



Lawns Park Primary School

A Quick Guide to Visual Processing

What is Visual Processing?

Visual Processing is the way the brain makes sense of visual information. It is the brain's ability to process and interpret what the eyes see. It includes how the eyes work together (binocular vision), tracking of the eyes whilst reading, making fast eye movements, visual comfort, and the perceptual aspects of vision.

There are three core visual acquisition skills:

- Eye-tracking - the ability to point to and track objects or words on a page, which is essential for reading and following a moving object.
- Eye-teaming - the coordination of both eyes to look at a single object, which is vital for depth perception and eye-hand coordination.
- Eye-focusing - linked to how effectively we can see things up close and make them clear, which is also crucial when reading, using a computer, or participating in similar activities.

Implications for a pupil

Pupils with visual processing difficulties may present with the following:

- Frowning, scowling or screwing eyes up with visual tasks.
- Holding books too closely or too far away.
- Tilting of the head, poor posture.
- Red eyes or lids/excessive eye watering.
- Headaches, especially around the front of the head.
- Skipping or re-reading words or letters.
- Reversals when reading e.g. was/saw, on/no, b/d, p/q.
- Transposing letters when writing.
- Losing place frequently when reading.
- Repeatedly missing 'small' words.
- Mistaking words with the same or similar beginnings or endings.
- Failing to recognise the same word in the next sentence.
- Confusing the same word in the same sentence.
- Struggling to remember sequences.
- Struggling to copy from the board.

How to help – top tips

There are many adaptations that can be put in place to support students with visual processing difficulties.

1. Make sure regular eye tests are up to date – for children this should be annually.
2. Keep the visually presented information simple and clutter free.
3. Clearly space words/problems on a page.
4. Printing text on a coloured or textured background can help to make information easier to read.
5. Reduce copying tasks.
6. Use audiobooks for class texts.
7. Encourage the learner to read on a computer where they can adjust the font size and background colour.
8. Learning how to touch type removes the barrier of remembering how to form letters thereby allowing them to focus on content.
9. Use a bookmark to block out other lines of text when reading.
10. Use a highlighter to emphasise important information.
11. Consider enlarging text and wider ruled books.
12. Write instructions on the board in different colours and/or include simple images/abbreviations for clarity.
13. Reduce visual distractions by folding tests/information sheets in half or use blank pieces of paper to cover up part of the page.
14. Referral for most cases of visual difficulties is to an optometrist for a sight-test.
15. Re-referral to a G.P., ophthalmologist or orthoptist is generally advisable if an existing visual condition or impairment is reported as worsening.
16. Referral to a specialist vision professional is generally advisable in cases of possible pattern related visual stress/sensitivity.

Further advice and support

Further advice:

University of Bradford have an affordable eye clinic, including a 'vision and reading clinic':

[Eye Clinic - University of Bradford](#)

Reading:

Checklist for Visual Perception and Processing Problems- Hertfordshire Integrated Services for Learning

[Checklist for visual perceptual processing problems \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)