

If you require any further information please contact:

The Orthoptic Department 01744 646816

Specific Learning Difficulties Clinic

Patient Information Leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Aim

This clinic is designed for children age 7 and above. It is aimed at helping to diagnose and treat visual problems which may affect your child's learning.

The clinic is not intended to replace the expertise of other professionals like teachers or the Educational Psychologists. An Orthoptist does not diagnose dyslexia or any other educational problems.

An Orthoptist is an eye care professional who is specially trained to detect eye movement and eye tracking problems. They can also provide advice on visual stress and visual processing difficulties (How the brain processes visual Information).

Visual stress and processing difficulties do not necessarily go hand in hand with dyslexia. They can occur separately or co-exist. Treating any area of visual difficulty will help your child manage their problem in a better way.

If your child has seen an Educational Psychologist or had any specialist assessments we would advise you to bring these reports with you to your appointment. If your child has glasses it is also recommended that you bring a recent copy of their prescription with you.

How to use your coloured overlay

- Try to use natural lighting rather than fluorescent lighting.
- Lay the overlay over the text the child is reading.
- Store the overlay in an envelope or plastic folder so that it does not crease.
- In school, children may benefit from having work printed on worksheets rather than read from the board.
- Some children benefit from using paper of a similar colour to their overlay for writing on.
- If using a computer or tablet it may be beneficial to alter the background colour.

Exercises

If necessary, exercises may be advised to help improve your child's tracking ability, or ability to focus.

Other advice may be given for example, keeping still and positioning when reading. Reading is made harder if the child moves around a lot as the words will move too.

Glasses

If a prescription for glasses is found, these may be given to your child.

Overlays

Following your first appointment, if appropriate, your child may be prescribed an overlay to trial when reading. It is a good indicator of success, if during this trial, your child voluntarily uses their overlay. However, if they find it does not help, they do not have to use it. The best judge as to whether it helps or not is the user. The response to colour is variable and specific to each individual.



Visual Stress is the experience of visual symptoms when reading.

These symptoms cannot be explained by a need for glasses or an eye movement problem.

As a result of visual stress a child may struggle to develop reading skills.

Symptoms tend to increase as text gets smaller and makes reading unpleasant to the point that children will tend to avoid it.

Symptoms:

- Seeing shapes and colours within text.
- Movement of the text.
- Distortion of print (fuzzy) and difficulty focussing on the print.
- Double vision.
- Tired eyes after reading.
- Sensitive to light and colours.
- Symptoms tend to increase as text gets smaller.

Signs that parents/ teachers may notice:

- Miss out words or lines when reading.
- Unable to sit still when reading or continually move head.
- Hold text closer.
- Poor visual memory.
- Close one eye.
- Adopt a head posture.
- Reluctance to read.
- Poor sequencing left to right.

What to expect on your first visit

The Orthoptist will establish what problems you have noticed and what symptoms your child is experiencing. The appointment will then be completed in stages.

Stage 1: A full eye assessment will be completed to ensure there is no eye problem causing symptoms.

Stage 2: A visual stress questionnaire will be completed to identify if this is present and what symptoms are experienced. If appropriate, an overlay assessment will then be completed.

Sometimes the correct colour reduces the movement of text that children describe and can make reading more comfortable.

Children that benefit from overlays are able to read with less discomfort when the overlays are in place.

Stage 3: The orthoptist will assess tracking ability. Poor ability to track words across a page can result in a difficulty to develop reading skills. This is tested using numbers.

This will conclude your first appointment. The Orthoptist may recommend an eye examination with a Doctor/Optician and will arrange appropriate follow up.