

# Dyslexia & Dyslexic Traits



Marshfield Primary School



**Learning together, inspiring each other, achieving our best**

# Introduction

This guide has been written to explain to parents and carers what dyslexia is, how it can affect children's learning and what can be done to support children, both in school and at home.

Between ten to 15 percent of people have dyslexia. This means that dyslexia is the most common specific learning difference, effecting between 6.6 and 9.9 million people in the UK and between 800,000 and 1.3 million young people in education<sup>1</sup>.

*Figure 1 Educational Cost of Dyslexia - Report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dyslexia and other SpLDs, October 2019*

It is based on a range of evidence and research in the field of dyslexia, as well as on current practice in primary schools across South Gloucestershire. As with all guidance, it is a broad outline, but we recognise that every child is different – if you have any concerns about your child's learning, please contact your child's class teacher.

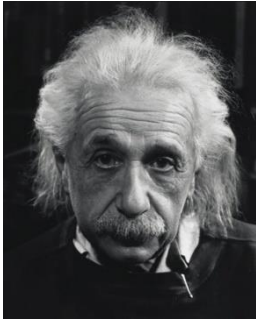
## What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a *specific learning difference* that has both positive and negative effects. The reason it is called *specific* is because it only impacts on certain areas of a person, rather than being a general learning difference that has an impact on all areas of someone's learning ability.

**A different way  
of processing  
information**

There is no connection between dyslexia and intelligence, overall ability or background. Dyslexia occurs across all sectors of society.

Research tells us that dyslexia stems from differences in the way that the brain processes certain sorts of information - particularly, it is thought, language-based information.



*Albert Einstein - dyslexic  
discoverer of the theory of  
relativity*

The key point here is that it is these physiological differences in the brain that lead to the challenges that individuals with dyslexia experience; it is not lack of ability, poor parenting or poor education.

As human beings we are all different. Whilst there may be some things which

**Every individual  
is likely to be  
different**

are generally the same associated with dyslexia, each child is different. People are shaped not just by their dyslexia but

by personality, experiences, parents or carers, environment and numerous other factors.

Dyslexia is genetic in origin and therefore can be passed on to further generations. This can mean that the parents or carers

of pupils with dyslexia may also have experienced or still be experiencing similar difficulties to their children.



*Tom Cruise - dyslexic  
winner of three golden  
globes and star of more  
than fifty films*

There is increasing evidence that the strengths of dyslexia can bring real advantages in the right environments; the

**The Royal College  
of Art reports  
that 29% of its  
students have  
dyslexia.**

creative sectors have far more people with dyslexia than in the general population and 40% of self-made millionaires have dyslexia.

## What do we do in school?

At Marshfield, we use a range of strategies to support learners with dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies:



*Mohammed Ali -  
dyslexic heavyweight  
boxing champion of  
the world*

### In the classroom, we:

- ensure that all pupils can see the teacher's face clearly, and vice versa;
- consider seating pupils with dyslexia near to the front of the class, with a close friend to act as a 'buddy';
- reduce distractions, e.g. shut doors to reduce noise and try to maintain a cool, but not chilly room temperature;
- check that all pupils have enough personal space at their desk to aid their ability to focus.

### When giving instructions, we:

- give a clear overview of what will be covered at the beginning of the lesson;
- break instructions down into clear, simple steps and give no more than three pieces of information at a time;
- repeat instructions as necessary, in a friendly, patient manner;
- check pupils understand by asking them to explain what has been said;
- use connectives to signpost instructions, e.g. 'firstly', 'secondly', 'next' and 'finally';
- display key words on the board or somewhere prominent, and ensure they are visible for the whole lesson;
- use visual prompts to make explanations clear and handouts where necessary;
- develop clear routines for home learning.

### **When providing written material, we can:**

- reduce the glare of black text on white paper by printing handouts on pastel-coloured paper or by using a pastel coloured overlay over white paper;
- provide 'reading rulers' for pupils who find that text 'jumps around' on the page;
- use a minimum font size of 12 or 14 and avoid justifying text, so there is a ragged right margin. This can help pupils to follow the lines of text with their finger when reading;
- double-line space and insert a line between paragraphs to make text easier to read;
- put headings and important information in bold text or highlight, to make them easier to scan;
- present information simply, using bullet points, images or diagrams when possible;
- 'chunk' numbers to make them easy to remember and/or copy, e.g. 864 126 321.



### **When teaching spelling and handwriting, we:**

- teach vocabulary associated with words, such as vowels, consonants, syllables, suffixes, prefixes and homophones (words that sound the same, but are spelled differently), to aid learning;
- help pupils to learn the spelling of tricky words by using amusing mnemonics;
- encourage pupils to spell words aloud, allowing time for repetition or revision of learning;
- use multi-sensory methods to reinforce letter writing, e.g. interactive whiteboards, iPads, spelling/writing apps;

- teach pupils how to write using cursive script when developmentally appropriate, as it can aid the 'physical memory' of each letter;
- consider the use of rubber pen grips or typing of written work for pupils with severe writing difficulties.

A continuous flow of writing also helps to improve handwriting speed and pupils are less likely to reverse letters such as 'b' and 'd'.

### **To build confidence, we:**

- do not cross incorrect work, but use a pink dot, following up misconceptions with pupil;
- do not draw attention to every spelling error, but focus on the most useful keywords for spelling correction;
- do not minimise difficulties – instead, help pupils to recognise, understand and tackle problems;
- set achievable targets, with clear steps to help pupils meet them;
- encourage independent learning, nurture strengths and praise effort rather than ability – a growth mind-set!



### **To encourage learning strategies, we:**

- encourage the use of highlighters to select key information from key texts;
- use writing frames to help pupils organise their ideas and structure written work;

*Pablo Picasso - dyslexic international artist and co-founder of the Cubist movement*

- create a short checklist of error patterns for pupils to look out for, such as spelling errors, commas, full-stops, capital letters and apostrophes;
- give pupils time to organise equipment at the beginning of the lesson, and to clear away at the end;
- allow pupils enough 'thinking time' to process any information or instructions;
- never demand a complete re-write of work.



### **What can I do at home to support my child?**

Speak to your child's class teacher for strategies that you can use at home to support your child. This may be around reading support, working memory or spelling, depending on your child's need.

## Further support and resources

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk) – the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) has been the voice of dyslexic people since 1972. It is a membership organisation working to achieve a dyslexia-friendly society for all.

<http://www.parentchampions.org.uk> - Parent Champions are ordinary people who have a passion for supporting children who struggle with literacy. They do this by championing the cause, pointing parents and carers in the direction of where they can get help and support from our partner organisations.

### Podcasts:

**Truth about Dyslexia** – “Welcome to The Truth About Dyslexia podcast, up to 20% of the population could be dyslexic - I wanted to share my journey, what I am learning, doing and understanding to see if it can help other adult dyslexics.”

**Dyslexia is our Superpower** – “I, like many dyslexics, (sadly) grew up thinking I was stupid. I don't want anyone else thinking they are dumb, less valued than those around them, or not good enough because their brain isn't '*normal*'. That's why I created the Dyslexia Is Our Superpower Podcast.”

**Exploring Different Brains** – “A weekly interview show hosted by Harold Reitman, MD., and presented by DifferentBrains.com. Join us as we speak with some of the most interesting people involved in autism, Asperger's, dyslexia, ADHD, OCD, down syndrome, and any condition that can be considered "neuro-diverse.”

**The Dyslexia Quest Podcast** – “The Dyslexia Quest is the fastest growing media platform in all of the special education genre, featuring interviews with the leading experts in the field



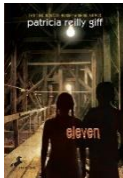
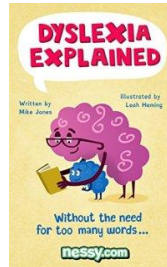
of intelligence, learning, flourishing and neurodiversity, as well as profiling uber- successful dyslexics to share their story and wisdom.”

### Books:

Fish in a Tree, Linda Hunt

Dyslexia Explained, Nessy

Eleven, Patricia Reilly Giff

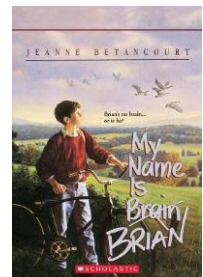


*Eleven, Patricia Reilly Giff - Imagine finding, in a box in your grandfather's attic, a newspaper clipping that reveals something shocking about your past — that you'd been kidnapped as a child — but you can barely read it thanks to a learning issue...*

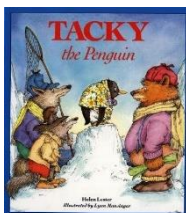
My Name is Brian, Jeanne Betancourt

*My Name Is Brian Brian, Jeanne Betancourt - Brian has always known he has some kind of problem with reading and writing, and he dreads the start of school each year because of it...*

*Ages 8-12*



Tacky the Penguin, Helen Lester



*Tacky the Penguin, Helen Lester - In this enchanting children's book, we find Tacky: An oddball, out-of-the-box thinker struggling to fit in with a colony of perfect penguins, and learning how to think positively about his lack of "perfection."*

*Ages 4 - 7*

## References

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