



Peterhouse School

Dyslexia at Peterhouse School

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This document should be read in conjunction with:

SEN Information Report

Accessibility Plan

At Peterhouse School, we are committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where the individual needs of all our pupils are recognised, understood, and supported. As a school specialising in autism, we acknowledge that some of our learners may also present with co-occurring specific learning difficulties, including Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) in dyslexia.

This policy sets out our approach to identifying, supporting, and making reasonable adjustments for pupils with dyslexia within the context of autism. We recognise that dyslexia and autism can overlap in complex ways, and that difficulties with reading, spelling, and working memory may sometimes be attributed solely to autism. However, we also understand the importance of recognising dyslexia as a distinct and diagnosable condition that may require tailored interventions and support strategies.

Our aim is to ensure that pupils with dyslexia, alongside their autism diagnosis, receive appropriate support to access the curriculum, develop confidence in their abilities, and make meaningful progress. This policy outlines our identification process, intervention approaches, use of assistive technology, staff training, and collaboration with families and specialists.

At the heart of this policy is our belief in a strengths-based approach that values each pupil's potential, promotes independence, and reduces barriers to learning — ensuring all learners can thrive and can become successful adults.

WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

Dyslexia is a set of processing difficulties that affect the acquisition of reading and spelling.

In dyslexia, some or all aspects of literacy attainment are weak in relation to age, standard teaching and instruction, and level of other attainments.

Across all languages, difficulties in reading fluency and spelling are key markers of dyslexia.

Dyslexic difficulties exist on a continuum and can be experienced to various degrees of severity.

The nature and developmental trajectory of dyslexia depends on multiple genetic and environmental influences.

Dyslexia can affect the acquisition of other skills, such as mathematics, reading comprehension or learning another language.

The most commonly observed cognitive impairment in dyslexia is a difficulty in phonological processing (i.e., in phonological awareness, phonological processing speed or phonological memory). However, phonological difficulties do not fully explain the variability that is observed.

Working memory, processing speed and orthographic skills can contribute to the impact of dyslexia.

Dyslexia frequently co-occurs with one or more other developmental difficulties, including developmental language disorder, dyscalculia, ADHD, and developmental coordination disorder. **British Dyslexia Association (BDA) (2025)**. *What is dyslexia?* Available at: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/about-dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia> (Accessed: 9th September 2025).

WHAT ARE THE KEY AREAS WE MAY SEE WITH A PERSON WITH DYSLEXIA?

When identifying key difficulties for our learners it is important that this is done through an autism lens. The following list is not exhaustive and highlights key areas that may also be seen in a person with autism who has literacy difficulties due to other identified learning needs or an additional diagnosis. These co-occurrences can complicate the presentation of dyslexia and require a careful, holistic assessment approach.

These are the most observable signs of dyslexia in learners:

1. **Reading Accuracy**
 - Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words
 - Frequent errors when reading aloud
2. **Reading Fluency**
 - Slow, effortful reading
 - Poor automatic word recognition
 - May re-read or lose place often
3. **Spelling Difficulties**
 - Inconsistent and phonologically inaccurate spellings
 - Difficulty recalling and applying spelling rules
4. **Writing Challenges**
 - Problems with sentence structure, punctuation, and organisation
 - Difficulty transferring ideas to paper

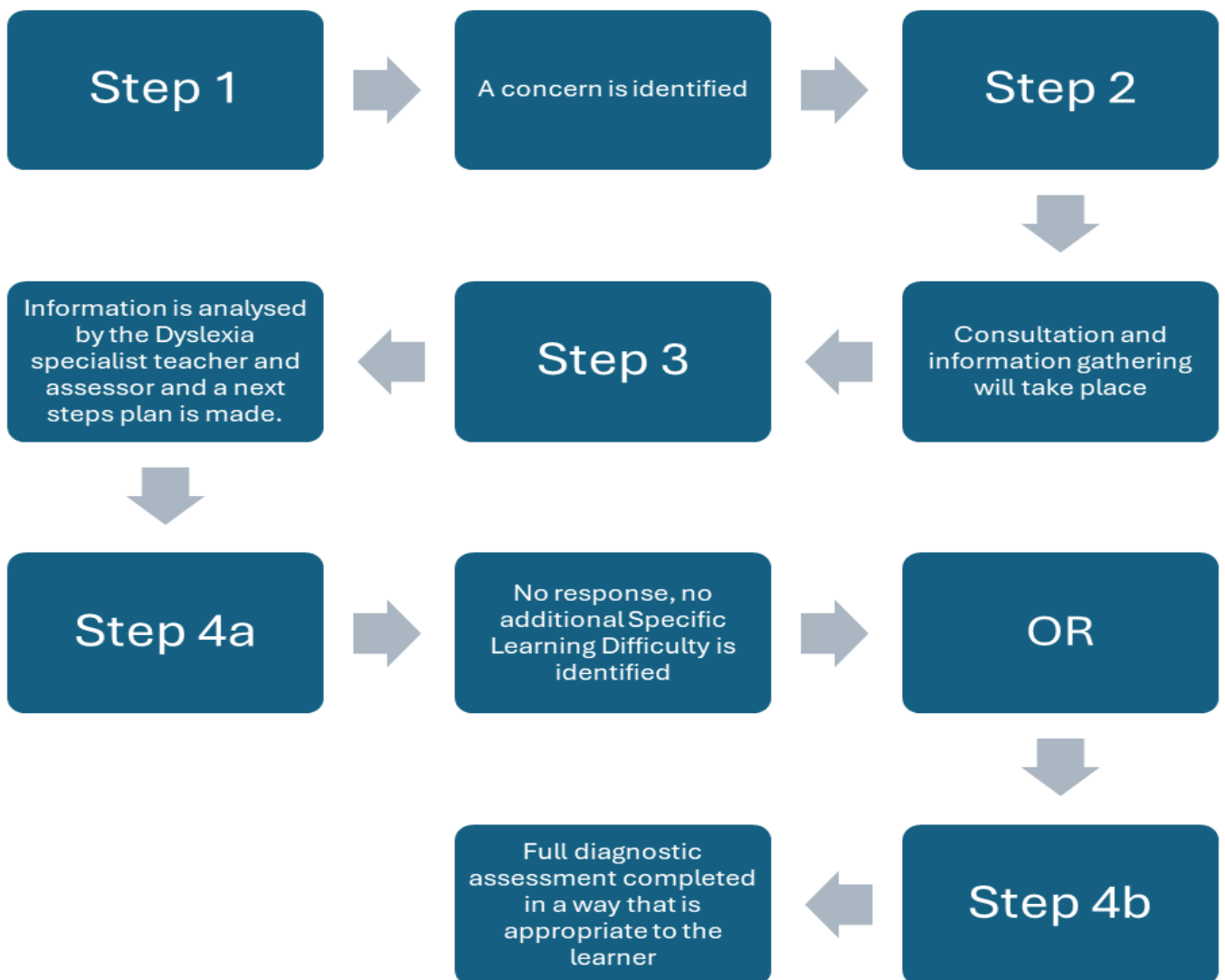
Underlying Cognitive Difficulties

These impact how learners process and use language:

1. **Phonological Processing**
 - Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in words (e.g., rhyming, segmenting)
 - Poor phonological awareness and memory
2. **Working Memory**
 - Limited ability to hold and manipulate verbal or visual information
 - Affects reading comprehension, following instructions, and writing
3. **Processing Speed**
 - Slower pace when reading, writing, or retrieving verbal information
 - Affects fluency and confidence in learning tasks
4. **Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)**
 - Difficulty quickly naming letters, numbers, or colours
 - Strongly associated with reading fluency issues
5. **Orthographic Processing**
 - Trouble recognising common letter patterns
 - Difficulty remembering the visual form of words (e.g., “said,” “friend”)

OUR PROCESS AT PETERHOUSE ON SUPPORTING DYSLEXIA

At Peterhouse we have a qualified Dyslexia teacher. Their expertise and knowledge will identify the best pathway through the assessment process for each individual learner always considering the person and their autism.



Step 1. A concern is identified by

- A parent
- A member of the teaching team
- A member of the Support Team
- A learner themselves

Step 2. Once a concern has been identified consultation with the following will take place

- Parents/carers
- Teaching team
- Support team
- The learner

It is important that all parties are aware of what the assessment process looks like, and the impact of the differing process is shared so the right pathway is identified for the learner. Initial options that can be offered if appropriate are

- A digital screener
- A personalised screener if more appropriate adapted as required. A table in appendix 2 highlights what will be assessed
- Scrutiny of the learner's work
- Questionnaires completed by parent/carer, school staff
- Adapted methods to seek information from the learner will be used this may include
 - Questionnaires
 - Conversations
 - Literacy type difficulties sorting activity
- Working in liaison with the school's Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Therapist

Step 3. The information gathered will be analysed by the Dyslexia specialist teacher and assessor and a next steps plan is made.

The outcome from the process may include

- No response, no additional Specific Learning Difficulty is identified
- Full diagnostic assessment completed in a way that is appropriate to the learner

Step 4. Following completion of the assessment a detailed report will be wrote, ensuring it is accessible to all. The report will be shared with all relevant parties and the recommendations as highlighted within the report will be shared and acted on.

This may include

- Weekly sessions with the Dyslexia teacher

- Feedback to the student to ensure they understand their difficulties. This will be done in a sensitive manner.
- Working with the student to develop their metacognition, giving them ownership of their ways of learning
- Adapted approaches to learning shared with all staff supporting the learner
- Approaches shared to support in the family home
- Targets added to EHCP

APPENDIX 1 – TERMINOLOGY OF WORDS

Area	Description
Reading accuracy & fluency	Struggles decoding, slow reading, low confidence
Spelling	Inconsistent, phonetically inaccurate
Phonological skills	Poor sound awareness, segmentation, and manipulation
Working memory	Difficulty holding and using information in real time
Processing speed	Slower responses in reading, writing, and verbal tasks
Orthographic processing	Trouble with visual memory of words and spelling patterns
Co-occurring conditions	Often overlaps with ADHD, DLD, ASC, dyspraxia, etc.

APPENDIX 2 – ASSESSMENTS AND PURPOSE

<u>What assessment?</u>	<u>What is being assessed?</u>
Single word reading	Applying phonic knowledge in the familiar – word lists used for the age/working level
Non-Word reading	Applying phonic knowledge in the unfamiliar
Reading comprehension	Literal and Inferential understanding Short term memory
Phonological Awareness	Hearing and distinguishing sounds. This includes recognising sounds, adding sounds, taking apart sounds and moving sounds around.
Auditory Discrimination	Hearing the similarities and differences in sounds
Visual Discrimination	The ability to detect differences in objects, symbols (letters and words), or shapes.
Auditory Sequential Memory	The ability to remember what sounds or words came first, middle and last Forwards – short term memory Backwards – working memory
Visual Sequential Memory	The ability to remember and recall a sequence of objects and/or events in the correct order
Alphabet Knowledge	Letter knowledge Letter sound/name correspondence Sequencing
Reading	Accuracy Fluency
Handwriting	Pencil grip Letter formation Sentence structure Word spacing Use of SPAG
Spelling	Phonic knowledge

