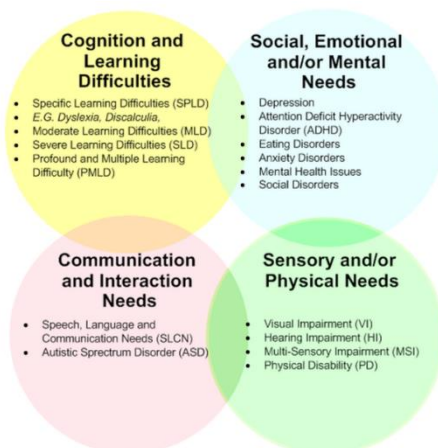




At St. Anne's we love, learn and grow together as part of God's family. We foster a growth mindset so our pupils have bold aspirations to live life in all its fullness. We let our light shine brightly - continually asking God to show us how best to shine so we can be beacons of His life.

St Anne's CE Primary SEND Newsletter

March issue – Dyslexia

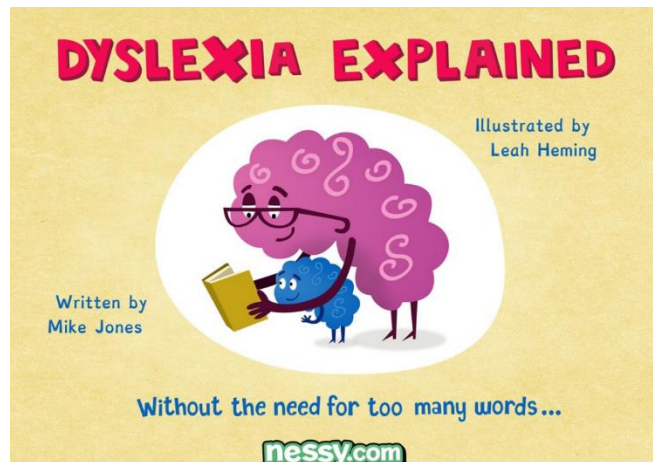


Dyslexia is a neurological difference and can have a significant impact during education. As each person is unique, so is everyone's experience of dyslexia. It can range from mild to severe, and it can co-occur with other specific learning difficulties. It usually runs in families and is a life-long condition. In this month's newsletter, we will explore dyslexia and what to do if you think your child is dyslexic and how you can support them at home.

Contents:

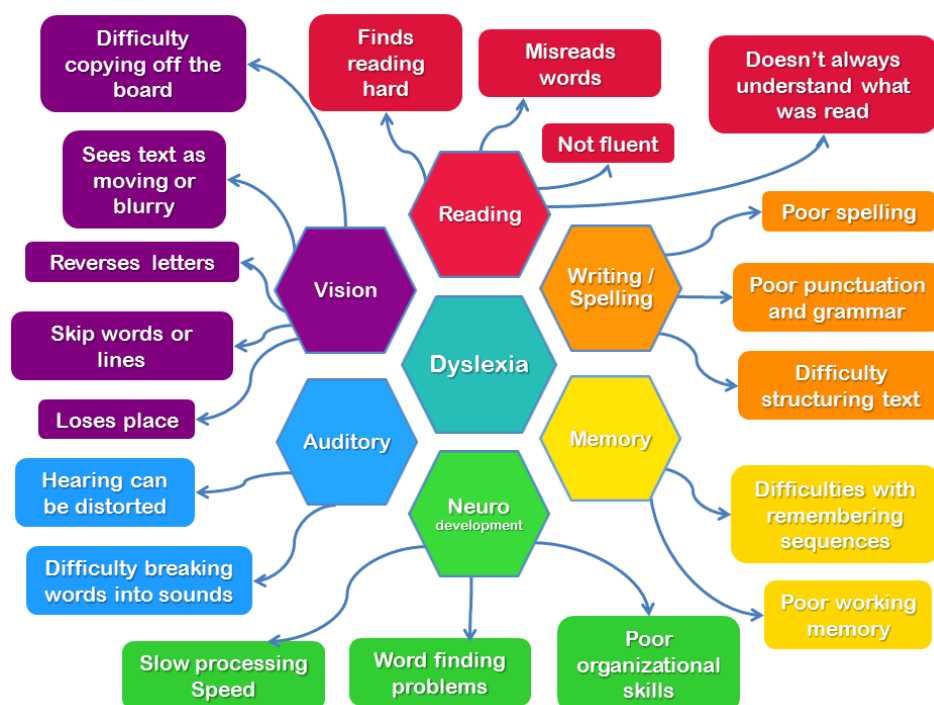
1. What is dyslexia?
2. Signs of dyslexia
3. Things to consider
4. What to do if you think your child might be dyslexic

As dyslexia tends to run in families, I am very aware that there may be some parents reading this newsletter who are dyslexic themselves and may struggle with information overload and to process a 'word heavy' newsletter. Therefore, I have attached an excellent document explaining dyslexia without the need for too many words. The excellent resource was made by Nessy and breaks down the key components of dyslexia:



1. What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty which primarily affects reading and writing skills. However, it does not only affect these skills. Dyslexia is actually about information processing. Dyslexic people may have difficulty processing and remembering information they see and hear, which can affect learning and the acquisition of literacy skills. Dyslexia can also impact on other areas such as organisational skills.



Definition of dyslexia

The BDA has adopted the Rose (2009) definition of 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 dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

In addition to these characteristics:

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) acknowledges the visual and auditory processing difficulties that some individuals with dyslexia can experience, and points out that dyslexic readers can show a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process. Some also have strengths in other areas, such as design, problem solving, creative skills, interactive skills and oral skills.

2. Signs of dyslexia

There is a misconception that dyslexia just affects the ability to read and write. If this were true, it would be much easier to identify. In fact dyslexia can have an affect on areas such as coordination, organisation and memory.

Each person with dyslexia will experience the condition in a way that is unique to them and as such, each will have their own set of abilities and difficulties.

However, if you know what to look for, there common signs that can help you to identify whether the difficulties being experienced could be indicative of dyslexia and would suggest that further investigation could be beneficial.

Signs of dyslexia (Primary school age)

If a child appears to be struggling with spelling, reading, writing or numeracy, how do you know whether these difficulties are potential indications of dyslexia?

There are some obvious signs such as a 'spiky' profile which means that a child has areas of strong ability alongside areas of weakness. You may also have other family members with similar weaknesses. Remember that not all dyslexic children will display the same weaknesses and abilities.

General signs to look for are:

Speed of processing: slow spoken and/or written language

- Poor concentration
- Difficulty following instructions
- Forgetting words

Written work

- Poor standard of written work compared with oral ability
- Produces messy work with many crossings out and words tried several times, e.g. wippe, wype, wiep, wipe
- Confused by letters which look similar, particularly b/d, p/g, p/q, n/u, m/w
- Poor handwriting with many 'reversals' and badly formed letters
- Spells a word several different ways in one piece of writing
- Makes anagrams of words, e.g. tired for tried, bread for beard
- Produces badly set-out written work, doesn't stay close to the margin
- Poor pencil grip
- Produces phonetic and bizarre spelling: not age/ability appropriate
- Uses unusual sequencing of letters or words

Reading

- Slow reading progress
- Finds it difficult to blend letters together
- Has difficulty in establishing syllable division or knowing the beginnings and endings of words
- Unusual pronunciation of words
- No expression in reading, and poor comprehension
- Hesitant and laboured reading, especially when reading aloud
- Misses out words when reading, or adds extra words
- Fails to recognise familiar words
- Loses the point of a story being read or written
- Has difficulty in picking out the most important points from a passage

Numeracy

- Confusion with place value e.g. units, tens, hundreds
- Confused by symbols such as + and x signs
- Difficulty remembering anything in a sequential order, e.g. tables, days of the week, the alphabet

Time

- Has difficulty learning to tell the time
- Poor time keeping
- Poor personal organisation
- Difficulty remembering what day of the week it is, their birth date, seasons of the year, months of the year
- Difficulty with concepts – yesterday, today, tomorrow

Skills

- Poor motor skills, leading to weaknesses in speed, control and accuracy of the pencil
- Memory difficulties e.g. for daily routines, self-organisation, rote learning
- Confused by the difference between left and right, up and down, east and west
- Indeterminate hand preference
- Performs unevenly from day to day

Behaviour

- Uses work avoidance tactics, such as sharpening pencils and looking for books
- Seems 'dreamy', does not seem to listen
- Easily distracted
- Is the class clown or is disruptive or withdrawn
- Is excessively tired due to amount of concentration and effort required
- A cluster of these indicators alongside areas of ability may suggest dyslexia and further investigation may be required.

3. Things to consider

Family history

Are others in the family dyslexic? There is usually a genetic factor in developmental dyslexia, although other family members may have varying symptoms and severity.

Educational history

Are there any factors such as school attendance which need to be considered? Has school put in place support for other Special Educational Needs? To what extent has it helped?

General health

Have there been any long illnesses resulting in school absence? Could there be any undiagnosed conditions, e.g. mild epilepsy or petit mal, which may look like inattention and gaps in learning? A physical injury or a stroke may indicate acquired dyslexia.

Vision

Does the child/adult lose their place when reading or reverse letters or words? Do they appear to be sensitive to light or describe blurring text or moving letters? A vision test in school is not sufficient to identify visual difficulties associated with visual stress. If visual difficulties are suspected, a full sight test must be carried out by an optometrist.

Hearing

Has hearing been checked? As a young child, did they have 'glue ear' which may have hindered auditory perception of sounds in words?

Speech and language

Have there been delays or deficits in speech and language development? This includes pronunciation of words, vocabulary development, complexity of spoken language and understanding of language heard. Your GP may suggest a referral to a speech and language therapist.

Co-ordination

Is the child/adult clumsy or accident-prone? Does this affect gross and fine motor movements? Can they anticipate the movements of others, e.g. in team games?

Difficulties with self-care, writing and play may be symptoms of dyspraxia which is also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) and referral to an occupational therapist may be advisable.

Attention and self-esteem

Staying focused and paying attention can be difficult for those with dyslexia. Being restless or fidgety, talking a lot and interrupting, being easily distracted and finding it hard to concentrate are also symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Dyslexia can result in significant loss of self-esteem and low self-confidence. Grooops is a charity which offers support to those suffering the emotional repercussions of dyslexia. For more information visit www.grooops.org

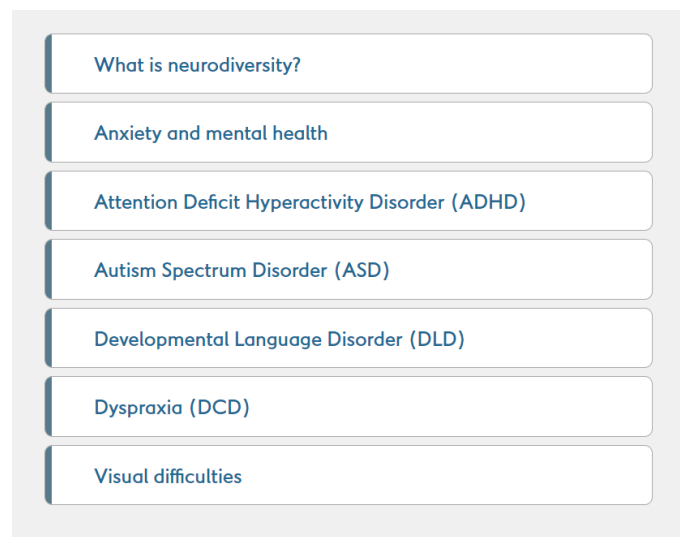
Communication/relationships

Does the child/adult have difficulty making eye-contact, communicating and making relationships, and showing appropriate behaviour? Is there a tendency towards some aspect of autism?

Neurodiversity and Co-occurring difficulties

Neurodiversity is a relatively new term. It helps to promote the view that neurological differences are to be recognised and respected as any other human variation. It is used to counter negative social connotations that currently exist and to make it easier for people of all neurotypes to contribute to the world as they are, rather than attempting to think or appear more 'typically'.

Neurodiversity encompasses all specific learning difficulties (SpLD), many of which co-occur or overlap. We have explored in more detail the SpLD that most often co-occur with dyslexia.



More information can be found here: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/neurodiversity-and-co-occurring-differences>

4. What do I do if I think my child is dyslexic?

If you suspect that your child may be dyslexic and would benefit from additional support then your first step should be to consult your child's teacher to discuss your concerns.

The SENCo may decide to carry out screening tests or checklists to find out more about your child's areas of strength and weakness in order to see how best they can be supported in the classroom. This support is called SEN Support. A screening tool does not provide an official diagnosis of dyslexia.

Your child's teacher will then consult the school's SENCo to discuss the next steps and appropriate support. The SEND Code of Practice states that if a teacher suspects that a learner has special educational needs (SEN) then they must inform the child's parents and include them in discussions about what is the best support for their child. They must also tell parents about any special educational provision that is made for their child. This will be communicated through informal discussions, parents' evenings, your child's one page profile and individual provision maps

A school doesn't need a formal diagnosis to put support in place for your child and shouldn't delay in providing appropriate support and/or interventions. However, a Diagnostic Assessment can help to ensure that the appropriate interventions are put in place for further education. This can be discussed with your child's class teacher or SENCO.

Diagnostic Assessment

The only way dyslexia can be formally diagnosed is through a Diagnostic Assessment carried out by a certified dyslexia assessor. This assessment will tell you if your child is dyslexic or not. You will receive a detailed report outlining areas of strengths and weaknesses and a clearer idea of your child's cognitive profile and how best to support them.

The aim of the assessment aim is:

- To highlight the young person's individual style of learning or working and what does/doesn't work for them
- To collect information about reading, spelling and writing skills
- To identify whether there is a clear discrepancy between general level of ability, and reading and writing attainment
- To consider other factors which may be affecting learning
- To identify whether any Reasonable Adjustments will need to be made in order for a young person to fully access the curriculum and exams
- Through consultation with the school's SENCo these assessments can either be requested by the school, or you can arrange and pay for an assessment privately.
- The British Dyslexia Association can offer advice, and arrange Diagnostic Assessments. Find out more on the BDA Assessment webpage.

Next steps

It is important to learn more about how you can help your child at home. Nessy have a wealth of resources to support parents from helping with learning spellings, getting organised and building self esteem. More information can be found here: <https://www.nessy.com/en-gb/dyslexia-explained/how-to-help-dyslexia>

How To Help Dyslexia

Once you have found out the basics about dyslexia, the next step is to learn how to help a child with dyslexia.



How To Help a Child: 3-4 years

Developing pre-literacy skills in very young children will help give them the best start.



How To Help a Child: 5-7 years

As soon as children start school it is important to develop essential phonological skills.

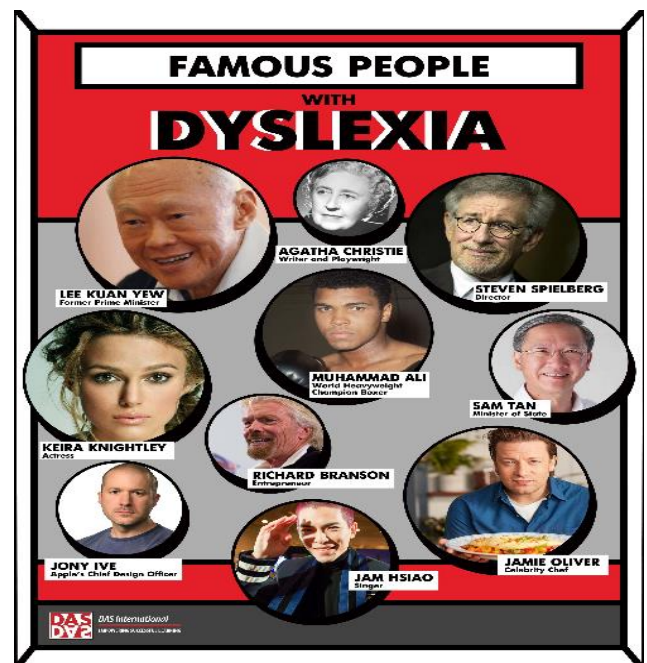


How To Help a Child: 8-12 years

Many dyslexic children that have not received effective early intervention by ages of 8 to 12, are likely to have fallen behind and are going to need additional accommodations to help them get through school.

Dyslexia is a neurological condition. Accept it. Help your child learn to not be ashamed of it. Dyslexia is a part of who they are. It is important to help them discover the ways in which they learn best. The sooner they understand it, the easier it will be for them to overcome it, and shine in life.

It is important to remember that there are positives to thinking differently. Many dyslexic people show strengths in areas such as reasoning and in visual and creative fields. There are many famous dyslexic people who have gone on to experience huge success. Share their stories with your child and talk about their own strengths and abilities.



A Final Note: Thank You for Reading

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this month's SEND newsletter, I hope you've found it informative and helpful. We are proud to be a dyslexia friendly school, with an extensive list of quality first strategies teachers use daily to support children with dyslexia. For more information about what you would find in the classroom, you can access Trafford's graduated approach found here which details some of the provisions we offer at St Anne's:

https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/trafford/fsd/files/table_of_interventions_1.pdf

If there's a specific topic you'd like me to cover in a future newsletter, I'd be delighted to hear from you. Similarly, if you've experienced some positive wins or have come across resources you find valuable and would like to share, your input would be most welcome. Together, we can continue to enrich our community with shared experiences and useful information.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your suggestions or questions.

Mrs McLoughlin

SENCO