

Holy Cross Primary – A Dyslexia Friendly School

Holy Cross Primary School is a 'Dyslexia Friendly School'. As a Dyslexia Friendly School, we promote good practice for teaching and learning which benefits all children, not just those who may have a learning difference.

The basic principle of Dyslexia Friendly is: "If a child does not learn in the way we teach then we must teach him/her in the way in which he/she learns".

We provide a variety of teaching strategies and resources to support pupils with specific literacy difficulties:

- Classrooms are full of helpful resources that pupils can access at any time to support learning e.g. phonics, spellings, 100 squares
- We are a buff paper school, which means all printing is produced onto off-white paper
- Children are provided with reading rulers to their preferred colour to combat visual stress test.
- Teachers always change the background colour on the smart board from white to a pastel shade to reduce visual stress
- We use a variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic ways to help you learn
- Provide writing frames / planning formats
- Give feedback marking to help pupils improve and make the next step in their learning
- Teach in fun ways using a range of multi-sensory techniques e.g. with word games, puzzles, role play, song, bingo games
- Offer extra adult support.
- Vary the way information is recorded which includes use speech to text software

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 (to be able to hear, read and write letter sounds), verbal memory (to be able to say the word on the page) and verbal processing speed (e.g. to be able to recall words beginning with the letter 's'). Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.

Other difficulties can occur alongside dyslexia too - 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 extra support and intervention.

What will the school do if they think my child is dyslexic?

Teachers constantly monitor pupil progress and offer appropriate learning support as necessary. They are aware of the signs to look for and inconsistencies such as the child clearly has areas of ability as well as weaknesses. If the usual class support is not supporting a child's learning then the school will consider other additional support. This could be by having extra learning at a slower pace with the teacher or teaching assistant as part of a group or on their own, using additional resources to help a child learn (access to phonic cards, spelling lists), pre-teaching, help the child to discover their learning preferences and use these when learning new things. If all in class strategies that usually support all pupils is not helping a pupil learn we will assess their phonic knowledge, verbal memory and processing memory in more depth and plan ways to best support their learning. This may result in setting additional or different targets for the child that are written in an Individual Education Plan. (IEP) The IEP is reviewed regularly and new targets and/or strategies may be planned according to the pupils' progress. Parents are updated on their child's progress three times per year via parents' evenings.

If a pupil struggles to make any progress then additional professionals from outside school may need to meet with the child for further insight into their learning difficulties and strengths e.g. speech and language therapist, education psychologist. They may make

further suggestions for the child's IEP.

What should I do if I think my child is dyslexic?

Speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance who can inform you of the ways your child's learning is supported in school. The teacher may give you some strategies to use to help support your child's learning at home. One key way to improvement is to practise regularly.

If your child's class teacher feels further assessment of the pupil is required then they will inform the SENCO who will carry out further assessments and inform you of the outcome and suggest ways to aid your child's learning as is necessary.

Why can't you do these assessments until after the age of 7?

Many children under 7 make common literacy mistakes (whilst they are still learning) which are very similar to those children who display dyslexic tendencies. Therefore we do not always carry out in depth assessments unless the child is 7 plus. However that does not mean we wait until the child is 7 to support their learning. We run a number of additional learning programmes to support children with their phonics and reading in key stage 1 e.g. phonic groups, additional small group literacy support, etc.

How can I help my child?

- Do whatever you can to make reading an enjoyable activity.
- Reassure your child; just because they have difficulties with learning it does not mean that they are stupid.
- Give lots of praise. Raise confidence and try to encourage a 'can do' attitude.
- Let them know that it's okay to make mistakes; mistakes are a natural part of learning. Trying again and again is important.
- Repeat instructions willingly.
- Prompt your child as necessary. Don't let them struggle on needlessly.
- Encourage talents and interests. Remind your child what they are good at.
- Having literacy difficulties or being dyslexic does not rule out being successful.

Remember being Dyslexic means you have a learning difference. Pupils can help themselves by finding different ways to help them to learn.

Being Dyslexic did not stop these people from achieving great things:



Want to know more about dyslexia?

Try looking at some of these websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/20783005>

http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20070/special_educational_needs/416/dyslexia_friendly_schools

www.beingdyslexic.co.uk

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk