



## Birches First School Dyslexia Friendly Policy

*'Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling'. (Jim Rose 2009)*

### About this policy

- The purpose of this policy is to promote effective teaching and learning for all pupils, including those with dyslexia.
- We expect to meet the needs of the vast majority of dyslexic pupils through existing school procedures; only a very small percentage of pupils will require an Education Health and Care Plan (formerly known as a Statement of Special Educational Needs); typically those whose academic achievement falls within the lowest 1% of the school population.
- This policy extends to all in the school community, not just pupils. We recognise that, on occasion, adults within the school community may also need support because of dyslexic difficulties.
- This policy supports The Children and Families Act 2014.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies, particularly the SEN and Inclusion Policy, The Single Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan and the SEN Information Report.

### What is Dyslexia?

According to the Dyslexia Institute, dyslexia can be defined as:

*"...a combination of abilities and difficulties which affect the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy."*

Dyslexia affects children of all academic abilities and can sometimes accompany other difficulties.

Dyslexic children frequently have weakness in short-term memory, sequencing and processing skills. They may find that skills do not become automatic and great stamina is required to produce each piece of written work. They may lack personal organisation skills and struggle to organise themselves and their belongings. Their experience of difficulty can lead to low self-esteem and poor motivation unless strategies exist to combat this.

It should be remembered, however, that as the above definition states; dyslexia is *"...a combination of **abilities** and **difficulties**..."*, and individuals may demonstrate great competence in areas other than literacy.

What starts as a learning difference can quickly become 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 can make good progress.

### Identification, Assessment and Intervention

If the school's system for monitoring the progress of individuals identifies a pupil as having difficulty, their class teacher will;

- Refer to "Dyslexia: Hints for Teachers" information sheet located in the staffroom
- Complete the "Dyslexia Indicator Checklist" (DfES)
- Consult the SENCO

At this point the SENCO may administer additional assessment tasks to pinpoint areas of particular strength or difficulty. An appropriate intervention programme, including multi-sensory techniques, is then developed in conjunction with the class teacher

Monitoring and support procedures will be implemented when a child is first suspected of having literacy difficulties. It is not necessary for an external body to "diagnose" dyslexia.

If parents are concerned that their child is not progressing well in literacy and may be dyslexic, they should approach their child's class teacher in the first instance.

Parents' concerns and observations are useful indicators of potential problems: their input will be valued and acted upon.

### Teaching Strategies

As the Dyslexia Institute states,

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

What is good for the dyslexic learner is good for everyone. Research shows that all children benefit from dyslexia friendly teaching methods.

Dyslexic children seem to process information differently. Understanding how they learn best (their learning style), and being flexible enough to adapt teaching approaches are vital factors in enabling dyslexic children to learn effectively in the classroom. Therefore, at Birches, we employ the following strategies.

- Maintain high expectations of intellectual thought but reasonable expectations of written responses
- Allow pupils to respond in ways other than writing when appropriate
- Teach reading and writing skills in a structured, cumulative way allowing opportunities for over-learning
- Whenever possible use multi-sensory teaching strategies
- Watch out for signs of fatigue
- Support the child's self esteem
- Give guidance on how to tackle tasks systematically

- Support without creating dependence
- Arrange appropriate peer support where appropriate
- Present oral information in small chunks and in different ways to ensure understanding and retention
- Investigate individual pupils' preferred learning styles (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic etc.) and exploit these when preparing tasks
- Make the classroom environment "dyslexia friendly" (Refer to SENSS booklet, "Creating a Dyslexia Friendly Classroom")
- Ensure worksheets and text on the board is "dyslexia friendly" (Refer to SENSS booklet, "Creating a Dyslexia Friendly Classroom")
- Use "target" marking regularly, where pupils know in advance that their work will be marked for either content or spelling or organisation but not everything all at once.
- Ensure that the child is assigned to the appropriate ability group, according to their intellectual ability and understanding, rather than their ability to read and record
- Use electronic aids and ICT to support pupil access and participation
- Ensure dyslexic pupils have access to sophisticated texts that will challenge and extend their comprehension, vocabulary and analytical skills, even when these texts are beyond their reading ability (shared texts, books on tape etc.)
- Whenever possible, give dyslexic pupils prior experience of the texts to be covered in class so that they can get beyond the decoding stage and be ready to consider content
- Whenever possible, issue lists of vital topic words prior to starting a new topic so that the child can practise reading, spelling and using them
- Support personal organisation so that letters reach home and equipment reaches school on the right days
- Obtain guidance and support from appropriate outside agencies.

### Individual Support Plans

If it is felt that a child has special educational needs, we will adopt a graduated response, matching support to level of need. The school, parents/guardians and the pupil will create an ISP (Individual Support Plan) which will record the steps planned to meet the needs of the child. This may see us using specialist expertise from outside agencies. ISP's will be planned, implemented and reviewed 3 times a year, usually at parents' evenings.

### Resources for Parents and Staff

The school maintains a bank of resources, which will help dyslexic learners across the curriculum, not just in literacy. These include electronic learning aids, computer programs, story tapes, visual/auditory stimuli and practical apparatus; as well as paper-based resources.

There is also a bank of materials available to parents, to help them understand the nature of their child's strengths and difficulties; and help them to support their child's learning at home. These are available on request from the SENCO.

### Partnership with Parents

We value the contributions of parents and plan collaborative intervention programmes if parents are able to support their child in this way. However, dyslexia can "run in families" and

parents may need support themselves before they are able to help their child. We will endeavour to provide this support and make school correspondence accessible to all, regardless of their level of literacy competence.

A supportive atmosphere at home is vital in promoting positive attitudes in dyslexic learners.

### Training

The Dyslexia friendly Initiative was begun in Staffordshire in 2001 and we have full Dyslexia Friendly School status.

Staff, routinely, update their knowledge and skills through appropriate training. Details of training undertaken by staff in the past 12 months can be found in the head teacher's record of continuous professional development.

### Staffing

All school staff are responsible for, and involved in, meeting the needs of children with dyslexia or other special educational needs. They will support students according to school policy.

The SENCO will monitor the implementation of this policy and be responsible for its review.

The SENCO will report to the head teacher and governors on issues relevant to dyslexia provision within the school.

### Concerns

If you wish to discuss your child's educational needs, are unhappy about something regarding your child's schooling or perhaps wish to say thank-you - your first point of contact is the class teacher.

You can contact the school office to arrange a meeting with the SENCO or the head teacher.

The SEN Governor is Mr T Cothey and he can also be contacted through the school office.

### Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding

Through all subjects we ensure that the school meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this school we meet the diverse needs of pupils to ensure inclusion for all and that all pupils are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

Every effort is made to ensure that activities are equally interesting to both boys and girls. Children with special needs are given additional support. This may be through extra adult help

or by devising appropriate activities to meet their needs whilst ensuring progression. High achievers are given extension activities as appropriate to develop deeper knowledge and understanding.

Staff are aware of the regulations set out in the SEN and Disability Act 2001 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and take all reasonable steps to ensure that no member of the school community is treated less favourably because of disability.

At Birches First School we recognise the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and as such we ensure that all Birches staff endeavour to follow this policy. The EYFS leader/SENCo is the prevent lead for the school and has attended Staffordshire Police Prevent training on (13<sup>th</sup> October 2015)

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### Admissions

The governing body has decided that children with special educational needs will be admitted to the school in line with the school's agreed admissions policy.

### Key Contacts

Head Teacher - Miss S Varricchione  
SENCO - Mrs N Stubbs  
SENSS representative - Helen Norton  
Educational Psychologist - Caroline Gilliland

### Policy History

Last reviewed by SENCO - October 2018