

## Dyslexia Friendly Policy

St Leonard's First School endeavours to meet the diverse needs of its pupils to ensure inclusion for all. All of our pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced curriculum, delivered in a relevant and differentiated manner, enabling progression and continuity to be experienced.

It is important in this school that the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matters. In order to make access to the whole curriculum a reality for all pupils, we foster an ethos in which positive attitudes to gender equality, cultural diversity and special needs of all kinds are actively promoted.

In order to meet the needs of all of our children we are actively working towards 'Dyslexia Friendly School' status. We believe that this will not only benefit children with dyslexic tendencies but will also have a significant impact on other pupils whose Literacy skills are not appropriate to their age, as strategies that are good for the dyslexic learner are good for everyone.

### What is Dyslexia?

In 2009 Sir Jim Rose's Report on 'Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties' gave the following description of dyslexia, which was adopted by the BDA Management Board, (British Dyslexia Association) but with the addition of the further paragraph shown below:

The description of dyslexia adopted in the report is as follows:

*'Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.'*

- *Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.*
- *Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.*
- *It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.*

- *Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia. A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well founded intervention.'*

*In addition to these characteristics, the BDA acknowledges the visual and auditory processing difficulties that some individuals with dyslexia can experience, and points out those dyslexic readers can show a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process. Some also have strengths in other areas, such as design, problem solving, creative skills, interactive skills and oral skills.*

*Dyslexic children frequently have weaknesses in short term memory, sequencing and processing information - skills everyone needs to learn effectively in a busy classroom. What may start as a learning difference becomes a learning difficulty if dyslexia goes unrecognised and the teaching is inappropriate.*

*However, if those with milder forms of dyslexia are identified early and given the opportunity to learn the way they learn best, they may cease to have special educational needs. The skills and strategies which dyslexic children need in order to learn can be taught.*

## **Teaching strategies**

Everybody has an individual learning style. Dyslexic children seem to process information differently. Understanding how they learn best, and being flexible enough to adapt teaching approaches are vital factors in enabling dyslexic children to learn effectively in the classroom. Therefore, at St Leonard's CE (VC) First School, we employ the following teaching strategies for dyslexic children:

- Have high expectations for intellectual stimulation, but reasonable expectations for written responses.
- We promote a 'can do' culture.
- Use multi sensory methods of learning - VAK learning styles.
- Be prepared to explain things many times, in a variety of ways.
- Give guidance about how to do tasks systematically.
- Implement SEAL to promote positive self esteem.
- Be aware of signs of tiredness and fatigue, allowing children opportunity for a break within their learning and utilising multi-sensory approaches such as brain gym.
- Enable dyslexic children to show their interest, knowledge and skills, despite their difficulties in writing.
- Marking identifies success and improvement points (next steps).
- Use of ICT (Wordshark, Numbershark, Nessy, iPad apps, talking tins, etc.)
- Use adult or 'Buddy' support where available.

## **Dyslexia Friendly Classrooms**

At St Leonard's First School we recognise that the correct working environment is vital for all learners. For a dyslexic child, already they may be having difficulties with listening, hearing, concentrating, sitting still, writing and finding the things they need. If their classroom environment works against them, no matter how hard they try it will be more difficult for them to succeed. Therefore classrooms are:

- Arranged so that during lessons, the dyslexic child can sit near the front.
- Equipped with clearly labelled and neatly arranged resources so that they can be accessed easily.
- Adapted so that dyslexic children have opportunity to sit alongside well motivated children or a work partner who can clarify instructions for them.
- Information and displays are accessible e.g. using non white paper, picture clues.

## **Dyslexia Indicators**

All teachers have responsibility for children with dyslexic difficulties. If the school's assessment and observation procedures indicate concerns regarding reading, spelling, writing or numeracy, teachers will implement the following procedures:

- Refer to '*Dyslexia included*' and the SEN Dyslexia - information board located in the staff room
- Complete Dyslexia Indicator checklists (early years or primary, as appropriate) available on the SEN notice board and in the shared staff area.
- Consult SENCO and plan a graduated response as necessitated by the SEND Code of Practice (2014)
- Consult with parents/carers and child.
- Consult with SENIS, if required.

## **Assessment and Intervention**

The school's assessment and tracking procedures facilitate the early identification of difficulties, whilst highlighting individual abilities. Areas of difficulty are highlighted and an appropriate, graduated response/intervention programme is developed, in conjunction with the SENCO.

## **Partnership with Parents**

In identifying and assessing pupils, with special educational needs, professional help can seldom be wholly effective, unless it builds upon parents' capacity to be involved.

We therefore acknowledge that maximum participation by parents/carers is essential in embedding positive attitudes in dyslexic learners. We endeavour to be in regular contact with parents - face to face, on the telephone or via individual homework diaries. We will help to allay any fears parents' may have for their child's education, by understanding their concerns and pursuing strategies to help.

Parent workshops/coffee mornings are also available and held at school which are delivered by teaching staff or outside agencies, such as SENIS (Special Educational Needs Inclusion Service).

### **Complaints Procedure**

If you have a complaint, please come and see us. We will listen and deal with it as quickly as possible. The School's Complaints Policy is available on the school website.

When parents/carers are worried or unhappy about any aspect of school life or the curriculum they should come and talk to the class teachers first. This will usually resolve the problem; however, if they are still dissatisfied then they should contact the Officer Manager, who is the designated Complaints Officer for the school. She will then inform the head teacher and further steps would be to inform the Governing Body and the Local Education Authority.

Signed..... SENCO Governor

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