

ISA Awards 2023 Case Study: Award for Innovation in Education



MAPLE HAYES HALL SCHOOL

JUNE 2024



History of the School

Founded in 1982 by Dr Neville Brown, Maple Hayes Hall School is a specialist school for children aged 7 to 17 with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) or dyslexia. All pupils who attend the school have Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and are funded by Local Authorities under s.39 of the CFA. They are currently the only s.41 approved ISS school for SpLD. The building at the centre of the school is a late 18th century manor house which was acquired by Staffordshire County Council in 1951 when it became a state school boarding annexe. Since becoming Maple Hayes Hall School the site has been developed extensively by the Principals so that the pupils have excellent opportunities as they study a broad curriculum. The school is a well-known centre of expertise, training and research for dyslexia and has developed and implemented a unique way of addressing literacy.

Dr. Brown believes that traditional phonics-based literacy programmes are ineffective for dyslexic children. His vision was to create a programme based on morphology, the study of word structure, to help these children learn to read and write. This unique approach focuses on teaching morphemes, the meaning units within words (e.g., "right" and "rig") and this method bypasses the limitations of phonics for students with poor auditory working memory. The literacy lessons form part of the school's normal curriculum so that no child misses lessons through withdrawal or feels isolated because of the educational challenges they face.

Maple Hayes Hall School boasts impressive results. Many students enter with reading ages of 6 but leave with GCSEs at or near the national average. Alumni have gone on to achieve success in higher education and various careers. Despite its success, Maple Hayes Hall School has faced opposition from those invested in traditional phonics methods. However, Dr. Brown has received recognition for his work, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the

British Dyslexia Association.

The school is currently led by Dr. Neville Brown a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, FRSA, C.Psychol., C. Sci and Registered Neuropsychologist, and his son, Dr. Daryl Brown, who is also a psychologist specialising in SpLD.



Dr Neville Brown
Co-Principal



Dr Daryl Brown
Co-Principal

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created a cursive
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www.dyslexia.school



AIMS

- Teach children with SpLD or dyslexia to read and write using a morphological approach.
- Help students overcome limitations of phonics programmes due to auditory working memory challenges and overcome limitations of whole word programmes due to visual working memory.
- Improve literacy skills to achieve age-appropriate levels.
- Prepare students for success in mainstream curriculum and beyond.
- Gain recognition for the effectiveness of the morphological approach in dyslexia education.



ACTIONS

- A unique morphological curriculum was developed and implemented that prioritised teaching morphemes (meaningful word parts) instead of now-conventional phonics or whole words.
- We focussed on the individual needs of the students and once assessed they were placed in small classes with those of a similar age and achievement levels.
- The morphological programme was integrated into our full curriculum so that literacy skills were developed alongside other academic subjects.
- Potential students are assessed and given a week-long trial in class so that we and their families can assess the suitability of the school before enrolment.
- The morphological programme emphasises the meaning of letter strings that comprise words, which phonics and whole-word approaches do not, so that the child can immediately jump from the short three- or four-letter words to the long word vocabulary required to access the curriculum. Additionally, the morphemes that are put into visual memory for reading are separately put into kinæsthetic or handwriting memory for easy retrieval and word-building directly in writing – the opposite of multisensory teaching.
- We invested in our teachers by providing ongoing professional development in the form of training in delivering the morphological literacy programme. Progress is monitored through weekly and termly tests, ensuring the programme remains effective.
- A merit award system was set up that reinforced success and boosted self-esteem by celebrating student achievements.
- We share research and outcomes to gain recognition for the methodology.





OUTCOMES

- Students with extremely low reading ages upon entry leave with GCSE-level literacy skills, achieving 7-8 (sometimes more) GCSEs at or near the national average demonstrating academic progress.
- By emphasising self-esteem and progress recognition the confidence of students has increased.
- Students are prepared for success in mainstream curriculum and potentially higher education.
- Alumni have gone on to achieve success in various careers, showcasing the programme's long-term benefits.
- The school's consistent "Outstanding" Ofsted ratings demonstrate its effectiveness.
- There has been an increased Awareness of the Morphological Approach through advocacy efforts that may lead to a wider recognition of this approach in dyslexia education.
- Ongoing professional development equips teachers with the necessary skills to deliver the programme effectively and in turn, build their confidence.
- There has been a positive impact on families as they see their child's progress in real-time.
- The week-long trial period before joining has helped ensure the programme is a good fit for enrolled students.



NEXT STEPS

- To continue to research and refine the unique programme to maintain its effectiveness and adapt to evolving learning needs.
- To further research on the morphological approach's long-term impact and wider dissemination of successful outcomes to solidify its place in dyslexia education.
- To explore and investigate if incorporating educational technology tools that complement the morphological programme could potentially enhance learning and cater to diverse learning styles.

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Useful links

<https://youtu.be/XjyjpVVmEkE>

