



The Bellbird Primary School

A Guide to Dyslexia for Parents & Carers

This guide is designed to give you general information about how The Bellbird Primary School identifies and supports children who have dyslexic tendencies. Within it, there is a range of information that might help answer any questions you may have.

If you have concerns or worries at any time, you should share them with your child's teacher, SENCo or head teacher or any other professional working with your child.

**IF YOU NEED A LARGE PRINT COPY
PLEASE ASK THE OFFICE**

Please don't worry if your child may have dyslexic tendencies. There are lots of people in school who want to help and we will do all we can to make sure you and your child are happy.

There are a range of abbreviations used in this handbook and all of these can be found at the back of the handbook in the Glossary.

What is dyslexia?

Cambridgeshire Local Authority's definition of dyslexia is taken from The Rose Report, which was published in 2009 on behalf of the Government. It says that dyslexia is:

A learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

It happens across the range of intellectual abilities, and it is best thought of as a sliding scale, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.

Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness (knowing their letter sounds), verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Children may also have other difficulties in aspects of language, motor coordination (including dyspraxia), mental calculation, the 'sense of number' (dyscalculia), concentration and personal organisation.

Is my child dyslexic?

The Rose Report repeatedly emphasises that 'What matters most is to ensure that children's difficulties with literacy learning are identified and addressed in ways that advance their progress, whether or not the difficulties are described in terms of dyslexia'. We strongly support this view.

The Rose Report proposes that dyslexic difficulties are best thought of as existing on a scale from mild to severe. For this reason in school we refer to children having 'dyslexic tendencies' rather than referring them to an educational psychologist for a written diagnosis.

The Rose Report indicates that up until the end of Key Stage 1 it is difficult to distinguish which pupils are dyslexic. Irrespective of dyslexia, it is vital that difficulty in acquiring literacy skills is identified and addressed at this early age. How well pupils respond to early intervention, which can be very effective, may be significant in a later consideration of dyslexia.

Early signals that a child may have dyslexic tendencies include:

- poor letter-sound knowledge,
- poor phoneme (sound) awareness,
- poor ability to try to sound out new words,
- unusual spelling,
- problems copying.

There are three levels of identification and assessment of literacy and dyslexic difficulties:

Level 1: Monitor Progress

Teachers, often with parental input, notice individual differences in children's performance and adjust their teaching accordingly. Records of progress are kept, along with information about how a child has responded to any interventions (extra support) within the class. Parents are informed of any concerns and may be asked to have their child's hearing and vision checked.

Many children will make progress as a result of intervention support from within the classroom.

Level 2: Skills Assessment

Curriculum based assessment (spelling tests, monitoring of work across the curriculum) informs classroom teaching for a child. Supplementary assessments may be carried out giving further insight into the areas of difficulty a child may face and help suggest areas where specific intervention may be useful.

Where a learning difficulty is identified it helps the teacher provide focused support and set specific targets to work on with the child.

A Graduated Approach of Assess, Plan, Do and Review is used to help secure good outcomes following specific intervention work.

Children may:

- work individually with an adult to support their difficulties,
- work in a small group outside the classroom,
- receive extra support within the classroom.

Level 3: Comprehensive Assessment

If, following significant intervention within school, children are still not making expected progress, then the school may seek outside advice from the Local Authority's Specialist Teaching Team, an Educational Psychologist or a Specialist Dyslexia Teacher. This may result in children having increased SEN support.

When there are complex, linked difficulties, including social and emotional circumstances, or when a child is two or more national curriculum levels behind their peers, specialist advice will be sought.

Children at primary age will not usually be referred to an Educational Psychologist for a formal diagnosis of dyslexia, but their literacy and dyslexic difficulties will be recognised and fully supported.

You will be consulted and have your say about all the decisions that affect your child.

What do I do if I am concerned about my child's progress?

- First of all, make sure you go and see your child's class teacher as soon as possible. Please do not think that your worries are insignificant.
- The teachers will be happy to meet with you to discuss your concerns so that you can work together to seek the best possible ways forward for your child.
- If, for any reason, you feel you would rather talk to someone else about the situation, the SENCo would be more than willing to meet with you to discuss your concerns.
- There will be a number of different strategies that can be tried to help your child.

Remember, as a parent, you know your child best.

What will the school do to help my child?

The Bellbird Primary School will aim to ensure that best practice for children with dyslexic tendencies is found in every classroom. This is called 'creating a dyslexia friendly classroom' and includes:

- using structured techniques to appeal to all senses,
- providing appropriate additional support including ICT and other equipment such as different pens, coloured overlays or word banks,

- developing a co-operative classroom culture of peer support,
- encouraging questioning,
- allowing more time for tasks,
- keeping instructions short and issuing them one at a time,
- breaking down longer instructions into smaller chunks,
- repeating key phrases and words,
- checking for understanding,
- ensuring that children can see the board,
- using appropriate colours, fonts and font sizes,
- allowing alternative methods of recording work.

How I help my child?

Be positive about your child's achievements

- talk to the school if you have concerns,
- share information with the school i.e. doctors' letters about your child,
- support your child with any homework set,
- read daily with and to your child.

The BBC programme Newsround has produced an excellent insight into what it is like to live with dyslexia. This is available at
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/20783005>

What advice is there for parents/carers?

The Parent Partnership Service provide support and advice to parents whose children have SEN. It provides accurate and neutral information on the full range of options available to parents. It helps parents to make informed decisions about their child's education. Where parents want an independent parental supporter, the Service should provide one.

Parent Partnership Service,
Cambridgeshire County Council,
CC1101,Castle Court, Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP
Telephone: 01223 699214 **Email:** pps@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/parents/support/partnership/>

Dyslexia Action: [www. http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/](http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/) 01784 222300

British Dyslexia Association: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/> 0845 2519002

The Rose Report 'Identifying and Teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties' is available free of charge from: DoE Publications Centre, PO Box 2193, London or on the Department for Education website, www.education.gov.uk item number DCSF-00659-2009

Dyslexia: Guidance for Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire Local Offer

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20068/special_educational_needs_and_disabilities/412/the_local_offer

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 – 25

(June 2014)

Available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Glossary of abbreviations

DoE - Department of Education

EP - Educational Psychologist

LA - Local Authority

PPS - Parent Partnership Service

SEN - Special Educational Needs

SENCo - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulties

TA - Teaching Assistant