



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Dyslexia

## Guidance for Schools – 2020

Produced in partnership by	Stockport Learning Support Service, Educational Psychology Service and Stockport SEND Strategic Lead
Consultation group	Parents in Partnership, primary and secondary settings and the Educational Psychology Service from Cheshire East Authority
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## Contents

1. Foreword
2. Introduction
3. What is dyslexia?
4. How do children learn to read?
5. How can parents and carers support the development of early literacy skills before their children start school?
6. What should all schools be doing to support children and young people with literacy difficulties?
7. How can the local authority (LA) support schools in supporting children and young people with literacy difficulties?
8. Early Identification and assessment
  - 8.1. Identification
  - 8.2. Assessment
  - 8.3. What is Universal Screening?
  - 8.4. The role of SEND Services
  - 8.5. Using the term dyslexia
9. Interventions
10. Specialist Assessment
11. The role of parents and carers
12. Assistive technology and dyslexia friendly classrooms
13. Frequently asked questions: Parents and carers
14. Frequently asked questions: Teachers
15. Further information

## 1. Foreword

It is amazing how young children with the help of their parents and carers, settings and schools take the first steps to develop the highly complex skills required to become competent readers and writers. For every child this journey is significant but for some the development of these crucial life skills is an even greater challenge.

I am sure that you will find the guidance and advice in this document useful, both to understand these challenges for our young people and to support the further development of their literacy skills.

I would like to thank the colleagues from Learning Support Service, who have developed this guidance, alongside colleagues from Cheshire East Local Authority, and Stockport Head Teachers and SENCOs who have acted as critical friends throughout this development.

Phil Beswick  
Director of Education Services

## 2. Introduction

Stockport LA is committed to raising the achievement of all young people and believes that literacy skills are central to a pupil's ability to access the full curriculum. Pupils experiencing difficulties with the acquisition of key literacy skills are often referred to as having a Specific Literacy Difficulty (dyslexia).

Stockport LA supports the view that SEND is a mainstream issue and that it is the responsibility of schools to optimise the performance of all pupils. Good practice for pupils with SpLD will promote their full and independent inclusion in mainstream classes.

These guidelines have been written to support parents and carers, teachers and other professionals in understanding and supporting the successful inclusion and progress of pupils with SpLD through the effectiveness of a whole school approach, reflected in policies, classroom practice and the support available to individual pupils, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

It is intended that this guidance offers a graduated approach to responding to identified literacy difficulties and should be read alongside the suggested support and resources for areas of SEND that are outlined in the documents entitled 'Stockport SEND Guidance for Early Years Settings, Schools and Practitioners' and the Stockport Entitlement Framework

[https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/service.page?id=jbXBlqMyV\\_g&familychannel=999](https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/service.page?id=jbXBlqMyV_g&familychannel=999)

### 3. What is dyslexia?

There is no one agreed definition of dyslexia. Despite considerable research, the numbers of pupils and the exact features of dyslexia vary widely.

In Stockport we accept the British Psychology Society (BPS) definition. It defines dyslexia as follows;

***“Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develop very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focus on literacy learning primarily at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities.”***

The Rose Report, published in June 2009, endorsed by the Government, also states;

***“Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.”***

***The definition acknowledges current research that;***

- *Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.*
- *Dyslexia occurs across a range of intellectual abilities. This removes the need to establish a discrepancy between a pupil’s general learning levels and attainment in literacy in order to demonstrate that dyslexia is present.*
- *It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut off points. It does not depend on identifying a specific profile of underlying features that need to be identified in order to demonstrate that a child has dyslexia.*
- *Co-occurring complexities may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves markers of dyslexia.*
- *A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded interventions.*

#### **4. How do children learn to read?**

- Early reading and writing skills development normally begin in the first years of life and are usually closely linked to the child's earliest experiences with language, books, stories and nursery rhymes.
- Children usually begin to read with a whole word awareness of visual and spoken words (for example, recognising their name or a shop logo) and then start to become aware of increasingly smaller units of sound in words over time. Reading development is supported by exposure to language (regularly reading to children from a very early age, singing nursery rhymes) and vocabulary development (talking to your child).
- Being able to hear and identify the different sounds that make up words in spoken language is known as phonological awareness and is a key skill of reading success. As children learn to read they will use phonological awareness to work out the relationships between the sounds in different parts of words (syllables, onset-rime, phonemes) in order to learn to pronounce and identify the whole word. This may occur through breaking down the sounds in words (decoding) or through other approaches such as recognising words or rhyme.
- In order to begin to read fluently and efficiently, in a way which allows for understanding what has been read, eventually words which have been decoded will need to move into memory so that they can be identified by sight.
- Skilled reading is a complex process and it is therefore not surprising that there is a great deal of individual variation in reading development.

#### **5. How can parents and carers support the development of early literacy skills before their children start school?**

Early literacy theory suggests that it is important for young children to be provided with language and literacy rich environments from an early age. A language and literacy rich environment for developing pre-reading skills is created when:

- Babies and toddlers are talked and listened to.
- A wide range of age appropriate books are available.
- Opportunities are created to play with and explore books.

- An awareness of rhythm and rhyme is developed by singing and sharing nursery rhymes and songs.
- Books and stories are shared and talked about.
- Opportunities are created for the recognition of familiar whole words, such as their name.
- Babies and toddlers are encouraged to scribble and make marks to imitate text creation.
- Parents/Carers share reading together at home, such as engaging in Paired Reading.

## **6. What should all schools be doing to support children and young people with literacy difficulties?**

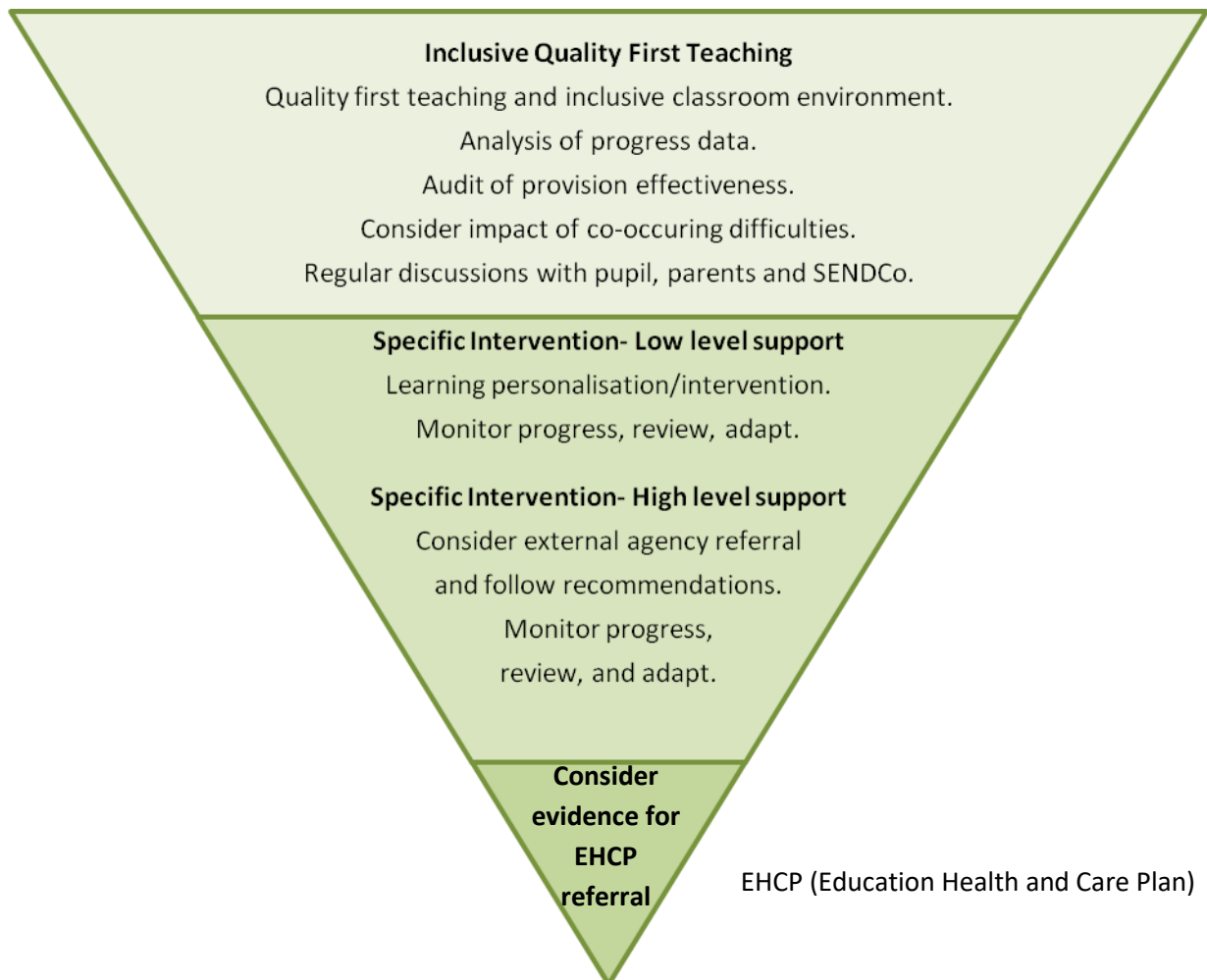
The needs of most children and young people with literacy difficulties can be met through Quality First Teaching and the normal curriculum provision.

Teaching staff are key to the success of children and young people overcoming their difficulties. It is their role and responsibility, with the support and co-ordination of the SENDCo, to plan provision, manage access strategies, adapt teaching styles, monitor progress and work alongside parents and carers to keep them informed.

If a pupil is not making expected progress with reading, writing and spelling, support at school level should be put in place following a graduated approach. Schools should provide appropriate resources, programmes and interventions, following an 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' approach, which is monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. If the child or young person is on SEND support, this will be part of their SEND Support Plan.

Many children/young people with dyslexia experience feeling of low self-esteem and high levels of frustration and it is important that emotional support is also available.

Use a graduated approach to planning provision. Assess, plan, do and review at each stage.



Stockport acknowledges that approaches to supporting children and young people with literacy difficulties should also be at a whole school level. Elements of good practice are:

- A whole school ethos that respects individuals' differences.
- Knowledgeable and sensitive teachers who understand the impact that specific difficulties can have on learning and self-esteem, and who adapt their teaching accordingly.
- An environment that has been adapted to enable inclusive learning and opportunities.
- Access to additional learning opportunities, interventions and resources to support progress.
- Excellent communication between teachers, parents and carers and pupils.

- An expectation that schools will implement strategies recommended in the Stockport 'SEND Guidance for Early Years Settings, Schools and Practitioners' as part of their staged 'Plan - Do - Review' cycle.

## **7. How can the LA help schools in supporting children and young people with literacy difficulties?**

Stockport LA can support schools in identifying and supporting children and young people with specific literacy difficulties in the following ways:

- Supporting professional development of teachers in their understanding of dyslexic difficulties.
- Promoting good practice in establishing an effective 'Plan - Do - Review' cycle to support pupils and monitoring provision effectiveness through the strategies set out in Stockport's SEND Guidance for Early Years Settings, Schools and Practitioners.
- Providing opportunities for schools to build their capacity to support pupils through appropriate training.

## **8. Early Identification and Assessment**

### **8.1 Identification**

There is clear and consistent evidence that early identification of learning difficulties is key to providing effective interventions and preventing difficulties from becoming worse.

The class teacher should take responsibility for recognising the possible early indicators of literacy difficulties and, with the support of the school, adapt learning and teaching approaches and strategies to ensure the child/young person's needs are met appropriately. In all schools a graduated approach should be put in place to specifically address areas of need, and done in collaboration with the SENDCo and parents and carers.

### **8.2 Assessment**

There is no agreed test which will diagnose a child or young person as dyslexic; rather there are a range of materials that can be used effectively by schools to help them assess ongoing literacy development and address areas of difficulty.



One recognised model of identification and assessment that schools should use is to consider a child's/young person's *response to intervention*. This is known as RTI and supports the cycle of '**Assess, Plan, Do, Review**', as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015). The approach involves:

- relevant universal screening
- high quality intervention strategies and programmes targeting specific pupils needs
- monitoring and review of progress and learning, and consideration of continued or alternative provision

### 8.3 What is universal screening?

There are a number of assessment tools available in schools that give an indication of whether a child/young person is at risk of dyslexia that can be effectively used by teachers to identify children/young people who are failing to respond to high quality teaching and who may need additional support.

When used effectively they can highlight areas of strength and difficulties, and help schools to determine the most effective intervention programmes and/or resources and strategies to use.

By using appropriate universal screening tools and adopting the RTI model, measures taken for individuals will be meaningful and relevant and reflect assessment of progress over time. Monitoring and reviewing progress would be part of the cycle of '**Assess, Plan, Do, Review**'; with the purpose of finding the most effective way to support a pupil's learning.

### 8.4 The Role of SEND Services

- The focus for any assessment should be identification of need and consideration of the best way to respond in order to provide effective support for learning progress. This is not achieved by providing a diagnosis.
- It is possible that a pupil will have one or more co-occurring specific learning difficulties, such as:
  - Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
  - Dyscalculia
  - Development Coordination Disorder (DSD)
  - Dyspraxia
  - Specific Language Impairment (SLI)

It significantly limits our understanding of a pupil if we assume that their difficulties will all fall into one area as defined by a generalised description. Instead we recognise the complexity of each individual child/young person's profile, and treat them accordingly.

- Assessment and 'diagnosis' by specialists who do not have wider access to information about the learning context and progress of the pupil over time can only give partial information. This type of assessment would only be a 'snapshot' of the pupil's experienced difficulties. School staff are in the best position to observe and identify difficulties as they emerge.
- In view of the number of children and young people affected by dyslexia, the skills necessary to identify and assess literacy difficulties, leading to additional provision, should be available within schools.

Educational Psychologists and teachers from the Learning Support Service can support schools in training and advising on support for individual pupils. They can work with the school staff to achieve a better understanding of the factors that may be affecting progress, and support schools to identify ways forward. Specialist Services can also support schools to develop interventions and advise on suitable resources.

### **8.5 Using the term 'Dyslexia'**

Consideration should always be given to whether using the term dyslexia is helpful for the pupil. Many children/young people and parents and carers find it reassuring to be able to describe their difficulties in this way, whilst others may feel that it limits understanding of the individual's needs.

## **9. Interventions**

An intervention that is put in place must reflect the needs identified through assessment, run alongside quality first teaching and be in addition to the universal support that is already provided in school.

There are many evidence based interventions that can be carried out in school for children/young people that require additional literacy support. A detailed list of effective interventions, and relevant information, can be found in the Greg Brooks report 'What works best for children and young people with literacy difficulties'.

<http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/assets/What-Works-5th-edition-Rev-July-2016.pdf>

This table provides a small sample of interventions recommended by the Education Endowment Fund and the Brook report, some of which are provided as training through Stockport SEND Services. Further information and a detailed list of effective interventions can be found in the full report.

The LSS also run training courses on Multi-sensory Teaching, Dyslexia: Reading & Spelling, Dyslexia Friendly Schools, Self-esteem & Dyslexia, Dyslexia & Memory, and Practical Strategies to Support Children with Dyslexia in the Classroom.

Type of intervention	Primary	Secondary	Name of Intervention
To develop reading and writing skills	✓	✓	Accelerated-Accelerate (Online programme)
	✓		Stockport Early Reading Intervention (SERI) (Training available through LSS)
	✓		Write Away Together (Training available through LSS)
	✓		Reception Literacy Programme (Training available through LSS)
	✓	✓	Conquering Literacy
To develop reading fluency and accuracy	✓	✓	Academy of Reading (Online programme)
	✓	✓	Catch up literacy
	✓	✓	Boosting Reading @ Primary/Secondary
	✓	✓	Direct Instruction
	✓	✓	Precision Reading
To improve phonological awareness	✓	✓	Toe by Toe & Dancing Bears
	✓		The Reading Intervention Programme <a href="http://www.readingintervention.org.uk">http://www.readingintervention.org.uk</a>
	✓	✓	Hickey Multisensory teaching programme
To improve reading accuracy and comprehension	✓		Reading Recovery
	✓		Boosting Reading @ Primary/Secondary
To improve reading accuracy and comprehension skills	✓	✓	Leicester Inference Training (Training available through EDS)
	✓	✓	Reciprocal Teaching
To improve spelling using peer tutoring	✓		Cued Spelling
Language development	✓		Talk Boost (Training available through LSS)
To support parents reading with children at home	✓		Paired Reading

## 10. Specialist Assessment

Schools may involve specialists at any point to advise them on early identification of SEND and effective support and interventions.

For those children whose literacy difficulties are persistent and not responsive to the evidenced based interventions delivered over time, more specific assessments of strengths and difficulties and more personalised support may be required.

In Stockport, SEND Specialist Services might become involved if:

- Schools are able to evidence that they have delivered high quality teaching in a dyslexic-friendly environment.
- Baseline assessments are in place and universal and targeted support has been delivered and monitored.
- Targeted support has been based on evidence-based interventions which have been delivered appropriately.
- The child or young person is making only limited literacy progress, may have impacting co-occurring difficulties, and remain significantly behind their peers.

If involvement is required, an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher may be involved in the following ways:

- Consultation with school staff and parents and carers to explore interventions already put in place and make further recommendations on teaching and learning strategies.
- Continue to work with staff to achieve a high level of understanding of dyslexia through CPD development opportunities.
- Work directly with the child to complete a detailed assessment of strengths and difficulties and recommend targeted support and intervention.
- Following a detailed initial assessment, an LSS Specialist Teacher may directly teach a pupil to deliver an individualised programme in school.
- Assess for Access Arrangements in secondary schools following the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) requirements and guidelines.

Specialist trained teachers at the Learning Support Service can also support schools and settings by providing an enhanced literacy assessment that can contribute to the early identification of dyslexic traits and difficulties.

## **11. The Role of Parents and Carers**

Engagement with parents and carers is central to pupil progress.

Parents and carers should expect regular communication from and with schools with regard to their son or daughter's progress, and identified difficulties should be discussed at the earliest opportunity.

Parents and carers, school staff and other services will work together in the best interests of the child or young person. Together they will, promote, support and monitor any agreed programmes, taking account of, and being sensitive to, parents and carers learning experiences as part of any strategies to support their child at home.

This learning collaboration may include:

- Listening to and, where appropriate, acting on parents and carers concerns.
- Providing guidance to parents and carers about how to help their child at home.
- Helping parents and carers to encourage language development through talk.
- Promoting the development of organisational /self-help skills
- Providing positive and appropriate feedback to foster and maintain self-esteem as a learner.

Parents and carers should expect that teachers and other school staff will be clear in their discussions with them about the actions they are taking in school for the benefit of their child. They should expect that assessment information, learning progress and targets are shared, and that their concerns are respected.

## **12. Assistive technology and dyslexia-friendly classrooms**

Some children and young people with literacy difficulties will benefit from assistive technology. This is an area that is continually growing and improving. These are a few current recommended resources:

### **Dyslexia App wheel**

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/stockport/fsd/files/apps\\_and\\_extensions\\_for\\_learners\\_with\\_dyslexia.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/stockport/fsd/files/apps_and_extensions_for_learners_with_dyslexia.pdf)

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/stockport/fsd/files/apps\\_for\\_learners\\_with\\_dyslexia.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/stockport/fsd/files/apps_for_learners_with_dyslexia.pdf)

### **Dyscalculia App wheel**

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/stockport/fsd/files/apps\\_for\\_learners\\_with\\_dyscalculia.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/stockport/fsd/files/apps_for_learners_with_dyscalculia.pdf)

**Clicker** – a widely used reading and writing tool.

**Wordshark/Numbershark** – games to support practice of literacy and numeracy key skills.

**Dragon dictate/Dragon Naturally Speaking** – dictation tool using voice recognition software.

**Easy spelling aid** – Simple spelling App. that can be used individually or in a classroom setting.

**Exam pen/Exam reader** – Instantly displays on the screen, and says scanned words or lines of text aloud.

**Whispersync** – an App. for kindles that allows you to switch between reading and listening.

**Co-writer / Sprint-plus** – Predictive text software.

**Kidspiration** – Mind mapping, a cross curricular visual workspace for learners.

### **Audio books**

**OneNote** – Free online digital notebook for free-form information gathering.

### **Text to speech software**

Dyslexia friendly classrooms should be part of effective inclusion for all children and young people in high quality literacy teaching environments, and include such things as:

### **Dyslexia Friendly Classrooms**

- ✓ **Teaching that promotes a growth mind-set approach** (knowing with practice we will get better at something).
- ✓ **Direct teaching of metacognitive strategies, study skills, revision and exam techniques.**
- ✓ **Visual timetable.**
- ✓ **Classroom equipment labelled with picture support.**
- ✓ **Table top toolkits** may include, as appropriate, high frequency words lists, topic

words, sound mats, writing frames, post it notes, highlighters, personal dictionaries, b/d cards, pencil grips, reading rulers/tinted overlays.

- ✓ **Visual prompts for active listening.**
- ✓ **Coloured background on 'whiteboard' set to buff or pale blue.**
- ✓ **Talking tins/postcards.**
- ✓ **Learning Wall Displays** may include, as appropriate, alphabet arc, high frequency words, topic words, days of the week, months of the year, narrative prompts, phonic prompts, mind maps – all with picture support.
- ✓ **Access to high interest/low reading age books and audio books.**
- ✓ **Displays showing alternative methods of recording.**
- ✓ **Timetables that permit opportunities for small group, 1 to 1, and individual work.**

**Stockport Schools can now work towards the Stockport Dyslexia Friendly Schools Award**



DFS Overview

### **13. Frequently asked questions: Parents and carers**

- **Does dyslexia run in families?**

The most up to date information suggests that there is a strong hereditary influence. It has been found that differences in reading performance can largely be attributed to genetics.

- **My child finds reading hard, are they dyslexic?**

Not necessarily! Many children struggle with reading but are not dyslexic. Reading difficulties can also be caused by a number of other factors including absence from school, poor hearing, poor vision, and lack of access to teaching appropriate to their needs.

- **Is the involvement of a specialist teacher or educational psychologist needed in order to have dyslexia recognised?**

It is not necessary to have an education psychologist or another external specialist to identify literacy difficulties, including dyslexia, and support the child/young person. However, staff in schools sometimes like to discuss the difficulties with an external specialist if a child's difficulties appear to be significant or persistent.

- **My child has been identified as dyslexic. What support should they be receiving?**

Children with significant literacy difficulties should have received a graduated response to their needs. Support should include effective high quality literacy teaching, access to dyslexia friendly classrooms, and intervention based on their

needs. If their difficulties are severe, they are likely to be accessing specific targeted provision also.

- **Does the school have to act upon the findings of a private dyslexia assessment?**

You can expect the school to note the report and discuss it with you. The focus for this discussion should be to acknowledge your concerns and talk about the recommendations made. They will also be able to discuss with you what is already being provided in school and what may need to be amended.

- **What can I do if I am unhappy with the support the school are providing?**

In the first instance you should request a meeting with the form/class teacher or SENDCo, at which you can express concerns and listen to the views of the school. If you still remain concerned, you should contact the Head teacher. If you still feel that issues have not been resolved then you should follow the process outlined within the Schools Complaints Procedure.

- **If a child is identified as dyslexic, should a statutory assessment of their needs be carried out?**

Identification of dyslexia does not necessarily qualify a child/young person for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment from the local authority or for specialist provision.

Children/young people with dyslexia identified should receive a graduated response to their needs as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice. Their needs can be met through normal curriculum provision, quality first teaching and the graduated approach. Only children and young people with the most severe, complex, and persistent needs are likely to be considered for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

- **Does my child need a diagnosis to qualify for exam Access Arrangements?**

No, individual schools will employ specialist assessors to undertake standardised tests to see if individuals are eligible under the Joint Council for Qualifications (JQC) criteria for access arrangements.

## **14. Frequently asked questions: Teachers**

- **As a teacher do I need a specific qualification in order to identify dyslexia?**

No, as a teacher, using the definition in this guidance, you will have the teaching skills needed to identify persistent literacy difficulties and dyslexia, although this is not a formal identification. Parents and carers need to feel confident that a formal identification of dyslexia is not necessary in order for you to address their child's difficulties in this area.



- **As a teacher what should I say to a parent or carer who has a private assessment which concludes that their child is dyslexic?**

Firstly acknowledge the parents or carers views and concerns. The following information may be helpful in discussion:

- There is no single assessment for dyslexia; however a private assessment can contribute to the overall profile of information that will help you support their child in school.
- It is important to read through the assessment and meet with parents to discuss their concerns and hear how you will be supporting their child.
- Discuss the assessment recommendations with parents and share with them what you are already doing in school that may be similar.
- It is important to consider any new information provided in the assessment report and identify which intervention are evidence based and manageable given the available resources.

Parents and carers should always be reassured that school are aware of their child's needs and that appropriate support is in place.

- **As a teacher who can I talk to for advice regarding a dyslexic pupil?**

Your school SENDCo will probably be able to give you support in the first instance. The Educational Psychology Service and your Learning Support Service teacher in school will also be able to offer advice, support and training at an individual level or whole school if requested.

## 15. Further Information

- Stockport Families Information Hub  
<https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/localoffer.page>
- British Dyslexia Association (BDA)  
<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

## Acknowledgements

Parents in Partnership

Wigan LA Dyslexia Policy

Cambridgeshire Dyslexia Guidance

Blackpool LA – Support and provision for pupils who experience literacy difficulties in Blackpool Schools

Milton Keynes Policy for Children and Young People with Specific Learning Difficulties:  
Dyslexia