Supporting Children with Dyslexia
A guide for school support staff
What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD). The word ‘dyslexia’ means ‘difficulty with words’. A dyslexic person’s ability to organise, read and spell is affected due to a difference in the area of the brain which deals with these processes. The degree of severity varies between individuals.

Dyslexia does not affect a person’s intelligence and dyslexics can still be successful and achieve, given the right support.

Signs of dyslexia

- Difficulty reading, spelling and processing words quickly.
- Mismatch between oral ability and writing.
- Significant difference between literacy and non-literacy-related attainment.
- Problems with general organisation, sequencing, and following instructions.
- Print may appear to move on page and it can be difficult to keep place.
- Often reverses letters and numerals.
- May reverse whole words when reading or spelling, eg saw/was.
- Behaviour problems due to feeling of frustration.
- Tiredness due to extra concentration required.
- Late development of speech.
- Family history of literacy problems.
Strategies for supporting children
• Give support across the curriculum.
• Use multi-sensory approaches to teaching and learning.
• Teach a structured phonics programme.
• Provide word banks.
• Focus on child learning key words.
• Use spell checkers.
• Make sure pupils have a clear view of the board.
• Allow extra time for written responses.
• Act as a scribe when appropriate.
• Use of coloured pens and paper may help those who experience visual discomfort.
• Use overlays, line trackers and bookmarks if appropriate.
• Use alternative ways of recording that allow child to reflect their true ability, eg diagrams, digital voice recorders, etc.
• Voice recognition software may be useful.
• Provide aids for organisation, eg visual timetable.
• Keep instructions short and ask child to repeat them.
• Show pupil how to plan using mind maps, flow charts, etc.
• Praise child’s effort.
• Mark work for level of understanding as well as content.
• Ask pupil which approaches are most helpful and encourage independence.
• Make the most of the child’s strengths.
Useful books


Useful contacts for information and resources

British Dyslexia Association
Unit 8 Bracknell Beeches
Old Bracknell Lane
Bracknell RG12 7BW
Tel: 0845 251 9002
[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

Dyslexia Action
Park House
Wick Road Egham
Surrey TW20 0HH
Tel: 01784 222 300
[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

iansyst Ltd
Fen House
Fen Road
Cambridge
CB4 1UN
Tel: 0800 018 0045
[www.dyslexic.com](http://www.dyslexic.com)