

MEDIA RELEASE

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4D - paving the way for dyslexia friendly schools

New Zealand schools are being encouraged to take dyslexia issues into their own hands with the launch of a pioneering new programme to establish a register of dyslexia friendly schools and share best practice learnings and resources.

4D (For Dyslexia), launched today by the Dyslexia Foundation, is aimed at empowering schools to improve the odds for the 70,000 New Zealand children with dyslexia who are currently in the education system. Joining is easy – schools are required to draft a dyslexia policy statement, publish it on their website and link through to the Dyslexia Foundation's website.

Guy Pope-Mayell, Chair of Trustees of the Dyslexia Foundation, says 4D is designed to share knowledge and drive educational change.

“By encouraging schools to develop a dyslexia policy statement, we’re enabling them to highlight the types of initiatives that they find work best at the coalface with our kids. It’s commonly accepted that there’s a need for better interventions and learning tools – so much so that many schools are developing their own approaches. 4D is a mechanism to connect the good work that’s taking place in schools throughout the country.”

“4D will also give parents of dyslexic students information on which to base school decisions,” says Guy Pope-Mayell.

Cashmere Primary School in Christchurch is the first school to sign up.

“This is a critical programme that empowers schools throughout the county to make a real difference for their dyslexic students,” Principal Jacqui Duncan says.

“Cashmere Primary has been at the forefront of dyslexia learning and intervention strategies for the past two years. We’re excited about the opportunity to share our learnings with other schools and to discover new ways to improve opportunities for our dyslexic students,” Jacqui Duncan added.

Mr Pope-Mayell sees the programme as one way to continue to momentum gained when the Government formally recognised dyslexia in April 2007.

“Recognising dyslexia was a huge milestone. However, without dedicated funding and dedicated learning resources, it simply isn’t enough. The Dyslexia Foundation believes that specific attention needs to be focused on dyslexia, which is why we’ve launched 4D.

The name 4D stands 'For Dyslexia' or alternatively '4 Dyslexia'. It is a play on 3D with the fourth dimension being creativity. 4D expands the 3 Rs to include reading, writing, arithmetic and creativity.

The launch of 4D is a pre-cursor to Dyslexia Awareness Week, which is taking place from 16-22 June. More information on 4D and Dyslexia Awareness Week is available on www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz

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