



# Dyslexia Friendly Policy

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

*This policy has been written and reviewed with due regard to the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that no member of our school community suffers discrimination or disadvantage regardless of age, race, gender reassignment, disability, civil partnership, religion and belief (or lack of belief), pregnancy and maternity, gender or sexual orientation.*

## **DEVON INCLUSION AWARD-DYSLEXIA**

Our Lady's Catholic School (OLCS) worked towards this dyslexia award over a period of three years to thoroughly embed dyslexia friendly practices across the school. OLCS were accredited with the award at the 'Enhanced Level' in July 2019. This policy sets out the processes and practices in place, in order to maintain the award and high standards developed.

*"If they don't learn the way we teach them, we must teach in the way that they learn"*

Staff at OLCS understand that all pupils are unique and learn in different ways. We utilise dyslexia friendly techniques which emphasise

*"...inclusive mainstream strategies which are designed to empower all learners to be the best that they can be." Mackay, N. (2006)*

## **What is Dyslexia?**

Devon use the British Psychology Society (1999) definition:

*"Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent work 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."*

Dyslexia can also cause unexpected and persistent difficulties in numeracy skills, phonological awareness, auditory memory, word and information retrieval, sequencing and rote learning. There may be accompanying weaknesses in the skills that support personal organisation, for example, the speed of processing, short term memory and difficulties with spatial awareness and direction including telling the time.

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) estimates that 10% of the population are dyslexic (4% severely dyslexic). It is likely that pupils with dyslexia may also have one or more of the co-occurring conditions such as Dyspraxia, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), Developmental Coordination Disorder, ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder).

It is important to remember that pupils with dyslexia often have many strengths which include: an ability to see 'the bigger picture', enhanced creativity, an aptitude for constructional and technical toys.

We recognise that there is no specific formula for any individual to become a more effective learner. The key is to provide a multi-sensory approach which accommodates all learning styles to allow all pupils, including those with dyslexia, to benefit and be successful in the classroom.

**Teaching Strategies:**

1. We offer a variety of ways to record information: mind maps, Talking Postcards, pictures, photographs and ICT for example speech to text and apps such as book creator
2. Instructions are broken down into smaller steps (using visual prompts where appropriate) to make them more memorable and repeated when necessary.
3. Thinking Time is given for pupils to ask questions.
4. Self assessment is used to allow pupils to express their understanding and request for help.
5. Success Criteria are used as a check list for achievement and the 'learning pit' is highlighted as the key point of learning so children are aware that 'being stuck' is not a personal failing but an opportunity for the development of skills and understanding.
6. Pupils are allowed to drink water during lesson time (the brain is more effective when hydrated).
7. Brain/activity breaks are built into lessons as appropriate.
8. Pupils have access to physical resources and equipment which support the learning process. Resources are clearly labelled in a dyslexia friendly format.
9. Lessons are carefully planned and differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils.
10. Learning objectives and mini-plenaries are referred to and used throughout the lesson with visuals from whole class learning kept visible throughout the lesson.
11. Talk partners are used to support learning and ensure active participation of all learners.
12. The learning environment encourages, praises and builds on strengths.
13. All children have the opportunity for their work to be displayed, celebrating their individual strengths.
14. Copying from the board will be avoided; copies of text and pre-printed learning objectives will be provided.
15. Sentence starters and writing frames will be provided to help children structure their work.

**Intervention which supports dyslexic learners and specific learning differences, and offers highly personalised support are offered in the classroom and in break out rooms;**

1. Precision teaching (daily 'over learning' of identified facts).
2. Individually tailored resources/programmes for reading and spelling.
3. Additional phonics practice.
4. Reading recovery and reading booster programme
5. Specific, tailored literacy interventions such as SIDNEY and FFT.
6. Talking Partners.
7. Multi-sensory spelling.
8. Support for pupils to develop gross and fine motor skills (Fun fit, High Five)
9. Support for pupils to develop handwriting skills
10. Touch typing intervention
11. Numicon and counting to calculate mathematics support.
12. Maths/number booster sessions.
13. Use of a range of ICT programmes including Nessy, Phonics Play.
14. Access to nurture group/Thrive support
15. Access to a range of support from: Babcock's SEN support service; the speech and language team, the communication and interaction team; the school educational psychologist; Devon information and advice service for parents; the occupational therapy and physiotherapy teams and the PDSS (physical disability support service).

### **Identification and Assessment**

Concerns over a child having dyslexic tendencies can come from a variety of sources:

- Parents/carers
- Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants
- Outside Agencies ( Eg: Educational Psychologists, Medical professionals, Speech and Language Therapists)
- Previous schools / nurseries

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we take all concerns seriously and apply the following procedures:

1. Inform SENCO.
2. Ask parents for their views.
3. Class Teacher has a structured discussion with SENCO to identify the nature and extent of literacy difficulties.
4. A Nessy dyslexia screening is carried out.

5. If the results of the discussion and/or Nessy screening indicate mild difficulties, the Class Teacher will continue with dyslexia friendly teaching strategies and employ extra strategies such as sending key words home to learn, having spelling prompts available, providing extra reading and phonics practice. Progress will be closely monitored.

6. If the teacher-SENCO discussion and screening indicates moderate or severe difficulties, the SENCO will carry out a more detailed dyslexia assessment (as recommended by the Devon dyslexia specialist advisory teachers) to identify the specific areas of challenge. Parents' involvement is then sought in developing a 'My Plan', setting clear targets for progress and outlining specific support strategies.

7. The My Plan will be reviewed termly and if progress is not being made or concerns deepen, parental permission will be sought to refer the child to the county specialist dyslexia teacher or school educational psychologist (as appropriate). Further in-depth assessment will take place and advice sought from the specialist professionals used to inform the My Plan targets and reviews.

### **Dyslexia Friendly Classroom.**

To make all classrooms Dyslexia Friendly, these are some of the strategies we have adopted:

1. Staff have received training and on-going support around how to make their classrooms dyslexia friendly.
2. Information about pupils / strategies for dyslexic pupils is kept on 'pupil profile' sheets which are available in the pupil's classrooms. These are made available to TAs and supply staff and used to support transition between year groups.
3. All classrooms have access to the following resources: reading rulers, pencil grips, magnetic alphabet and magnetic board, reading overlays, choice of writing implements, desk prompts (for numeracy and literacy), Trugs, Nessy.
4. Resources are clearly labelled in dyslexic friendly font and supported by a picture.
5. A visual timetable will be on display.
6. Prompts and key words will be on display in dyslexic friendly font. (see display policy)
7. Cream coloured paper will be used if appropriate.
8. Dyslexia friendly font will be used (Comic Sans).
9. Practical maths equipment is readily available.
10. Cursive handwriting is encouraged where appropriate.
11. Lighting will be appropriate.
12. IWB text will be in comic sans font, non-black but dark print on a pale but non-white background.
13. Flip chart pens will be dark colours but not black. Text will be separated by swapping the colour of pen.
14. Classrooms, toilets, coat hooks and offices are labelled in dyslexia friendly ways, with photographs/pictures to support the written information.
15. Numbers will be used rather than bullet points on flipcharts/IWB

### **Partnership with Parents**

As the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of Special Educational Needs clearly states:

*"Professional help can seldom be wholly effective unless it builds upon parents' capacity to be involved"*

We strongly believe that maximum participation by parents / carers is essential in engendering positive attitudes in dyslexic learners. We will help to allay parents' fears by firstly understanding their concerns and clearly sharing strategies to help.

(\*no longer available) Leaflets for parents on dyslexia and how to support a child with literacy problems are available in the school entrance.

The SENCO is available to meet promptly with parents to discuss concerns and this is specified in the school newsletter and reinforced through teacher communication.

### **Complaints Procedure**

If you have a complaint please come and see us! We will always listen and deal with it quickly. When parents are unhappy about any aspect of school life or the curriculum, they should come and speak to the Class Teachers first. This usually resolves the problem, but if parents are still dissatisfied, they can speak to the Principal or SENCO. Further steps would be to inform the Governors and the Local Education Authority, for which a detailed policy is available.

Under the Equality Act 2010, due regard has been given to equality considerations when reviewing this policy in accordance with the requirements of The Single Equality Act 2010. The governing body reviews this policy every two years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.