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Princess Beatrice's battle with dyslexia

By Sophie Kirkham

PRINCESS BEATRICE has had dyslexia since the age of seven, the Duchess of York said yesterday.

The 16-year-old, who is due to sit her GCSEs this summer, has had extra tuition for ten years and will continue to do so "for the foreseeable future".

The Duchess was visiting the Oliver Goldsmith School in Peckham, South London, where Damilola Taylor, the ten-year-old murder victim, had been a pupil.

She told pupils that she thought that she had also had mild dyslexia. "I had a problem at school. I think I am fine now but I think I did because it took me ages to read — and no one listens," she said, adding: "I have a real problem with spelling."

Describing the difficulties faced by her Beatrice, her elder daughter, the Duchess said that children who were not taught to read and write were condemned to a life of seclusion, crime and unemployment.

"[Beatrice] loves history — coming from Queen Victoria and her family, she wanted to learn about history, but she couldn't because she couldn't read. "If you don't educate, it's ignorance. I couldn't bear to condemn my daughter to no prospects.

"Imagine if I didn't realise my daughter was dyslexic — she would be having such a problem. She now goes out in public and speaks because she has been listened to. Doesn't every child have the right to be listened to?"

Pupils at the school are helped in reading and writing by a specialist charity, Springboard For Children, of which the Duchess is patron. The charity estimates that 250,000 children in Britain are illiterate.