Dyslexia Policy

This policy has been written for the Arnold Hill Family of Schools, that is Arnold Hill Academy and its feeder primary schools.

Philosophy

As a family of schools, we believe in and are proud of our inclusive practice. Across all our schools, teachers use a variety of strategies to make sure classrooms are appropriate for all learners. This includes using strategies to guarantee our schools are dyslexia friendly.

Dyslexia is a learning difference, and problems can arise if it is not recognised and if teaching is not appropriate. Evidence suggests that all children benefit when dyslexia friendly methods are adopted throughout a school. Therefore as part of inclusive practice, we have adopted dyslexia friendly strategies across the whole family of schools to meet the needs of children and young people. We empower staff through training, policy and ethos within our schools. We also use a range of teaching approaches to support learning, self-esteem, confidence and emotional well being for pupils with dyslexia.

All teachers within the family are trained in identifying and supporting dyslexia. When a child is identified as having difficulties, teachers take immediate action by beginning to build a learning profile and putting support strategies in place. Teachers are confident in their knowledge, and this process is not dependent upon waiting for a formal diagnosis, action can be taken instantly. Staff recognise the stress that dyslexia can cause pupils and understand the importance of immediate intervention.

The learning profile is an ongoing document that builds a picture of strengths, weaknesses, and the best ways to support a child or young person. Teachers use profile strengths as a way in to learning, as well as using it to identify areas where pupils need more support. The profile is updated regularly and follows pupils through primary school(s), and onto Arnold Hill. This gives consistency in support throughout all of our schools, and ensures it is maintained during transition periods.

We would expect children with dyslexia to be supported from the school's own budget. Diagnosis of dyslexia does not entitle a child to any additional funding, and nor does it automatically mean they go onto the Code of Practice or school SEND register. Support is given in the classroom through quality first teaching, as part of our inclusive practice. On occasion, a child may require specific, focused interventions, and the impact of these would be monitored closely. We believe in the importance of getting the learning environment right for all children, and our inclusive practice is such that children with dyslexia have their needs met within the classroom.

As a family of schools, we believe working with parents and carers is key to supporting children. We will always discuss concerns, look at or review support strategies as well as seeking advice and information

from parents and carers. If parents have concerns about their child, they should speak to either the child's class teacher or form tutor.

Definition of dyslexia.

In 2009 the Government organised Rose Report, "**Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties"** defined dyslexia as follows;

• Dyslexia is a learning *difference* 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 dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention"

(Rose Report 2009)
(Italics families own.)

Classroom Expectations.

Use of strategies to support dyslexic learners is proven to support all learners and so across all schools, as part of our inclusive practice, teachers use the following strategies;

All lessons are planned to consider a range of teaching approaches and learning styles. This includes using a multi-sensory approach.

Activities may be adapted by task, by the expected outcome or by the level of support given.

Children may be provided with materials to support them in becoming as independent as possible with their task. These may include writing frames, visual word banks, task ladders, visual examples or word mats.

Children may be given extra time to complete tasks, although this will not normally be made up during break times. At other times, less written work will be expected, or children will be provided with alternative methods for recording their work, including ICT.

Children may also be supported through working with a peer, or within a small group as well as through support given by an adult.

Homework should be accessible for all children and reflect dyslexia friendly practice.

Environment

It is important to get the environment right for all learners, not just within the classrooms, but across the entire school. Therefore within all of our schools, wherever possible, we;

- Use only Sans Serif fonts for worksheets, PowerPoint presentations and on displays.
- For worksheets and other close reading we use a minimum of point 14 font size.
- To emphasise text we use bold and/or a different colour. We do not use underlining or italics.
- We avoid justifying text.
- We use at least 1.5 line spacing.
- We print out using a buff or pale coloured paper rather than white for children identified as having a preference.
- We reduce clutter, and avoid lots of different bright colours in the environment, this includes on walls and displays as well as for PowerPoint presentations.
- Classrooms are well organised and tidy with clearly labelled resources.
- When using the whiteboard, we use alternate coloured pens.
- On interactive whiteboards we use colour tinted backgrounds.
- Arrange classrooms so that learners with dyslexia sit facing the board next to supportive friends.
- Information is printed off for dyslexic learners, rather then expecting them to copy or search for information on the board.

Reading

As part of our inclusive practice, we make sure that texts given to the children to read, will, in the vast majority of cases fit with the guidelines above. We also make sure that children have their own copies of a text, that they can see clearly.

We use alternative methods for presenting information and ideas, so that pupils are not reliant on reading all of the time. These may include film, diagrams and other visual resources, as well as practical demonstrations and kinaesthetic activities or oral work.

In addition we also use a range of strategies to support children with reading. These include;

- Chunking longer pieces of text to make them easier to read.
- Highlighting key parts of a text.
- Use of bullet points or lists, graphs and illustrations to explain content in text.
- Carrying out discussions of texts before reading.
- Key words are pre-taught.

- Teachers read aloud everything that is either written on the board or given to a pupil.
- Coloured overlays or reading rulers are available in classrooms for children to sue if they wish.
- Texts may be given to children in advance to enable pre-reading, possibly at home with parents support.
- All schools have a range of dyslexia friendly books and texts, including those at an age appropriate interest level whilst being at the correct reading level for the child. Books and texts are readily available to pupils.

Spelling

Learning spellings can be difficult, and we are conscious of protecting children's self-esteem. There are a number of strategies we use to support children in this area;

- When given, spelling tests are tailored to children's needs, rather than being given a blanket test, and should include some words that children already know how to spell.
- When marking spellings, credit is given for improvement, and the correct use of spelling patterns, even if the whole word is not spelt correctly.
- Children are taught spellings using a variety of approaches, including precision teaching, multi-sensory learning, using spelling rules, mnemonics or morphology.
- Repetition and overlearning is used to support children with learning spellings, and children are taught to find strategies that work for them.
- Cursive handwriting is taught across all schools unless it is inappropriate for a particular child. This is used to support the teaching of spelling.
- When marking spelling mistakes in children's work, teachers identify a few key words only, rather than picking up on every mistake.
- Word banks are available to support specific activities and topics. They are given out for specific activities and then collected in to keep them fresh. Topic words are also displayed in classrooms.
- A variety of resources are available in classrooms to support children with spellings such as electronic spell checkers, phonics dictionaries, personal word banks and word mats.

Writing

Struggling with writing can impact on work across the curriculum, and so we have a range of approaches and strategies to support children with this in all curriculum areas.

- Providing alternative ways for pupils to record their work.
    - Using ICT – all schools use Clicker 8 to support writing.
    - Recording through drawing/ making notes/ mind maps etc.
    - Using writing frames or cloze procedure to limit the amount written.
    - Talking to an adult about their work.
    - Using talking tins to record answers and work.

- Reducing the amount pupils are expected to write, or giving extra time for written tasks.

- Additional supports within lessons, such as;
    - Word banks – lesson specific or personal word banks.
    - Language prompts displayed around the room.
    - Information from the board printed to avoid copying
    - Writing frames/ sentence starters/ paragraph starters/ planning frames.

To support with handwriting we use a multi-sensory approach to teaching in the Early Years and Foundation Stage. There are also a range of pencil grips available in all schools for children who wish to use them.

Working and Auditory Memory

Some pupils also have difficulty with both their working and auditory memory. In order to support them with this we do the following;

- Give pupils time to process, considering the pace of lessons, and showing an awareness that not all children are able to learn at a fast pace.
- Use visual prompts in lessons, and providing frameworks to support with remembering the structure of tasks.
- Providing time for over learning for children that need it.
- Metacognition – teaching coping strategies, making lists, spider diagrams, memory aids etc.
- Using talking tins.

Organisation

To support children with their organisation we do the following;

- Provide clear structures and routines for pupils to follow.
- Make available spare equipment in all classes in case pupils have forgotten anything.
- Provide checklists of equipment needed for tasks.
- Display visual timetables in every primary classroom, and provide appropriate individual timetables for young people in Arnold Hill.
- Send reminder messages home to parents to enable them to support with organisation.
- Provide written instructions for homework, including the date it is due to be handed in.

Emotional Support

It is vital that all children and young people are supported emotionally, and that their self-esteem and confidence are built up. This is particularly important for pupils with dyslexia.

We believe all pupils should know what dyslexia is, and understand what it means to have dyslexia. It is also important that children and young people recognise the achievements of, and have an awareness of famous people with dyslexia, as well as understanding what dyslexia means for their peers. In assemblies across all schools we celebrate the achievements of a wide variety of people, including those from minority groups and those with different needs such as dyslexia.

We also believe in the importance of a positive culture and ethos within our schools, and will encourage all children to take risks and have a go. Pupil's strengths are celebrated, and they receive specific praise based on their own needs, abilities and challenges.

Identification, Assessment and Review.

Within Arnold Hill family, we follow the Pathway for Assessment of Dyslexia as recommended by Notts CC Local Authority. (Appendix 1)

Initially a problem may be identified by either parents or a class or subject teacher. All teachers have received training on dyslexia, and are aware of the characteristics of dyslexia in their age group.

Once a pupil has been identified a meeting will be set up between school and parents to discuss any concerns and to start building a profile of the pupil. At this meeting they will look at the age appropriate characteristics of dyslexia, and establish whether the child fits with these characteristics. If they do, strategies to support the pupil both at home and school will be discussed and put into place. Parents will also be made aware of the family policy on dyslexia, and the process they can expect to go through. If the child does not fit with the characteristics, but needs are still evident, the school will look at other appropriate support, and this will be put into place. (Some of this may be the same as support given to children with dyslexia)

(Appendix 2 – characteristics of dyslexia)

Building a profile

An understanding of the whole pupil is essential in order to put in place suitable and appropriate support for pupils. For this reason, once concerns have been identified, schools will begin to put together a detailed profile of the pupil. This will be completed by the pupil's teacher(s), parents/carers and the pupil themselves. It will look at strengths, areas of difficulty and preferred learning styles. Wherever possible, strengths and preferred learning styles will be then used to help address areas of difficulty.

In our primary schools, the child's class teacher will begin to build a profile and communicate this to parents. At Arnold Hill a key worker will be nominated and they will co-ordinate building a profile and be responsible for communicating this to parents and teachers.

The profile will contain the following information;

- Parent or carer background questionnaire – parent's concerns/ family history/ background information
- Pupil voice/skills questionnaire – pupils views and opinions about their learning
- School dyslexia profile form
- Pupil assessment profile.
- Day to day assessments and observations
- Examples of marked/ annotated pieces of work
- Checklists to draw together observations from assessments and annotations.

(Appendix 3 – Dyslexia profile forms and questionnaire examples)

If school feel it would be useful, they may carry out a further dyslexia screening or other standardised assessment. This may be needed for access arrangements. However, screening is seen as an ongoing process, not a one off assessment. Information will be gathered and added to over time, with information from assessments being put alongside other evidence as described above. This will give a full picture of the whole child over time, rather than a snapshot of performance on one particular day.

To be useful, all assessments should lead to workable plans of action that promote learning. We use our assessments to help determine what is appropriate learning support at school. It provides evidence of the child's strengths as well as areas of difficulty, and helps teachers and parents to understand what progress and achievement it is appropriate to expect for the individual child.

This information will be collated onto a pupil profile sheet, along with any actions to be taken.

Interventions

The assessment described above will help inform subsequent teaching. Intervention for the pupil will include a plan identifying specific targets, appropriate evidence-based strategies and details of how progress will be evaluated.

Information about the following will need to be considered:

- assessment of the impact of teaching strategies and interventions on the pupil's learning;
- curriculum access, including differentiation of the curriculum (by task and outcome) in the classroom and differentiation of homework, such that pupils are set realistic and achievable tasks;
- previous learning targets, interventions, strategies and their subsequent implementation, review and revision;

- the educational history of the pupil, to include looking at school records and discussion with parents, pupils, teachers and other relevant people;
- pupil progress made in relation to additional effort and instruction;
- a monitoring of pupil performance across interventions and over time to establish the extent to which difficulties persist.

Reviewing progress

All of our schools work on the basis of a plan, do review cycle. Support is planned, carried out and then reviews feed into the next planning stage.

Strategies and support are reviewed by teachers following in-school assessments or blocks of intervention. Progress of all children is carefully tracked and monitored. Class and subject teachers continue to informally review and update support and strategies and will update them when necessary.

The impact of interventions is monitored closely, with baseline assessments undertaken before and after block interventions. When assessing the impact schools will consider both data and observational evidence.

If progress remains slow, additional or different strategies may be tried. Sometimes it may be necessary to carry out an appropriate test as recommended by the Notts Dyslexia Friendly Schools Guide. This will be used to pick out specific areas of difficulty so that more targeted support can be put into place around these needs.

Parent's will be asked to update the parent questionnaire annually, and the pupil's progress and the impact of support or interventions would be discussed at parents evenings. If there are concerns in between times, meetings or discussions with parents or carers would be arranged on an individual basis.

Where progress is slow and school feels it needs advice around dyslexia identification or strategies it may contact the county's SFSS specialist teacher.

Access arrangements

Pupils with dyslexia may need special arrangements to be made for them when taking exams, however, having dyslexia does not automatically qualify you for access arrangements.

- The Joint Council for Qualifications (secondary) and Standards Testing Agency (primary) list many different types of Access Arrangements that can be applied for.
- It states that: "Access Arrangements are not there to give candidates an unfair advantage but to give all candidates a level playing field in which to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding.

The intention behind many access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of an individual disabled candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment."

- Eligibility and/or evidence requirements are listed for each of the Access Arrangements in the 'JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration' handbook for the current academic year. The duty to make reasonable adjustments is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010.
- For more detailed information, it is essential to refer to the latest JCQ handbook.

Transition.

The development of this policy across all families in the Arnold Hill Family, ensures that all schools have a collective approach to supporting children with dyslexia, and will therefore ensure a smoother transition between schools and key stages.

Pupil profiles will be passed on between classes and schools, alongside a discussion between teachers highlighting pupil's strengths, learning styles and barriers to learning.

In addition to this, the Family work closely on transition, and transition programmes are in place for children moving between schools and between classes. In addition to this core offer, there are also additional packages available for children who need more support around transition. This would include children identified by school as having SEND, including those with dyslexia.

Partnership with Parents.

We encourage parents to share their concerns and recognise that parental support is key to a child overcoming any dyslexic barriers. Parents are given strategies to help their child at home, and are always welcome to discuss any concerns they may have with the child's class teacher or the school senco. We welcome information parents have regarding their child. We share information with parents about the measures that are being taken to address the child's difficulties and make sure that they are involved in the target-setting process and the review of the targets set.

We also make parents aware of other sources of information that may be of use to them. Dyslexia Action also offers an excellent support service to parents. Dyslexia Action produces a variety of information leaflets on Dyslexia and is free to parents. http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/

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