



Dyslexia & dyslexic traits

Barley Close Community
Primary School



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.

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.

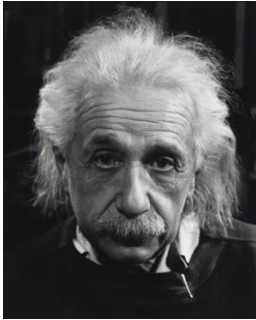
What is dyslexia?

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 language-based information.



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

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

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

**Every individual
is likely to be
different**



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

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.

There is increasing evidence that the strengths of dyslexia can bring real advantages in the right environments; the creative sectors have far more people with dyslexia than in the general population. Up to 40% of self-made millionaires have dyslexia.

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

What do we do in school?

At Barley Close, 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:

- provide children with resources which support their learning that are easily accessible to them.
- personalised resources to support specific needs of the individual child.
- 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
- reduce distractions as much as possible
- check that all pupils have enough personal space at their desk to aid their ability to focus.

When giving instructions, we:

- give an 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/prompts on the board or working wall , and ensure they are visible for the whole lesson;
- use visual prompts to make explanations clear and handouts where necessary;

When providing written material, we:

- 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;
- 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.



When teaching spelling and handwriting, we:

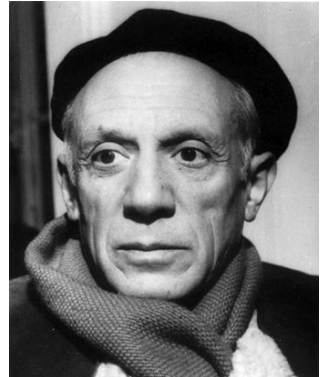
- teach vocabulary associated with words, such as vowels, consonants, syllables, suffixes, prefixes and homophones (words that sound the same, but are spelled differently), to aid learning.
- help pupils to learn the spelling of tricky words by using amusing mnemonics;
- encourage pupils to spell words aloud, allowing time for pre learning, repetition or revision of learning;
- use multi-sensory methods to reinforce letter writing, e.g. interactive whiteboards, iPads, spelling/writing apps;
- teach primary pupils how to write using cursive script when developmentally appropriate, as it can aid the 'physical memory' of each letter.
- use rubber pencil grips
- Use laptops to type work or assistive technology such as 'Clicker' (personalised writing iPad APP) for those

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

with severe writing difficulties.

To build confidence, we:

- 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.



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

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;
- 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I get my child tested for dyslexia?

At school, when children are identified as struggling with reading or writing, children can be screened for dyslexic traits. This is done using a screening tool called *Dyslexia Screener*. The test provides a report which suggests the likelihood of dyslexic traits and the areas of strength and weakness the child has. **It is not an official test of dyslexia**, but it does provide useful information in terms of what type of support a child may need in school. An official diagnosis of dyslexia can only be completed by specially trained dyslexia assessors.

At Barley Close we work closely with the Educational Psychology service and Inclusion Support Service who also advise and support children in our school with dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies and the teachers working with them.

Where can I get my child tested for dyslexia?

The British Dyslexia Centre in Bristol (www.dyslexiacentre.co.uk) are able to conduct official assessments for dyslexia. The tests cost around £500.

What can I do at home to support my child?

Speak to your child's class teacher for strategies specific for reading and learning that suits your child's learning styles and their individual needs.



- Establish routines and use checklists and prompts to remind your child of what steps they need to take including for homework and daily organisation eg getting ready for school.
- Colour code timetables and belongings.

- Read instructions together and paraphrase so they are easy to understand.
- Break instructions into smaller steps
- Lots of praise, especially when they are trying their best, “It was really good when you...”
- Do not compare their work to siblings or other children. Celebrate what they can do.

Where can I find helpful tips and information to help me support my child?

- Our school website is regularly updated with information and helpful resources
<https://www.barleycloseschool.co.uk/inclusion-and-pupil-premium/>
- A very helpful guide to supporting your child from East Sussex County Council
[https://www.st-james-coldwaltham.w-sussex.sch.uk/docs/How to help your child with dyslexia 281 29.pdf](https://www.st-james-coldwaltham.w-sussex.sch.uk/docs/How_to_help_your_child_with_dyslexia_281_29.pdf)
- British Dyslexia Association have lots of information on helping with homework
<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/children/how-can-i-support-my-child/homework>
- Mrs Alison King can be contacted for advice and information via the school office or
Alison.king@barleyclose.org.uk



Alison King
 Inclusion Manager and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). Member of senior leadership team (SLT)

Further support and resources

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

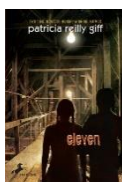
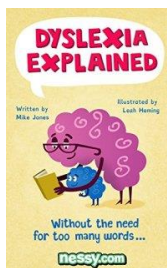
profiling uber- successful dyslexics to share their story and wisdom.”

Books:

Fish in a Tree, Linda Hunt

Dyslexia Explained, Nessy

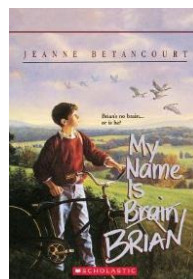
Eleven, Patricia Reilly Giff



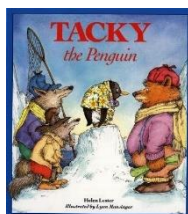
Eleven, Patricia Reilly Giff - Imagine finding, in a box in your grandfather's attic, a newspaper clipping that reveals something shocking about your past — that you'd been kidnapped as a child — but you can barely read it thanks to a learning issue...

My Name is Brian, Jeanne Betancourt

*My Name Is ~~Brain~~ 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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