

March 2009

Dear Parents,

ROUTINE DYSLEXIA SCREENING FOR PUPILS IN THE RECEPTION CLASS

It is widely reported that ten per cent of the population are at risk from some degree of specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia and many more have general difficulties with literacy. Research suggests that it should be possible to identify both slow learners and potential dyslexic children at around the age of five. The earlier potential problems are identified, the easier they are to overcome. With this in mind we will be carrying out routine screening of your child using the Dyslexia Early Screening Test – DEST. This will be followed up in Year 1, during the spring/summer term of 2010, with reading and spelling tests, together with a repeat of the DEST if it is felt to be necessary.

The DEST is not a formal test, and each part of the DEST is designed to be fun and not at all stressful. It takes about forty-five minutes per child and has four sections which cover a range of early skills, including the child’s knowledge, language skills, speed and hand-eye skills. By looking at a range of skills we find strengths as well as weaknesses, and this can be very helpful when considering how to help your child learn as well as possible. From the results of the DEST we can check whether or not your child might have subtle hearing problems, or difficulties hearing rhymes. These difficulties can make it harder to learn to read.

The short tests included also allow us to check whether your child is likely to be dyslexic. If there is any history of difficulties in learning to read and spell in your immediate family (yourself, your spouse, your child’s brothers or sisters, grandparents) it would be helpful if you could note this down at the bottom of this letter and return it to your child’s class teacher.

The outcome of this screening will be sent to you once all the results have been collated.

Yours sincerely

Ailsa Norris/Vanessa McIntosh/Liz Gregory
Special Needs Department

Name of child _____

Date of birth _____ Class _____

Is there any history of problems with reading or spelling in the family?

Signature of parent _____