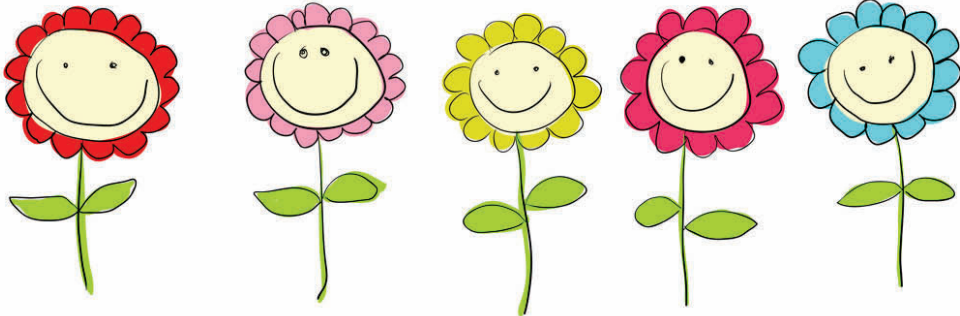




# An A to Z of The Dyslexia Friendly Classroom



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### Additional Adult Support

- Should NOT be a substitute for well-differentiated tasks
- Establish clear procedures for pupils to access help
- Beware of 'learned helplessness' – the pupil who relies too heavily on the Class Teacher/LA
- Try to timetable regular slots for additional, target teaching e.g. Nessy

### Classroom Routine

- State a clear purpose for each lesson
- Display class timetable – provide visual timetables for pupils to use at school and home
- Organise equipment effectively – label with visual/colour cues where possible
- Have an agreed location for finished work to be placed
- Put up the date each day in large writing

### Copying

- Read aloud as you write
- Use coloured pens, vary colours used for lines/sections (to ease tracking difficulties)
- Do not stand where obstructing view
- Try to avoid pupils copying from the board where possible - Think about the purpose of the copying, does it link to lesson objective?!
- Allow plenty of time to complete tasks
- Give pupils a copy of what is on the board – copying/reading close work is easier
- Give typed photocopies – pupils can highlight key words/facts rather than copying
- When copying from a sheet or page in front of them give them a counter to place on the word they have just copied to keep their place

### Dictionaries

- Saying 'look it up in the dictionary' is the least helpful response a teacher can give to a spelling request from a dyslexic child – in order to find a word in a dictionary you need to have a good idea of how to spell the word!
- Consider the use of alternatives and have a range available - wordbooks, wordlists, keywords, spelling dictionaries, electronic spellcheckers, googling etc.
- Make sure they know the order of the letters of the alphabet, the names of the letters and which letter the name relates to. Get them to lay out magnetic letters in order in a rainbow arc
- Teach efficient use of a dictionary e.g. teach the four quartiles

A – D

E – L

M – R

S - Z

### Display Boards

- Display most commonly needed information
- Key word lists: high frequency words, word 'families', topic vocabulary
- Times table charts
- Number/hundred square
- Useful lists: days of the week, months of the year

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## Equipment

Have equipment readily available:

- Triangular pens/pencils or pencil grips
- Line trackers, bookmarks, overlays as appropriate
- Handwriting paper and guidelines
- Resources to support multi-sensory teaching
- Spelling aids: dictionaries, word cards, personal spelling logs, electronic spelling checkers, hints cards/booklet

### Desktop baskets/individual packs should include:

For Literacy:

- Alphabet strips/arcs, with vowels shown in red (showing both upper and lower case)
- Cue cards re spelling rules currently taught
- Laminated memo cards (for date, key words, reminders...)
- Most frequently needed equipment (pencil, pen, ruler, workbook)
- Post high frequency words and information that is used often around the room
- Tape alphabet strips, b/d reminders etc. to desks

For Maths:

- Most frequently needed equipment (number line, 100 square...)
- Counters, cubes, etc
- Numicon equipment
- Tables squares
- Clocks
- Plastic money

## Giving Instructions

- Children with dyslexia have problems with short term and working memory. This means that they struggle to hold more than 1 or 2 points in their heads
- Give verbal instructions clearly and one at a time – ask pupil to repeat back to check understanding
- Stress key words
- Back up instructions visually – written/visual reminders displayed on class board or own memo card
- Check homework instructions are written legibly/clearly – be prepared to scribe sometimes
- Give homework instructions in the first part of the lesson if possible
- Break tasks down
- Back verbal instructions up with visuals eg lists
- Explain things many times and in a variety of ways

## Homework

- Homework may take dyslexic pupils much longer than others. Agree ground rules with parents as to how long is to be spent on homework
- Ensure they have written their homework down correctly. Leave it up on the board for a





long time. Check it is correct and legible so that parents can help

- Consider alternate ways of recording homework eg providing a slip to stick into homework diary, use of dictaphone or talking tins
- Give homework at the beginning of the lesson
- Make sure all children know the procedure for handing in homework
- Work with parents on a system to plan ahead, especially for project work

## ICT

- Encourage the use of word processing, with built in spell checker (which can minimise handwriting and spelling problems, use of predictive programmes (such as 'Pen friend')
- Provide a large mouse or tracker ball for pupils with severe motor difficulties
- Encourage own portable, electronic spell checkers
- Dictaphones have a range of uses: recording own stories, details of homework, things to remember
- Alternatives of recording in literacy tasks
- Talking calculator
- Encourage pupils to develop their touch typing skills
- Use iPad apps
- See BDAtech.org

## Key Steps to Excellence

- Create an uncritical atmosphere
- Give opportunities to succeed
- Avoid sarcasm
- Praise success and give rewards frequently
- Remember, dyslexic children have to put far more effort into completing tasks – be mindful of this when looking at work completed
- Match tasks to concentration span – allow breaks/time out to run errands, clean board etc
- Provide scaffolding - build a support structure so the learner cannot fail
- Slowly dismantle the scaffolding until the child can do it independently
- Always be ready to re-build some of the scaffolding when necessary

## Language

- Avoid sarcasm and rhetorical questions (dyslexic children can take language literally)
- Never shout or 'put them on the spot'
- Give them time to come up with answers
- Speak slowly and clearly, using short sentences – repeat key words
- Vary tone of voice
- Pre-teach subject specific vocabulary
- Use slower speech and shorter sentences as students with dyslexia need longer to process instructions

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## Marking work

- Mark pupils work with him/her wherever possible (sit on same side of the desk)
- Return marked work as soon as possible (if collected in)
- Written comments should be clearly printed and legible
- Positive Marking - Balance positive comments with points for development
- Be specific about focus of marking (are you judging "authorial or 'secretarial' skills?)
- Do not correct ALL spelling errors – target specific errors which pupils can reasonably address
- Judge content separately from presentation
- Try to judge oral responses to some tasks (rather than written ones) – you may be surprised at the level of understanding that the child is unable to portray in their work!
- Give praise

## Multisensory Teaching

"We hear, we forget,  
We see, we remember.  
We do, we understand."  
(Chinese Proverb)

Auditory (Hear) Visual (See) Oral (Say)  
Tactile (Touch) Kinaesthetic (Motor/movement)

- Use a combination of auditory and visual 'channels' for **giving** information
- Ensure planning is differentiated, backtracking to previous year group objectives where appropriate
- All tasks planned should be achievable
- Begin each lesson by stating clear objectives, make desired outcomes clear and finish with a plenary, recapping on what has been taught
- Ensure all adults in the class are aware of children's strengths, weaknesses and current targets
- Use visual aids whenever possible

## Organisation

- Give guidance about how to tackle tasks systematically e.g. teach them what a tidy desk looks like and how to go about it
- Make sure you are a good role model
- Provide checklists and timetables where necessary e.g. how to start a piece of work
- When making lists use numbers rather than bullet points as bullet points all look the same
- If they have to copy avoid asking them to copy from a distance – provide a personal A4 copy
- Dyslexic children usually have a poor sense of time. They have little concept of terms such as yesterday, tomorrow so these will have to be specifically taught
- Provide a written example of the date. Colour coding may help to place today's date in the context of the week e.g.

**Today is Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January**

**Yesterday was Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January**

**Tomorrow will be Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January**





- Draw attention to the changing months and how they fit in with the seasons
- Discuss birthdays and festivals as they occur
- Place analogue and digital clocks on the wall next to each other so students can see both ways of telling the time and the connection between them
- Encourage each child to make a personal timetable to take home using illustrations for the days when they need to bring things in e.g. PE kit
- Have a large illustrated timetable up in the classroom
- At the end of the day, remind children what they will need tomorrow
- If messages are not reaching home, for important messages contact parents directly.
- Help the child to use the planner effectively
- Encourage them to put important messages and letters in a clear plastic folder

### Reading

- Check suitability of texts – may need to simplify
- Do not ask pupil to read aloud (unless she/he wants to); build in a right to pass
- Read instructions to the pupil where appropriate
- Encourage paired reading
- Help them to find suitable books related to their interests
- Have a wide range of high interest/low reading age books, both fiction and non-fiction
- Never send children to younger classes to get books – it is humiliating
- Don't allow children to read books that are too difficult. Apply the five finger rule – get the child to read one page from their reading book and ask them to hold up one finger for every word they can't read. If they are holding up more than five fingers before the end of the page the book is too hard
- Check their understanding when reading – there is no point in reading without meaning

### Seating

#### When seating pupils, try to ensure they are....

- At the front, facing the board
- Near to the class teacher where possible (so help can be offered readily)
- Seated to minimise disruption and concentration maximised – displays/visual stimuli behind the pupil
- not 'crowding out' (left handers clashing with right handers)
- Sitting with good posture, request footrest/writing slope/seat wedge if posture is poor
- Seated in well-lit areas and in natural light for writing tasks
- Provide a designated quiet area where pupils can get respite
- Try sitting in the dyslexic child's seat to see the classroom from his/her perspective

### Spelling

- This is one of the hardest skills for dyslexic children
- It's no good just handing a child a list of words and saying 'learn these for a test next week'. They need to be shown HOW they can spell them using a wide range of strategies. They can choose the strategy that suits them best:
- Counting Syllables
- Start with their names and go round the class – each child to clap their name and





say how many syllables

- When they learn a new word get them to read it, count the syllables and split into syllables. Suddenly a really long and difficult word becomes a series of short words eg remember **re mem ber**
- Phonics
- Multi-sensory structured cumulative phonics programmes work well for dyslexic pupils. They need to learn their sounds with automatic recall both for reading and spelling eg. Jolly Phonics, Read Write Inc. Letters and Sounds
- This type of programme works best for auditory learners ie those who remember what they have heard
- Kinaesthetic Methods
- These learners do best by being able to see and touch what they are learning e.g. sing plastic or magnetic letters
- Visual Methods
- Visual learners do better by remembering what they have seen. They will do well with look, cover, write, check
- Mnemonics
- These can be very useful for remembering the spelling of irregular words. A mnemonic device is a mind memory and/or learning aid. Commonly mnemonics are verbal –such as a short poem or special word used to help a person remember something – but may be visual, kinaesthetic or auditory. Mnemonics rely on associations between easy to remember constructs which can be related back to the data that is to be remembered
- One common mnemonic for remembering lists consists of an easily remembered acronym or phrase with an acronym that is associated with the list of items. e.g. to remember the colours of the rainbow Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain
- Children with learning difficulties will find it difficult to remember too many mnemonics
- The best mnemonics are those which the children make up an illustrate themselves. If they make them up they are more likely to remember them
- Because - big elephants can't always use small entrances
- People – people eat oranges, people like eggs
- Arithmetic – A red Indian thought he might eat toffees in church
- Hear – You **hear** with your **ear**
- Necessary – never eat chips, eat salad sandwiches and stay young
- There is a **rat** in **separate**
- Beautiful – big eggs are ugly
- Business – there is a **bus** in **business**
- Difficulty – Mrs D Mrs I Mrs FFI Mrs C Mrs U Mrs LTY
- Said – Sam and I dance
- Would, could, should – o u lucky ducks
- **Night** – I go home **tonight**
- **Island** – an **island is** land surrounded by water
- **Friend** – a real friend is a **friend** to the **end**





- Parliament – I am in parliament
- Piece – a piece of pie
- Laugh – laugh and u get happy
- Together – Together we went to get her
- Tuesday – u eat sweets day
- Wednesday – we do not eat sweets day
- Thursday – u r sick day

### Visual Stress

- Use coloured paper for worksheets (usually a pastel shade such as cream, yellow or light blue)
- It is possible to obtain exercise books and lined paper in pastel shades
- Try using coloured overlays – some children will find these beneficial
- Change background of computers and interactive whiteboards

### Worksheets

- Use bold headings and clear print – well spaced, not too small!
- Make sure they are at an appropriate reading level (differentiate!!)
- Use less writing, more diagrams and/or pictures
- Cut out unnecessary detail
- Consider use of coloured paper to ease visual stress (ie pale blue, cream etc)
- Pay attention to the reading level but also the intellectual level. Weak basic skills do not necessarily imply weak reasoning

### Writing

- Consider alternative means of recording (a scribe, paired/collaborative work, tape recorder/dictaphone, video, laptop, illustrated diagrams/charts, powerpoints, talks)
- Provide framework/scaffold for writing, with headings, sentence beginnings etc eg writing frames, a range of planning formats – linear, spider diagrams, mind maps etc
- Encourage pupil to record ideas initially, without worrying excessively about spelling
- Attach lists of useful words to exercise books
- Encourage use of own spelling log/word cards
- Develop use of mnemonics for 'tricky' words
- Have key words displayed in classroom
- Allow more time and expect less in terms of quantity
- Help children to participate without feeling embarrassed or fearing failure

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