



Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils

The Unicorn School

Registration – Category DU

1. *Date of visit:* 25.06.2012
2. *Name of Consultant(s):* Mr Nick Rees

School Contact Details	Location/ status	Student Details	Special Needs	Assoc'/ exams
The Unicorn School 20 Marcham Road Abingdon Oxon OX14 1AA Tel: 01235 530222 Fax: 01235 536889 Email: info@unicorndyslexia.co.uk Website: www.unicorndyslexia.co.uk	Town	69 co-ed Ages 6-13	Dysc Dsyl Dysp ADD P&S	
	Ind			
	Day			
Comments: We aim to reintegrate into mainstream education in 2 to 3 years. We also take children with specific language difficulties				

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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b) Name and qualifications of Head/Principal, with title used:

Name: Jacqueline Vaux
Title (eg Principal): Headteacher
Qualifications: MA Oxon, Bsc Psychol(Open),
Oxf.CertSpLD
Awarding body: Oxford Univ OU Middlesex

Consultant's comments: A well-established and experienced Head.

c) Name and qualifications of SENCO

Name: Rachel Mc Mullen
Title (eg SENCO): SENCO
Qualifications: AMBDA, SEN qualification, PATOSS practising
Certificate
Awarding body: Oxford Brookes University and BDA

Consultant's comments: The SENCo was absent due to a broken limb at the time of the inspection. She has taken up this appointment since the previous CReSTeD visit. She is suitably qualified and held in high regard.

d) Head/Principal's telephone number if different from above:

Tel: 01235 530222

e) Unit/Senior SpLD teacher's telephone number:

Tel:



Background and General Informatio

4. a) **Recent inspections:** **OFSTED (Feb 2012-outstanding in all areas)
Good School's Guide Jan 25th
Bucks LA for CCRAG 2010 update 2011**

Consultant's comments: The Ofsted report from 7-8 February highlights a school of outstanding quality of education, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in the welfare, health and safety of the pupils which fully meets its stated aims. Since the previous inspection the school had continued to improve and all the weaknesses identified had been successfully addressed.

Independe
nt Schools
only

- b) **Current membership**

BDA
Patoss,
Dyspraxia
Foundation
(about to join ISA)

Consultant's comments: Most suitable and appropriate membership. The school is planning to submit an application in 2012-2013 to ISA.

- c) **Department of Education Registration
Number: 931/6109**

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

		Total	Dyslexic/ SpLD	Accepted age range
Day:	Boys:	58	all	6 to 13
	Girls:	11	all	6 to 13
Boarding:	Boys:	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls:	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overall total:		69	69	

Consultant's comments: Pupil numbers have been stable since the previous visit.

- e) **Class sizes – mainstream:** n/a

Consultant's comments:

- f) **Class sizes - special needs:** Average class size 10, (12 max in largest room)

Consultant's comments: This is an appropriate class size for the type of school. Pupils are also grouped according to ability in Literacy and Maths and are regularly withdrawn for 1-1 lessons.

DSP4
SPS5

- g) **Aims and philosophy of the whole school:**

The principal aim of the school is to provide for the educational, social and emotional needs of moderately and severely dyslexic, dyspraxic and dyscalculic pupils.

Our pupils stay for an average of two years and we aim to integrate pupils back into mainstream schools with the literacy skills, maths skills and co-ordination skills as well as renewed self-esteem to enable them to cope with the demands of their subsequent education. The school has a family atmosphere where we aim to celebrate the talents of each individual. Outreach aims to provide free dyslexia teaching to children in local state schools.



Consultant's comments: It was clear during the visit, through reading the documentation and by talking to staff, parents and pupils that the school is true to its aims and philosophy.

- h) ***For completion by consultants only: Pastoral care arrangements, as relevant to dyslexic students, based on Ofsted/ISI report: The arrangements for pastoral care are outstanding as reported in the Ofsted report of 2012. Teachers are unfailingly positive in their dealings with the pupils and this nurturing approach encourages the pupils to thrive. Relationships between staff and pupils are instrumental in enabling the notable increase in pupils' confidence and self-awareness.***



Staffing and Staff Development

- DSP, SPS, 5. a) **Qualifications, date, awarding body and experience of all learning support staff:**
DU 7; SC, WS 18; MS 21
Staff either have OCR level 5, OCR level 7 an RSA certificate or accepted equivalent or/and AMBDA or are working towards AMBDA

Consultant's comments: The staff are suitably and appropriately qualified for this type of school.

DSP, SPS
8

- c) **Do all English teachers and teachers of literacy skills have nationally recognised qualifications in the teaching of SpLD dyslexic) children (except A level English)?**
95% of our class teachers and one to one teachers have nationally recognised qualifications for the teaching of dyslexic pupils One new class teacher is currently finishing her SpLD course and will be following through to AMBDA in September

Consultant's comments: The staff are very well and suitably qualified.

DSP, SPS
9

- d) ***For completion by consultants only: Do all members of staff demonstrate the ability to meet the needs of dyslexic (SpLD) pupils within their departments?*** The staff are very well and suitably qualified. Amongst the staff is a wealth of experience which is very evident.



Policy and Philosophy with Regard to Dyslexic (SpLD) Pupils

Criteria 1 & 6.
2

a) **Policy statement with regard to dyslexic (SpLD) pupils**

The Unicorn School has a whole school approach to dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. Its very existence is to provide education for children who are dyslexic and have related difficulties.

We celebrate all children's strengths and talents in the school particularly through trips and visitors in school and taking part in prestigious art competitions and exhibitions, drama workshops, and construction activities, sport and IT is paramount in school. Our 1:1 teaching for all children every day provides very intensive support to progress in literacy skills and provides a personal mentor for each child. Occupational therapy and Speech therapy on site are an integral part of many children's lives at school. We are currently working towards ICAN status and are making sure that the environment itself is very visual.

Identification and assessment

We offer dyslexia screening assessment by appropriately qualified teaching staff to parents of children both outside the school and those interested in joining us. We ask for a full Educational Psychologist's report for those who wish to join stating that that a child has dyslexia and/or associated specific difficulties. It is vital for teaching staff that they understand a child's strengths and learning styles. A mind-map is drawn up by 1:1 teachers for their own use, with information summary about the Ed Psych's report and the interests, hobbies of the child as well as appropriate hearing, eye tests etc. Within the school, pupils are assessed twice yearly in reading and spelling by their 1:1 teachers and by "Goal on line" in maths. They are assessed by the Speech and Language therapist if there are concerns about expressive, receptive language or articulation and by the Occupational therapist if there are concerns about fine or gross motor control or muscle tone.

Support for policy from Senior Management Team

All senior management team are highly qualified teachers of dyslexic children and are instrumental in leading progress and encouraging best practice, performance management and continued professional development for staff

Support for policy from governors

Most of our governors have direct or indirect experience of dyslexia and are very supportive of the school policy. All Policies are signed off by the Chair of Governors. Some governors are parents of children who were in the school and are now adults. Tremendous gifts of time and commitment and bursary funds are given by governors

Consultant's comments: The special educational needs policy is comprehensive and clearly laid out with sections for all those concerned including the governing body, staff, pupils and parents. The policy is reviewed regularly.

b) **Admission policy / selection criteria:**

Children are accepted on a first come, first served basis as long as they have an Ed Psych's report stating dyslexia or specific learning difficulty as a primary need. Children will not be accepted if they interfere with



other children's rights to work and play in peace. If there is any doubt, they will be visited in their home school and may be taken on a term's trial initially. All pupils who apply must spend two normal days in the school to see how they fit in and whether the placement is appropriate for them. Statemented children are welcomed as long as we can meet all the objectives set out on the statement.

Consultant's comments: This is included in the special educational needs policy. It is clear and informative.

Criterion 3

c) **Give specific examples of the whole school response to dyslexia (SpLD):**

The School has been created as a Specialist School and is therefore designed as a whole to meet individual needs on both a group and 1:1 basis.

Consultant's comments: Small class sizes with structure and routine as well as ability grouping where appropriate and regular 1-1 withdraw. All pupils have an individual education plan. Occupational and speech and language therapy is also provided on site if appropriate.



School Organisation

7. a) **How is the week organised?**

The school day runs from 9am to 3 45pm

At 8 50 there is a whole school dance programme to disco music.

Literacy and Maths are taught in the mornings.

1:1 lessons take place during Maths with one half of the class going to

1:1 while the other half do maths at their level and then swapping over

This allows for dyscalculic children to be taught in very small groups and high flyers separately; allowing for a more individualised approach in maths.

All other National Curriculum subjects are taught in the afternoons.

Sailing and swimming take place once a week and sports off- site for

Upper School takes place on Wednesday pm/Friday pm There are

breaks at 10 30am , 11 50am and 2 30pm.

Consultant's comments: The timetable is well organised and the system works well for the pupils.

b) **Details of arrangements for dyslexic (SpLD) pupils, including prep / homework:**

All our dyslexic pupils are in very small classes and all have 30mins 1:1 support daily. Some also have occupational therapy and/or speech therapy. A few may have art therapy. All pupils have class teachers who are dyslexia trained They have access to IT and appropriate software both in 1:1 and with their class. They are expected to become very proficient in their use of IT. All pupils are taught to touch type as soon as they enter the school and typing speeds are monitored. Textbooks are rarely used but if they are in Upper school they are selected for visual appeal. Pupils are grouped according to ability in maths.

Homework tasks are set by 1:1 teachers daily for years 2-5 and are written in the homework diary by the teachers. This may be literacy skills homework but must be able to be done independently. This diary acts as a go- between for parents and teachers and comments from parents are expected and welcomed. In Upper School (years 6 -9) there is more homework from the class teacher, which may be English, Maths, Science and less from the 1:1 teacher.

Consultant's comments: The whole school approach is organised around supporting pupils with dyslexia and SpLD. This includes an effective home school relationship and includes setting appropriate homework.



Identification and Assessment

Criteria 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:**

We offer dyslexia screening assessment by appropriately qualified teaching staff to parents of children both outside the school and those interested in joining us. We ask for a full Educational Psychologist's report for those who wish to join stating that that a child has dyslexia and/or associated specific difficulties. It is vital for teaching staff that they understand a child's strengths and learning styles. A mind-map is drawn up by 1:1 teachers for their own use, with information summary about the Ed Psych's report and the interests, hobbies of the child as well as appropriate hearing, eye tests etc. Within the school, pupils are assessed twice yearly in reading and spelling by their 1:1 teachers and by "Goal on line" in maths. They are assessed by the Speech and Language therapist if there are concerns about expressive, receptive language or articulation and by the Occupational therapist if there are concerns about fine or gross motor control or muscle tone.

Consultant's comments: As previously indicated in the policy statement, dyslexia screening is offered to both prospective pupils and for those external to the school. A full educational psychologist's report is also requested.

- b) **Give details of what action you take when children are identified as at risk of dyslexia (SpLD) from screening:**

Advise parents. Admit for trial days if parents wish. Monitor progress with appropriate texts.

Consultant's comments: This has been previously indicated in the policy statement. It is clear and informative.

- c) **Give details of how children in your school can access a full assessment for dyslexia (SpLD):**

This can be undertaken by any member of staff who is appropriately qualified and usually involves an update. We refer most often to an educational psychologist who is happy to come into school to undertake assessments whose name is Terri Passenger. Alternatively, Dyslexia Action provides a bank of Educational Psychologists.

Consultant's comments: This has also been fully explained in the policy statement. It is concise and informative.

Teaching and Learning

MS & DU
12; MS &
SC 17; MS
& WS 19

9. a) **Lesson preparation and delivery to meet the needs of dyslexics for:**

- **Curriculum subjects**

Lesson plans for class teachers are in standard planners issued at the start of the term. Lessons plans and lessons are observed and feedback given. Lesson plans follow the teacher's scheme of work outlined for the year, | Planning takes account of the needs of individual children and their learning styles. Objectives for the lessons are made clear; instructions are stepwise and may need to be repeated during tasks for pupils who forget. Resources are hands on and there is relatively little teacher talk. Mind mapping, multisensory teaching, learning games, trips and visits and visitors into school all form a vital part of the teaching and learning experiences for our dyslexic children. IT is paramount for both teaching and for homework tasks. Pupils have memory sticks that can go between home and school

- **Literacy support**

1:1 teachers plan lessons on an agreed sheet that details objectives and lesson content and details the homework tasks and comments.

The 1:1 lessons are much individualised to the needs of the child and resources are fun and Word shark, Nussy, Dragon Naturally Speaking mind mapping software all support learning as well as innumerable games. There are frequent 1:1 meetings to share best practise and good liaison with class teachers to make sure learning is carried over into class.

Consultant's comments: 14 lessons were observed for approximately 15 minutes each. This was a range of whole class and 1-1 lessons. Literacy, Maths, Science, ICT, RE and Music were all observed. All lessons were well prepared and lesson plans were used. Most lessons began with a review of what had previously been taught, all had a practical aspect and all had a plenary. Pupils were well behaved throughout and largely enthusiastic. Rooms were tidy and organised on the whole although some had displays covering large amounts of the walls. In 1-1 areas where there was no door or more than one 1-1 taking place the environment was quite noisy as was the classroom off the ICT suite. 1-1 lessons were on the whole traditional in the resources used and in delivery. All lessons were well paced. The pupils enjoyed their lessons and it was obvious that pupils were making progress.

b) **Use of IEP's**

All children in the school have an IEP. These are prepared termly with the 1:1 teacher, class teacher, child and the parent and therapists; Targets must be SMART and easily understood. The reviews are held with the child's input and the parents at the end of every term and new targets set. The children know their own targets and the younger children have them stuck on their tables so they can be rewarded if they meet them in class. Any Statemented children, in addition to the above reviews also have annual reviews of statement in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Consultant's comments: The IEPs are well set out and the information provided on them is both clear and informative. There are class as well as individual targets. Additional areas of focus are also included. Strategies and resources are indicated and they are reviewed at regular intervals. Teachers, pupils and parents review the IEPs. IEP targets are often attached to the top of the pupil's desk for easy reference.



c) **Records and record keeping**

Tracking of reading accuracy and comprehension, speed, and spelling ages using standardised tests is undertaken twice a year by the 1:1 teachers using standardised tests. These results are held on the shared computers system for staff and progress can easily be monitored. They are held in individual children's files in the system

National curriculum class tracking is maintained on our shared system both for every individual pupil and for the class. This allows progress to be monitored in both areas year on year.

Visual Profiles of each child's levelled piece of work each term is kept in the classrooms to log improvement in writing and other subjects.

Goal on line provides a baseline maths assessment and monitors improvement Children can listen to the questions on the computer and do not have to read them. It is a very visual assessment

A self-esteem inventory is undertaken on a yearly basis and flags up any children who may be vulnerable or highly confident who we may not have noticed. Pupil's Educational psychologist's reports and other information is held in a locked cabinet. The SEN Register and copies of the IEPs are held in the SENCO's office but IEPs are also accessible on our system for all teachers who teach the child.

Progress is tracked across the whole school in reading spelling and Maths and trends observed as well as progress from start date to leaving date.

Consultant's comments: Record keeping is extensive and provides valuable and necessary information to the teachers for on-going planning. It is reflective and evaluative.

Criterion 3

d) **For comment by consultants only: Two case studies of dyslexic pupils (proforma provided to Heads for use if required).** Pupils are extensively tracked throughout their time at the school. Primarily this is done via the IEP's. However a variety of standardised tests e.g. reading are also used usually at 6 monthly intervals. National Curriculum teacher assessment and testing is also utilised to good effect for English, Maths and Science. Tracking takes place for individual pupils and for the whole class in the various aspects of English e.g. reading, writing and speaking and listening. Pupils are also tracked on entry and on leaving the school.

Criterion 3

Impact of provision – assessment summary (only fill in the Key Stages relevant to your school):

Key Stage 2	No. of Year 6 pupils entered	English		Maths		Science	
		L4+	A/D	L4+	A/D	L4+	A/D
Whole School							
Dyslexic (SpLD) Pupils	18 Eng	13		7	8		

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

Consultant's comments: n/a



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

Access arrangements have been requested and made for two boys sitting Bucks Grammar School exams. 25% extra time was given, a reader for one and an enlarged exam paper for the other for whom tracking is an issue.

A GCSE French exam was sat here since the last Crested inspection and Access arrangements requested by us. The child was awarded the use of a computer and extra time. The school is now a registered exam centre.

Access arrangements have been made for SATs for those children who meet the published criteria. They will be retested by us to check. The majority of the children who are all at SAP or above will qualify for support. Readers, scribes, transcription, IT use and extra time are awarded. SATs are marked internally but according to the guidelines. Where entrance exams to other schools are taken, enlightened schools allow pupils to sit the exams here in a familiar environment and take advice from us for access arrangements.

Consultant's comments: These are appropriate and necessary requests and it is commendable that the school is now a registered examination centre.

h) *For completion by consultants only: **Dyslexic (SpLD) pupils' responses regarding their school and teachers:** 9 pupils, 2 girls and 7 boys, from year groups 2-8 were given the opportunity to talk and to answer questions for 30 minutes. All pupils thought that their teachers helped them a lot especially with English and Maths. The 1-1 teachers were given particular mention, as was the occupational therapist. They liked being in a school with the same sort of children. They all enjoyed attending school. The only request was to make greater use of the laptop word processors.*



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

10. a) Whiteboards in all classrooms, computer suite and laptops, computers and appropriate software in 1:1 rooms games and resources for multisensory teaching in 1:1 rooms, resource room and classrooms I T, OT resources including swing, speech and Lang resources. Games in all these areas. Huge numbers of reading books in various schemes and generally extremely well resourced

Consultant's comments: The school is very well resourced and the use of a range of equipment was much in evidence during the visit.

b) **Library:**

The library has a great range of books, which have been coded for ease of access. Children can access the library at break time if they wish and have library times too. It is a cosy area with colourful floor cushions. Older children act as librarians who help them sign out books. Children are encouraged to add their own literary works to the library.

Consultant's comments: The library is a welcoming environment with a good choice of reading material. A suggestion, regarding the use of pupils as librarians, from the previous visit has been put in place.

c) **ICT**

A vital part of the school, networked computers throughout school with internet access, lap tops in year 8 class and fundraising to supplement IT suite and laptops with more in class access across school. ICT suite very heavily used. Interactive whiteboards in every classroom, adjustable so that children can reach. All 1:1 teachers have IT for pupils with touch typing maths and literacy programmes and mind mapping programmes. Speech recognition software is available. Too Simple software is also available in class. Very strict firewall and e safety in place. ICT co coordinator plays vital role in school.

Consultant's comments: The school is very well equipped and during the visit the use of ICT was in evidence. The laptop word processors have however not been successful due to unreliable access to the internet. The school is investigating other options for the future.



Statement of Special Educational Needs

11. a) **School policy:**

We welcome Statemented children to the Unicorn School as long as we can meet the objectives and we conduct Annual Reviews according to the Code of Conduct. We attend tribunals for pupils who want to come to the Unicorn, advise both parents and county on our provision and undertake Statutory Assessments while children are in the school.

Consultant's comments: The policy is clear and appropriate.

Independent Schools only

- b) **Types of Statemented needs accepted:** Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Speech and Language difficulties when linked to other specific difficulties. Physical disability when related to other specific difficulties. We do not take children with behaviour difficulties whether Statemented or not as this is not in keeping with our admissions criteria.

Consultant's comments: This is appropriate.

- c) **Number of Statemented pupils: 9**

Consultant's comments: All pupils with statements meet the admission criteria.



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

- Independent Schools only
12. Schools should provide, with the documentation, a list of the names of all known dyslexic (SpLD) pupils in the school. 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:** 8 parents were contacted. All thought that the school was successful in meeting its aims. All reported that their children enjoyed attending school and that they had all made progress. The school is run as a business but is friendly and considerate. Small class sizes and the amount of 1-1 support was valued. The self-esteem and confidence of the pupils is developed very well. It is how dyslexic pupils ought to be taught everywhere with brilliant, skilled and patient teachers. One parent would like more homework so that they could understand more of what was going on at school and another would like more sport as for their child. Sport was a strength. Two parents thought that communication regarding their child's progress could be given more regularly than once a term but they both appreciated that schools were busy places.



14. *For completion by consultants only: **Summary of Report including whether acceptance is recommended:** The Unicorn School offers an outstanding education for its pupils all of whom have dyslexia or SpLD. The pupils respond accordingly with excellent behaviour and enthusiasm. They feel valued, supported and safe in a warm and welcoming environment. Parents support the school wholeheartedly and it is recommended that The Unicorn School is re-registered as a DSP CReSTeD school.*

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	DSP
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"/>
4. The school is established primarily to teach pupils with Dyslexia (SpLD).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Assessment for admission to the school should include a report from an Educational Psychologist or a Specialist Teacher who holds an Assessment Practising Certificate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. The Head of Learning Support (or equivalent) should normally hold a nationally recognised qualification for the teaching of dyslexic (SpLD) pupils.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. As a minimum, all English teachers and teachers of literacy skills will have nationally recognised qualifications in the teaching of dyslexic (SpLD) children. In exceptional circumstances the consultant may recommend to Council that an experienced teacher or a teacher undergoing training satisfies this criterion.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. All members of staff demonstrate the ability to meet the needs of dyslexic (SpLD) pupils within their own departments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>