

Wigan Dyslexia Policy

Guidance for a Graduate Approach

1. Introduction

Pupils experiencing difficulties with the acquisition of key literacy skills are often referred to as having a Specific Literacy Difficulty or SpLD (dyslexia). These guidelines look at the most recent definitions of SpLD (dyslexia) and the implications for assessment and support at school level. They have been compiled following a review of current literature, previous Wigan guidelines and have also considered other current local authority advice and information.

Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) is an umbrella term that includes a range of learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and specific language impairment. This document focuses upon the specific learning difficulty of dyslexia. It does not set out to address the full range of specific learning difficulties.

2. Aims

The aims of the guidelines are to promote a shared rationale and understanding in the identification, assessment and support for pupils with Dyslexia within the local authority. The guidelines are to be shared with all schools, settings, parents/carers, children and services within Wigan.

3. What is Dyslexia?

'Dyslexia' is derived from the Greek and means literally '**a difficulty with words or language.**'

Debates around the merits and pitfalls of giving pupils a label of dyslexia are likely to continue. There is no one agreed definition of dyslexia and, despite considerable research, the findings regarding the numbers of pupils and causes of dyslexia vary widely. However, more recent definitions reflect a degree of consensus between academics and professionals around the key areas that affect the acquisition of literacy skills.

The British Psychological Society emphasises the need for a staged assessment process to take place:

'Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is

***severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis of a staged process of assessment through teaching.'* BPS (1999)**

Wigan Council has adopted the Rose definition as a basis for identification of dyslexia. It reflects current practice and research on dyslexia and refers to the fact that dyslexia occurs on a continuum, with some pupils experiencing much more significant difficulties with literacy acquisition than others. Thus it provides a rationale for carefully targeted intervention and support, relative to the continuum of need.

In June 2009, Sir Jim Rose published his report on dyslexia to the Secretary of State for Education. The report contained advice and support to British schools around identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia. These findings are consistent with the BPS definition.

Rose defined dyslexia as follows:

- Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.***
- Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.***
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.***
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.***
- Co-occurring difficulties 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 intervention.***

4. Assessment and Support for Schools

Every child is entitled to Quality First Teaching for literacy. (See QFT checklist produced by TESS). If a child is not making expected progress with reading, writing and spelling and is reading at a level one or more year behind their chronological age, support at school level should be put in place following a graduated approach. At every stage of intervention, the 'assess, plan, do review' approach must be followed as stated in the SEN Code of Practice. Parents / carers and pupils views must also be regularly sought. Schools should have been providing appropriate programmes and interventions (see Resources section) which have been monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. This includes timed group interventions, evidence based and designed to increase rates of progress and put children back on course to move towards national expectations. It is important that schools keep good records of meetings, interventions and outcomes. If, following interventions,

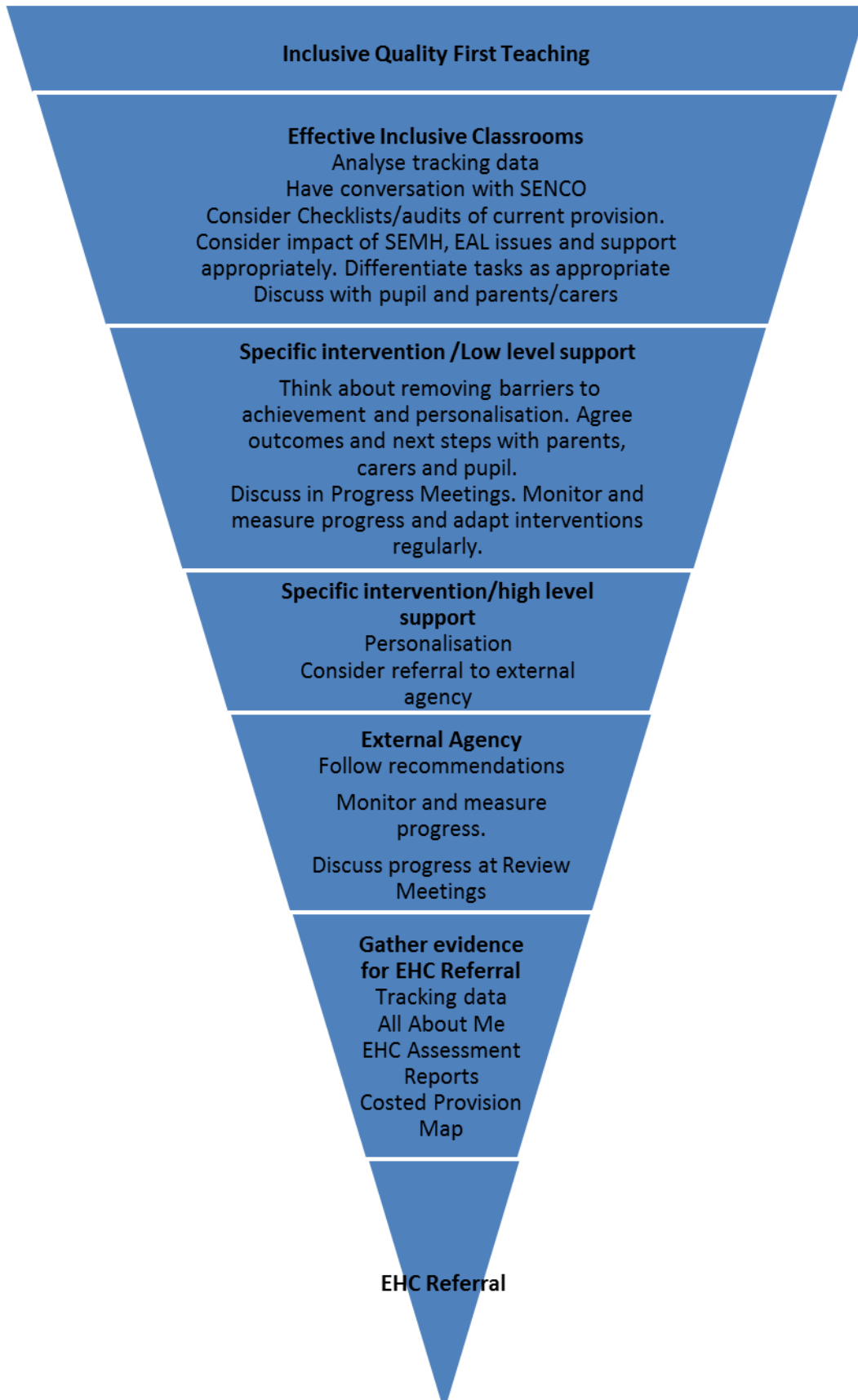
the pupil's difficulties continue to be severe and persistent the school's SENCo can request support from external agencies.

Support from external agencies may include the following:

- Advice regarding quality first teaching, delivering interventions and monitoring and evaluation of those interventions.
- Training – INSET, full days, half days or twilight sessions.
- Observations of interventions being carried out by staff.
- Observations of children, in class, small groups etc.
- Consultations with pupils, staff and parents.
- Modelling of techniques, teaching strategies or interventions.
- Support with completing a skills audit for all staff to identify training needs.
- Enabling settings to develop inclusive practice for pupils on the dyslexic continuum through training, consultation and project work, e.g. Dyslexia Friendly Training and the Wigan Dyslexia Friendly Schools Award.
- Advice for school on developing policy and practice for pupils on the dyslexic continuum.

Graduated Approach to Dyslexia

Assess, Plan, Do, Review at each stage



Exceptional support
Applicable to FEW pupils

Lots of additional support
Applicable to SOME pupils

No additional support
Applicable to ALL pupils

5. Does the Local Authority assess for Dyslexia?

The Educational Psychology Service is able to diagnose dyslexia and the team can be accessed as outlined in the Local Offer. However, the needs of most children and young people with literacy difficulties can be met through normal curriculum provision and through the Graduated Approach as outlined above.

The primary purpose of any assessment will be to plan appropriate teaching programmes, rather than to arrive at a 'diagnosis.'

6. What might an Educational Psychology assessment of Dyslexia include?

During individual casework, the assessor will gather a range of information including assessment data and background information around the child.

Assessment may include:

- A standardised assessment of reading and spelling ability.
- Detailed assessment of phonological awareness, knowledge and application of phonological skills.
- Assessment of auditory sequential memory
- Assessment of processing speed
- Strategies used by pupil
- Assessment of reading speed
- Assessment of writing speed

**Standardised scores are a useful guide to give an assessor an indication of the severity of the difficulty as they give a measure of performance in relation to other children of the same age. A standard score of 100 is average for the population. The 'average' band score is generally regarded to fall between the range 85 – 115.*

The following information is also essential as part of the assessment process and should be gathered in collaboration with TESS:

- Tracking data
- Curriculum Levels, P Levels, SATs scores

- Analysis of intervention and impact
- IEPs or provision map
- Examples of the pupil's work

Other factors which affect learning, such as attendance, home-schooling, access to school, socio-emotional, motor difficulties or medical needs also need to be considered.

Further Information

Where appropriate, observations of the pupil within a setting provide useful information about the child's listening skills, motivation, independent learning skills, social skills and peer relationships.

As well as measuring the pupil's actual performance, an assessor will gather information about other aspects of functioning, such as: confidence and motivation as a learner, achievements and areas of strength.

Information from Parents/Carers:

Parents or carers can provide unique and detailed information, contributing to the picture of the whole child and are an essential part of the process of any identification for dyslexia. The assessor would always aim to meet with the parents or carers to gather information about their child. Further information for parents is provided the leaflet: Dyslexia - A Guide for Parents.

7. Specialist support

Specialist teaching is available and can be bought in from the TESS team at any stage of the Graduated Approach. If a child has an EHC Plan their package of support may also include specialist literacy teaching where appropriate.

The needs of most dyslexic pupils will be able to be met within the school. Your TESS Teacher will be able to discuss a wide range of practical resources to support pupil's staff and whole school policies. In addition, the TESS team provides a training package (Wigan Dyslexia Friendly Schools – see TESS Training brochure for current course details)

8. Examinations and Access Arrangements

Students may be eligible for adjustments to examination conditions. It is worth noting that ***access arrangements are not there to give candidates an unfair advantage but to give all candidates a level playing field in which to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding.*** The intention behind many access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of an individual disabled candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Eligibility and/or evidence requirements are listed for each of the Access Arrangements in the 'JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration' handbook for the current academic year. The duty to make reasonable adjustments is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010.

Dyslexia is not specifically mentioned as an eligibility requirement. However the term is used when providing examples for different types of Access Arrangements.

Assessment for Access Arrangements can be carried out by an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher named by the school (Form 8). The Handbook gives guidance on who can carry out assessments. It states that specialist assessors must have an appropriate Level 7 or equivalent qualification by 31st August 2017.

Assessments used to inform Access Arrangements must be suitable for this purpose. A list of those that can be used can be found at: www.pearsonclinical.co.uk. There can be changes to this list and it is obviously vital that centres and assessors keep this up to date.

Include that it is the ultimate responsibility of the SENCO to decide the AA, whether they themselves have carried out the testing or after discussion with any internal or external assessors.

9. Frequently asked questions

Are all children with reading or spelling difficulties dyslexic?

No. Literacy difficulties exist on a continuum. There is no clear or absolute cut off point where a child can be said to have dyslexia. A child can be seen as having dyslexia if their reading and/or spelling skills develop incompletely or with great difficulty and the problem is severe and persistent.

Before we describe a child as dyslexic, many factors should be taken into account, significantly response to appropriate intervention. Whether or not to describe a child's literacy difficulties as dyslexia will be a matter for professional judgement and should be based on thorough assessment. Consideration should also be given as to whether using the term will be helpful for the individual child concerned.

Does my child need a diagnosis of dyslexia?

Some pupils find it reassuring to have a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. However, for others, a diagnosis may not be helpful and decisions should be made by each individual child and their family. A diagnosis is not generally linked to additional funding or resources in Wigan schools. It also does not automatically lead to an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan. The Graduated Approach as outlined in this document is the process for supporting pupils with difficulties

Whether or not a diagnosis is present, Wigan LA aims to have high expectations for all pupils and the Graduated Approach will support this.

Is dyslexia hereditary?

Research shows that dyslexia can be hereditary but this is not always the case.

Can dyslexia occur across the full range of abilities?

Yes, dyslexia can occur in pupils of all levels of ability.

Who identifies dyslexia?

Dyslexia can be identified by professionals with appropriate specialist training and qualifications (in Wigan this is the Educational Psychology Service). Staff in schools often find it helpful to discuss children, whose progress causes concern, with outside agencies including TESS and the Educational Psychologist. Close liaison between parents/carers and school staff is vital, as these are the people who have the most important information and will be those involved in working to help with identified difficulties.

Some families may feel the need to seek a formal diagnosis of Dyslexia from suitably qualified professionals. In Wigan the Graduated Approach underpins all support whether or not there is a formal diagnosis.

Why do some people receive a diagnosis of dyslexia in Post 16 education and why was this not recognised earlier?

Dyslexia exists on a continuum. Not all individuals are severely affected and it is possible for them to succeed, with some compensatory strategies, throughout their school life and examinations without causing concerns around progress. As curriculum or subject demands become more challenging and complex, and the volume of required reading and writing increases, underlying difficulties may become evident. It may only be at this point that it is appropriate to investigate such difficulties further.

If a child is recognised as dyslexic, should a statutory assessment be carried out?

Identification of dyslexia, whether from school or an independent assessment, does not necessarily qualify a child for extra funding, for an Education Health and Care Assessment from the local authority or for specialist provision.

Children with dyslexia should receive a graduated response to their identified needs as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice (2014). The needs of most 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 require an EHC plan.

Useful Contacts

British Dyslexia Association

The British Dyslexia Association Unit 8, Bracknell Beeches, Old Bracknell Lane, Bracknell, Reading RG12 7BW Tel: 0333 405 4555

Helpline: 0333 405 4567

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Dyslexia Action Head Office

Dyslexia Action House, 10 High Street, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9EA

Tel: 0300 303 8357

<http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk>

St Helens Dyslexia Association. (SHADDA) Informal drop in sessions. 7pm third Tuesday of each month. The Millenium Centre. Corporation Street. St Helens.

Further Information:

Inclusion Development Programme (IDP): DCSF Website or DVD –Ref 00070-2008DVD-EN. Dyslexia and Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties: Policy and Practice Review – Dyslexia Action 2013 (www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

Sounds-Write www.sounds-write.co.uk

dyslexics.org.uk

References

DfE/DfH (2015) Special Educational Needs and Disability **Code of Practice**

DfES (2002) **The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies** Including all children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson. Ref: DfES 0465/2002

DfES (2003) **The National Literacy Strategy** Targeting support: choosing and implementing interventions for children with significant literacy difficulties management guidance

North East Lincolnshire Council (Undated) **North East Lincolnshire Dyslexia Policy and Working Guidelines**

Devon County Council (2005) **Inclusive Education in Devon: Dyslexia: Guidance on Identification, Assessment and Intervention.**

Bristol County Council (undated) **Policy for Provision for Children with Dyslexic Difficulties**

Milton Keynes Council (2003) **Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy**

Access to Education, Birmingham Council (2015) Dyslexia Guidelines Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties Rose J. (2009) London: DFCS.

Guidelines due for review September 2016

Leeds City Council (2015) Complex Needs Service: Guidelines for Special Literacy Difficulties: Dyslexia.

Surrey County Council policy for Dyslexia (2011)

