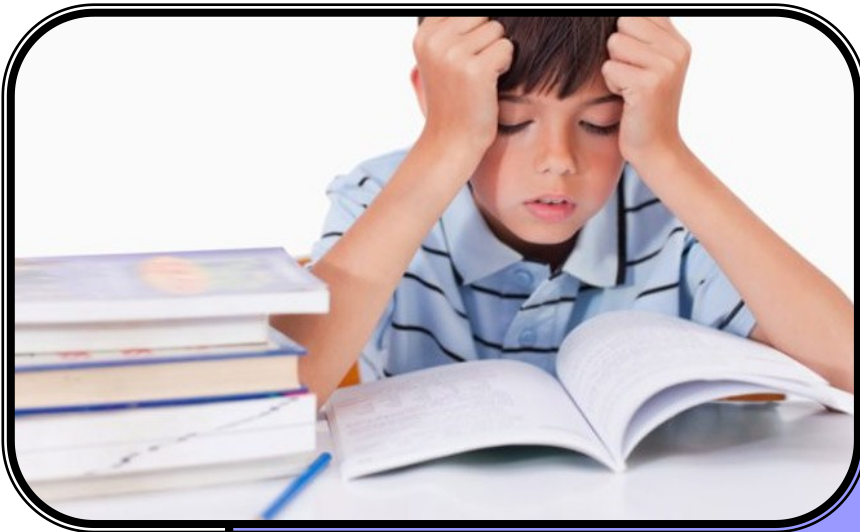


**Fortrose Academy**



# Dealing with Dyslexia

## Introduction

Dyslexic type difficulties are thought to affect around 10% of the population in the UK meaning it is very unlikely you will have a class without these difficulties. Having looked at classroom practice over the school there are great things going on but as with anything in life there is always room for improvement! Hopefully this booklet will provide you with information on dyslexia, the things we can do to support pupils with these types of difficulties (which actually help all pupils) and some strategies that will help to improve classroom practice.

## What is dyslexia?

There are many definitions of what dyslexia is (Highland Council uses the British Psychological Society's one) but they are all worded around the same difficulties;

**Dyslexia may be defined as a difficulty in language based information. Short term memory, sequencing, directionality and co-ordination may also be affected.**

It is a descriptive *not* diagnostic term that implies a distinct and identifiable reading disorder with a known medical cause although this is not the case. (Bishop 2010)

It is really important that you consider dyslexic type difficulties in the context of your subject. In every class there is a need to make provision for a variety of strengths and additional needs, not all linked to dyslexia, but importantly, the strategies that work well for dyslexic type difficulties can be very effective for all.

As educators we want to do the best for all pupils, but in the case of additional support needs it is also the law.

**“It is a teachers responsibility to provide a suitably differentiated subject curriculum, accessible to all pupils, that provides each with the opportunity to develop and apply individual strengths.”**

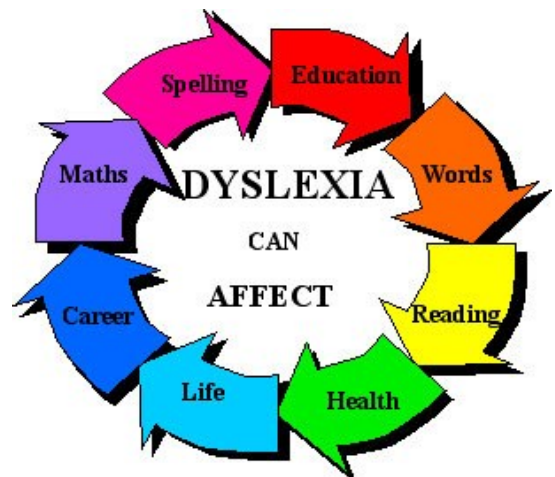
*Education (Scotland) Act 2004: Additional Support for Learning*

## Things to remember about pupils with dyslexic type difficulties...

- They are developmental in nature so some pupils who coped with the early stages of language acquisition may have difficulties with higher order skills and these often don't appear until the upper school.
- Pupils who are constantly meeting barriers to their learning can become discouraged very quickly due to a lack of initial success. Try not to assume that a pupil is inattentive or lazy- they could be working a lot harder than their classmates, but with little apparent success.
- Misbehaviour, illness, toilet breaks etc are often used as a way of coping with their difficulties that they don't necessarily understand themselves, these are avoidance tactics!
- Although reading and writing problems are not linked to ability, able pupils may persistently underachieve because of this.
- Accept that pupils with these difficulties may require additional support within the context of a subject (ask LS for help!).
- Pupils may look for the quickest and most superficial solution- if you don't think you will have success you won't persevere and re-check work. This is often the pupil bringing a stressful activity to an end more quickly.

## They often...

- Lack self confidence
- Have a poor self image
- Fear new situations
- Confuse written and verbal instructions
- Are very disorganised
- Lack stamina



## Additional barriers to learning

There are many different barriers specific to each subject (these can be given on request!), these are the generic ones that pupils could encounter in most subjects. If you have concerns with a pupil, and they are displaying many of these - please use the Dyslexia indicators found at the end of this booklet.

They could face a combination of these...

- Struggle with retention of learned facts
- Suffer from a mismatch between learning and teaching styles
- Write slowly and form letters poorly
- Failure to develop automaticity of use of simple equipment
- Have difficulty organising work space
- Find holding a list of instructions in memory difficult
- Have difficulty recognising the correct spelling from a list when using spellchecker
- Be unable to carry out an activity and listen to the teacher at the same time
- Struggle to work at the same rate as their peers
- Find it difficult to follow a series of instructions in the correct order
- Be unable to recall specific vocabulary and terminology
- Confuse similar words, resulting in misrepresentation of content and context
- Struggle to respond appropriately to questions and in discussion
- Produce answers that do not reflect their knowledge and insight
- Lose the thread when they are writing resulting in messy and poorly sentenced work
- Tire more quickly than others, work could deteriorate over the course of the lesson
- Give up easily when faced with long texts and print
- Experience visual distortions in text, making it difficult to locate information



## **Barriers and strategies**

In this section we will discuss barriers to learning and strategies to help overcome them. Consistently throughout most studies, the pupils involved maintain that the attitude of their teacher is the most important support in the classroom. So although these strategies will help, you are the most important component!

The emotional climate is the most important thing– caring, calmness and security.

Before we start, it is important to remember that dyslexia approaches are beneficial to all pupils, regardless of their needs.

**BEST PRACTICE IS TO TEACH AS IF EVERYONE IS DYSLEXIC!**

## **Support Strategies**

Many of these strategies will be taking place already, others are a wee reminder!

### **The classroom**

- Adjust the lighting in the classroom- if possible- to relax stressed pupils experiencing headaches/eyestrain
- Pupils at front of class with an easy view of the teacher
- Clear view of the board
- Sufficient space to accommodate work
- Sources of equipment clearly labelled and organised (pictures helpful)
- Key and high frequency words placed strategically around the classroom

### **Copying from the board and alternatives**

- Issue pre –prepared blank table, charts etc to complete to save time
- Hand out of notes to be copied
- Use the board for reminders - not big bits of work
- Allow plenty of time to read from the board
- Notes given in clear format
- Fonts that studies have found to be the best for those with reading difficulties; Arial, Verdana, Calibri, Helvetica

If you have to use the board-

- Try using different colours
- Underline every second line to break things up
- Make sure writing is clear and well spaced out
- Leave the writing up long enough to ensure pupils don't need to rush
- The board can be divided into sections using different colours to aid place finding

## Teaching

- Teach specific terminology and explain and illustrate the specialist meanings often
- Begin the lesson by outlining what it is going to be about
- End lesson with a summary – much more likely to stay in long term memory
- Give only one instruction at a time and repeat instructions frequently
- Ask pupils to repeat instructions back- this not only provides a check that things have been understood, but they remember things better if they hear themselves speak
- Make use of multi-sensory learning- involve the senses- visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning.
- Arrange/allow peer support to help dyslexic pupils keep up to the pace of the lesson
- Use visual cues (pictures/diagrams) to illustrate subject-specific language to make the meanings clearer.

When using a list of instructions–  
number them instead of bullet points.

Why?

Bullet points are all the same so it is  
easy to lose your place.

Short term memory issues mean  
instructions are hard to remember.

Give the first two instructions again  
and direct them at the dyslexic  
children.

White boards can pose real difficulties  
for dyslexic pupils.

Overcome this by using alternate lines  
of primary coloured pen, that way  
pupils can keep track using the  
colours.

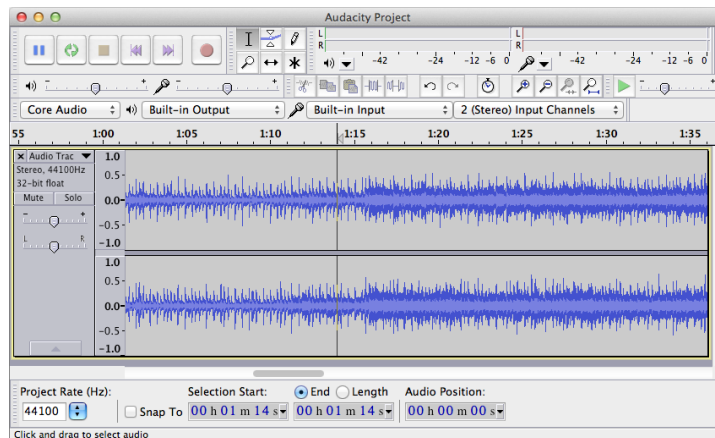
Good quote to think about;

“There is nothing so unfair as the  
equal treatment of unequal people”

Thomas Jefferson

## Recording work

- Use coloured paper- this can be a great help in reducing glare and visual stress
- Encourage alternatives to writing e.g Alphasmart, ICT etc
- Provide a framework for written responses e.g paragraph headings
- Oral contribution encouraged- praise the asking of questions
- Use alternative ways of recording work- verbal descriptions- Dictaphone- Audacity (PC recording software on all school computers)
- Do not ask dyslexic pupils to make notes while watching a demonstration or listening to instructions
- Allow pupils to record dictated notes so that they can store them as voice files for revision
- Allow pupils to decide the method of recording that suits them best
- Evidence of pupils 'showing what they know' in different ways – drama, posters, ICT,



# Multi sensory learning



Visual



Auditory



Kinesthetic

The learning preference that pupils have will effect there ability to learn In the class-room. It is a complex process with many variables. Many research studies have found that for pupils to learn best they need to use multiple learning strategies.

By using different ways of learning we make activities more interesting , motivating and place value in the different ways that we can retain information. Here are some ways we can take a more multi sensory approach

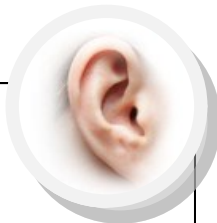
## Visual learning

- Try using mind maps (on A3 sheets with colour pen)
- Encourage the use of highlighters
- Make use of picture cues to reinforce lesson themes
- Provide diagrams where available
- Make use of film and video
- Write down key words and phrases needed for instructions
- Map creation activities
- Pictorial note taking
- Posters, cartoons, charts



## Auditory Learning

- Use of music
- Rhymes and songs
- Verbal instructions repeated
- Group listening activities
- Repeat back to teacher the key points of the lesson
- Discussion groups
- Explanation by pupils to a pupil who was off on what they missed
- Record notes orally (transfer them to mp3 so they can be repeated)
- Orally present the information learnt



## Kinaesthetic learning

- Use flash cards– maybe in a game
- Question cards with questions on one side and answers on the other
- Vary the method of instruction
- Involve movement around the room as part of an activity– change table or seat, stick questions on the wall in large print
- Try to do as many physical experiments and investigations as possible– learn by doing
- Try role playing themes and characters





## Things to ask yourself...

- Is your teaching as multi sensory as it could be?
- Are as many of the learners senses being stimulated as they could be?
- Are you interspersing 'literacy' times with 'seeing and doing' activities?
- Is the learner using a variety of different methods, for example, speaking out loud, writing on cards or talking about a topic with a partner?
- Do you have a large timetable in your classroom which shows when pupils need to take in homework/particular items?
- Do you label equipment in your classroom?
- Are worksheets simple in layout with clear print and a simple layout?
- Are pupils sitting beside the correct person for maximum concentration? Could they move there?
- Are you encouraging the word processing of work?
- Are you beginning a lesson by outlining its content and then ending with a summary?
- Are learners given short breaks to maintain concentration?
- Am I providing alternatives to copying from the board?



## **I am worried about a pupil in my class what do I do?**

1. Fill in a Form 1 (appendix 1 at the back of this booklet). On this form you record your reason for concern.
2. Try out strategies provided in this booklet (speak to Learning Support for advice).
3. Evaluate how successful they were.
4. Still no sign of improvement? Complete the "dyslexia indicators at the secondary stage form" (appendix 2 at the back of this booklet)
5. Share the form with Learning Support and work out new strategies.

Form 1 Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_



**Initial Identification of Concern**  
To be completed by Class/Subject teacher

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date concern(s) identified: \_\_\_\_\_

By whom: \_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths**Area of concern:     **S H A N A R I** (circle)

| Strategies tried | Time Scale | How successful were these? |
|------------------|------------|----------------------------|
|                  |            |                            |

**Strategies successful    -    Monitoring**                      tick .....

**Strategies not successful – next steps.....**

**Request assistance from member of school staff with responsibility for Pupil Support**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Copy this form to the Named Person**

## Dyslexia Indicators at the Secondary stage

Pupil Name-

Class-

Date-

|  | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| Quality of written work does not adequately reflect the known ability of the pupil in the subject  |     |    |
| Good orally but very little written work is produced- incomplete assignments   |     |    |
| Disappointing performance in timed tests and other assessments   |     |    |
| Poor presentation of work- e.g illegibility, mixed upper and lower case, unequal spacing, copying errors, misaligned columns (especially in maths)           |     |    |
| Poor organisational skills- pupil is unable to organise self or work efficiently; carries either all books or wrong ones; frequently forgets to hand in work |     |    |
| Sequencing poor- pupil appears to jump from one theme to another, apparently for no reason   |     |    |
| Inability to memorise (especially in maths and modern languages) even after repeated practice  |     |    |
| Inability to hold numbers in short term memory while performing calculations   |     |    |
| Symbol and shape confusion (especially in maths)   |     |    |
| Complains of headaches when reading; sometimes see patterns in printed text; says that words move around the page or that text is glaring at them            |     |    |
| Unable to carry out operations one day which were previously done adequately   |     |    |
| Unable to carry out more than one instruction at a time  |     |    |
| Poor depth perception-e.g clumsy and uncoordinated, bumps into things, difficulty judging distance, catching balls, etc                                      |     |    |
| Poor self-image- lacking in confidence, fear of new situations- may erase large quantities of written work, which is acceptable to the teacher               |     |    |
| Tires quickly and work seems to be a disproportionate return for the effort involved in producing it   |     |    |
| Easily distracted- either hyperactive or daydreaming   |     |    |

**Other- Please give details**

Teacher-

Subject-