



Supporting Literacy Needs Policy

January 2026

1. Introduction

At Walnut Tree Walk, we recognise that it is important for all children to be challenged and supported to reach their full potential. This is through:

- Challenge for all: All children, at all current attainment levels, must be challenged and encouraged to develop as independent learners.
- Appropriate scaffolding and support that is not limiting: Support staff should be used to support all groups of learners and not just the lower attaining pupils.
- Differentiation: Sometimes this is both appropriate and necessary but it must not be used in a way that might limit individual children or groups or for it to become a 'glass ceiling'.

Children with Literacy difficulties should be supported in a way that matches their specific needs. Literacy needs can be caused by one or more factors including cognitive needs, executive function difficulties or language or social communication difficulties. Additionally, if a child has experienced a significant disruption to their education and missed parts of their schooling, they experience emotional barriers to learning or they have vision or hearing difficulties, this could also impact on their literacy development.

2. Principles

Section 3 outlines the typical pathway of support that a child who has specific literacy difficulties will receive during their time at Walnut Tree Walk. It is based on the following principles, which the Educational Endowment Fund have set out in their reports on supporting literacy skills in primary schools:

- 1: High-quality classroom teaching** is of the greatest benefit to all learners, including children with specific literacy difficulties.
- 2: Assessment, identification and monitoring methods** should be clearly understood so that literacy difficulties are supported at the earliest opportunity.
- 3: High quality, systematic phonics teaching** is the most effective strategy to support literacy difficulties in the EYFS and KS1.
- 4: Out of class support should be targeted**, time-limited and programmes selected should be evidence-based.
- 5: The use of teaching assistants is effective** when they are trained, overseen by a teacher and following a specific programme.
- 6: Support should be tailored to the individual needs of a child** rather than using a single 'best' method for every child with literacy difficulties.

3. Typical pathway for supporting literacy needs at Walnut Tree Walk

Quality first, whole class approach

Reception:

Daily, high-quality phonics teaching.

We follow the Sounds-write programme. Teachers and TA's delivering the programme have undergone comprehensive training.

Language-rich curriculum which prioritises vocabulary acquisition in all areas of learning.

Key Stage 1:

Daily phonics lessons

4xweekly small group reading sessions (typically 1:6) focusing on fluency/comprehension.

Writing and grammar lessons follow our key teaching and learning principles (appendix 1) to ensure children receive high quality provision.

Key Stage 2:

Vocabulary and spelling lessons focus on etymology, morphology, spelling rules, exceptions to spelling rules

Reading lessons are based on key skills of vocabulary, structure, retrieval, inference and summarising

Writing lessons provide structured opportunities for pupils to develop both the mechanics of writing (spelling, handwriting, sentence construction) and the composition of writing (planning, drafting, revising and publishing) across a wide range of genres.

Targeted support

Timetabled phonics intervention (3x weekly) with class teacher/trained TA for children identified as not making expected progress.

If Literacy needs are linked to Speech, Communication and Language needs, the **Nuffield Early Language Programme** may be appropriate

Timetabled phonics intervention (3x weekly)

Colourful semantics to support writing composition

Rainbow road to support transcription and handwriting

Speech sound intervention

Language for thinking

Lower Key Stage 2:

Some pupils in Year 3 continue with 3xweekly **timetabled phonics interventions**

Precision teaching for spelling (Review after 2 terms)

Toe by Toe for spelling

Small group reading sessions to support fluency/comprehension

Rainbow Road

Upper Key Stage 2:

Lexonic: Intensive, 6 week programme of support to develop children's word reading and spelling skills.

On track reading: 3xweekly before school reading session.

200 HFW: Individual spelling programme

Spelling keyrings in writing lessons.

Identification, Assessment and Monitoring

Children's knowledge of phonics sounds is **assessed and recorded on a sound by sound level** so any gaps can be supported immediately.

Sounds-Write assessments are used at 2 points in the year to assess blending/segmenting/phoneme manipulation skills.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (Statutory Assessment)

Phonics -ongoing assessment on a **sound by sound level**.

Year 1 – Phonics Screening Check (Statutory Assessment)

End of Year 2 – Screener (identifies if children would benefit from further assessment into literacy needs). Specific discussions regarding **dyslexia** are appropriate from this point.

Summative assessment based on teacher judgment at 2 points in the year.

Precision teaching and **Lexonic** improvement scores.

STAR Reading: a standardised, computer-adaptive assessment to measure pupils' reading ability, progress, and comprehension. Used at 2 points every year in Key Stage 2 so children's development over time can be monitored.

In KS2, **Educational Psychologist diagnosis** based on intervention outcomes may be discussed.

4. Inclusive and Accessible Classrooms

At Walnut Tree Walk, all classrooms should be inclusive learning environments and this inclusive practice will benefit all learners. At the start of each year, teachers will complete an audit of their classrooms and address any areas for development so that all these standards are met. This audit can be found in Appendix 2.

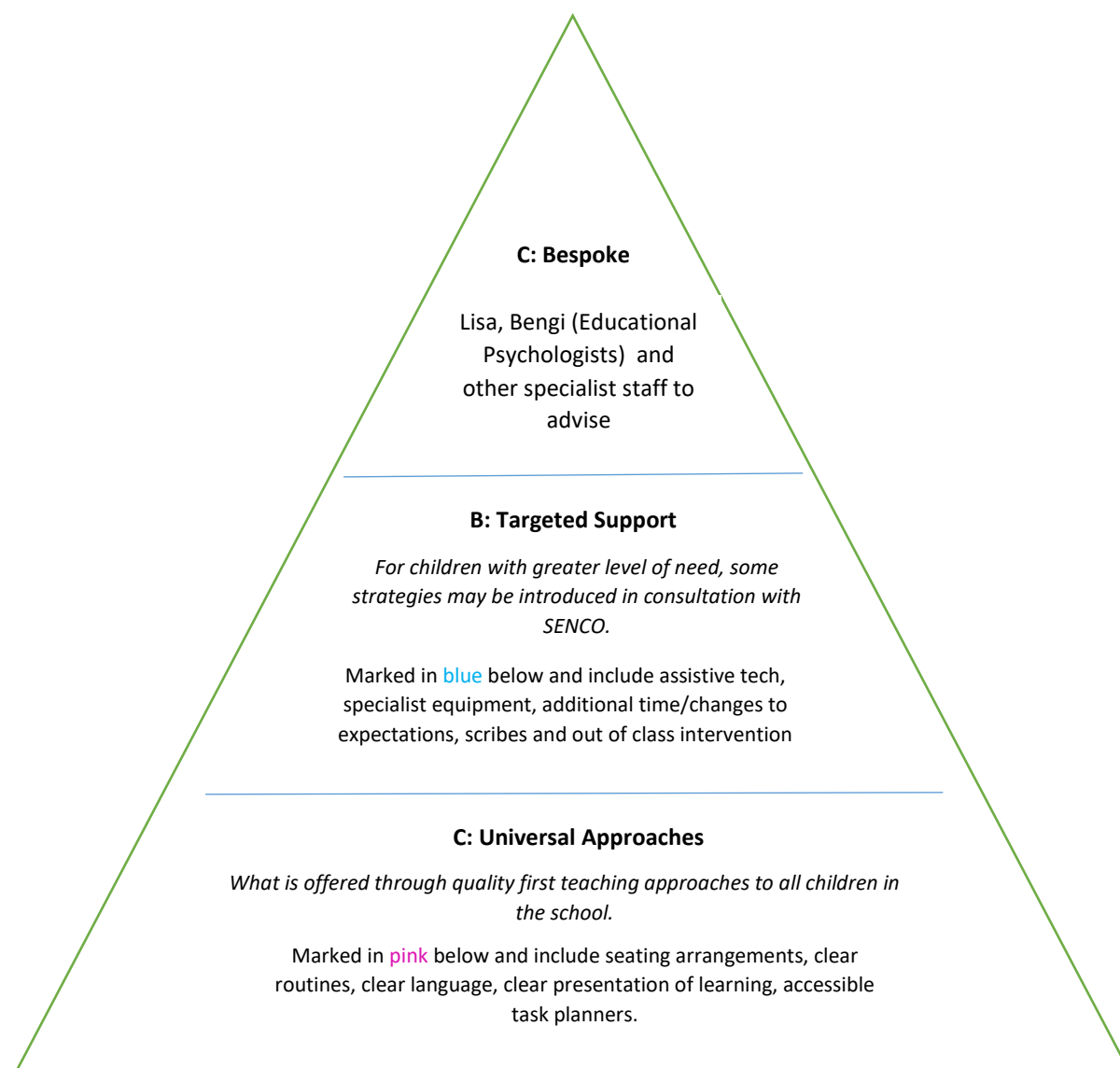
5. Ongoing support

The following support given to children follows a tiered approach:

Tier A: **Universal** – see **pink sections** on the diagram below.

Tier B: **Targeted Support** – see **blue sections** on the diagram below.

Tier C: **Bespoke** - specialist support



Below is a summary of environmental, organisational and instrumental scaffolds that are used consistently at Walnut Tree Walk under these tiers.

Accessible Classrooms

Accessible Classrooms are a way of incorporating environmental, organisational, and instructional scaffolds into daily school life. These will boost the performance and comfort of all children in your class, and especially those who have literacy difficulties. Accessible classrooms meet needs in the areas of executive function, working memory, and verbal processing. They allow you to move away from multiple types of individual differentiation towards quality first teaching for all.

**It is meant to make your life easier
→ Use peer and SENCo support to
audit practice and select ideas.**

Most of these ideas are from www.sensibleenco.co.uk
and *The Inclusive Classroom* by Sobel & Alston

- Think about the needs of your class
- Consider available resources
- Choose a few strategies to start with



Seating

- children with needs near the front, with an easy view of you and the board
- seated to minimise distraction, ensure any stimulating displays are **behind** them
- ensure left handers are not clashing with right handers
- use writing slopes, wobble cushions, wedge cushions as needed
- designated carpet spot e.g. laminated square
- ensure quiet spaces are available such as workstations



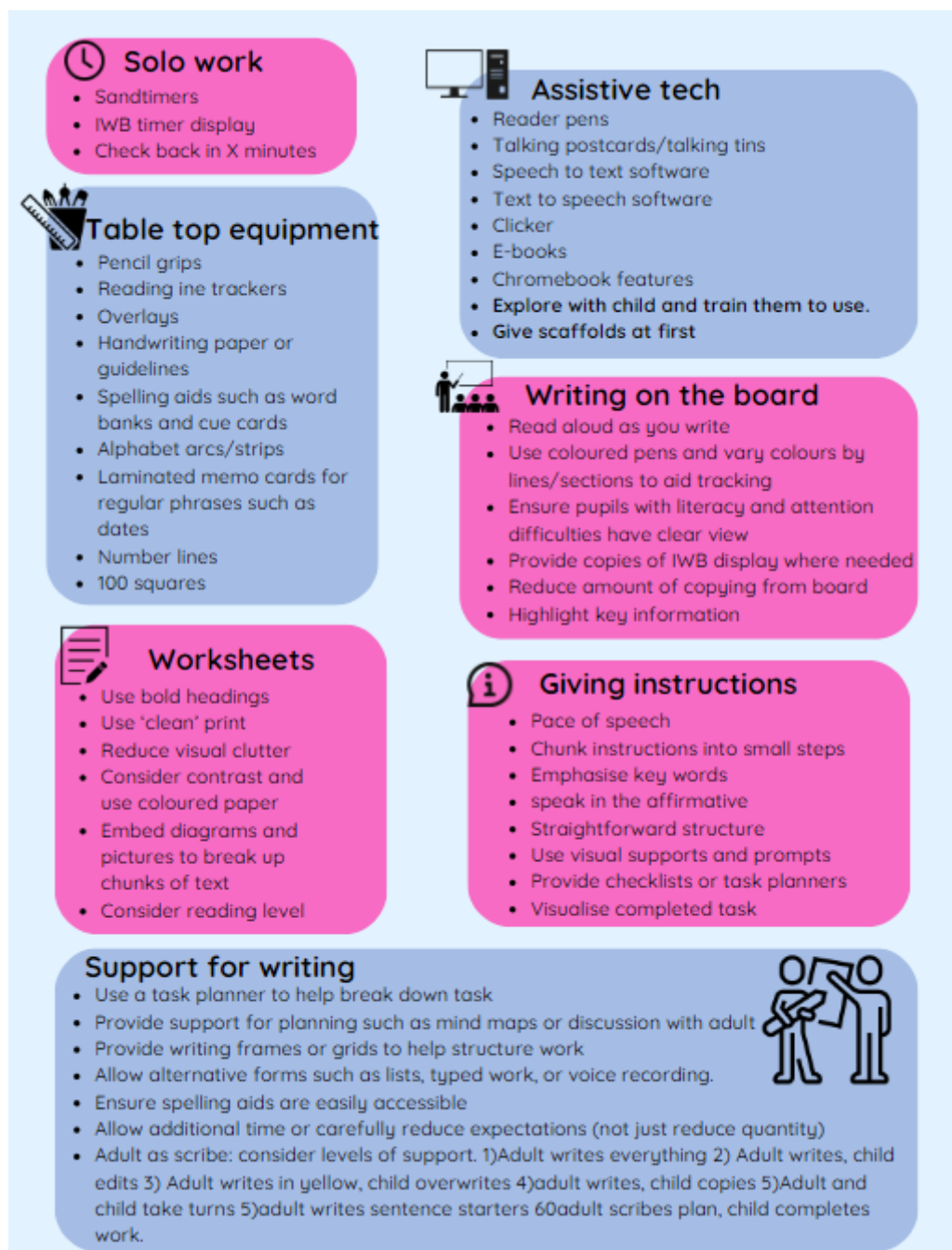
Routines

- Embed familiar routines as much as possible
- State learning intention for each lesson
- Daily schedule using visuals
- Organised equipment with clear labels and colour codes
- Clear instructions where finished work to be placed



Language

- Be aware of pace of speech
- Use simple language and straightforward grammar
- Emphasise key words
- Give affirmative instructions such as "put your hands on your lap" not "Do not touch that"
- Say what you mean - be literal and clear
- pre-teach specific vocabulary



The strategies used to support an individual child will depend on their specific area of need. Teaching staff in school have access to Literacy Need Factsheets for more details to support with identifying the appropriate strategies and resources, as well as the support of the SENDCo and Educational Psychologists.

6. Dyslexia

Typically, about one in five children experience some literacy difficulties. Of these children, some may have a need that is identified as dyslexia. Children with any form of literacy need will be supported at Walnut Tree Walk, whether or not they have a formal diagnosis.

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling (e.g Rose report (2009), British Dyslexia Association, British Psychological Society 1999). Scientific perspectives on dyslexia have rapidly changed and will probably continue to change.

For some children, a diagnosis of dyslexia may be appropriate if it provides a way of a child understanding a specific difficulty they have or if it will enable extra support; however, it is important not to let a pursuit of a diagnosis of dyslexia hinder the provision of support for a child. Support and intervention is provided in response to a child's individual needs – it is not necessary to get a diagnosis of dyslexia to access any tier of support at Walnut Tree Walk.

Identifying dyslexia is an ongoing process over a period of time rather than a single test carried out on one occasion.

Dyslexia can be named when:

- Individual child has received evidence-based intervention and support which is monitored over time AND
- Rates of progress continue to cause concern and difficulties appear severe and persistent.
- Reading and/or spelling skills have been acquired with great difficulty
- Persistent difficulties with accuracy, fluency and speed of decoding are apparent.

In line with general guidance on best practice, current evidence and Lambeth Dyslexia Policy, *“Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the ‘word level’ and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities.”*

Our system for monitoring children's progress is set out in section 3. Parents will be kept up to date about their child's progress in Literacy through parents' evenings, reports and conversations with the class teacher. If the GL dyslexia screener, undertaken in Year 2, suggests further monitoring is necessary, the class teacher or SENCO will discuss this with parents. In this case, we will closely monitor how the child is responding to targeted support through KS2. Decisions regarding ongoing support and a dyslexia diagnosis will be made between Year 3-6.

7. Identifying Literacy Needs

The process for addressing literacy needs is as follows:

1	Identify that there is an overall difficulty with literacy
2	Identify their specific needs in literacy
3	Classroom adjustments matched to their needs
4	Targeted intervention matched to their need, including regular monitoring and review
5	Additional bespoke assessment and intervention

Stage 1: Identifying a literacy difficulty

The first step would be to identify that there is a literacy need. This could be evident through a number of different ways:

- Phonics monitoring and the phonics screening check results
- Below age-expected reading attainment
- Below age-expected writing attainment
- Literacy not in line with language skills
- A child who finds literacy difficult

Additionally, other ways to identify a literacy difficulty include observing one or more of the following:

- Avoidant behaviour
- Slow/laborious writing
- Writing mirrors spoken grammar
- Poor concentration
- Copying others
- Upset and lacking confidence
- Extreme self-talk (either negative or overly positive)
- Rushing or avoiding listening
- Refusing support
- Over-reliance on support

Stage 2: Identifying the specific areas of difficulty

Once a literacy need has been identified, the next step will be to identify the individual child's specific area of difficulty or need so that the correct support can be provided. Key adults such as parents/carers, class teacher, and SENDCo will be part of this process to identify what the needs are. They could be linked to decoding/blending/phonological awareness, reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, verbal memory, handwriting, spelling, writing composition, or an emotional response to learning.

The Class Teacher and SENDCo will work together to identify whether the needs are due to:

- phonological awareness
- verbal working memory
- verbal processing
- visual-spatial processing
- executive function
- emotional approach to learning

The table below provides an overview of some common signs for each of the main areas of literacy difficulty:

Skill	Signs of difficulty
Phonological awareness	Problems distinguishing sounds, mispronouncing words, can't identify rhymes, unclear speech, poor decoding and blending,

Verbal memory	Forgets instructions, easily distracted, difficulty repeating back to you, difficulty using one piece of information to solve another, difficulty holding things in mind.
Verbal reasoning	Struggles to express their ideas, poor comprehension, difficulty understanding instructions or explanations
Verbal Processing Speed	Takes a long time to respond to question and takes even longer when you rephrase the question, slow reaction times, slow reading, hard to respond to long instructions/blocks of speech and text.
Visual-Spatial processing	Poor drawing, poor letter formation, misses small details such as punctuation or symbols, problems finding things on desk, confusion of letters/numbers, poor scanning skills, difficulties copying, slow to find something on the page.

Domain	Signs of need
Executive function	Difficulty filtering out distractions, difficulty maintaining attention, difficulty planning and executing an action, difficulty organising an approach to a task (such as working out what needs to be done, breaking down into steps, deciding on the order, working their way through each step) recognizing when a task is finished, adapting or switching when required, emotional dysregulation.
Language difficulty	Unable to express themselves, frustration, difficulty following instructions (difficulty increases with more complex or lengthy instructions), difficulty with social relationships, unclear speech, unusual answers to questions, tangents.
ASD/social communication difficulties	Needs will be seen elsewhere also but in literacy, they may be skilled at learning sounds, matching sounds and letters, decoding/blending, but have much more difficulty comprehending or retaining meaning.

Stage 3: Classroom adjustments matched to specific needs

All classes are now working to Accessible Classroom principles (see section 4 above).

Some children will also benefit from further adjustments in everyday teaching and learning activities. For example, overlays, reading line trackers, pencil grips, writing slopes, number lines, spelling aids, reader pens, scribes, chromebooks, touch typing, e-books, task planners, writing grids, scribes, extra time, output adjustments etc.

Teachers have access to further resources and consultations with SENDCo and EP to help them match specific adjustment strategies to a child's specific needs.

Stage 4: Targeted intervention matched to specific Literacy difficulties

NEED	Examples of Intervention (individual and small group formats)
Phonological Processing	Toe-by-Toe, Sounds-Write phonics intervention groups, Speech and Language therapy
Reading (accuracy, fluency and comprehension)	Precision Teaching, Individual reading practice, target readers, Lexonic, Before-school reading intervention groups for upper KS2
Spelling	Precision Teaching Plus, Lexonic, High Frequency words focus
Writing composition	Colourful Semantics, Language for Thinking
Verbal memory	TA led memory game intervention, Rainbow Road
Handwriting	Rainbow Road
Visual spatial processing	Rainbow Road

After each programme of intervention, parents should be updated as to the effectiveness (this can be done in the support plan meeting).

Stage 5: Additional bespoke assessment and intervention

Some children's needs may be more complex and persistent than can be met through Stages 1-4. With parent/carers consent, these children will be referred for further Educational Psychology assessment which will include:

- Observation
- Teacher, SENCO, and parent/carers consultation
- Pupil perspective work
- Individual Assessment
- Educational Psychology report.

8. Parental Support

Children with specific literacy difficulties benefit greatly from additional support at home. You will be able to receive individual advice on how to support your child from the class teacher. If your child has an SEN support plan, this advice will be provided by Catherine. All children benefit from being read with on a daily basis and being supported to practice some key words which they find difficult to spell.

9. When children leave the school

Children who have received additional support through stages 1-4 will get a report stating the nature of their difficulties, the underlying needs identified, the nature of the in-class support they received and any Individual interventions they have received. A record of usual ways of working will also be recorded which is important for exam access arrangements, if needed.

Their report will name dyslexia if appropriate and this report will be signed by the headteacher, SENDCo and Educational Psychologist.

An example of a report is included in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Teaching and Learning Principles

Teaching and Learning Key Principles: Expectations for all lessons at WTW

There are 7 key principles for learning that we would expect to see in all lessons:

1. Link
2. Master
3. Spaced Learning and Retrieval
4. Positive Behaviour for Learning
5. Marking and Feedback
6. Challenge
7. Oracy and Questioning

Appendix 2: The Inclusive Classroom Checklist

		1/10	Actions I will take
ROOM The learning space needs to reflect needs and promote engagement. Classrooms need to hold space for physical, sensory, cognitive and emotional needs of all inhabitants – children and adults alike.	Can all children see whatever they need to see (board, teacher, learning materials, etc.)?		
	Can they all hear?		
	Is the light too bright?		
	Does the seating plan take into account different children's needs?		
	Is the room physically accessible to all children (and adults)?		
RELATIONSHIPS Relationships are key to successful inclusive teaching. The adults in the room need to know their children and the different ways of relating to them.	Does every vulnerable child have a go-to trusted adult they can turn to? Do they know who that is?		
	Do you know who has attachment and SEMH issues in your classroom?		
	Do you know how to respond to the attachment and SEMH needs of the children in your classroom?		
	Do you know which children can support or distract each other?		
RESOURCES It's easy to 'buy' a lot of materials and we don't suggest this. Resources imply minimal, simple and effective materials that support personalised access to learning rather than make up for it. Poor resources could be ready-made worksheets. A good resource might be a cushion for a child with dyspraxia.	Are there resources needed for children to support their access to reading and writing?		
	Can you utilise resources to support other needs, such as sensory, physical and emotional needs?		
	Are visual prompts readily available and used effectively?		
	Have you discussed the resources with the children? Are they interested in actually using the ones you suggest? Are they confident to choose their own?		
	Are children encouraged to use resources to further their independence? Are		

	they able to organise themselves?		
RELEVANCE How well do you adapt the curriculum to your children? Does your teaching inspire and draw in your children because they feel it relates to them or is useful? Does the curriculum engage their enthusiasm and participation?	How far does the learning and curriculum relate to children's own experiences?		
	Are children supported to make links between their experiences outside the classroom and their learning?		
	How far is the curriculum adapted to reflect local needs and issues?		
	Does the curriculum include an awareness of anxiety triggers for individual children (e.g. talk of family trees for looked-after children)?		
RESPONSE Are our instructions and guidance differentiated to different children? Are the questions and answers between adult and child adapted to meet the needs of the children? Does the adult demonstrate understanding of the child through their language?	Are <i>all</i> children supported to contribute to their own and the class's learning?		
	Do adult responses support children to engage with learning and develop perseverance and resilience?		
	Are children allowed time to process and develop their thinking before they are expected to share learning?		
	Are children encouraged to share their learning in different ways, including the use of technology?		
	Do the adults understand how to adapt their responses to children and do this effectively?		
RECALL You may have taught an amazing lesson but what have the children retained? How do you know? Do you support children with working memory issues?	Do you use questioning and a variety of prompts to support children in recalling and applying their learning?		
	Are children able to share the recall of their learning in different ways (e.g. not always expecting them to write it down)?		
	Are you able to support the children to understand which bits of the learning		

	and exercises are relevant to remember?		
RETENTION Do you know what your children recall a couple of weeks after the lesson? What are the students retaining to be able to apply later?	Are there regular opportunities for children to revisit learning to support their long-term understanding?		
	How far are children supported to see how different pieces of learning relate to each other and fit together?		
	Are children enabled to practise and develop a range of skills across the curriculum?		
RESILIENCE Are the children supported to feel OK to try and fail and then feel confident enough to try again? Does the support you provide for children in your classroom build further independence or does it simply sort out a temporary problem by creating a dependence on an adult such as a TA or LSA?	How far are children, especially those with SEN, supported and given opportunities for independent working?		
	Are they prompted for independence rather than encouraged to become dependent on adult prompts?		
	Is there a culture within the classroom where it is acceptable to make mistakes, and are these seen as learning opportunities?		
	How far does teacher feedback enable children to identify and celebrate success, rather than just identify areas for development?		

Accessible and Inclusive Classroom Checklist

In all rooms

Timetables and routines for day clearly displayed (with visuals if needed)
Low intensity/ low distraction workspaces available in classroom (where possible)
Consider seating (at tables and on carpet) for specific needs of pupils
Equipment readily available and clearly organised and labelled

In all lessons

Colour code and colour block any large passages of text on Interactive Whiteboard to aid tracking
Use clean, suitably sized fonts and double line spacing
Use bold headings and embed diagrams and pictures to break up the text
Minimise visual clutter on materials and handouts
Provide printed copies of IWB documents for any child who needs it
In writing lessons (and some other subjects) use Task Planners to support task organisation
Learning Intentions and/or success criteria clearly explained and displayed at start of every lesson
Give clear instructions making it clear what you mean
For Maths lessons, concrete resources will be available
Demonstration of the task, allowing children to visualise the completed task. For Writing lessons, ensure that the writing

For some individual children, it may be appropriate to have:

Readily available additional supportive equipment such as pencil grips, reading line trackers, overlays, spelling aids, word banks
Assistive technology, such as chrome books, talking postcards, text to speech software, which the individual child has been trained and supported to use
Personalised Task Planners broken into smaller steps
Writing frames
Carefully adjusted expectations of outcomes or the provision of additional time to complete a task
An adult scribe - consider the 6 different levels in which this can be provided: • adult writes everything • Adult writes, child edits • Adult writes in yellow, child overwrites • Adult writes, child copies • Adult writes sentence starters • Adult scribes plan, child completes work
Alternative ways of demonstrating knowledge

Appendix 3: Example of a Supporting Literacy Needs Report (Each report will look different).

Pupil name: “**Child**”

Date of birth: xxx

Current Year Group: Yr 6

Date: xx

Child has been identified as having specific literacy needs. Concerns around her literacy development were first raised in Year 3 and shared by parents/carers and school. Concerns were identified in the areas of:

- Reading fluency
- Reading accuracy
- Spelling accuracy
- Emotions and behaviour around literacy learning.

Child received the following initial support:

- Accessible classroom strategies, plus additional targeted strategies of use of chromebook (speech to text and touch typing), adult scribe for selected lessons, extra time for checking and editing, word bank/spelling bank.
- Small group phonics intervention (daily)
- Individual daily extra reading for accuracy and fluency
- Small group wellbeing intervention

Child did not make sufficient progress in response to the initial support, so further assessment of needs was conducted in the Spring term of Year 4. **Child’s** needs were identified as:

- Phonological awareness
- Verbal working memory
- Verbal processing
- Emotions around learning

Child then received three terms of intervention as follows:

- Individual phonics intervention (Toe by Toe)
- Individual spelling intervention (Stairway to Spelling)
- Small group memory skills
- Individual weekly wellbeing intervention
- Individual reading intervention for accuracy and fluency

Given the severity, persistence, and impact of **Child’s** literacy needs despite several terms of intervention and support, it is appropriate to use the label of dyslexia to describe her literacy needs. We recommend that in future, **Child’s** specific needs in the areas outlined above are taken into account above the label of dyslexia, in order to ensure that she receives the most appropriate intervention and support for their specific needs.

We can confirm for the purposes of exam access arrangements that **Child’s** current usual ways of working include

- Additional time to complete tasks
- Reduction in amount of work required where additional time is not available
- Adult acting as reader for long or complicated text-based instructions
- Simplified text on worksheets and factsheets

Signed:

SENDCo:

Headteacher:

Educational Psychologist: