George Spencer Family of Schools – Dyslexia Policy

The George Spencer Family of schools Dyslexia Policy runs alongside the Individual Schools Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

Aims:

For all pupils to be able to achieve their very best so they can and feel positive about their strengths and prepared to try new learnings in and out of school.

This will be achieved by:

- Identifying pupils with dyslexic tendencies as early as possible so that they are monitored and tracked
- Identifying the strengths and weakness of the pupil in relations to dyslexia.
- Identifying ways in which to support pupils with dyslexic tendencies effectively within our family of schools.
- Adopting a whole family of schools approach to training, provision, support to ensure consistency and having a positive impact on the transition of pupils across school
- Ensuring pupils and parents are informed and involved in decision making around assessment and subsequent provision.

What is Dyslexia?

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) adopted Sir Jim Rose's 2009 report 'Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties'. It states:-

- '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 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.

Dyslexia is also referred to as a 'Specific Learning Difficulty'; where the emphasis is on identifying the weaknesses and the focus of support has been through the Special Needs Department, however there has been a body of work which sees it as a 'Specific Learning Difference'. Using the latter model, there is an

emphasis on pupil strengths and learning preferences, with focus on how all lessons are planned, resourced and taught. The 'difference' model emphasises inclusive teaching strategies designed to empower all learners to be the best they can be. *(See Appendix A)*

Dyslexia falls within Cognition and Learning as a broad area of need in the June 2014 SEND Code of Practice. Teachers adapt teaching methods to address the learning needs within the classroom and through identifying pupils' strengths and learning styles; these can be used to support their areas of weakness. With this approach, an assessment of dyslexia is not required in order to begin implementing strategies to support dyslexic learners as these are embedded in dyslexia Early Identification: friendly classroom practice. For some students, high quality universal teaching will not be sufficient and concerns are beginning to be raised at this point about the learning and progress of individual pupils, these will be addressed through a graduated response. See appendix A: Key Stage 1&2 Appendix B: Key Stage 3&4

The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision improves long-term outcomes for the child or young person.

The identification process will include:
- Pupil views
- Staff concerns and observations
- Information shared by parents regarding their child and their needs
- Pupil progress and teacher assessments
- Using baseline data to analyse areas causing concern

Holistic Approach
A holistic approach is sought to ensure pupils' needs are fully met. Feedback from pupils, parents and staff are valued at every stage of the process.

The first response to concerns will be the provision of high quality teaching with adaptations and differentiation to encompass the strengths and needs of all pupils. Lessons will be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and remove barriers to pupil achievement, which will be monitored through school tracking systems.

Further assessments will take place if the pupil needs are not being met purely through class teacher input and differentiation in the classroom.   If the pupil needs are such that they require input that is 'additional too and different from' their peers, they will be added to the SEN support register. The aim of formally identifying a pupil is to ensure that effective provision is put in place for the removal of barriers to learning. At this stage the school will refer to The Nottinghamshire School Pathway for Assessment of Dyslexia (Appendix C)

Screening, Assessment and Monitoring:

Assessing pupil needs and the support of additional provision will follow the Graduated Approach as described in the new SEND guidelines (June 2014). This consists of a four part process;

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- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

(See appendix A or B)

Each schools' detailed information about this can be found SEND Policy and SEN Information Report/Local Offer.

Interventions and provision will be closely monitored by all concerned. Good practise, advice and support will be provided by all staff across the family of schools and co-ordinated by the family SENCO.

Schools in the Nottinghamshire local authority do not provide a formal assessment of dyslexia as good practice for working with pupils with dyslexia and other literacy needs is adopted within our family without the need for a full diagnostic assessment. This formal dyslexia assessment is not required by schools to put in place provision or to apply for access arrangements for formal exams.

Strategies to support the dyslexic learner:

The George Spencer family of schools use a variety of interventions which are specifically selected to meet the particular needs of the pupil:

- Ongoing informal assessments from teaching and support staff
- Colour Overlays, reading rulers, coloured work books may be used if appropriate.
- Changing the background colours on the white board, PowerPoints,
- Reading schemes that support Dyslexic pupils e.g Barrington Stoke (on buff paper)
- Visual Timetables
- Individual Timetables
- Handwriting guidance sheets on tables
- High frequency spellings on the walls.
- Key words displayed on tables
- Word Mats
- Mind mapping
- Writing frames
- Work Buddies
- Use of ICT to support learners, eg Dragon Speak, Google drive
- Sympathetic marking concerning spellings differentiated work
- Modification of resource reading age
- Emotional support

Interventions:

A selection of the following interventions are used within the family of schools to support: spelling, handwriting, memory and reading

- Switch On – reading intervention
- Toe by Toe
- Word Shark
- Nessy
- Acceleread / Accelewrite
- 1 minute phonics
- 5 minute box
- Thrass
- Lexia
- Rising Stars
- Catch up Literacy
- Extracted spelling interventions
- Key skills lessons
- Handwriting intervention

Access Arrangements:

When schools are applying for access arrangements for external school exams, such as KS2 SATs and GCSEs, a dyslexia assessment is no longer accepted as a reason for having extra time or a reader. At KS1, SATs are teacher assessed the school does not have to apply for extra time. Guidance is provided with each test, for example what we can or can't read to the children.

At KS2 a small number of pupils may need additional arrangements so they can take part in the KS2 tests. Head teachers and/or teachers and SENCO's must consider whether any of their pupils will need to access arrangements before they administer the tests.
Access arrangements should be based primarily on normal classroom practise for pupils with particular needs. They must never provide an unfair advantage. The support given must not change the test questions and the answers must be the pupils own.

For KS3, KS4 and KS5 a series of tests have to be administered by a professional with a specific qualification and an application will be made for pupils that meet the criteria set by the specific examination board. If an application for access arrangements is approved parents, pupils and staff will be informed of the outcome. Access arrangements may include use of a word processor, extra time, a reader and an amanuensis (writer).

Transition New Year group, School or University

Information gathered regarding any pupil with dyslexia, in terms of their strength and weakness profile and strategies which are used to support and access arrangements that are in place will each year be shared with the pupil's new teacher, be that in the same school or with a change of placement. This transfer of information will enable a smooth transition to the next teacher, enabling the pupil to have continuity of approach, in terms of strategies used in class.

When a pupil is making the transition to a new school, the SENCO / Head teacher will seek as much information to ensure that all staff are aware of the needs of all the pupils and provision can be put in place to meet those needs as effectively as possible. This is relevant to all phases, including Year 11 to Post 16 to University. The admission criteria for every university are variable in regards to dyslexia assessments requirements and who should carry them out. It is essential you check the criteria guidelines. Many universities will only acknowledge assessments if they have been carried out within the last two years, but requirements vary between different establishments.

LA Support Services (*See Appendix C)*

If, after following the graduated response a pupil continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence based support the school should consider involving a specialist from the local authority. This process begins through discussion at termly Springboard meetings to gain further advice. Parental consent will be required.

 Schools can access support from Nottinghamshire LA, Schools and Family Specialist Services
- Cognition and Learning Team
- Senior Teacher for Dyslexia
- Educational Psychology Service

This policy has been developed in collaboration with all the SENCOs within the George Spencer family and with reference to:

- SEND Code of Practice 2014
- Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties – Sir Jim Rose (2009)
- Nottinghamshire Local Authority Guide to Dyslexia
- The Nottinghamshire Guide to Dyslexia Friendly Schools
- Dyslexia Friendly School Pack
- Local offer
- Parent Partnership: Local help and information for parents of children with SEN particularly assisting with meetings with schools. Tel: 01736 751 921 Email: PPS@Disabilitycornwall.org.uk www.cornwallpps.org.uk
- The British Dyslexia Association National Helpline
- 0118 9 66 82 71 www.bdadyslexia.org.uk (Many useful information sheets to print out or the website has the facility to read out text.)
- Dyslexia Action (Information about dyslexia, teaching qualifications and courses, resources and other useful information.) 01784 22 23 00
- Website www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk
- IPSEA: Independent Panel of Special Education Advisers - lists Educational Psychologists and other professionals who can give advice on SEN related matters. 0800 0 18 40 16.
- ACE: Advisory Centre for Education National Helpline 0808 8 00 57 93. 10am - 5.00 pm. Website www.ace-ed.org.uk If the call is because of an exclusion 0207 7 04 98 22 for a free booklet or the Exclusion Advice line 0808 8 00 03 27.
- https://www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-how-to-use-access-arrangements
- http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-system/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration