

CAMBRIDGESHIRE DYSLEXIA GUIDANCE – A QUICK GUIDE

For more detailed information, please read the full Cambridgeshire Dyslexia Guidance on the Local Offer.

“No matter where they live or what their background, every single child in this country deserves the opportunity to read, to read widely, and to read well - it’s a simple matter of social justice.”

Child Literacy Campaign 2015



What is dyslexia?

“Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.”

- **Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed***
- **Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities**
- **It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points**
- **Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia**
- **A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexia difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention¹**

.The Rose Report definition acknowledges current research that:

- There isn't one specific profile of cognitive strengths and difficulties that needs to be identified in order to classify a child as having dyslexia
- There are clear genetic and biological bases to dyslexia. Studies report that many parents of children identified with dyslexia also have reading difficulties
- The term dyslexia is often used interchangeably with reading difficulties and literacy difficulties at the word level.

Within this model we recognise that the biggest question is: What is the nature of the dyslexic difficulties and what are the best interventions to support an individual's particular needs relating to reading, spelling and some wider areas of literacy?

¹ From Rose, J (2009) '[Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties](#) : an independent report from Sir Jim Rose to the ¹Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families,' DCSF

What should all schools be doing to support children and young people with dyslexia?

Universal Support (support for all): A Dyslexia Friendly School

We would expect all schools to have [Dyslexia friendly classrooms](#).

Early Identification and Assessment

The school will use an '**Assess, Plan, Do, Review**' approach to find the most effective way to support a pupil's learning.

The Class Teacher will know your child's learning needs and should recognise possible literacy difficulties early. They should identify the specific nature of the difficulties your child is having and put in appropriate support .

Teachers should involve parents and children as soon as needs are identified so that they are fully engaged in the process.

Assess

There are assessment tools available in schools that can be effectively used by teachers to identify children who are not responding to high quality teaching and who are likely to need additional literacy support.

Plan/Do

Once your child's strengths and difficulties have been identified, the question that needs to be asked is:

'What do we need to do to support him/her?'

Any intervention that is put in place must reflect the needs identified through assessment.

If your child requires additional support there are many evidence-informed interventions that can be carried out in school. Any intervention should be done alongside the universal support that school is putting in place.

Talk to your school about what support or interventions they have available. Training is available to schools from SEND Services 0-25 if needed.

Review

A date for monitoring and reviewing progress should be agreed, and everyone should be clear about what they need to do to help your child. At the review, decisions should be made about the next step for your child

When is a Specialist Assessment needed?

For children who are not making progress despite lots of appropriate school support, more specific assessments may be needed.

Some schools have their own Specialist Literacy Teachers who can support them in further understanding your child's strengths and difficulties in relation to dyslexia. Others may seek the support of the Cambridgeshire County Council SEND Services 0-25 which is made up of Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers and Specialist Practitioners. This service can be requested if:

- Schools can show that they have delivered High Quality Teaching and dyslexia friendly classrooms (universal support)
- School based assessments have been completed and targeted support has been delivered appropriately and has been monitored consistently.
- Your child is not making progress, or making only very limited progress and remains significantly behind the levels expected for their age.

If the child meets the thresholds for involvement from the SEND Service 0-25 (available on the Local Offer or from school), a Specialist Teacher or Educational Psychologist may become involved in helping you and the school consider how best to help your child.

Will my child need an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

Most children and young people with dyslexia can be supported through School SEND Support (Code of Practice 2015) without an EHCP. For some children (2-3% of the population) an EHCP might be needed.

Details of thresholds for an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) are available [here](#).

What can I do to help my child to manage their dyslexia?

This list has been compiled by parents of children identified with dyslexia (Autumn 2015).

Good home-school communication

Focus on your child's strengths

- celebrate what your child can do
- encourage your child and keep things positive
- encourage out of school activities
- give your child lots of specific praise

Reading

- reading with, and to, your child from a very early age
- finding reading opportunities whenever you can
- breaking down paragraphs into more manageable 'chunks'
- looking for significant words in paragraphs and checking for understanding
- Buy/borrow high interest, low reading age books, e.g. www.barringtonstoke.co.uk
- Audio books on CD

Specific interventions that may help

- 'Teach your monster to read' books
- Sound Check <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about/projects/sound-check>
- Apps such as 'Hairy Phonics' , **Cambugs** www.cambugs.co.uk
- **Toe by Toe*** www.toe-by-toe.co.uk

- [Paired Reading technique](#)
- Sound Reading System (synthetic phonics reading programme)
- **AcceleRead, AcceleWrite*** <http://www.dyslexic.com/acceleread>
- Wordshark <http://www.wordshark.co.uk>

Information Technology

- Dictaphone
- speak to text software
- Learn to type ([bbc touch typing](#))
- Dragon Software
- Predictive Text
- Swift Key
- Dyslexia [Wheel of Apps](#)

For more detailed information, please read the Cambridgeshire Dyslexia Guidance on the Local Offer.

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A letter to school from dyslexic children in Cambridgeshire

This letter has been compiled from the comments received during focus groups with pupils with dyslexia in primary and secondary schools in Cambridgeshire.

Dear Teacher,

Having dyslexia can be hard, and at times we feel embarrassed and sad. Please make sure you highlight the things that we are doing well and you explain to others that having dyslexia doesn't mean you're stupid. You know that people with dyslexia need to work harder than others to write and spell and read, but don't assume we are all the same. We struggle in different ways so please make sure you find out what our strengths and difficulties are and differentiate work for us according to our needs.

We may have amazing ideas, but can't get them down on paper. Help us to find another way of sharing our ideas with you and our peers. Offer lessons where we can work with others, this helps us get our ideas across without having to write them down. If we are seated near a friend we can ask them for help, we may not feel comfortable asking students we don't know well.

Not all of us with dyslexia see it as a disadvantage and some of us have strengths in other areas; some are better at art than our friends without dyslexia. Some of us have good creative ideas; we have noticed that peers without dyslexia don't have ideas as 'out of the blue' as some of us. We may be more visual than other people and good at seeing things from a different viewpoint. Just remember that we are all different and everyone's strengths are different.

When we are in your lesson, please ask us what help we would like (subtly!), we may not want the support of a Teaching Assistant, especially as we get older, and would prefer to try things on our own first. Don't make us read in front of the class, in fact don't make anyone feel they have to read in class, and please don't read out our test scores so everyone can hear. I don't want everyone to know what I got.

If we struggle to write quickly please help us by sending homework via email or sharing the power points from class with me. We may need extra time to complete work as some tasks take us longer to finish, don't punish us for this, show that you understand and give us time.

Nobody likes to be labelled so please see us as who we are and not just as our dyslexia.

Yours sincerely,

A student with dyslexia

