

## West Sussex Dyslexia Aware School Award

This year, the school is working towards achieving the West Sussex Dyslexia Aware School Award. The school is focused on raising whole school awareness of barriers to learning and meeting the needs of dyslexic learners. Research supports the view that good teaching and learning for dyslexic pupils is good practice for all learners. (Teresa Haynes and Anne Bouet, West Sussex Specialist Advisory Teachers)

### What is dyslexia?

'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. 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.' Rose (2009)

This is the definition agreed in 2009 by the expert advisory group for the Rose Report entitled, 'Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties.' This definition has been adopted by the major UK dyslexia organisations including BDA, Dyslexia Action, PATOSS, and The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust.

The core features of dyslexia identified in the Rose (2009) definition are difficulties with:

Phonological Awareness - the ability to hear and analyse the sounds within words. Phonological awareness skills include the ability to rhyme, blend sounds to make words, segment sounds in a word, delete sounds or swap sounds around as in spoonerisms and word play. Phonological awareness is understood to be the key skill that enables the learning of phonics and therefore the acquisition of the alphabetic principle.

Verbal memory - the ability to remember and manipulate information heard or presented orally, such as hearing a repeating a word never heard before. For an adult verbal memory is used when trying to repeat a foreign word.

Verbal processing speed - the ability to access, rapidly, spoken information from memory. This is often tested by asking pupils to read out long lists of digits, or name objects and timing how long it takes. Difficulties in these areas can be thought of as reflecting a core weakness in the systems that are involved in processing information

about word-sounds (phonology) and their impact is primarily seen on the development of decoding and encoding skills in reading and spelling.

## What are we doing to help pupils with dyslexic tendencies?

The school will identify children who have dyslexic tendencies as early as possible so that appropriate support can be provided. We will talk to you about areas of learning that your child might be finding difficult and discuss the support we have put in place to support them. The school will regularly monitor and assess the support given and adjust it accordingly. All teachers and teaching assistants will have dyslexia awareness training. This will mean that they will be able to help pupils learn more effectively, using a range of strategies and resources.

## What should I do if I think my child has dyslexic tendencies?

If you have concerns, please come in and talk to your class teacher.

If you would like to find out more about dyslexia, you might like to visit some of the following websites.

<http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/>

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>

<https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/>