



THE MOAT SCHOOL

Learning to touch type ensures that pupils with dyspraxia can record their work legibly.

'Mainstream in structure and specialist in nature' is how The Moat School in Fulham describes itself. It is an independent school for pupils aged 9-16 and won a TES award for Special Needs Initiative 2015 for its 'paired reading' programme.



Now part of Cavendish Education, the school was opened in 1998 by a group of parents who realised there was no specific school offering dyslexia provision in London at that time. This group became the Constable Education Trust which still offers bursaries to this day.

The Moat School currently has 85 pupils and 40 staff, including a full-time therapy team and learning support assistants, and caters for students with a wide range of specific learning difficulties. Around 28% of the pupils have dyspraxia but nearly all have sensory processing difficulties.

Mark Quillfeldt teaches English at the school and is also the Senco. Many of the pupils will take up to six GCSEs while others will be entered for different certificates

and alternative qualifications according to skills and interests. 'All our learners are entitled to access arrangements such as extra time, the use of laptops, scribes or readers,' he said, 'and we encourage them to learn touch typing. This is so useful for all their extended writing tasks as few of our pupils have good handwriting.'

The school runs workshops for those children whose handwriting is so poor they cannot even fill in a form but some learners with severe dyspraxia can spend hours every day on handwriting and still see little improvement so the school also invests heavily in technology.

Every pupil has a laptop and the school makes extensive use of Google Drive and Google Docs while the Texthelp Read and Write software helps those who need to have their work read back to them because they process text so slowly.

The school has tried voice recognition and has found it is a good solution for many learners which they can use at home too. However, it can be tricky to implement in the classroom,' said Mark. 'It requires users to speak slowly and clearly and a child using voice recognition can be distracting to other pupils in the room, so it is a good idea for them to learn touch typing too.'

The Moat School has been using KAZ for many years. It is an online teaching tool which can teach children to touch type the basic alphabet keys in just 90 minutes. It tracks pupils' efforts so that the teacher can see at a glance whether they are making progress, typing accurately and improving their words per minute.

The company offers several versions of the software for schools, businesses and adult learners and has a new SEN/ dyslexia edition - KAZ's Neurodiverse Typing Tutor- that was shortlisted for a Bett award in 2019.

This was developed with guidance from the Dyslexia Research Trust. It is designed so that it does not overload the working memory and lets pupils set up preferences for colours and fonts to minimise visual stress. It uses 'brain balance' and 'muscle memory' and builds up motor skills and co-ordination.

Originally KAZ was the responsibility of the ICT co-ordinator at The Moat School because it is a software product but now it is part of the Skills for Learning curriculum where children work on individual skills such as spelling and reading comprehension that will help with their literacy and improve their independence.



'Like most people I type a lot,' said Mark. 'I believe learning to touch type is good for all children, including those in mainstream schools. It's an essential life skill and not just something for children with special needs.'

KAZ's Mainstream and Neurodiverse typing tutor was shortlisted as a Bett Finalist 2019.

"The aim of the award was to reward products that make a distinct contribution to supporting learners with special educational needs."



Give YOUR students a head start - teach them to type.



<https://kaz-type.com>