



Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils

Dowdales School

Registration– Category MS

1. *Date of visit:* 28/1/2014
2. *Name of Consultant(s):* R A McCarthy

School Contact Details	Location/ status	Student Details	Special Needs	Assoc'/ exams
Dowdales School Nelson Street Dalton-in-Furness Cumbria LA15 8Ah Tel: 01229469800 Fax: 01229 469801 Email: office@dowdales.cumbria.sch.uk Web: www.dowdalesschool.co.uk	Rural	534 boys 514 girls	Dysl ADHD ASD Hearing Impaired	
	LA Day	Ages 11- 16		GCSE
Comments: "Students with special education needs receive excellent support" Ofsted 2011				

Please note:

- *Throughout this report details that might be used to identify individuals have been removed to protect their privacy.*
- *The reports have been prepared for each category from a master form; some reports may have numbers that appear to be missing. This is because that particular question is not relevant to the category of school, a complete list of the criteria as it applies to each category can be found on our website.*

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3. a) **Name and address of school:** Dowdales School
Nelson Street
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LA15 8AH
- Tel: 01229 469800
Fax: 01229 469801
Email: office@dowdales.cumbria.sch.uk
Web: www.dowdales.cumbria.sch.uk
- b) **Name and qualifications of Head/Principal, with title used:**
- Name: Ms Julie O'Connor
Title (e.g. Principal): Headteacher
Qualifications: BA
Awarding body: University of Wales
- Consultant's comments: Ms O'Connor is committed to the progress of all of her pupils and is particularly supportive of the work that Helen Booth and her team are doing. It should be noted that the very recent Ofsted visit rated leadership and management as outstanding.*
- c) **Name and qualifications of Head of Specialist Provision or Senior SpLD teacher:**
- Name: Mrs. Helen Booth
Title (e.g. SENCO): SENCO
Qualifications: Post Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy
Awarding body: (University of York)
Register of Qualifications in Test Use (British Psychological Society)
AMBDA
- Consultant's comments: Mrs Booth is well qualified and experienced. She is current with the latest developments in teaching and learning as well as access arrangements.*



Background and General Information

4. a) **Recent inspections:** OFSTED inspection 16th June 2011

Consultant's comments: A later Ofsted Inspection took place in November 2013, so comments have been taken from that report.

The quality of teaching was reported as good, with some being outstanding. Leadership and management as well as behaviour and safety were reported as outstanding.

Inspectors commented that 'students with lower prior attainment or special educational needs make excellent progress. They benefit from teaching that meets their needs effectively and from full involvement in group work with students of all abilities'.

It was also noted that 'teachers take care to attend to the learning needs of students with disabilities and those with special educational needs during whole class teaching. Students with literacy difficulties are helped to overcome barriers to their learning with excellent specialist support'. It was also noted that leadership of support for vulnerable students and those with disabilities or special educational needs is 'excellent'.

The behaviour of pupils was described as 'impeccable'.

- d) **Numbers, sex and age of pupils:**

		Total	SpLD (Dyslexia)	Accepted age range
Day:	Boys:	534	52	11 - 16
	Girls:	514	30	11 - 16
Boarding:	Boys:			
	Girls:			
Overall total:		1048	82	

Consultant's comments: Currently numbers are higher than this at 1065 but pupils are never the less known to staff as individuals.

- e) **Class sizes – mainstream:** 25-30

Consultant's comments: On the day of the visit the occasional class was 31 or 32, but a year 10 class was 15. The size of the class had little effect on the engagement of the pupils, which was, in all classes observed, exemplary.

- f) **Class sizes - special needs:** Dyslexia withdrawal groups-individual or 2 - 3 students per group. Specialist maths lessons 4-6 students per group.

Consultant's comments: The classes observed were well structured, cumulative and multi-sensory and pupils were clearly enjoying their learning. The class where life skills were being taught (using a map) was a delight and it is good to see that skills other than literacy and numeracy are considered.

- h) **For completion by consultants only: Pastoral care arrangements, as relevant to SpLD (dyslexia) students, based on Ofsted/ISI report:** The summary of the recent Ofsted inspection noted: "Students feel valued and are safe. There is outstanding support to promote their wellbeing, especially for those who need extra help."



Staffing and Staff Development

DSP, SPS,
DU 7;
SC, WS 18;
MS 21

5. a) **Qualifications, date, awarding body and experience of all learning support staff:**

Details of staff qualifications were provided at the time of application, names and specifics are not published to protect the identity of individuals.

Consultant's comments: There is a good range of interests, qualifications and experience in the support staff.

MS 20

- b) **Staff development and in-service training of learning support staff within last 18 months:** Details provided at time of visit.

Consultant's comments: In service training has been wide- ranging and useful. Mrs Booth has also worked extensively with feeder schools and schools to which Dowdales pupils move for their 6th form studies as well as working with the staff at Dowdales to enhance understanding of specific learning difficulties.

MS Only

- g) **Whole school staff development in relation to Dyslexia Awareness and Inclusion strategies e.g. IDP (Inclusion Development Programme):** • SENCo delivers INSET session every year to all new members of staff on Inclusion with Dyslexia Awareness being an integral part of this.

Consultant's comments: It was noticeable, even during the tour of the school, that teachers were using 'dyslexia friendly' teaching techniques as a matter of course. There is a high level of understanding and awareness of individual needs that is beneficial to all pupils.

The 'observation room' where teachers and pupils can be observed working together is an asset in improving the quality of teaching and learning.



Policy and Philosophy with Regard to Dyslexic (SpLD) Pupils

Criteria 1
& 2

6. a) **Policy statement with regard to dyslexic (SpLD) pupils including:**
- **Identification and assessment**
 - **Support for policy from Senior Management Team**
 - **Support for policy from governors** In line with the school's philosophy in empowering the individual, Dowdales seeks to provide a focus on the varying needs of dyslexic students to allow them to benefit from the whole learning experience at Dowdales and for them to maximise their potential. Our dyslexia provision seeks to give our students academic support to enable them to fully access and flourish in the mainstream curriculum. Our mentoring of dyslexic students is designed to help in their preparation for a life of positive, happy citizenship and for the world of work. We aim to provide our dyslexic students with a safe, happy environment in which their dyslexia is not seen as a barrier to success or personal fulfilment. We promote a positive attitude towards the challenges and successes in being a dyslexic student and we offer a level of expertise and competence to be able to teach dyslexic students and enable them to have as much assistance as possible in examinations. In order to achieve our goals we are committed to the professional development of our dyslexia teachers to enable them to maintain or enhance their skills. We also promote good practice in the teaching of dyslexic students by all our staff. We regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our provision on the learning of our dyslexic students.

Consultant's comments: Ms O'Connor meets weekly with Governors and the Governor with an interest in additional learning needs meets Mrs Booth regularly. There is close liaison between school and Governors. The Senior Leadership Team, like the Head, is committed to raising the achievements of every pupil at Dowdales. The Deputy Head, who led the tour of the school, has an impressive knowledge of individual pupils. This is a large school, but they were all known by name and all clearly well known.

- b) **Admission policy / selection criteria:** LEA School non-selective

Consultant's comments: Dowdales is fully subscribed, with parents very keen for their children to attend the school.

Criterion 3

- c) **Give specific examples of the whole school response to dyslexia (SpLD):** Primary Liaison- Head of Key Stage 3 and SENCo visit feeder Primary Schools to discuss new intake after which dyslexic pupils receive additional visits as required. This liaison with primary school has been further developed in recent years with assessments for dyslexia carried out by the SENCo.

All dyslexic students are then identified at a whole school INSET session on the first day of the new academic year.

All pupils are screened during the Autumn term in Year 7 using the LASS computerised screening system. Further tests are carried out by the specialist teachers on those pupils whose scores indicate a possible risk of dyslexia. Small teaching groups are determined from the results of these assessments and the Cognitive Abilities Tests.



Pupils then receive lessons each week from a specialist dyslexia trained teacher.

A dyslexic register is then made available to all staff via the school intranet along with a copy of the IEP.

All staff have access to the Learning Support Dept. Information Booklet and Shared Area on the Staff Intranet which contains guidance on understanding dyslexia and suggestions for classroom teachers. All dyslexic students are taught to use the ACE dictionary and there is a copy available in most classrooms.

We are currently using assistive software on the school network. This is available to all students and will be particularly beneficial for extended writing tasks.

All dyslexic students are assessed for Exam Access Arrangements and regularly take advantage of these arrangements in lessons.

Laptops are available for use in lessons when appropriate to help with extended pieces of writing.

Coloured overlays are available for students both in lessons and for examinations.

Worksheets are differentiated for dyslexic students and adjustments made for writing tasks and homework as necessary.

Consultant's comments: In the mainstream lessons observed, dyslexia 'friendly' teaching techniques were being used for all pupils. Teachers knew which members of their classes were dyslexic.

Pupils were encouraged to discover information for themselves and to discuss their ideas in pairs or groups before feeding back to the class. Feedback from teachers was positive and encouraging. Pupils were not afraid to ask for help. All the lessons observed were obviously carefully planned and included all pupils.



School Organisation

7. a) **How is the week organised?** 6 x 50 minute lessons per day.
Consultant's comments: This is a very good length for support lessons and appears to be successful throughout the school.
- b) **Details of arrangements for dyslexic (SpLD) pupils, including prep / homework:**

Identification: Initial screening procedure as described in point 7c. Information is used from primary school assessments and teacher information. All parents of Year 6 pupils entering Dowdales are interviewed by senior staff and any learning, behaviour or medical issues are discussed.

Teaching: This is carried out only by Specialist Teachers. Key Stage 3 students attend one lesson per week either on an individual basis or with a maximum of 2 other students appropriate to their needs. Lessons are delivered using a structured multi-sensory approach and follow our Programme of Work for dyslexic pupils based on the Bangor Dyslexia Teaching Programme.

Although Key Stage 4 students are not withdrawn from lessons they have the opportunity to receive individual support as necessary during GCSE support lessons, lunchtime, form periods and after school sessions.

We believe parents play an integral part in the learning process and are invited to the IEP review meetings in addition to the regular parents' evenings. However, they are encouraged to contact school whenever they have any concerns.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

Students' progress is assessed at the end of each academic year using the WIATT-II T UK reading and spelling tests and results reported to the Headteacher.

Referral Forms are available for subject teachers to inform the Learning Support staff of any concerns or achievements of dyslexic students.

The SENCo monitors successes of dyslexic students in Awards assemblies and Annual Prize giving.

Homework is differentiated and a marking policy for dyslexic students, suggested by the SENCo is available for all staff .

Consultant's comments: The parents contacted knew what was happening in school and felt happy to contact teachers. Teacher themselves felt that they were well informed about pupils' particular strengths and weaknesses.



Identification and Assessment

Criterion 1
DSP & SPS
6

8. a) **Give details of how you identify pupils in your school who have or are at risk of dyslexia (SpLD), and when this takes place in the admissions process:** Much information is obtained from the thorough Primary Liaison procedure carried out in Year 6. SENCo and Assistant Head visit all primary schools and discuss each pupil with the class teacher and the Headteacher. All parents of Year 6 pupils entering Dowdales are interviewed by senior staff and any learning, behaviour or medical issues are discussed.
- All students are screened during the Autumn term in Year 7 using the LASS computerised screening system. Further tests are carried out the specialist teachers on those students whose scores indicate a possible risk of dyslexia. Small Teaching groups are determined from the results of these assessments and the Cognitive Abilities Tests.
- Any students new to the school in later years are also screened.
- Consultant's comments: There is a very high awareness of dyslexia and other specific difficulties throughout the school. Although liaison with feeder schools is excellent, there are still pupils whose difficulties are identified at Dowdales and great care is taken that those pupils who need support do not slip through the net. Indeed, in the group of 15 pupils interviewed, 11 had been identified and assessed at Dowdales.*
- b) **Give details of what action you take when children are identified as at risk of dyslexia (SpLD) from screening:** Following the initial screening, parents are informed of our concerns and the students then receive a full assessment from the Specialist Teacher or SENCo in school, both of whom have the necessary qualifications for this. Parents are then invited back into school to discuss the results of the assessment and the next course of action. If necessary, students are offered one lesson a week following a structured multi-sensory teaching programme with a Specialist Teacher.
- An IEP is written and staff are informed for their records by adding the student to the dyslexia register. Staff have access to information to suggest strategies for teaching dyslexic students.
- Consultant's comments: Parents felt fully included in this process. Record keeping as well as IEPs are excellent.*
- c) **Give details of how children in your school can access a full assessment for dyslexia (SpLD):** We have 2 teachers in school who have the necessary qualifications to carry out an assessment for dyslexia. (SENCo and Deputy SENCo). If the results are inconclusive or there appear to be further difficulties a referral will be made to the Educational Psychologist.
- Consultant's comments: It is of great benefit to the school that they have access to 'in-house' expertise as well as access to the Local Authority Service. This undoubtedly is a valuable piece in the jigsaw of provision and awareness that is evident at Dowdales.*

Teaching and Learning

Criterion 3,
MS & DU 12;
MS & SC 17;
MS & WS 19

9. a) **Lesson preparation and delivery to meet the needs of dyslexic (SpLD) pupils for:**
- **Curriculum subjects**
 - **Literacy support** All staff use the whole school lesson plan proforma which has details of differentiation and any in class support. The dyslexia lessons use a similar lesson plan but with some slight changes to reflect the different nature of the lesson. All staff have a lesson observation by a member of the senior leadership team in the Autumn term and as part of the annual performance management process all staff have a lesson observed by their line manager in the Spring Term.

Consultant's comments: The focus of lessons within the support department is, generally, on literacy/ numeracy up to year 10 after which support is more subject based. This is wholly appropriate and should help be needed at any point with a particular subject, it would be available. The structured phonics programme has been put together using elements from the Bangor structure and other programmes such as Alpha to Omega and it works well. There is an excellent range of resources including Nesy and Word Shark. Pupils are taught to use the Ace dictionary and it was good to see Ace dictionaries in use in mainstream lessons. Curriculum subjects made good use of techniques to help dyslexic students.

- b) **Use of IEP's:** All students with a statement, on School Action or School Action plus have an IEP which is issued in September. Progress is monitored, reviewed and a new IEP prepared in February. Parents are invited to all IEP review meetings. The IEPs are available to staff on the school Intranet. In addition there are strategies for staff to use with Dyslexic students also on the staff shared area.

Consultant's comments: IEPs are in the LA format and are useful and informative. It is not easy to put together IEPs that are useful to mainstream staff as well as support staff, but these (along with pupils profiles) do this well.

- c) **Records and record keeping:** All students are issued with 1 Assessment Profile and one Record of Achievement each academic year. All dyslexic students have individual files tracking their progress with results of standardised tests and detailed teaching records.

Consultant's comments: This is excellent tracking of progress.

- d) **For comment by consultants only: Two case studies of dyslexic pupils (proforma provided to Heads for use if required) All the students who attend Support lessons are well and carefully tracked and records are well kept.**

Criterion 3



Criterion 3

e) **Impact of provision – assessment summary:**

GCSE	No. of pupils inc'd in the Year 11 timetable, regardless of age	Percentage A* - C	Percentage 5+ A* - C	Percentage 5+ A* - G
Whole School	210	96	73	99
Dyslexic (SpLD) Pupils	19	95	26	100

f) **Any other relevant information, e.g. details of any other examinations taken, Reading and Spelling age assessments:**

Consultant's comments: There are high expectations of all pupils at Dowdales and results are good across the board.

g) **Details of access (special examination) arrangements requested and made for dyslexic (SpLD) pupils:**

Details of access arrangements for year 10 and 11 pupils provided, deleted to protect identities.

Consultant's comments: Careful records are kept of how effectively access arrangements are used in controlled assessments and 'mock' examinations. This record forms useful evidence of need.

h) *For completion by consultants only: **Dyslexic (SpLD) pupils' responses regarding their school and teachers:** A group of 15 pupils from the full range of years met to discuss Dowdales and their progress, academically and socially. They were all extremely polite, their opinions were considered and their approach sensible.*

The majority had been assessed at Dowdales and were grateful for the support they had received. They felt that the access arrangements in place for them reflected their needs and they valued the support they had received.

They felt that the majority of mainstream teachers understood their strengths and weaknesses and taught them accordingly. A younger pupil who was concerned that notes on the board were sometimes erased before he had copied them was advised by the older pupils to ask the teacher for more time. It seemed that pupils became more confident as they progressed through the school and were happy to ask for help. Pupils were supportive of each other and had a very practical outlook. They agreed that they were happy at school and they appreciated the opportunities they were given. It was a pleasure to meet such a thoughtful and articulate group of pupils.

Facilities and Equipment for Access to Teaching of Dyslexic (SpLD) Pupils

10. a) **General resources for teaching dyslexic (SpLD) pupils:**

General resources for teaching dyslexic (SpLD) students: There are differentiated worksheets/ writing frames produced by the teaching staff and learning support assistants for each subject area.

- ACE dictionaries are available in several classrooms.
- Coloured overlays are available for class work and examinations
- Worksheets are photocopied onto coloured paper when required.
- Lists of subject specific key words are available.

Consultant's comments: There is an excellent range of resources available- and used. There is also a good range of assessment materials. In mainstream lessons, teachers were observed to be guiding pupils to discover information for themselves and in all lessons pupils were encouraged to reflect on their own performance and targets. Lessons were often 'hands-on' and practical. Discussion was encouraged and key words/definitions were seen in use.

The behaviour of pupils was extremely good, whether in lessons or in the corridors. Teachers were enthusiastic and happy to be at Dowdales.

b) **Library:** A Selection of Barrington-Stoke books with graded reading ages is available. School maintains a selection of books which have been carefully graded using the Hatcher system.

Consultant's comments: The library is a lovely space housed in a modern building with a high apex and a classroom into a mezzanine. It has an excellent range of books: fiction and non-fiction. The librarian keeps electronic records of which books are most popular and which pupils are reading widely as well as those who are not. These records are available to teachers and there are reading 'challenges' that are used effectively to encourage reading.

The library is open early (8 o'clock) so that pupils can come in to do homework or read and it is open late for the same reason.

c) **ICT:** Dyslexic students have opportunities to use WordShark4, Nessy in their dyslexia support sessions. Initial screening for literacy problems is completed using the Lucid LASS programme. All pupils have access to Read and Write Gold9 text to speech programme.

Consultant's comments: Text to speech programs such as Read and Write Gold should be available to all pupils who have reading difficulties and it is commendable that this is networked throughout the school.

As well as this, interactive whiteboards are used in all academic classrooms and the majority of work is done on these, rather than teacher hand-written. A very useful feature is the work that is put up for those arriving earliest to lessons (it is a big site and not all pupils arrive at the same time) so that pupils can start work immediately without waiting for the whole class to arrive.

Pupils who need to be stretched and challenged are able to move onto tasks that will do this whilst those less confident can work at their comfort level.

Excellent use of ICT was being made on the day of the visit and it was evident from pupils' books that this is the norm.



Statement of Special Educational Needs

11. a) **School policy:** The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for ALL children, which is differentiated to meet individual needs and abilities. SEN policy provided at time of visit.

Consultant's comments: The SEN Policy closely follows the Code of Practice and it is clear that the recommendations in it are carried out.

- c) **Number of statemented pupils: 24**

Consultant's comments: Cumbria rarely gives Statements of Educational Need to children whose difficulties are purely dyslexic, so the majority of Statements are for children who have overlapping needs. Given that the focus of teaching is very much on individual need, I am sure that all 'statemented' pupils needs are being met and record keeping is excellent.



Parents' Feelings About the School, in Particular, its Response to Dyslexic (SpLD) Pupils

Maintained
Schools only

12. Schools should provide, with the documentation, a list of the names dyslexic (SpLD) pupils in the school: 3 from each year group. From this the consultant will select 12 names and schools will be asked to contact the parents (CReSTeD will provide an explanatory letter) for their permission to give their phone numbers to the consultant. The consultant will then contact 6 of these parents before the visit takes place to discuss their feelings about the school.

For completion by consultants only: **Parent Contacts:** Parents felt universally that their children were happy and well supported by their teachers. They were aware of what was happening in school, felt able to contact teachers and were confident that teachers would contact them should it be needed. All would recommend Dowdales to other parents.

One parent would have liked a greater availability of school laptops, but recognised that this would be 'in a perfect world'.



14. *For completion by consultants only: **Summary of Report including whether acceptance is recommended:** Acceptance is fully and wholeheartedly recommended. Dowdales is a school that is committed to achieving the very best from its pupils and the resources and the school buildings are impressive. The dance and drama studios, the Art work around school and above all the commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers make this school outstanding in its provision for all pupils who attend it; particularly those who have a specific difficulty.
It should also be noted that Ms O'Connor and Mrs Booth do not sit on their laurels, but are keen to keep improving the learning experience for pupils as well as the knowledge and understanding of teachers and parents.
This is a school that provides outstanding support for pupils.*

In October 2013 the CReSTeD Council agreed an update to the criteria, the application for re-registration was completed prior to the new criteria's publication. To help parents review the information contained in this report the criteria as it applied is shown below:-

Consultant to tick relevant boxes when criteria are observed to have been met:		
Criteria		MS
1	The school implements a thorough and rigorous process for identifying dyslexic (SpLD) children.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	The Senior Management Team and Governors fully support the provision for dyslexic (SpLD) pupils.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	The impact of the provision for dyslexic (SpLD) pupils is measurable.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12	There is an awareness by all members of staff of the necessity to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of dyslexic (SpLD) pupils and this is evident across the curriculum.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
17	There is awareness and support by other members of staff of the needs of dyslexic (SpLD) pupils.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19	There is provision for individualised lessons on a withdrawal basis, and these staff communicate with mainstream teachers regarding the dyslexic (SpLD) pupils.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20	The teaching assistants responsible for in-class support have received specific training in dyslexia (SpLD) and will continue to receive regular Continuous Professional Development in supporting dyslexic pupils.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
21	There is either a Dyslexia (SpLD) <u>specialist</u> teacher in the school or the school uses specialist support and advice as needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>