DYSLEXIA CASE STUDY

Thomas is the youngest of three brothers. His parents work full time in executive jobs. They took time to read to their children and always set a great example of enjoying literature in the home.

Thomas’ elder brothers, one in late primary and the other in high school, are keen readers and receive consistently high grades in English in their school reports.

Thomas, although undoubtedly bright and with a large oral vocabulary, struggled to write his name without reversing some of the letters, even in his first year of school. He made little progress in reading and found himself in the lowest group for writing.

By the end of his second year, Thomas had still not progressed out of the lowest reading and writing groups.

His parents remarked that while his brothers’ shelves were lined with ‘favourite books’ which they shared with each other, Thomas was not interested in what they were reading and had no ‘favourites’. He was also very reluctant to do nightly reading with his parent unless he was being read to.

In his third year, Thomas started complaining of headaches and even though his sight was thoroughly checked, showing no abnormalities, he would complain about schoolwork making him tired. He began to grow anxious about attending school.

In the middle of his third year at school, after an evaluation by a speech-language therapist, Thomas was diagnosed with moderate dyslexia. He was then referred to Linguist Learning.

Thomas was given a short, medium and long-term learning plan. This included:

- re-learning the basic symbols and their sounds using the Spalding Writing Road to Reading method’
- an intensive sight-word recognition program to bring him up to speed on words up to and slightly above his grade level (he excelled at this),
- learning and applying spelling rules and becoming aware of the patterns of English spelling with the Spelling for Life program.

Thomas had one weekly 45-minute session for 12 months and practised at home with his family every other night. After this time, his reading scores began to improve and he is now in the second-highest reading group in his year (there are four groups).

He has several favourite authors whose books now adorn his shelves.
He is given extra time in class to complete written assignments and is allowed to use his spellchecker wherever possible. He proudly states that he only uses it for editing now.

For the first time, his school report showed an ‘above average’ mark in writing.

Thomas continues to work with Linguist Learning during the summer holidays for a week-long intensive program.

He is no longer anxious about school.