intervention programmes will be used selectively and appropriately; they will be monitored and evaluated, and teaching adjusted as necessary to meet the continuing needs of the pupil.

4.6.3 The school will draw upon advice (as necessary) from the range of support services available within Kent, such as Dyslexia drop-in sessions, LIFT and specialist teachers

5. Monitoring

4.8.1 Monitoring procedures for pupils with dyslexic difficulties will occur at three levels, as with all students with special educational needs:

- monitoring students' progress
- monitoring the effectiveness of interventions
- monitoring curriculum access and the effectiveness of whole school approaches

4.8.2 All pupils with SEN or requiring Additional Support (including pupils with dyslexic difficulties) are monitored through regular reviews of their targets, following guidelines laid down by the Code of Practice; these procedures will contribute towards planning and implementing support programmes.

6. Abbreviations

BPS	British Psychological Society
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
EP	Educational Psychologist
LEA	Local Education Authority
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SEN	Special Educational Needs
EAL	English as an Additional Language
TA	Teaching Assistant

7. Appendix

7.1 Appendix 1: Stages of Intervention

- Class teacher and/or parent/carer raises initial concern with regard to significant difficulties with reading, writing, spelling.
- Inclusion Manager collects data: Curriculum levels (current and previous to track progress), reading level, Phonics assessment, Speech Link Assessment, Language Link Assessment, Language for Learning screener, any other relevant assessments, samples of work.
- Inclusion Manager checks what interventions are in place already, if any, over and above quality first teaching, on class Provision Map, and tracks progress as result of interventions.
- Possibly during a Pupil Progress Meeting, Inclusion Manager discusses overall assessment of child with class teacher and recommends interventions for a period of no more than 12 weeks.
- Class teacher assesses whether progress is taking place as a result of interventions and informs Inclusion Manager. If necessary the type and or frequency of intervention is adjusted and worked through, again over a period of up to 12 weeks.
- If there is still no significant progress 1:1 teaching will take place using the Fresh Start programme.
- Reading using the Magic Belt, Totem and Talisman series of books may be done alongside.
- If, despite this high level of intervention, there is no significant progress, advice will be sought from The Local Inclusion Forum Team to seek advice on further support. This may involve the involvement of the Specialist Teaching Service. Parents/Carers permission will be acquired.
- If, despite all of the above, there is no significant improvement, it will be necessary to seek assessment from a professional who is qualified in administering dyslexia assessment.
- If the child is assessed as being dyslexic, appropriate teaching and interventions will continue, to support the child.
- Parents/carers will be kept fully informed throughout the process, via the class teacher and Inclusion Manager as to progress and as to how they can support their child at home.

7.2 Appendix 2: Dyslexia Strategies across the School

The following strategies have been agreed by each class to support children with dyslexia.

Buds

- Parent questionnaire to ascertain family history of dyslexia and attitude towards reading and books
- Regular phonics lessons
- Sound games

Saplings

- Visual prompts
- Word mats
- Focus on rhyming and word game activities at the start of English lessons
- Restrict the number of 'guesses' that children make
- Use reading books linked to phonics
- Use Alphabetic code resources to support spelling

Oak

- Develop typing skills
- Use ICT for recording
- Use Alphabetic code resources to support spelling
- Use Dragon Dictate

Willow

- Develop typing skills
- Use ICT for recording
- Use Alphabetic code resources to support spelling
- Use Dragon Dictate
- Use high interest/low reading age books when appropriate

Across the school

- Resources readily available
- LO shared
- Task boards
- Colourful Semantics
- Variety of spelling strategies adopted such as visualising using picture and mnemonics