

Karen Starkiss

Karen brings over 30 years of experience as a teacher of primary & secondary students & therefore knows what to recommend & what is practical. In England, she was Principal of one of the top performing primary schools, despite the fact that she had the highest number of students with severe Learning Difficulties in the County. She has also worked in “failing” schools to quickly improve standards of teaching & learning. In 2007 she was invited to Buckingham Palace in recognition of her ‘outstanding contribution to Education.’



In England Karen undertook extensive, transparent, accredited training which qualified her to be able to assess, formally diagnose & teach children & adults with dyslexia. She advised schools about becoming more inclusive & accessible & worked with the special needs advisors for her Local Education Authority to write ‘dyslexia-friendly’ quality standards for schools.

When Karen moved to Australia, she was extremely concerned to find that dyslexia & other SpLDs were not recognised in her state of Victoria & in fact in most states throughout Australia. She therefore joined with other passionate parents & educationalists to advocate for change. Dyslexia is now accepted as a disorder, most certainly by the Government in Vic & is commonly accepted in many parts of Australia. In 2016, as director of Learning at Speld Karen was one of five Speld members who persuaded the funding body to formally recognise dyslexia. Karen is currently the owner of Dyslexia Assessments & Support Services & has wide experience in assessing dyslexic children, teenagers & adults for learning difficulties. For some years now she has provided Professional Development workshops about diversity, inclusion & teaching reading to schools, colleges & employers all over Australia.

Karen has appeared on National Television in England, spoken at a number of conferences, has been interviewed by the Age & on ABC radio about her expertise in dyslexia. She advised A Government Task Force in Canberra about children with LD. Karen has also worked with the Education Departments in the ACT & Northern Territory, to put together a program to help schools become inclusive & accessible to all students, providing training for Expert/Lead teachers & professionals.

In 2015 Karen was appointed to the Victoria DET Learning Difficulties & Dyslexia taskforce in the, advising about support for students with LD including dyslexia & provided workshops throughout Victoria, on behalf of Department of Education & Training, for school Principals & senior managers about implementing the Response to Intervention process to allow all learners to achieve & to identify children with LD early & to solve small issues before they become big problems.

Karen currently works with Department of Education, Catholic & Independent schools in Victoria & interstate delivering workshops covering a range of subjects but mainly around Diversity & Inclusion & Raising Reading Standards for all children including those with literacy disorders. In addition, Karen works with a number of schools as a consultant helping them raise standards in literacy by implementing whole school scopes & sequences & programs for teaching synthetic reading & spelling (including a synthetic phonics scheme), & vocabulary scope & sequence. She helps schools choose the correct assessments & provides support about collecting & using data effectively.

Karen has personal family experience of learning difficulties & dyslexia, which helps her understand the challenges, frustrations & successes experienced by teachers, parents & children

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