

## Dyslexia Friendly Policy



### POLICY STATEMENT

At St. Michael's CE (A) First School, we value the importance of being a Dyslexia Friendly school. Not only does a Dyslexia Friendly ethos help us to meet the needs of dyslexic pupils, but also the needs of pupils who have delayed Literacy skills. Indeed, evidence suggests that all children who are taught using Dyslexia Friendly methods are able to benefit and that, in essence, more children are able to benefit when dyslexia friendly methods are adopted throughout school.

We also recognise that a child's self-esteem and confidence goes hand in hand with successful learning. Our children are made aware of the nature of the barriers that some people may have to learning and how different strategies can help to overcome these. Positive role models are made known to the children and their achievements are celebrated.

### WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

There are many different definitions of dyslexia. In Staffordshire we all use the British Psychological Societies definition: 'Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent 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.'

The Rose report in 2009 gave this description of dyslexia which has been adopted by the British Dyslexia Association: "Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling."

Dyslexic tendencies occur in people of all backgrounds and of all abilities. It is estimated that about 10% of the population may be affected, with 4% of these having severe difficulties.

Children with dyslexia may experience other difficulties with:

- Short term memory
- Long term memory
- Processing and retrieving words and information

- Phonological awareness
- Sequencing or rote learning
- Auditory memory
- Spatial awareness
- Direction - left and right
- Organisation
- Fine Motor Skills

However, if those with milder forms of dyslexia are identified early and given the opportunity to learn in the way that 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

No two dyslexic children are alike and the difficulties they experience will vary greatly. Therefore our teaching styles must reflect children's differing needs. These can include:

- ✓ Exploring a wide range of recording styles for children
- ✓ Use of ICT to aid recording, such as talking tins, talking postcards, alphasmarts, Ipads, laptops,
- ✓ Use of ICT to help develop phonic and reading knowledge, such as e-books and specific dyslexia centred software
- ✓ Use of pictorial cues
- ✓ Use of visual timetables
- ✓ The use of our marking policy which includes symbols alongside/in place of the written word

In order to increase the confidence and enjoyment of learning for a dyslexic child, we employ a whole range of methods. Some of these methods include:

- Use of reading books that are at an age appropriate interest level, whilst being at the correct reading level for the individual child.
- Organising reading buddies
- Printing off information for the dyslexic child, rather than expect them to copy/search for information from the whiteboard
- Use of precision teaching to help improve sound and word recognition
- Use of speed reading techniques to improve reading fluency and word recognition

All children (and adults) will have preferred learning styles i.e. ways of learning that they rely more strongly on. Learning styles are divided into:

Auditory ... where the learner relies more heavily on what they hear.

Visual ... where the learner relies more heavily on what they see.

Kinaesthetic ... where the learner relies more heavily on what they do practically.

Further information on different learning styles can be obtained from school.

At St. Michael's CE(A) First School, we use a learning style questionnaire with pupils so that they are aware of how they learn best. This can help us find the best way to teach a dyslexic child.

## **DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY CLASSROOMS**

We aim to maintain our whole school as a dyslexia friendly environment for all children and adults. In our classrooms, we adopt many of the principles set out by Staffordshire, for achieving a dyslexia friendly classroom. In order to achieve this, our classrooms:

- Are arranged so that during lessons dyslexic children sit in an appropriate place
- Have clearly labelled resources, which use pictures and symbols as well as words
- Have water readily available throughout the day
- Use colour tinted backgrounds on the interactive whiteboards
- Use coloured paper for worksheets, letters and information
- Have a range of dyslexia friendly resources ready at hand, such as: rainbow arcs, word lists, spelling and handwriting prompts etc.
- Have interactive displays, which can include talking postcards, word lists and topic vocabulary, photographs and pictures
- Are appropriately lit and well-ventilated to provide a comfortable learning environment
- Use reading rulers and coloured overlays
- Are tidy and well-organised
- Have easily accessed ICT (talking tins, laptops and spell checkers etc.)

## **IDENTIFICATION OF DYSLEXIC TENDENCIES**

All teachers are responsible for identifying dyslexic tendencies in children. Teachers are trained on Dyslexia Friendly teaching techniques and strategies. This training may be delivered in school using, for example, the IDP (Inclusion Development Programme) resources, or it may be delivered by external providers, such as Entrust. For new members of staff, Dyslexia Friendly teaching forms parts of their personalised induction. At St. Michael's we also use a wide range of assessment methods, and have a number of rigorous pupil tracking and monitoring procedures in place.

If a teacher is concerned they can:

- Refer to the SENSS booklet 'Achieving a Dyslexia friendly Classroom'
- Complete the Staffordshire 'dyslexia checklist'
- Consult with parents
- Speak with the Senco

In some cases, where the parents, class teacher and Senco feel it is appropriate, the Senco can arrange for SENSS to carry out further assessments with the child. This may result in further suggestions of how to target the child's individual needs.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Teachers and staff are constantly tracking and monitoring pupil progress.

When marking work, teachers and staff are mindful of managing the needs and self-esteem of Dyslexic children. They may only make a limited number of corrections on a piece of work. Where appropriate, staff will try to give verbal feedback as well as written feedback. Where a child has known difficulties or Dyslexic tendencies, then teachers will exercise sensitivity in their marking of spellings particularly. Correction of spellings will be focussed primarily upon high frequency words and particular letter strings.

## **HELPING YOUR CHILD AT HOME**

For a child with dyslexic tendencies, repetition and over-learning can be key. The SENSS booklet, 'Making Spellings Memorable', suggests a variety of different ways of teaching and learning strategies. For children who find it difficult to remember letter patterns, practical activities can help children to retain spellings. Often, children can find that it's easier to learn in small bite sized sessions or 'drip feeding', rather than sitting for any great length of time.

Some books that parents may find helpful include:

"So you think you've got problems?" by Rosalind Birkett

"Dyslexia - how would I cope?" by Michael Ryden

"Reading Difficulties and Dyslexia Booklist" lists books which are easy to read but with interesting content published by the Book Trust "Dyslexia-friendly Books" is a list produced by Lovereading4kids

"Digby the Dyslexic Dinosaur" was written in 2008 by the children at Stafford Dyslexia Centre and may be helpful for other children.

The SEND Family Partnership Book library also have a number of other books which you can borrow to help explain dyslexia to your child, as well as useful books for parents and children: ring 01785 356921

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

Of course, parental support is key to helping a child overcome any dyslexic barriers. Parents are given strategies to help their child at home, and parents are always welcome in school to discuss any concerns they may have.

The school website provides many links for children and parents to access suitable interactive activities.

The 'Staffordshire Send Family Partnership', also offers an excellent support service to parents. The Send Family Partnership produce a variety of information on Dyslexia and also the SEND procedures in school. This information is free to parents, and is readily accessible in the school foyer.



## THE SENCO'S ROLE

When a teacher shares concerns she will initially liaise with parents to gather vital background information. Mrs Fisher (SENDCo) will then advise parents and the class teacher on how best to support the child. If a child continues to experience significant difficulties Mrs Fisher can refer to Staffordshire Special Educational Needs Support Service (SENSS) for further assessment and advice. It is important to note that no referrals for SEN will be made by school without permission from parents.

## SEND AND DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS' POLICY STATEMENT

St Michael's CE (A) First School aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning that can hinder or exclude individual pupils or groups of pupils. We aim to ensure equality of opportunity for all children by paying attention to specific groups of children within our school including:

The aims of our special educational need and disability policy and practice in this school are:

- To provide access to the curriculum, the environment and to printed information for all
- To reduce barriers to progress by embedding the principles in the National Curriculum Inclusion statement  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>
- To use our best endeavours to secure special educational provision for pupils for whom this is required, that is "additional to and different from" that provided within the differentiated curriculum to better respond to the four areas of need:
  1. Communication and interaction
  2. Cognition and learning
  3. Social, mental and emotional health
  4. Sensory/physical
  - To request, monitor and respond to parent/carers' and pupils' views in order to evidence high levels of satisfaction and partnership
  - To ensure a high level of staff expertise to meet pupil need, through well targeted continuing professional development.
  - To support pupils with medical conditions full inclusion in all school activities by ensuring consultation with health and social care professionals
  - To work in cooperative and productive partnership with the Local Authority and other outside agencies, to ensure there is a multi-professional approach to meeting the needs of all vulnerable learners.

As part of our commitment to a Dyslexia Friendly ethos, we are proud to hold the recognised Staffordshire's Dyslexia Friendly Full Status Award and are continually striving to maintain and improve Dyslexia Friendly practice.

As a school, we believe that a Dyslexia Friendly environment and teaching styles will benefit the learning of all pupils and not just those with dyslexic tendencies. Strategies that are good for the dyslexic learner are good for everyone.

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The first step for any parent who has a complaint is to come into school and speak with us. Often simple misunderstandings can be easily sorted.

Initially, parents should ask to speak with the class teacher who will usually be able to rectify the problem. It may be that, following an initial meeting, the SENDCo can become involved. If parents are still unhappy they can speak with the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher. The next step would then be to inform the Governors and The Local Education Authority, for which a further policy is available.

**Latest Policy Review date:** May 2021

**Policy review date:** May 2022