



NANSTALLON SCHOOL



## How we support children with dyslexia

An information booklet for our children, parents, staff and governors

"Take this obstacle and make it the reason to have a big life, because if you can overcome this obstacle you are going to be that much further ahead than anyone else. It takes having obstacles to learn and grow and be better."

- Orlando Bloom



I'm positive about dyslexia!

## What is dyslexia?

The word dyslexia comes from the Greek, and means "difficulty with words".

*"Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling."* Rose Review June 2009

People with dyslexia find it hard to remember what words sound and look like, hence their difficulties in learning to read and spell. However, people with dyslexia may not just have problems with reading and spelling, they can also have difficulties with writing, maths, memory, motor skills, organisation, processing skills and sometimes, self-esteem.

Dyslexia is a difficult concept to understand as it occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. Information is processed by the dyslexic brain in a different way to the orderly sequenced way that many non-dyslexic people think, plan and solve problems. This often means that dyslexic people are more creative and can come up with very different solutions to problems.

Dyslexia should not, and need not, be a barrier to achievement. People with dyslexia are just as talented, intelligent and capable as anyone else, and with the right kind of support they can do just as well across a wide range of professions. Famous dyslexics include Jamie Oliver, Tom Cruise, Sir Steve Redgrave, Sir Jackie Stewart and Sir Richard Branson. Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison were also believed to be dyslexic.

Being dyslexic does not mean that you cannot achieve things and succeed in life. Here are some famous people with dyslexia.

**Steven Naismith, Footballer**  
All through school, while I was good at football, I felt the struggle when it came to things like a spelling test.

**Jamie Oliver, Chef**  
I never really had anyone to help who understood dyslexia and who could bring out my strengths.

**Lewis Hamilton, Formula One World Champion**  
School was not a happy place.

**Keira Knightley, Actor**  
It doesn't mean that you're stupid... It just means that you work in a different way.

**Sir Jackie Stewart, President of Dyslexia Scotland**

**Holly Willoughby, TV presenter**

**Jennifer Aniston, Actor**  
I thought I wasn't smart, I just couldn't retain anything.

**Richard Branson, Entrepreneur**  
Being dyslexic can also help in the outside world. I see some things clearer than other people do.

**Benjamin Zephaniah, Poet**  
At 21 I went to an adult education class in London to learn to read and write. The teacher told me, "You are dyslexic," and I was like, "Do I need an operation?" She explained to me what it meant and I suddenly thought, "Ah, I get it. I thought I was going crazy."

**Dyslexia Scotland**  
Charity No: SC 000991  
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[www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

## **How do we support dyslexic children at our school?**

- We provide visual timetables so that all our children know what they will be doing throughout the day.
- We encourage independent learning, and expect our children to choose places to work that best suits their learning style and/or activity they are doing. The layout of our classrooms provide different areas for children to work in, some of which may block out distracting stimuli, (eg. noise, friends, movement, etc).
- We clarify or simplify written instructions and/or information to prevent a child becoming overwhelmed with the amount of reading or writing that needs to be done.
- We use the app 'seesaw' which promotes independent learning. When using 'seesaw' the children are able to use the audio device to record their thoughts and ideas. The app also allows children to listen to instructions without having to rely on reading them.
- We use larger font size and increase spacing of words to help children read texts and work independently if required. The use of different coloured paper and exercise books, plus coloured overlays are available for any child with visual stress.
- We provide manipulatives for all out tasks and challenges in maths (and any other subject that requires them) to help all our children move their learning on. Our resources are clearly labelled and accessible to all our children.
- A class story is read every day and discuss writing techniques and new vocabulary that is used in the book. These techniques and words are then frequently referred to with the expectation that the children will begin to use them in their own speaking and writing.
- We promote a love of poetry in school and work hard at learning and performing different poems; this is a great way to improve the working memory and introduce new vocabulary.
- We use 'story telling approach' to develop our children's Literacy and story writing skills.
- If children find writing difficult they can use a laptop or ipad to record their work. Some children may choose to use a writing slope or pencil grip to aid them whilst writing. It is not always required to write responses, so a child may choose to draw or record themselves talking through an explanation or response; we encourage all our children to respond to tasks and challenges in ways that suit their learning, but also moves their learning on.
- Teachers will ensure that all children know and understand tasks and challenges, by regularly repeating instructions; getting the child to repeat the instructions; having the instructions displayed visually; using a task card; tell a friend; etc.
- We show all our children 'what a good one looks like' so that all our children know what is expected of them.

- We use different levels of ability for our peer reading, working and marking which helps promote independence, confidence and self-esteem for all children involved.
- We use flexible work times where all our children are given ample time to complete tasks and challenges set for them.
- We use positive praise and value every answer given. We ensure thinking time is provided and encourage and nurture strong, positive relationships between staff and children, and children and children. In doing this we ensure that our children have a good, positive image of themselves. Any child with low self esteem will be cared for in a nurturing environment and encouraged and helped to improve their feelings of self worth by the use of different techniques and resources; for example: forest school (whole class, small group or individual sessions if required); Lego club; circle time; meet & greet sessions at the beginning of the school day; buddy support; gardening; show casing their work in a positive way; good communication with parents; life skill groups; etc.
- Each week we have life skills group where all our children, from reception to year 6, are involved in learning new life skills. Our current life skill groups include music, sewing, first-aid, debate, forest school, gardening, and yoga. The children work on each life skill for four weeks and receive a certificate of completion at the end of the four week period.
- We have small class sizes which allows us to individualise intervention support for any child requiring additional help and/or support

### **How do we teach spelling at our school?**

Phonics is taught from Reception through 'Letters and Sounds' and additionally supported by rhymes, songs, chants, games.

Children are grouped, within class, throughout the school depending on their individual needs. In our school, phonics and spelling is taught throughout the whole school from Foundation to Year 6.

We use a variety of strategies to teach spelling:

1. Words within words: *Example:* There is a rat in separate
2. Segmentation: This is where you break words into syllables and spell each syllable.  
*Example:* ex/clu/sive = 3 syllables
3. Mnemonics: Example: Using the first letter from each word to spell the new word.  
Doubt = **D**o **O**ctopuses **U**se **B**ig **T**oilets?
4. Kinaesthetic Motor Memory ( & visual memory): A similar strategy to Look, Cover, Write, Say, Check. Uses the visual memory. Tricky words such as said or liquefy could be used for this strategy.
5. Spelling Rules: *Example:* When adding suffix 'ed', double the final consonant.

6. Looking for patterns and meaning: *Example:* Laugh and rough, elephant and Sophie, off and raffle, for and family - these are all examples of the 'f' sounds.
7. Chanting and rhymes for words. For example, *Doubt* can be remembered by chanting 'Mrs D, Mrs O Mrs UBT, that's how you spell it - all follow me...

*For further information about the approaches we use in spelling, please refer to our handbook 'phonics and spelling booklet'.*

### **What should I do if I am worried my child may have dyslexia?**

If you are concerned with any aspect of your child's education you should always discuss this with your child's class teacher in the first instance. You can also arrange a meeting with Myra Winch, the school's SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator), to discuss your concerns further.

### **At what age can my child be tested for dyslexia?**

It is helpful to identify dyslexia as early as possible as it allows your child more time to develop strategies to meet their individual challenges. Dyslexia can be identified by using official assessments from the ages of four or five. However, when children are younger, identifying dyslexia can be difficult because the signs and symptoms are not always obvious. Many children develop ways of compensating for their dyslexia, however, this can mask their difficulties as they get older.

At Nanstallon School we use a dyslexic screening test (DST) to assess if your child has dyslexic tendencies. This can only be done from the age of 7 years old. The DST is not a diagnosis but an assessment that may indicate whether your child has dyslexic tendencies. The assessment takes about 45 minutes and once completed you will be invited in to school to discuss the results. From the assessment we are able to identify areas that your child may be struggling with (eg. phonological awareness; poor memory) and use this knowledge to support your child with their learning.

### **How can I help my dyslexic child at home?**

- Provide opportunities for your child to participate in activities that they are good at, or enjoy; for example, music lessons or dance/gym classes. This is a great way to boost your child's self-esteem.
- Encourage your child to practise their reading every day, which does not necessarily have to be their school book! Your child may enjoy reading comics or newspapers, street signs, road maps, recipes, labels – the list is endless!
- Be informed. If you understand dyslexia you will understand your child's needs better. There are various website links at the end of this booklet that you may find useful.

- Encourage your child to rest and relax when they come home from school; they have had a busy day and need time to chill out and unwind. They may also appreciate some time to talk to you about their frustrations or concerns about an aspect of their school day; school life can be hard for children with dyslexia.
- Speak to your child's class teacher, or SENDCo who will be able to give you ideas how you can support your child's learning at home.
- Encourage your child to understand that although they have to work a lot harder than their friends, who do not have dyslexia, they can still achieve their dream, so dream big!

***'If you can dream it, you can make it so.'***

### **Useful website links:**

- A child friendly, and very informative youtube video explaining dyslexia can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11r7CFIK2sc>
- British Dyslexia Association: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
- Parent Champion Dyslexia: <http://www.parentchampions.org.uk/resources/understanding-dyslexia-booklet/>
- Dyslexia Cornwall: <https://www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk/>
- NHS Dyslexia: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/>