



## **Supporting students with Dyslexia and literacy difficulties at Richard Hale School**

### **What is Dyslexia?**

“Dyslexia is a learning difficulty (or difference) that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

Dyslexia occurs across a range of intellectual ability.

Additional difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor coordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation.

Dyslexia is on a continuum.

A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds to well informed intervention.”

*(Sir Jim Rose Identifying and teaching children with dyslexia and literacy difficulties 2009).*

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## How do Richard Hale support students with Dyslexia?

The vast majority of students with a dyslexia diagnosis or dyslexic tendencies will have their needs met through adaptive teaching in the classroom.

This can be supported with reasonable adjustments to support students with dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies in their learning. Such adjustments might include:

- Use of a laptop or Chromebook in lessons after discussion with the SENCO (devices are provided by parents unless the student is funded for additional support)
- Resources uploaded to Google classroom or printed as handouts.
- Handouts, tests and assessments printed onto coloured paper.

The Student Support Centre can also assist with coloured overlay testing (we cannot provide overlays for use in the classroom but can work with students to identify appropriate colour to purchase).

In addition to high quality classroom teaching adapted to meet the needs of individuals with dyslexia, the school may offer further interventions for students with dyslexia who are not making expected progress in the classroom.

These interventions might include:

- Additional literacy lessons for identified students, taught and overseen by the English department.
- Reading, spelling, writing or phonics interventions for identified students, overseen by the Student Support Centre.
- Touch-typing support.
- Homework Club (Mon-Thurs until 4.20 in the Library).
- Assessment for Exam Access Arrangement.

## **Studying a Modern Foreign Language at Richard Hale**

It is a commonly held belief that learning a modern foreign language will be too difficult for a student with dyslexia or literacy difficulties, but the research suggests that this is unfounded.

The British Dyslexia Association comments: 'Dyslexia specialists generally agree that dyslexic children should be given the opportunity to learn a foreign language. Many dyslexic children will enjoy the multi-sensory methods of language teaching which involve role play, games, singing and other group activities. Learning a foreign language broadens pupils' horizons as their awareness of other cultures develops.'

While it may take longer for dyslexic learners to learn a foreign language and they may experience similar difficulties as they did when learning to read and write in English, there are significant benefits. Learning a language can help students identify patterns in words that will support them with spelling and grammar in English. Strategies used in an MFL classroom are also invaluable in helping students with dyslexia develop their skills in learning and memorising key information. Tasks such as finding the true and false statements in a text, linking the spoken sounds/words to the written sounds/words, identifying words with similar spelling, sounds and meanings are a few examples of activities that Modern Languages teachers employ on a regular basis. These will help all learners. Finally, for students whose language processing abilities often encounter obstacles, learning a new language can impact positively on self-esteem and motivation.

## How can I support my child at home?

### Reading

Reading aloud is the foundation for literacy development. It is the single most important activity for reading success. It provides children with a demonstration of phrased, fluent reading. Children can listen on a higher language level than they can read, so reading aloud makes complex ideas more accessible and exposes children to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech. This, in turn, helps them understand the structure of books when they read independently. It exposes less able readers to the same rich and engaging books that fluent readers read on their own, and entices them to become better readers. Students of any age benefit from hearing an experienced reading of a wonderful book.

Several researchers have published work that helps us understand that very simple, small actions during reading can have a big impact on what a child takes away from sharing a book with an adult. Children being read to almost always focus on illustrations or looking up at the adult reader. The child's eyes almost never look at the print on the page, yet that's where children can learn the most about letters, sounds, and words. To get the most out of a shared reading, guide their attention to printed words. Doing so may help the child's reading, spelling, and comprehension skills down the road. To help direct their attention to the print in a book, you can focus on specific parts of it, including:

- The meaning of the print. This includes pointing out specific words within a book and drawing the child's attention to the print. For example, "Here are Matilda's words. She says, 'thank you'."
- The organisation of the book and print, which includes understanding the way pages are read, the role of the author, and print direction. For example, "I am going to read this section, see where the section is marked by this large gap?"
- The letters. Struggling readers may need help remembering that letters come in uppercase and lowercase, and help learning the names of each letter. For example, "This M in the red block is an uppercase letter. See how this uppercase letter is bigger than these lowercase letters?"
- The words, which includes helping them recognise some written words, and the match between spoken words and written words. For example, "Let's point to each word as I read it. Ready?"

## Questioning

As you read with your child, question them to make sure they understand what they are reading. The kind of questions you could ask are categorised in the table below:

Area	Example Questions
<b>Information Retrieval</b> (checking they are understanding what's on the page)	Where did .... go on this page? Who are the characters we've met so far? What did this character do? What did this character say?
<b>Inference</b> (checking they are picking up on clues and reading beyond the text)	Why do you think the character did this? How do you think the character is feeling at this point? Why do you think the character said this? How does this compare to how they were feeling earlier?
<b>Predicting</b> (trying to guess what's going to happen in the future of the book)	What do you think will happen next? How do you think this will make the character feel? How do you think it's going to end?
<b>Summarising</b> (briefly saying what's going on)	What's happened so far? What's happened on this page?
<b>Application</b> (applying what's going on in the story to themselves)	Can you relate to how this character is feeling? Would you have made the same decision? Why/why not? Do you know anyone like that?
<b>Synthesis</b> (how well can they explain how the book fits in the wider categories)	What genre(s) does this book fit into? How do you feel about the ending of the book? Would you change anything? Why?
<b>Evaluation</b> (allows them to work out what they like/don't like each time)	How effective do you think the writing is? How would you compare this to....? Could this happen in reality?

## **PEER reading**

The best story times are very interactive: you can use the PEER method to help remember a few important ways to read in this interactive way.

**P:** Prompt the child with a question about the story. Prompting them focuses their attention, engages them in the story, and helps them understand the book. Example: Point out something in the book, for example, a character trait, "What do you think of Miss Trunchbull? Is she a nice person?"

**E:** Evaluate the child's response. Example; "That's right! I think she's pretty horrible too."

**E:** Expand on what the child said, using specific instances (evidence) from the book Example: "In fact, it was very mean of her to make him eat all that cake."

**R:** Repeat or revisit the prompt you started with, encouraging them to use the new information you've provided and, if there is an opportunity, relate it to something else that has happened in the text, or ask them to. Example: "Can you think of another time Miss Trunchbull was mean?"

## Visualisation

One way to help a child comprehend what they are reading is to encourage them to visualise parts of the story in their mind. These "mind movies" help clarify information and increase understanding, and can be done with fiction or nonfiction texts. The images can include any of the five senses. Some of the books you read with the child may already contain beautiful illustrations, so try this visualisation practice with the longer books you use as your read aloud. Or, sit facing them and read a few pages without having them look at the pictures. Then follow these few simple steps to provide your child with practice developing their mental images:

- Begin reading. Pause after a few sentences or paragraphs that contain good descriptive information.
- Share the image you've created in your mind, and talk about which words from the book helped you "draw" your picture. Your picture can relate to the setting, the characters, or the actions. By doing this, you are modelling the kind of picture making you want them to do.
- Talk about how these pictures help you understand what's happening in the story.
- Continue reading. Pause again and share the new image you created. Then ask them to share what they see, hear, taste, smell and feel. Ask what words helped them create the mental image and emotions.
- Are your images identical? Probably not! This is a great time to talk about why your images might be different. Perhaps the child went on a school trip or had a school assembly that changed the way they created the picture in their mind. Perhaps experiences you've had as an adult influenced what you "drew." These differences are important to understand and respect.
- Read a longer portion of text and continue the sharing process

## Spelling strategies

**A mnemonic is a memory aid - something that helps you remember things.**

- beautiful - big elephants are ugly
- because - big elephants can't always use small entrances.
- rhythm - rhythm has your two hips moving.
- tomorrow - trails of my old red rose over window.

**Find words within words.**

- measurement - You should be sure of your measurements before you start work.
- secretary - A secretary must keep a secret.
- special - The CIA have special agents.
- business - There's a bus in business.

**Break the word down into syllables**

- wed - nes - day
- parl - i - a - ment
- bus - i - ness
- cem - e - ter - y
- en - vir - on - ment
- choc - o - late
- ter - rib - le
- fri - end

**Sound out silent letters**

- bus **i** ness
- parl **a** ment
- gover **n** ment
- com **b**
- phle **g** m
- mini **a** ture

### Learn a spelling rule

- i before e except after c - receipt/believe
- magic e - hop/hope, bit/bite
- double an l with a vowel suffix - travel/traveller, enrol/enrolled

### Find the root word, prefix or suffix to decode meaning

- **dis** - satisfy
- **un** - prepared
- **trans** - atlantic
- **uni** - form
- **pre** - natal
- **ante** - natal

### Highlight the difficult bits

- necessary - 1 collar, 2 sleeves
- embarrassed - you go really red
- separate - there's a rat in separate
- accommodation - 2 c's need an m each to live in
- dessert - is sickly sweet



## Recommended reads for boys who struggle with reading:

Boys at Richard Hale often seem to like reading about football or footballers. There are lots of books in this category.

There are some great books by Matt and Tom Oldfield. For example, **Unbelievable Football: How Football can change the World**. There are two volumes available. These are very readable short stories, each of them true and interesting (even if you're not too bothered about football!)

Matt and Tom Oldfield have also written '**The Ultimate Football Heroes Series**' - all major football heroes covered. These books do use very simple language but if they can hook your son into the reading habit then it's a good start.

Marcus Rashford has also written some books that have been popular with the boys - '**You are a Champion, How to be the best you can be**' (co-written with Carl Anka) and the follow up, '**You Can Do It, How to find your voice and make a difference**'.

If football doesn't interest your son, I would still recommend **short stories** to begin with. They can easily be read in one sitting and then it's super easy to ask questions at the end of each story (to check comprehension). Very readable short stories include:

**Survivors: 'Extraordinary tales from the wild and beyond'** - all true stories, by David Long and Kerry Hyndman

**New Scientist: Why Don't Penguin's Feet Freeze?' (and 114 other questions)** Very easy to pick up and read in short bursts. If your son enjoys science, '**A short history of nearly everything: A journey through space and time**' by Bill Bryson.

**'The Book of Hopes' Edited by Katherine Rundell** - Lots of short stories put together during the pandemic, on a whole range of topics.

A longer, but extremely gripping book is: **The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman**. The cheapest version of this you can get on Amazon for about £5, illustrated by Chris Riddell. If you enjoy graphic novels there is a fantastic graphic novel adaptation of this one by P. Craig Russell, split into volumes 1 and 2.

If your son is an extremely reluctant reader at the moment, just go with anything he shows an interest in

The Barrington Stoke website is also a great source of very readable but accessible books for young adults: [barringtonstoke.co.uk/dyslexic-reluctant-readers](https://barringtonstoke.co.uk/dyslexic-reluctant-readers)

### Useful links:

British Dyslexia Association - <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Dyslexia Assist - <https://dyslexia-assist.org.uk/links/>