



St Peter's Methodist Primary School

Dyslexia Policy

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Rationale

Language and literacy skills play a crucial role in the pupils' ability to learn and achieve, underpinning learning across the curriculum. In recognition of this fact, we have devised our own school dyslexia policy.

Our school follows the Kent County Council (KCC) Dyslexia Policy (last revised 2015).

The definition of Dyslexia employed by KCC is the British Psychological Society definition (1999):

“Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the ‘word level’ and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching. ”

This is an educational model of dyslexia and therefore we refer to a ‘determination’ of dyslexia, rather than a ‘diagnosis’ which would be associated with a medical model.

We are aware that there are other models of dyslexia, including the discrepancy model, previously adopted by KCC - which refers to a difference between a cognitive ability and a significantly lower literacy attainment and is a medical model.

In the KCC Dyslexia policy it states, “Kent recognises well established research evidence which demonstrates that dyslexia can occur in children of all abilities. Poor phonological processing skills is almost universally agreed as being the underlying difficulty for children who find learning to read and spell particularly hard.” (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling and Scanlon, 2004)

Assessment for Dyslexia

We follow a stepped process of assessment for dyslexia at St Peter's. In our school the Mainstream Core Standards are in place, which details Quality First Teaching including systematic phonics teaching in the class room. This ensures all pupils have appropriate learning opportunities in all subjects, including literacy. Through our assessment systems, we will identify children who are experiencing difficulties in phonological processing and early word reading and/or spelling. Through cycles of plan, do and review we will support these children with targeted support, based on a thorough assessment of need supported. Interventions used to support children include Bear Necessities and Accelerated/Accelerwrite.

For children whose difficulties persist after these cycles of targeted support, we will provide more intensive, personalised support, also in cycles of plan, do and review. Assessment for dyslexia may be considered at this point.

KCC Dyslexia Policy states “Kent believes that school staff should have the skills necessary to identify and to intervene early with any child who has long term persistent difficulties with word level literacy skills (Dyslexia.) Teachers can identify children who have persistent difficulties with reading and spelling. This does not have to be carried out by an external specialist.” Parents / carers do not therefore need to seek private assessment unless they choose to do so. Our Inclusion Leader has been trained by the Specialist Teaching and Learning service to determine dyslexia.

At St Peter's we used the LASS software to identify literacy difficulties including dyslexia. Children will work on a 1:1 basis in a quiet space with our Inclusion Leader.

The four subtests used to determine dyslexia are:

- Phonological awareness
- Auditory short-term memory
- Single word spelling
- Single word reading

In addition to these subtests, other possible significant contributing factors are taken into account.

Causes of Dyslexia

Research is ongoing into the causes of dyslexia, and brain scans show there is a part of the left hemisphere of people with dyslexia that does not work in the same way as it does for people who do not have dyslexia. Dyslexia runs in families (for about 50% people who have dyslexia.)

Dyslexia does not present a life-long barrier to learning. "Recent research indicates that any inherited biological contribution to a child's difficulties in an area such as reading and spelling is very unlikely to be fixed but may be epigenetic (inherited but can be altered by the environment)" (KCC Policy)

Working with Parents and Carers

At St Peter's we are committed to regular and effective communication with parents and carers about their child's learning and progress. If a child is assessed by dyslexia, we will talk to you about why this has been done as well as discussion the implications of our findings.

"Schools will work in partnership with parents/carers and families and take careful account of the views of the child and their parents/carers. Schools are expected to ensure parents/carers are given appropriate information in order for them to understand how their child's needs are being met and how they can support their child at home." (KCC Policy)

Dyslexia is a learning difference, a combination of strengths and difficulties - "Schools should help parents/carers understand their child's strengths and difficulties, as well as supporting the child and ensuring that all staff who work with them are aware of the child's strengths and difficulties." (KCC Policy)

Dyslexia is best thought of as a continuum and not as a distinct category. About 20% of all children have some delay in their literacy skills, only about 14% of all children will have difficulties that fit the definition of dyslexia adopted by KCC.