



Waterhouses CE (VC)
Primary School

Dyslexia Friendly Policy

Committee	Curriculum and Attainment
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'Celebrate learning, Achieving and Friendship in God's Love'

Core Christian Values: Love, Trust, Hope, Respect

Introduction

Here are the procedures we have adopted to support the Dyslexia Friendly Initiative. We recognise that more children are successful when taught using dyslexia friendly teaching methods, and while dyslexia friendly techniques can be applied to children who are not dyslexic, this does not work the other way around. We fully subscribe to the guiding philosophy of the Dyslexia Institute who state that:

*'If a pupil can't learn the way we teach,
then we must teach in the way that they can learn..'*

What is Dyslexia?

There are many definitions of dyslexia. In Staffordshire we use the definition developed by the British Psychology society (1999)

'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, retrieving words and information and sequencing or rote learning. There may be accompanying weaknesses in the skills that support personal organisation, for example, speed of processing, short term memory sequences and difficulties with spatial awareness and direction- right and left.

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) estimates that 10% of the population are dyslexic - 6% demonstrating mild dyslexic tendencies but 4% of these are severely dyslexic.

As no two dyslexic children will have the same profile of difficulties it is important to assess each child to truly understand how they learn. And of course each dyslexic pupil will have a range of unique strengths that can be built on. Many pupils with dyslexia have strengths in verbal skills and artistic abilities. Here at Waterhouses we are able to establish a child's individual strengths and weaknesses and tailor a specific teaching programme to address his or her needs.

We recognise that there is no special formula for any individual to become a more effective learner. The key is to find the way that an individual learns best and then to adapt the classroom organisation and teaching style to accommodate more effective learning. Any two dyslexic learners will have a different pattern of strengths and weaknesses in learning style - even for different tasks. This is why a multi-sensory approach is advocated so that each learner can find the best way to aid his or her learning. This ensures that each of the senses is used- the visual channel for looking, the auditory channel for hearing, the kinaesthetic for touch and the oral channel for speaking.

Teaching Strategies

At Waterhouses we employ a host of teaching strategies for dyslexic children. These include:

- ☑ Offering a variety of ways to record information: mind maps, sound buttons, pictures, photographs, writing frames, ICT
- ☑ Instructions broken down into small steps using visual prompts if possible to make them more memorable and repeated when necessary.
- ☑ Time allowed for children to ask questions.
- ☑ Brain breaks which are built into the lesson.
- ☑ Access to all resources and equipment which is well organised and child friendly
- ☑ Multi-sensory teaching techniques.
- ☑ Lessons are carefully planned and differentiated to meet pupils' needs.
- ☑ Learning objectives repeated throughout the lesson.
- ☑ The use of learning buddies and talk partners to support all children to be active participants in learning.
- ☑ A positive learning environment that encourages, praises and builds on strengths.

Additionally, we employ the following dyslexia friendly methods to help dyslexic children with reading and writing:

- ❖ Precision Teaching to help build a memory bank of high frequency words to improve reading and spelling fluency.
- ❖ Extra phonics practice.
- ❖ Teach correct letter formation and cursive handwriting to help combat letter reversals.
- ❖ Use pictures, symbols and actions where possible.
- ❖ A structured multi-sensory approach to reading using frequent repetition and daily reading practice.
- ❖ A structured multi-sensory approach to spelling eg use of sand tray to spell words in, magnetic letters, calligrams, mnemonics.
- ❖ Use of specific teaching programmes eg *Beat Dyslexia*, *Write From the Start* handwriting programme and *ALK Active Literacy Kit*
- ❖ Use of specific ICT programmes such as *Wordshark*, *Numbershark*, *Phonicsplay* and *Nessy*.

Identification and Assessment

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

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

At Waterhouses we take all concerns seriously and apply the following procedures:

- Inform SENCO
- Ask parents for their views.
- Class Teacher to complete a Dyslexia Friendly Checklist by highlighting and rating areas of difficulty
- If the results of the checklist 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 on a key ring, providing extra reading and phonics practice. Progress will be closely monitored.
- If the checklist indicates moderate or severe difficulties, parents' permission is sought to implement a School Action IEP to set clear targets for progress.
- The IEP will be reviewed regularly and if progress is not being made or concerns deepen, parental permission will be sought to refer the child to a Specialist Dyslexia Teacher from the SENSS through the SENCO. Further in depth assessment will take place and advice sought from the Specialist Teacher.
- In severe cases, a referral to the Dyslexia Centre in Leek may be applied for.

Dyslexia Friendly Classroom

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

- ✚ All classrooms have a copy of '*Achieving a Dyslexia friendly Classroom*' to refer to.
- ✚ All classrooms have a class file which advises on strategies for individual pupils with additional needs in the class.
- ✚ Each classroom has a 'Dyslexia Friendly' box for children to access for support materials such as pencil grips, alphabet strips, phonics place mats, coloured reading overlays, coloured rulers, 'fiddle' toys.
- ✚ A visual timetable on display
- ✚ Prompts and key words on display.
- ✚ Clearly labelled resources.
- ✚ Cursive handwriting on display.
- ✚ Practical maths equipment and resources readily available.
- ✚ Use of coloured paper if effective.
- ✚ Use of dyslexia friendly font (comic sans)

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.

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 with 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 Head Teacher. Further steps would be to inform the Governors and the Local Education Authority, for which a detailed policy is available.