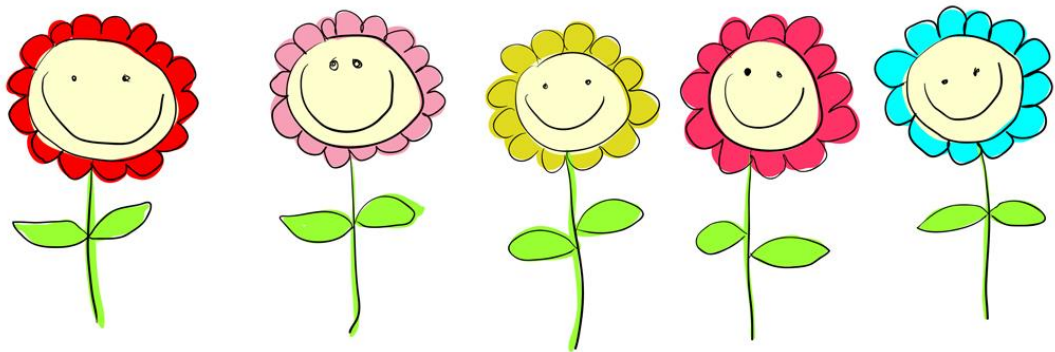


# Creating a Dyslexia Friendly Classroom



## Handbook for Class Teachers & TAs

# The 'Dyslexia Friendly Classroom

## What should it be like?

### SEATING



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

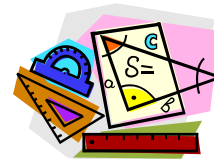
- At the front, facing the board;
- Near to the class teacher where possible (so help can be offered readily);
- Seated to minimise disruption and concentration maximised – displays/visual stimuli behind the pupil;
- not 'crowding out' (left handers clashing with right handers);
- Sitting with good posture, request footrest/writing slope/seat wedge if posture is poor.
- Seated in well lit areas.

### CLASSROOM ROUTINES



State 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.

### EQUIPMENT



#### Have 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:

##### 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).

##### Numeracy:

- Most frequently needed equipment (number line, 100 square...)



### LANGUAGE

- Avoid sarcasm and rhetorical questions (Dyslexic children can take language literally);
- Speak slowly and clearly, using short sentences – repeat key words;
- Vary tone of voice;
- Pre-teach subject specific vocabulary.

## GIVING INSTRUCTIONS



- 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.

## Display Boards



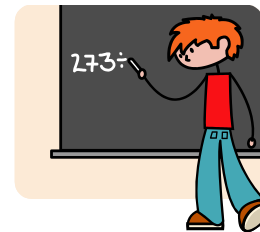
- Display most commonly needed information:
- Key word lists: high frequency words, word 'families', topic vocabulary;
- Times table charts;
- Number/hundred square;
- Useful lists: days of the week, months of the year.

## 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).

## Writing on and copying from the board



- 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;
- 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.

## WRITING



- Consider alternative means of recording (a scribe, paired/collaborative work, tape recorder/Dictaphone, video, laptop, illustrated diagrams/charts;
- Provide framework/scaffold for writing, with headings, sentence beginnings 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.

## READING



- Check suitability of texts – may need to simplify;
- Do not ask pupil to read aloud (unless she/he wants to);
- Read instructions to the pupil where appropriate;
- Encourage paired reading.

# ICT



- Encourage the use of word processing, with built in spell checker (which can minimise handwriting and spelling problems, use of predictive programmes.
- Provide a large mouse or tracker ball for pupils with severe motor difficulties;
- Encourage own portable, electronic spell checkers/l pad/tablets with appropriate apps.
- Dictaphones have a range of uses: recording own stories, details of homework, things to remember;
- Alternatives of recording in literacy tasks Talking tins, talking postcards e.g. Dragon
- Talking calculator.



## 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;
- Avoid excessive use of ink!
- POSITIVE MARKING - Balance positive comments with points for development;
- Be specific about focus of marking (are you judging “compositional or ‘secretarial’ skills?); Mark to the learning objective.
- 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!

## Additional Adult Support

Should NOT be a substitute for well-differentiated tasks;  
Establish clear procedures for pupils to access help eg put up hand and wait for attention, stand by teacher's desk (as per classroom routines);  
Beware of 'learned helplessness' – the pupil who relies too heavily on the Class Teacher or Teaching Assistant  
Try to timetable regular slots for additional, target teaching – pupil should be aware of time/location.

## KEY STEPS TO EXCELLENCE

- Create an noncritical 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.

# 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.