



# Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties: Policy and Practice Review

A consensus call for action: why, what and how?

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**A consensus call for action: why, what and how?**

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## Foreword

Last year I retired from teaching after a career of over 40 years, which included 25 years as a Head Teacher of a large, inner-city primary school. I have had a wonderful teaching career and I know that people who work in schools are in a very privileged position. They have a huge responsibility for pupils and there is no greater example of this than working with those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN).

There are an estimated 1.2 million children<sup>01</sup> in the UK who have dyslexia, so it is vitally important that our teachers understand how to support pupils with the condition. For those pupils with dyslexia, the task of processing sounds to symbols and vice versa can be difficult and this can seriously affect their studies and performance. However, with the right support from their teachers and systems in place, simple changes can make a big difference.

During my teaching career some of my proudest moments were witnessing pupils with SEN make the most of their education and go on to achieve their potential. As a school leader I found that it was important to develop systems which allow high quality interventions for children with literacy and dyslexic difficulties and to ensure they are implemented thoroughly throughout the school.

However, this does not always happen - many pupils with dyslexia go undiagnosed and unrecognised. Often, this is because teachers lack the skills to identify and support children who are dyslexic needing further investigation or extra support.

Every teacher should expect to teach children with dyslexia, and they need to be equipped with the skills to support those children. Yet there is currently no mandatory minimum level of dyslexia training that the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course providers must deliver.

It really is not good enough that we have a teaching profession that is not universally trained to understand the issues. There should also be teachers in each school or each group of schools who are qualified to test for and identify dyslexia. Although I praise the fantastic work of SENCOs in schools, there is an urgent need for all ITT programmes to include a mandatory module on dyslexia and other hidden disabilities and for on-going continued professional development SEN training to include similar training.

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<sup>01</sup> Dyslexia Action (2009) Dyslexia Action impact report 2008-9

In future this will be even more important because under Ofsted's new framework, all schools will need to show that every child has made progress and that they have the skills in their workforce to identify pupils with literacy difficulties as early as possible and that they can implement appropriate interventions and support.

Earlier in the year I was delighted to receive a Written Parliamentary Answer from the Under Secretary of State for Schools, Lord Nash, detailing how essential it is that teachers' training prepares them to teach children with a broad range of SEN. I am encouraged that the Government does recognise the issue, but I believe the case has been made for change.

That is why I am delighted to support this report by Dyslexia Action on behalf of, and endorsed by, the members of The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust. It is important that we listen to organisations like those within The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust as they have extensive expertise and knowledge based on their long-standing work for, and on behalf of, those with dyslexia and hidden disabilities. Their report sets out in detail arguments as to why dyslexia and literacy difficulties are critical issues and puts forward a compelling case for a national dyslexia and literacy strategy.

Given my background, I was encouraged by the focus on supporting the teaching profession but also welcome the report's other recommendations around sharing best practice and school improvement.

The report comes at a critical time because, for the first time in a generation, the Government are legislating to tackle some of the major barriers that children and families face. Via the Children and Families Bill the reforms to SEN provision will hopefully help pupils with dyslexia get secure access to the support they deserve. It's particularly important that the Bill creates the best possible levers to support children with dyslexia.

This report is a welcome contribution to the debate and I hope that the Government will use its recommendations to shape its reforms to the SEN framework.



**Mike Storey**  
Lord Storey of Childwall  
CBE  
September 2013



# Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

This report presents a call for action that reflects the consensus of the major organisations concerned with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties who work together as members of The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust. The report gives a status update for dyslexia and literacy difficulties and summarises the considerable progress that has been made in recent years such that dyslexia is now formally recognised almost everywhere in education and in Government.

As documented in this report and elsewhere, we know that there are solutions to the major challenges that arise because of dyslexia and that, in many schools throughout the country, teachers are doing an excellent job of responding to the needs of children with dyslexia, helping them to thrive and achieve well. However, much still needs to be done. As documented in this report, parents continue to be frustrated and feel it is a 'battle' to gain recognition and support for their children's special needs.

The Children and Families Bill, due to be enacted in 2014, provides the opportunity to address some of these issues. Building on the Green Paper (2011) and reports such as those of Lamb (2010), Rose (2009) and OFSTED (2010), the Government has signalled its intention to create a system which is: a) less adversarial b) less bureaucratic c) gives parents a greater say in decision making and d) puts resources in the hands of practitioners. The goal is to find ways of sharing knowledge and spreading effective practice of systems that work.

The partners in The Trust are offering a positive way forward through the key activities outlined in this report through:

- Providing a framework for specifying the skills and competencies required for teachers to address the needs of pupils with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties.
- Publishing and disseminating evidence about effective, evidence-based, interventions and support.

This report is also set in the context of the United Nations Convention on the rights of people with disabilities (2006) which calls for an educational system that is committed to the 'development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential'. To this end, signatories to the convention undertake to provide 'effective individualized support measures which are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion'.

The present document has been put together to help implement the principles of the UN Convention and influence the development of policy and practice at a time of significant educational reform. Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the report present the evidence and arguments **why** dyslexia and literacy difficulties are critical issues and **why** a national dyslexia and literacy strategy is needed. Section 5 of the report presents **what** we know about effective solutions, and specific action that is being taken to address these issues. Finally, in section 6, we outline steps towards addressing the questions about **how** such solutions can be delivered in practice. Section 7 presents a detailed call for action to:

- a) Ensure that good practice is made available more consistently to all who need it.
- b) Ensure that a move towards 'mainstreaming' dyslexia ensures those with dyslexia are properly identified so that individual needs can be met appropriately by those with specialist skills and expertise.
- c) Extend and maintain understanding in new generations of professionals and policy makers.
- d) Keep a focus on dyslexia and literacy as knowledge of other kinds of special educational needs develops and may seem more 'fashionable'.
- e) Address some of the more complex and challenging needs that may be associated with dyslexia.
- f) Develop solutions that respond to changes in the way pupils learn and interact, including their use of technology.

# Section 1: Principles and purpose

## Section 1 – Principles and purpose

### 1.1 Introduction

This report has been produced by Dyslexia Action on behalf of the partners who form The Dyslexia SpLD Trust (The Trust). It aims to draw together the key findings and recommendations that have been made in reports and public statements made by The Trust partners over the past four years, since the publication of the landmark report from Rose (2009): 'Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties', and, since the latest change in Government - which led to a radical review of the Special Educational Needs system culminating in a new Bill for 2014. In summary, the reason this report is needed now is to:

- Show why a National Strategy for Dyslexia and Literacy is needed.
- Set out what we think good practice for pupils with dyslexia looks like.
- Begin to develop the guidance and support to schools and local authorities as they revise and develop their practices in the light of new legislative and administrative structures.

The Trust is a consortium of voluntary sector organisations, supported with funding from the Department for Education, which is working together to promote and demonstrate good practice in teaching and supporting pupils with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. The Trust was formed in 2008, although three of The Trust partners: Dyslexia Action, Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre and the British Dyslexia Association, have been around for some 40 years. These dyslexia organisations began largely as parent-led groups to campaign for and deliver services for pupils with dyslexia at a time when very little was available in mainstream schools. Advocacy and campaigning work has continued to be at the core of the British Dyslexia Association which, along with The Trust partner X-traordinary people, has helped keep the issue of dyslexia in the public spotlight. Dyslexia Action, which formed on the merger of The Dyslexia Institute and the Hornsby Dyslexia Centre, has focused on the development and delivery of assessment, tutoring and teacher training. The Professional Association for Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS), has, for more than 25 years, been leading the field in creating standards of professional practice around assessment and teaching. Springboard for Children has over 15 years of experience in providing child-centred, one-to-one literacy teaching for children at risk of falling behind in education. The Trust's newest member, The Driver Youth Trust, has made it a priority to campaign for better training for teachers in the understanding of dyslexia.

Central to the agenda of The Trust partners is our campaign to improve the initial training and on-going professional development of teachers and all those who work with children with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. An initial strategy for this was established in the Rose (2009) report and significant work to develop that has been carried out by The Trust (see Section 6.1).

In the main sections of this report we are working towards solutions that address the need to improve training for teachers and to make effective interventions and support more consistently available in schools. The report is organised around a set of questions: why, what and how? We begin with the arguments *why* dyslexia and literacy difficulties are critical issues and *why* a national dyslexia and literacy strategy is needed. We then set out *what* we know about effective solutions and specific action that is being taken to address these issues. The final section is taking the first steps towards addressing the questions about *how* such solutions can be delivered in practice.

### 1.2 United Nations Convention

This report reflects the collective view from partners of The Trust who are all concerned with the education of children with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. We outline the shared and overarching principles that are reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). This reflects the basic principles of equality of opportunity which exist to people with disabilities. Article 7 commits Governments to: 'take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children'. Article 24 records the right of persons with disabilities: 'to education directed to:

- The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
- The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
- Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society'.

Paragraph 2 of Article 24 sets out the principles of inclusive education and access to individualized support, including:

- Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements;
- Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
- Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

### 1.3 Dyslexia organisations' principles

The missions and objectives of the organisations coming together under The Trust are, as would be expected, in line with the UN principles that were quoted above. So, in relation to the education of children with dyslexia, and related Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), we take the view that:

Children with SEND should:

- be identified as early as possible so that they can receive early targeted support and intervention;
- have the support they need to fully participate alongside their peers in order that they may develop and realise their abilities to the same extent as their peers, unrestricted by their specific disabilities;
- have access to the kinds of teaching that is effective in enabling them to overcome, or minimise, the effects of their difficulties even if this may mean adjustments to other areas of the curriculum;
- be educated by schools which recognise and respect individual differences in abilities and difficulties without stigma or victimisation of any kind;
- be given the opportunities to develop their talents, in whatever domains they may be found, and to develop confidence and self-esteem within a broad and balanced curriculum.

Schools should therefore:

- Ensure that they make the best use of data and information to support the early identification of special needs and to assist in planning and delivering effective targeted and/or adapted interventions;
- Ensure all staff have appropriate knowledge and understanding in order that the requirements of children can be met in all subjects and activities, recognising the wide range of severities and complexities of special needs;
- Provide accurate information to parents to support them in understanding, participating and making decisions about their children's education. This should include information both about the nature and level of an individual's special needs and information about what resources and support is available to address those needs;
- Ensure that the organisation and delivery of education supports the individual's learning and development needs of pupils rather than constricting or limiting them;

- Engender high expectations for children with SEN, and with all children, and strive to achieve successes for 100% of the children in the school;
- Provide a safe and secure environment for learning and interaction in which differences between individuals are recognised, accommodated and celebrated.

## 1.4 Government Reform

In reforming the SEN system and education more widely, we recognise that the Government is trying to live up to its commitments to the UN Convention (2006) (See 1.2) in relation to disabilities and other conventions referred to in the draft legislation. Recognising the scale of the challenges, in a letter to the Education Select Committee in 2012, the Minister of Education wrote:

‘Too many children and young people who are disabled or identified as having special educational needs have their needs picked up too late, do less well than their peers at school and college and are more likely to be out of education, training and employment at 18. Schools and colleges can focus on the SEN label rather than on meeting the child’s or young person’s needs and aspirations and many teachers in schools and colleges can feel they lack the confidence to teach children and young people with special educational needs effectively.

Families often have to battle to find out what support is available and in getting the help they need from education, health and social care services. They don’t feel properly involved and they lack control over their support’.

Following consultation, the Department for Education introduced a draft Bill (September 2012) which focused on the following four key measures to improve the SEN system:

- A single assessment system which should be more streamlined, quicker to process and better involve children and young people from 0–25 and their families.
- An education health and care plan (EHC Plan) to replace the Statement of Special Needs, which will ensure that services work together and come with a personal budget for families who want it.
- A requirement on local authorities to publish a ‘Local Offer’ indicating the support available to those with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.
- The introduction of mediation opportunities for disputes and a trial giving children the right to appeal if they are unhappy with their support.

Most children and young people with dyslexia are expected to have their special needs met through the provision that will be set out in the Local Offer. In this, schools and local authorities will be required to make clear what provision is normally available within early years settings, schools, colleges and other services, including health and social care. It is argued that clear information about what schools provide will have the dual benefits of driving up standards and reducing conflicts as it becomes easier to compare available provision with agreed standards of good practice.

## 1.5 A consensus call for action - Why, what and how?

This document has been put together to help implement the four key measures first highlighted in the DfE’s draft Bill and to influence the development of this policy and practice at a time of significant educational reform. Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the report present the evidence and arguments as to *why* dyslexia and literacy difficulties are critical issues and why a national dyslexia and literacy strategy is needed. Section 5, of the report presents *what* we know about effective solutions and specific action that is being taken to address these issues. Finally, in section 6 we outline steps towards addressing the questions about *how* such solutions can be delivered in practice.

# Section 2: Why?

## Section 2: Why?

### 2.1 Milestones in the Dyslexia Journey

Dyslexia is a subject that has caused much debate over the years. The first descriptions – from over a hundred years ago – used the term ‘word blindness’, reflecting the view that difficulties in reading were caused by problems in visual perception. It was not until the 1970s that the role of language processing was recognised and only in the last 20 years has that been accepted as the primary feature of dyslexia.

While controversy and debate continued, it was easier for some in professional practice to ignore the issue and harder to argue for specific approaches and methods. Instead, those living with dyslexia were often wrongly labelled as ‘slow’, ‘thick’ and/or ‘lazy’, with school reports warning parents not to expect much from their son/daughter!

Controversy also led to alternative treatments and ‘miracle cures’. If mainstream services have nothing to offer, it is no surprise that people will turn to alternatives. Almost always, these alternatives are untested and often based on unsubstantiated claims.

Dyslexia was recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 and is still specifically mentioned in the more recent Equality Act (2010). This means that educational and workplace settings have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that those affected by dyslexia are not disadvantaged compared to their peers.

Dyslexia became recognised as a Special Educational Need (SEN) and was mentioned as an example in the 1997 Code of Practice.

The Rose Review, and acceptance of its recommendations by the Education Minister, achieved many positive outcomes, not least of which was a consensus definition of dyslexia, as shown below:

#### **A working definition of Dyslexia, as formulated by the Expert Advisory Group (Rose Review, 2009)**

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.

A key message in this report is that dyslexia is now well understood and there is good evidence about what methods and approaches are effective, paving the way for further development of effective support mechanisms.

Government has also more recently made public statements about dyslexia and the importance of it being recognised, including statements from Secretaries of State for Education, notably Kenneth Clarke, David Blunkett, Ed Balls and Michael Gove. In March of last year (2012), Education Minister Michael Gove acknowledged that one in ten children are dyslexic.

### 2.2 Evidence from No to Failure and the Rose Review

In 2007 the ‘No To Failure’ project was commissioned by the Department for Education to gather evidence on the impact of different ways of delivering support to children with dyslexia in mainstream schools. ‘No to Failure’ (The Trust, 2009) provided evidence that specialist teaching works and that even a fairly modest amount of specialist teacher input can make a marked difference to the literacy skills of pupils with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. The ‘No to Failure’ study showed that literacy intervention programmes, set and monitored by dyslexia specialist teachers, are an effective way to prevent what can otherwise be on-going, long-term literacy difficulties. It also clearly showed that early intervention for young children is the most cost effective model and provides the best prognosis for improved literacy skills.

Worryingly, the study also showed that many children showing signs of dyslexia were not being identified by their teachers. Fifty-five per cent of the school children that showed signs of dyslexia on a screening test were not on the special educational needs register. Fewer than half (44.5%) of the pupils, who were found to be at risk, were already on the SEN Register prior to screening and 8% were placed on the SEN Register as a direct consequence of the screening results. In summary, most dyslexic children in the schools involved in the project had not been spotted by their teachers.

‘No To Failure’ also showed an association between dyslexia and low achievement in standardised tests (SATS). Just over half (56%) of pupils who had not achieved expected levels in KS2 SATS were found to be at risk of Dyslexia-SpLD, based on the screening results.

The findings from this study clearly tell us that without good procedures for identification, a large number of children slip through the net and do not receive the kind of literacy teaching that is known to make a difference. Of the children who received support through ‘No to Failure’, delivered by an expert in dyslexia who worked with the SEN team, a significant number showed substantially better progress in one or more areas of literacy. Interestingly, a large percentage of children who had the weakest literacy skills had been identified as having SEN. Therefore, by providing interventions for children with SpLD the schools were able to move those from the lower ability groups forward, which improved the standards for the schools overall.

Sir Jim Rose was asked to make recommendations for practice and policy based on the findings of ‘No to Failure’; a review of the international literature on dyslexia and literacy difficulties; as well as surveys of schools and consultation with local authorities, experts and other interested parties. The review culminated in the publication of a report in 2009 called ‘Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties’.

Local authorities surveyed for the Rose Report supplied information on dyslexia/SpLD qualifications held by teachers working for their central support services. Out of 24 authorities surveyed, these were the results:

- Eight authorities had fewer than five qualified specialist teachers
- Ten had from 5-10
- One had 11-15
- Three had from 16-20
- Two had more than 20

Awareness training invariably included definitions of dyslexia; characteristics, behaviours and learning styles of dyslexic pupils; ways of supporting dyslexic pupils in literacy; and creating a dyslexia-friendly classroom. In 19 local authorities, assessing pupils for dyslexia/SpLD was also covered; coverage of assessment was more common in local authorities without the BDA quality mark, whereas coverage of learning styles of dyslexic pupils was less often included in these local authorities. Thus, a number of local authorities had put considerable effort into ensuring they had specialist teachers with relevant qualifications in place while others had very few and one had none.

A key recommendation of the Rose Report was that more specialist teachers should be trained in order that every primary school had access to someone with this level of expertise. With support from The Trust a scheme was established and was then taken forward by the former Government's Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) with the outcome that approximately 3500 extra specialist teachers were trained between 2009 and 2012.

Alongside specialist teachers, the Rose Review identified a need to improve the knowledge of all teachers in all schools and to provide a 'middle band' of training for some teachers in all schools which was less comprehensive than the specialist role. One recommendation from Rose was for the former 'National Strategies' to revise their Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) materials. The IDP was considered by Sir Jim Rose to have '... considerable potential for strengthening the response to dyslexia.' These materials have recently become available again at: [www.idponline.org.uk/psdyslexia/fscommand/launch.html](http://www.idponline.org.uk/psdyslexia/fscommand/launch.html). A second recommendation was to develop advanced skills modules and further impetus was given to this by the Lamb Inquiry, leading to the creation of some teaching modules for use in continuing professional development (see Section 5.5 for the resultant development of The Literacy and Dyslexia-SpLD Professional Development Framework).

In summary Sir Jim Rose concluded:

'All teachers of beginner readers should have at least a working knowledge of what to look for that suggests a child may be at risk of dyslexia and know where to seek advice on what steps are needed to help them. This working knowledge should be a normal constituent of initial teacher training of those destined to teach beginner readers, and updated through in-service training.'

### 2.3 Why we need to improve teacher training

It is widely understood in the education field that factors associated with good literacy teaching are likely to enhance learner achievement. As highlighted by Ofsted (2011a) and reported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011), improvements in literacy amongst children occur through:

- explicit teaching of reading, by teachers who are well trained in the reading process, and who are skilled in identifying reading difficulties and using appropriate teaching strategies to address them;
- teachers with high expectations for pupils' achievements in literacy;
- a rigorous, sequential approach to developing speaking and listening, and teaching reading, writing and spelling through systematic phonics;
- assessment of progress in order to determine the most appropriate programme or support, and rigorous monitoring of the impact of provision.

The revised National Teaching Standards, covering all aspects of the profession which came into effect in September 2012, also made clear the responsibility of teachers to: 'Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils' (Standard Number 5) and requires them to:

- 'know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively;
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development;
- **have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.'**

The highlighted sections in the last bullet point are especially encouraging, making it explicit that every teacher has a responsibility to understand the nature of the special needs which their pupils may have, and be able to respond to these. However, despite these laudable intentions, it remains the case that many teachers feel ill-equipped to do this. Almost certainly, this is linked to the fact they received very little, if any, input on special needs in their initial teacher training, as evidenced in the Fish in the Tree Report (2013).

### Teacher Knowledge and Training

In May 2006, the NUT published 'Costs of Inclusion' - a study on the impact of inclusion in mainstream schools. Cambridge University conducted the study and concluded that teachers needed far greater and more consistent professional development in SEN.

Influenced by the findings of 'Costs of Inclusion', the House of Commons Education Select Committee recommended that the Government adopt a new strategy for professional development in special educational needs. According to the NUT report, the Government, in its response to the Select Committee, said that it would initiate such a strategy, which was expected in 2007. In support of this strategy, the NUT sought to quantify support needed by teachers in mainstream schools in relation to all the identified learning difficulties and thus conducted a stratified survey (NUT, 2006) involving 100 teachers in mainstream schools. It found:

- Only 36 per cent felt confident in teaching children with dyslexia.
- Around three quarters of teachers felt their top priority in overcoming the barriers to teaching children with dyslexia should be additional professional development and trained support in the classroom.

### 2.4 Progress 2009-2013

During a Public Bill Committee meeting Children and Families Minister Edward Timpson MP said schools need to help their children understand more about disabilities so students can be more accepting and supportive of one another... (DfE, 2012). To ensure this happens we need to make sure dyslexia is clearly understood and recognised as a disability in the terms of the Equality Act 2010. As Lord Storey said in the 2nd reading of the Children and Families Bill:

'I suggest that all teachers must be equipped with the skills to identify and support children with special educational needs, which should include specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. It really is not good enough that we have a teaching profession that is not universally trained to understand the issues. There should be teachers in each school or each group of schools who are qualified to test for and identify dyslexia. Although I praise the work of SENCOs in schools, there is an urgent need for all initial teacher training programmes to include a mandatory module on dyslexia and other hidden disabilities'.

(Hansard, 2013)

A survey by the Teaching and Development Agency in 2009 showed approximately half of newly qualified teachers felt their initial teacher training was good or very good in preparing them to work with learners with special educational needs. Ofsted (2008) criticised the lack of consistency in the quality of ITT for helping SEN pupils. Four years on, progress towards the goal of comprehensive teacher training in dyslexia remains slow. New research findings from the Driver Youth Trust's 'Fish in the Tree report: Why We are Failing Children with Dyslexia' (DYT, 2013), revealed that 52% of teachers surveyed did not receive any training on dyslexia and 74% did not feel satisfied that their initial teacher training provided them with the skills to identify and teach children with dyslexia. Funding to support the on-going training of specialist teachers is no longer available with the Government placing its faith in the program of training for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators or Inclusion Coordinators, and in individual scholarship schemes to allow practicing teachers to apply to update their skills and knowledge through professional development courses.

### 2.5 The Fish in the Tree

Commissioned by the Driver Youth Trust, a charity dedicated to improving the life chances of children and young people with literacy problems, the 'Fish in the Tree' report questioned why we are still failing children

with dyslexia, especially in equipping teachers with the skills to help those with dyslexia, which would benefit all children. Launched at a The Trust Parliamentary Reception in the House of Lords in April 2013, 'The Fish in the Tree: Why We are Failing Children with Dyslexia' report highlights the lack of specialist training provision. Its findings state that while teachers overwhelmingly thought it important to receive training to help teach children with dyslexia, more than half revealed having no specific training at all. For nine out of ten teachers surveyed, initial training on dyslexia amounted to less than half a day.

The report sets out a series of measures which would help to tackle the gaps in training and provision. It backs the call for a National Dyslexia and Literacy Strategy, recommending training for all teachers in special educational needs including dyslexia and recommends local authorities identify and support children with the disability from the earliest possible opportunity.

The report noted:

#### **In relation to teaching those children who struggle with literacy**

- *60% of teachers surveyed did not feel satisfied that their initial teacher training provided them with the skills they need to teach those who struggle to read and write*

#### **In relation to teaching children with dyslexia**

- *74% of teachers did not feel satisfied that their initial teacher training provided them with the skills they need to identify and teach children with dyslexia*
- *Half described themselves as not very knowledgeable on dyslexia*
- *52% of teachers surveyed said they had received no training on dyslexia*
- *18% had received less than an hour's training on dyslexia*

#### **Teachers' want more training on dyslexia**

- *84% of teachers thought it was very important that teachers are trained in teaching children with dyslexia. They do not want to be sent into classrooms without the skills they need to teach dyslexic children.*

As a result of its findings, The Fish in the Tree sets out five recommendations to Government to address the need for better identification and support for children with dyslexia:

1. Provide mandatory training for all classroom teachers on special educational needs, including dyslexia.
2. Develop guidance and new training resources on teaching children who struggle to read and write and those with dyslexia, to accompany the new Teachers' Standards.
3. Ofsted to investigate how schools support children who struggle to read and write, and whether teachers are getting the right training.
4. The new laws on special educational needs should make sure schools identify and support children with dyslexia, with proper assessment and well trained specialist teachers.
5. The Government should develop a dyslexia and literacy strategy to ensure that children who struggle to read and write get the right support. This should recommend a dyslexia specialist teacher for every school.

## Section 3: Why Literacy is a Social and Economic Issue in the UK

## Section 3: Why Literacy is a Social and Economic Issue in the UK

### We 'could do better'

There are clear and well documented long-term and significant social and economic costs associated with not taking a strategic and comprehensive approach to educating children with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. Studies show that many learners who start with difficulties in the classroom, move through low self-esteem, poor behaviour and school exclusion to end up offending and in prison. Improvements in literacy standards have been made and we are making progress but we 'could do better' at providing good literacy education for all children. In particular, we need to do more to support the 20% who are not reaching the required standards; whilst those at the top and in the middle may be improving, the tail on the distribution of achievement is growing longer.

### 3.1 Dyslexia and Literacy

As is made clear in the Rose (2009) Report, and detailed in many other places such as the Dyslexia Still Matters report (Dyslexia Action, 2012), dyslexia is not just a problem with literacy. It can:

- Affect the ability to remember spoken information within the short term memory system;
- Make it harder to retrieve words from long term memory;
- Occur alongside other difficulties e.g. concentration, arithmetic and motor co-ordination;
- Result in a loss of self-confidence and feelings of isolation and exclusion.

The wider consequences of dyslexia are variable from individual to individual, but the biggest challenge that dyslexia causes in education and in working life is with reading and writing. It is therefore understandable that the primary focus of interventions and support for people with dyslexia is on reading and that we all agree such support is better provided as early as possible in a child's education.

How important is it that those with dyslexia are identified separately from others with literacy-learning difficulties? This is a question that has sparked much controversy with some educators arguing passionately that there is no need to make any distinctions and that all those with literacy difficulties will respond to the same kind of support. Others have argued that those with dyslexia must be identified because they need a different kind of support. The consensus from those who work with dyslexia/SpLDs is:

- Not all children with literacy difficulties respond to the same approaches equally well.
- The kind of literacy support that is effective for those with dyslexia is also likely to be effective for all children with literacy difficulties.
- When it comes to early reading support, it is therefore NOT critical to identify those who show characteristics of dyslexia, provided all receive the form of teaching which we know works for people with dyslexia.

### 3.2 Dyslexia and Literacy – assessing the costs and benefits

Much is said about the high levels of illiteracy in school leavers, society's need for a skilled work force and the problem of disaffected young people. The calculated cost of illiteracy to society is £2.5 billion a year (Every Child a Reader, 2009).

When the Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability - progress and next steps' (DfE, 2012) detailing the Government's planned reform of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) system was published, The Trust asked Dyslexia Action to look at the question of assessing the

costs and benefits of delivering specialist support for those with dyslexia. Although interventions may seem costly we know that the costs of failures are great both to the individual and to society.

We are arguing that no strategy to address the challenge of 'universal literacy' will succeed unless it acknowledges dyslexia and incorporates specific measures for people with dyslexia.

Getting it right for those with dyslexia will therefore do a great deal to lift overall standards in English language and could help lift the UK from its lowly position in the international comparison league-tables.

### 3.3 The Challenge

Trends in literacy standards through SAT results (Jama & Dugdale, 2012) at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) show us that approximately 1 in 5 school aged children are still not meeting expected levels in literacy. This means that there are approximately 1.62 million children in English schools who are prevented from accessing the school curriculum because they are unable to read well enough. These children are at a huge disadvantage and are effectively excluded from engaging in classroom activities.

Trends in literacy standards across the UK over the last 5 - 10 years, based on SAT results and GCSEs (DfE, 2011), show us that, on average, there has been an improvement. In 1995 only 49% of children at KS2 were meeting expected levels in literacy (Level 4) but this has improved to 81%. But it is those with the poorest skills that remain static. Approximately 20% of children are still not meeting expected levels in reading.

According to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS, 2010) 'Skills for Life Survey' the number of people with relatively poor literacy skills has declined, whilst the number with the poorest skills has not changed significantly.

Figures from the European Commission's Eurostat (2011) put the UK 19th out of 33 countries, ranked according to the proportion of the population aged 25 - 64 with an 'upper secondary education' (equivalent to A-levels). Just 76.1% of Britons are educated to A-level standard compared to 92% in Lithuania.

### 3.4 Consequences of poor literacy – the figures speak volumes

It is well documented (Stewart, 2005) that there are huge social and financial costs as a result of illiteracy. There are implications both for the individual that struggles to read and our economy as the result of underemployment, unemployment and crime. These are directly related to literacy problems as the result of poor academic achievement, vocational training and reduced employment opportunities. Studies show that many learners who start with difficulties in the classroom, move through low self-esteem, poor behaviour and school exclusion to end up offending and in prison. According to a Skills for Life Survey which looked at adults' English and Maths attainment, 5.1 million people lacked functional literacy skills. It was consequently recommended by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012) that new models of delivering Initial Teacher Education should be explored.

### Department for Education

The latest figures from the Department for Education (DfE, 2011) show that an estimated 5,740 are permanently excluded from primary, secondary and all special schools. Pupils with SEN statements are around eight times more likely to be permanently excluded than those pupils with no SEN. According to the DfE, 75% of all school exclusions, some 4,260 children are permanently excluded.

### National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER)

The NFER (Rack, 2005) noted that the cost of provision for a child who is excluded is approximately £10,000 per annum. The cost of supporting children with SEN who are excluded is therefore over £50 million per year. This funding would have been better used to provide appropriate early support in school.

## Youth Justice Board

As detailed in the Corporate and Business Plan 2011-12 to 2014-15 (D133) of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (2011), the National Audit Office has estimated that the total cost to the UK economy of offending by young people could be up to £11 billion per year, and the proportion of young people who reoffend stands at around 37%. Over a quarter of children in the youth justice system have a learning disability, while more than three-quarters have serious difficulties with literacy. (Department of Health, cited by Newman et al., 2012)

## Prison Statistics

According to the Ministry of Justice (2011) the prison population at 31 March 2012 was 87,531 offenders in England. Research by Dyslexia Action (Rack, 2005) demonstrated that there is an overrepresentation within the prison population of those with literacy difficulties and those who have dyslexia/SpLD. Around 50% of the prison population have poor literacy skills and 20% of offenders were found to be dyslexic, which is 10% above the population norm. According to the NOMS Annual Report and Accounts 2010-11 the cost on average per prisoner is just under £27,000 per year. The UK tax payer is therefore paying in excess of £710 million per annum just for the over-representation of those with poor literacy skills.

According to Newman et al (2012) over a quarter of children in the youth justice system have a learning disability, while more than three-quarters have serious difficulties with literacy. In a study by HewittMain (2012), 53% of (2,029) prisoners at Chelmsford were diagnosed as having dyslexia, compared to 10% of the UK population. This evidence, and that of other studies, suggests that many learners who start with difficulties in the classroom, move through low self-esteem, poor behaviour and school exclusion to end up offending and in prison.

## Department for Work and Pensions

According to the Department for Work and Pensions (2012) the benefit expenditure for England and Wales in 2009/10 on Income Support was £7,558 million and on Jobseekers Allowance was £4,276 million. In 2010/2011 it was £7,073 million for Income Support and £4,044 million for Jobseeker's Allowance.

# Section 4: Why there is still room for improvement?

## Section 4: Why there is still room for improvement?

### Need for improvement

Two separate surveys undertaken for the Dyslexia Still Matters report (2013), and detailed below, produced some startling results concerning the education system and how it dealt with pupils with dyslexia. An over-riding need for improvement was evident.

A summary of findings from parents with children who had dyslexia included:

- i. Difficulties in their children's learning are not picked up early enough.
- ii. The possibility of dyslexia is usually raised by them and not the school.
- iii. Expertise and resources in schools are hard to access.
- iv. Dyslexic children's experience of school is often negative.

Adults and young people over the age of 16 with dyslexia confirmed that:

- i. Accessing help at school is difficult.
- ii. A lack of understanding of the nature of dyslexia leads to unhelpful and damaging comments from some teachers which have a long lasting detrimental effect.

### 4.1 Opinions of Young People and Adults with dyslexia

Dyslexia Action's online survey of people over the age of 16 with dyslexia asked about their experiences of being dyslexic and of education. While this was only a relatively small sample of 128 respondents, the results were in line with the comments raised by callers to Dyslexia Action and to the BDA's Helpline that are received on a daily basis.

Like the parents of children with dyslexia, almost all the respondents believed that teachers should have much better training in dyslexia and that there should be better access to specialists and 1:1 support. Close behind in terms of priorities, the respondents felt there should be more measures in schools to build confidence (85%), good access to ICT (79%) and an understanding/sympathetic school environment (77%). Among the sample surveyed by Dyslexia Action 35% revealed their dyslexia was not diagnosed until after the age of 21.

Comments relating to people's feelings on finally being diagnosed included: 'I was worried that I was different'; 'I cried all day'; 'I was ashamed'; 'my mum knew from the age of 8 but the doctors said it was just immaturity'; 'I was bullied by a teacher and was very confused'; 'I already knew so it just confirmed what my parents had said since I was 6'; 'I felt stupid, angry, upset. It really knocked my confidence'; 'I felt mixed up; my emotions were all over the place'.

### Negative Experiences at school

Most respondents with dyslexia, who were aged 16 plus, reported negative experiences from their time at school; with over half saying they found being dyslexic frustrating. This was compounded by unhelpful comments from their teachers such as:

- 'try harder' - reported by nearly 83% of respondents
- 40% said teachers only ever commented on spelling and never on the ideas and content
- 65% said teachers made them read aloud in front of the whole class despite their difficulties
- 38.2% said their teachers made public comments about their difficulties
- 30% said they made fun of mistakes or wrong answers.

One respondent reported being bullied all the time; another was told by their teacher that they would never amount to anything in life, saying: 'I was lazy and a troublemaker'. Another reported being told: 'I was stupid and they [teachers] made me stand and tell my classmates I was stupid'. Others reported being accused of cheating and of being lazy.

When asked about their move to secondary school after primary, nearly 62% said they struggled with the work. Worryingly, when asked what positive experiences they remembered from their education, 20% of respondents reported 'none'.

Despite all their negative experiences, over half said the most positive thing about going through education with dyslexia was that they felt proud of what they had achieved despite it. More than half did say that dyslexia was better recognised now than 10 years ago but 22% believe much more should be done to ensure people with dyslexia can succeed at work. The majority (60%) believed they would have been more successful had they received better support at school. Some 62% believed they were able to get better jobs because of skills training or further education received after school and once their dyslexia was diagnosed.

### 4.2 Parents of Young children with dyslexia

Dyslexia Action commissioned YouGov to conduct an independent survey of a representative sample of parents who had children with dyslexia (464 parents were surveyed). While parents did highlight positive aspects of practice, the overwhelming view is that schools offer 'too little, too late' and many children are still facing a hard time at school because teachers are not trained in understanding or teaching children with dyslexia.

Findings included:

- 9 out of 10 parents of dyslexic children, said all teachers should have a basic level of training in dyslexia.
- Many parents commented on the need for more 1:1 support or smaller group teaching.
- 81% of respondents were in favour of school improvements to include measures to track the progress a child is making in literacy throughout their time at school.
- The transition of primary to secondary was often identified as a particular problem.
- Parents also commented that it was very important for them to be involved and there needed to be a much better level of communication between them and the school. Some said they felt ignored and that teachers needed to listen to parents and take their concerns seriously.
- More than 50% of parents said there are times when their child doesn't want to go to school.

# Section 5: What?

## Section 5: What?

### 5.1 What works?

Up to this point, we have been highlighting flaws in the current system and the on-going concern about raising the levels of knowledge and expertise relating to dyslexia amongst the teaching workforce. However, solutions do exist and there are examples of practices that are working well. Next we consider what these are, and how we can work to make sure that good practice for dyslexia and literacy difficulties becomes the norm and not the exception.

### 5.2 OFSTED Report (2010)

#### When children and young people learn best

According to a report from OFSTED (2010) Children and Young People learnt best when:

- Teachers presented information in different ways to ensure all children and young people understood
- Teachers adjusted the pace of the lesson to reflect how children and young people were learning
- The effectiveness of specific types of support was understood and the right support was put in place at the right time
- Assessment was secure, continuous and acted upon
- Teachers' subject knowledge was good, as was their understanding of pupils' needs and how to help them
- The staff understood clearly the difference between ensuring children and young people were learning and keeping them occupied
- Respect for individuals was reflected in high expectations for their achievement
- Lesson structures were clear and familiar but allowed for adaptation and flexibility
- All aspects of a lesson were well thought out and any adaptations needed were made without fuss to ensure that everyone in class had access.

Children and Young People's learning was least successful when:

- Expectations of disabled children and young people and those who had SEN were low
- Activities and additional interventions were inappropriate and were not evaluated in terms of their effect on children and young people's learning
- Resources were poor, with too little thought having been given to their selection and use
- Teachers did not spend enough time finding out what children and young people already knew or had understood
- Teachers were not clear about what they expected children and young people to learn as opposed to what they expected them to do
- Communication was poor: teachers spent too much time talking, explanations were confusing, feedback was inconsistent, language was too complex for all children and young people to understand the tone and even body language used by adults was confusing for some of the children and young people, who found social subtleties and nuances difficult to understand

- The roles of additional staff were not planned well or additional staff were not trained well and the support provided was not monitored sufficiently
- Children and young people had little engagement in what they were learning, usually as a result of the above features.

### 5.3 Important features of good practice

Sir Jim Rose's review (2009) highlighted the importance of teachers having an understanding of the normal processes of development in reading and spelling and, in particular, the Simple Model of Reading. A survey of practitioners who were consulted for this review identified the following features of good practice as most important:

- Using multisensory methods for teaching & encouraging multisensory learning
- Planning and delivering lessons so that pupils/students experience success
- Planning and adapting the teaching programme to meet individual needs
- Teaching a structured programme of phonics
- Building in regular opportunities for consolidation & reinforcement of teaching points already covered
- Maintaining rapport with pupils/students
- Planning a purposeful and engaging balance of activities in lessons
- Teaching pupils/students to be aware of their own learning strategies
- Teaching pupils/students to develop effective learning strategies
- Showing sensitivity to the emotional needs of pupils/students
- Teaching pupils/students to improve their working memory
- Selecting appropriate resources to support particular learning needs.

### 5.4 Summary - Four key elements of good practice

The features of good practice identified by OFSTED and by Rose show close agreement, and resonate well with the reports from parents about what they have found helpful or unhelpful. It is interesting to see that good practice for those with dyslexia is not just about individualised learning programmes and the specific content of these programmes. The ethos and organisation of learning within the classroom and across the whole school also make a big difference. In summary, effective learning for children with dyslexia depends on:

- i. A whole school ethos that respects individuals' differences, maintains high expectations for all and promotes good communication between teachers, parents and pupils.
- ii. Knowledgeable and sensitive teachers who understand the processes of learning and the impact that specific difficulties can have on these.
- iii. Creative adaptations to classroom practice enabling children with special needs to learn inclusively and meaningfully, alongside their peers.
- iv. Access to additional learning programmes and resources to support development of key skills and strategies for independent learning.

## 5.5: Interventions for literacy

In this section, we highlight the features and illustrate a range of practices that have been shown to be effective. The Literacy and Dyslexia-SpLD Professional Development Framework was funded by the DfE in response to the Rose Review. It has been developed by The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust under co-direction of PATOSS and Dyslexia Action and in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders across the profession. The purpose of the Framework is to: raise knowledge and expertise of staff in schools, support institutional improvement and strategic plans, help schools to meet the latest OFSTED requirements, provide information and resources for focused, cost and time effective CPD across the workforce resulting in the capacity to improve learning experiences and outcomes for the Dyslexic-SpLD learners and their parents. It can be found at The Trust's website alongside 'Interventions for Literacy' and an updated version of Greg Brooks' report: 'What works for children and young people with literacy difficulties?' (Brooks, 2013). All the schemes featured in Brooks' review (2013), are targeted directly at literacy, are readily available and have been evaluated in the UK, resulting in findings in at least one study to double pupils' normal rate of progress.

### Brooks' conclusions (2013)

The basic conclusions of Brooks' review in 2013 remain broadly as they were in 2007. These are quoted here:

- Ordinary teaching ('no treatment') does not enable children with literacy difficulties to catch up.

*Implication: Although good classroom teaching is the bedrock of effective practice, most research suggests that children falling behind their peers need more help than the classroom normally provides. This help requires coordinated effort and training.*

- Schemes for KS3 are few, but several work well for reading: 'Grammar for Writing' for instance, has great potential.

*Implication: Provided they receive continuing support, children who make these gains should be better able to cope with the secondary curriculum.*

- Schemes for children who struggle with spelling work best when highly structured.

*Implication: Children with spelling problems need schemes tailored to their preferred ways of learning and delivered systematically 'little and often'. Such schemes work particularly well for enabling children to grasp relatively regular patterns of spelling.*

- Work on phonological skills for reading should be embedded within a broad approach.

*Implication: Phonics teaching should normally be accompanied by graphic representation and reading for meaning so that irregular as well as regular patterns can be grasped. Children with severe difficulties in phonological skills, or using English as an additional language, may need more 'stand-alone' phonics teaching to support their speaking and listening.*

- Children's comprehension skills can be improved if directly targeted.

*Implication: Engaging the child in exploring meaning embeds the relevance of reading for life, expands vocabulary and broadens the range of texts. Children falling behind their peers need both carefully structured reading material and rich, exciting texts.*

- ICT approaches work best when they are precisely targeted.

*Implication: The mediation of a skilled adult is essential to ensure technologically driven schemes meet children's needs. Time needs to be allocated effectively so that the diagnostic tools of programmes can be used for each child appropriately.*

- Large-scale schemes, though expensive, can give good value for money.

*Implication: When establishing value for money, long-term impact and savings in future budgets for special needs must be considered, particularly when helping the lowest-attaining children.*

- Where reading partners are available and can be given appropriate training and support, partnership approaches can be very effective.

*Implication: Reading partners need skilled training and support to maximise impact. A school needs to manage partners so that feedback to classroom teachers is effectively and regularly given. Teaching assistants (TAs) and learning support assistants (LSAs) are well equipped to undertake this role.*

- Good impact – sufficient to at least double the standard rate of progress – can be achieved, and it is reasonable to expect it.

*Implication: If the scheme matches the child's needs, teachers and children should expect to achieve rapid improvement. High expectations are realistic expectations in most cases.*

# Section 6: How?

## Section 6: How?

### Towards Solutions

#### 6.1 The Literacy and Dyslexia Professional Development Framework

The Trust's aforementioned Literacy and Dyslexia-SpLD Professional Development Framework (The Trust, 2011), sponsored by the Government, is an on-line CPD tool for teachers and school staff to support them in teaching pupils with literacy difficulties, specific learning difficulties and dyslexia. This points them to what level of dyslexia knowledge and skills they should have for different roles and what CPD would be appropriate to build their skills, including key reference texts and research literature; work-place activities; teaching resources; web-based resources and other professional development materials. This can be used individually but also in the context of a school or group of schools to build an effective spread of skills within that setting. It is a self-assessment tool that provides the user with a full personalised report based on a 'gap-analysis' of their confidence in key areas related to dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties [SpLD]. It therefore defines the levels of additional knowledge, skills and professional attributes that are required to fulfil relevant job roles in the school and educational workforce to support literacy acquisition and dyslexic-SpLD learners effectively.

The framework is divided into six strands:

- Development of language and literacy
- Theories of dyslexia-SpLD
- Identifying and assessing dyslexia-SpLD
- Supporting and teaching learners with dyslexia-SpLD
- Communicating and working with others
- Professional development and dyslexia-SpLD.

The framework can be used to structure whole school improvement plans or departmental continuous professional development targets in respect of dyslexia-SpLD. It provides a free on-line resource; identifies the knowledge and skill levels for those working across all stages to effectively support the dyslexic learner or those with generalised literacy difficulties; provides a supportive analytical tool to assist individuals, support teams, schools, and local authorities to address professional development needs or filter resources according to topic or level of knowledge required.

#### 6.2 Sharing good practice

Even when one knows what works, there remain challenges around how to apply that in practice. Brooks (2013) includes details of the way that many schemes are implemented. Further examples, including videos, are found on The Trust interventions for literacy website, and in the Dyslexia Still Matters report. The Trust is now beginning work, commissioned by the DfE, to look at turning what we know about effective practice into guidance that can be used to help schools and local authorities ensure that their Local Offer contains the elements necessary to address the needs of pupils with dyslexia and literacy difficulties.

#### 6.3 The Local Offer

Tables on p.36 take the principles that were set out at the beginning of this report, and makes them more concrete with the aim of facilitating the structuring of a Local Offer in relation to dyslexia. The Table reflects the fact that the action to provide for children's special needs will be delivered by a range of people with varying knowledge and resources at their disposal.

The actions are grouped under those things that are:

- Universal – that will be required from all teachers in all schools;
- Targeted – that some children will need and some teachers will need to provide;
- Specialist – that some children will need and where provision may be provided by resources outside the school or shared amongst schools.

It is important to emphasise that individuals do not fit just into one column in this scheme: someone that is getting provision outlined in the 'specialist' column will also be getting provision as outlined in the other Targeted and Universal columns, and similarly those getting Targeted provision will also have Universal provision. The final column for Complex provision will, in relation to dyslexia, usually reflect a difference in degree from Specialist input, so entries in this column have only been made to note additions to this.

## 6.4 Tables showing a structure for dyslexia provision to inform the Local Offer

### School ethos, values and policies

Actions under these headings apply across the whole school, but the divisions have been maintained to reflect the increase in emphasis needed in meeting severe and/or complex special needs.

	Universal	Targeted	Specialist	Complex
<b>Values</b>	Maintain high expectations for children with SEN within a safe and secure learning environment.  Recognise both effort and good intentions as well as achievements in written work.  Recognise creativity and the ability to find alternative solutions and other ways of demonstrating skills and understanding.	Recognise that not all children learn in the same way and at the same rate and be prepared to adapt methods of teaching and acquire new skills rather than sticking with a single approach.  Be prepared to put in whatever it takes so that 100% of the children achieve success.	Make the successful education of those with SEND a top priority for the school.  Have a champion for those with SEND, but ensure that awareness, understanding and the knowledge and resources to respond are in place in all lessons and activities.	Work in a highly focused and creative way to address needs that have proved hard to meet in other ways.  Strive to achieve a return to full inclusive provision.  Maintain expectations for success on the same terms as those without SEND.
<b>Policies</b>	Consistent and sensitive policies on assessment and marking (e.g. of spelling), assessment and reporting.  Exam access arrangement policy with timely assessment and adequate resources to administer.	Flexibility to enable a focus on different learning priorities (short-and long-term).  Organisation of the curriculum to allow those who have good abilities in some areas but may need literacy support to access the curriculum at the level of their abilities.	Accommodation within the curriculum (e.g. additional support instead of second language lessons).	As for specialist, but with wider ranging or more intensive use of specialist resources.
<b>Resources</b>	Initial Teacher Training.  School Leadership Training.  Whole School awareness training.  School Improvement Plan.	CPD.  Local Authority Advisors.  Whole-school awareness training.	As previous column.  Specialist Consultants.	As for specialist, but with wider ranging or more intensive use of specialist resources.
<b>Policies</b>				
<b>All</b>	<b>Achievement for All</b> is an integrated programme to develop schools SEN policies and provision. <b>The BDA's Dyslexia Friendly Schools Initiative</b> also addresses these issues. <b>The Literacy and Dyslexia-SpLD Professional Development Framework</b> provides an overarching tool covering knowledge and skills base to support policies and practice from Universal through Targeted/Complex.			

### Staff Knowledge

	Universal	Targeted	Specialist	Complex
<b>Values</b>	Awareness of the main characteristics of dyslexia and related specific learning difficulties; understanding of the impact that these can have on learning and interaction; and, knowledge of strategies to overcome barriers to participation.	Theoretical understanding of key learning and communication skills (e.g. maths, reading) and of the ways that development of these skills may be affected by difficulties and promoted by focused teaching. Knowledge of and ability to use a range of 'catch up' interventions (for example...) and ability to evaluate the effectiveness of these for individuals in relation to established benchmarks.	In-depth understanding of the nature of dyslexia and the factors that impact and interact to influence the severity of its consequences. Knowledge of and ability to use a range of assessment tools and to design and deliver a highly focused individual programme of support including individualised learning, compensatory strategies (including IT) and adaptations to classroom delivery.	In depth understanding of dyslexia and its interaction with other specific difficulties. Knowledge of an ability to use a range of assessment materials and interventions, linking with other disciplines as needed.
<b>Examples</b>				
<b>Universal</b>	'Inclusion Development Programme' and whole school awareness and training provided by Dyslexia Organisations (E.g BDA Dyslexia Friendly Schools).			
<b>Targeted</b>	Apprentice Training/ resourced-based learning (E.g. P4L).			
<b>Specialist</b>	Masters level and Post Graduate Diploma specialist training courses.			
<b>Complex</b>	Masters level and Post Graduate Diploma specialist training courses.			

### Identification

	Universal	Targeted	Specialist	Complex
<b>Values</b>	Observation of response to classroom teaching; recognising and responding to parental concerns; attending to and acting on reports from previous settings; reflecting on the evidence accumulated over time and from different sources.	Use of checklists and screeners.	Assessment of strengths and weaknesses using standardized tests and other sources of information.	Multidisciplinary Assessment.
<b>Examples</b>				
<b>Universal</b>	Class teacher			
<b>Targeted</b>	Class teacher; Advice/Input from SENCo			
<b>Specialist</b>	SENCo or Dyslexia/SpLD Advisor within the LA			
<b>Complex</b>	Educational Psychology Services; independent assessment/advice services			

## Learning and Development Programmes

	Universal	Targeted	Specialist	Complex
<b>Learning Programmes</b>	National Curriculum, delivered according to inclusive teaching principals and differentiated for accessibility and response needs, drawing on appropriate materials and resources.	Targeted learning programmes in small-group, one-to-one, or distance/home learning environments.	Individualised structured learning programmes adapted to the individual's particular learning barriers.	As specialist but adapted and augmented to address complex needs and interactions amongst needs.
<b>Learning &amp; Development Programme Examples</b>				
<b>Universal</b>				
<b>Targeted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interventions for Literacy, a searchable database of effective literacy interventions, <a href="http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/">http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/</a></li> <li>Structured activities to develop and extend phonological awareness, word recognition, phonics, graphic knowledge and spelling. For example use of Active Literacy Kit: A resource for teachers and teaching assistants that covers alphabet knowledge, letter-sound links, blending and early reading skills.</li> <li>Support in applying and developing strategies and skills for different kinds of reading and different kinds of writing.</li> <li>Support in applying and developing specific skills in, for example, time-management, personal organisation, study skills: memory techniques, mind mapping, revision etc.</li> <li>Short-term Booster or 'catch up' programmes.</li> <li>Use of special interests or targeted literacy - for example the Springboard Literacy Programme provides fiction and non-fiction titles for all stages of reading development.</li> <li>Development of other talents through, for example, Gifted and Talented programme.</li> </ul>			
<b>Specialist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interventions for Literacy, a searchable database of effective literacy interventions, <a href="http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/">http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/</a></li> <li>One-to-one literacy support using, for example, Hickey-based multisensory programmes, Every Child a Reader; Every Child a Writer.</li> <li>Morphological teaching.</li> <li>Handwriting programme designed to commit spelling patterns to kinaesthetic memory.</li> </ul>			
<b>Complex</b>				

## Inclusive Teaching

	Universal	Targeted	Specialist	Complex
<b>Inclusive teaching</b>	Using a range of teaching strategies in active and multisensory ways with ample opportunities for interaction, consolidation and reinforcement.	Utilise targeted teaching strategies appropriate to pupils' identified barriers to learning.	As for targeted, and support the application of specialist teaching strategies.	As for specialist, but with wider ranging or more intensive use of specialist resources.
<b>Inclusive Teaching Examples</b>				
<b>Universal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use and encourage alternative methods of presentation and recording written work.</li> <li>Give verbal information in short, clear sentences with visual back up.</li> <li>Use range of materials and resources to overcome processing/access to learning difficulties.</li> </ul>			
<b>Targeted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing texts in alternative formats (for example using Load to Learn).</li> <li>Provide support with note-taking and recording using, for example, structured and partially completed record sheets.</li> <li>Encourage and support the use of specialist/practical equipment e.g. reading rulers, coloured overlays, assistive technology (see ICT section).</li> <li>Use a range of presentation methods e.g. mind-maps, rich pictures, storyboards, range of different colours on whiteboard.</li> </ul>			
<b>Specialist</b>	Co-ordinate with specialist staff to apply exercises and strategies in lessons. For example, working with a speech and language therapist who may pre-teach the vocabulary that children need for lessons.			
<b>Complex</b>				

## Technology

	Universal	Targeted	Specialist	Complex
<b>Technology</b>	Using technology to support inclusive teaching and learning practices.	Using technology to: deliver targeted learning programs; support text access through text-to-speech and other assistive software; support writing and recording processes.	Individualised learning programs delivered through multimedia and/or online computer applications.  Specialist software and hardware.	As for specialist, but with wider ranging or more intensive use of specialist resources.
<b>Technology Examples</b>				
<b>Universal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use multimedia presentations including videos, internet and interactive whiteboard.</li> <li>Support use of computer-based skills development programmes.</li> <li>Support use of tools such as calculators, audio books, text to speech software and spell-checkers.</li> </ul>			
<b>Targeted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of computer-based skills development programmes (e.g. Units of Sound, Lexia, Successmaker, Wordshark);</li> <li>Support and extend the use of text to speech and speech to text conversion systems.</li> <li>Provide course materials, test papers and images in a range of file formats adapted to suit personal reading needs of students (e.g. using Load2Learn).</li> </ul>			
<b>Specialist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of structured, cumulative and multisensory programme to teach reading and spelling that involves a high level of independent work by the student.</li> <li>Provide access to an on-line resource of curriculum materials across all Key Stages - textbooks, test papers and images, for example using Load2learn.</li> <li>Extended training in assistive software such as TextHelp or Claro Read which speaks on-screen text and scanned books/documents aloud and can be integrated with writing and recording software.</li> </ul>			
<b>Complex</b>				

# Section 7: Summary and Conclusions

## External Resources

	Universal	Targeted	Specialist	Complex
<b>External Resources</b>	School staff to have access to research papers, web-sites, conferences, online-discussions forums and opportunities for professional development training.	As previous column.  Access to advisory services and specialist consultants.	As previous column.  Possibility to refer to specialist assessment centre or dedicated facility for specialist teaching and support.	As for specialist, but with wider ranging or more intensive use of specialist resources.

## Section 7: Summary and Conclusions

### 7.1 Dyslexia in 2013

- 1) Good, effective provision exists in a wide range of schools enabling children with dyslexia and literacy difficulties to thrive and succeed. This provision is not just in the private sector or in specialist schools, but can be seen in mainstream primary and secondary schools and often reflects an authority-wide approach.
- 2) Teachers in some schools and specialist dyslexia centres are doing a fantastic job for children with dyslexia. The characteristics of this 'good practice' are outlined in this report along with links to further sources of information and guidance.
- 3) The most effective practice involves a combination of the four key elements of support that we have identified from our survey of practice and from previous reports:
  - i) A whole school ethos that respects individuals' differences, maintains high expectations for all and promotes good communication between teachers, parents and pupils.
  - ii) Knowledgeable and sensitive teachers who understand the processes of learning and the impact that specific difficulties can have on these.
  - iii) Creative adaptations to classroom practice enabling children with special needs to learn inclusively, but meaningfully, alongside their peers.
  - iv) Access to additional learning programmes and resources to support development of key skills and strategies for independent learning.
- 4) Dyslexia is now clearly 'on the map'. Although there are still teachers (and others) who do not like to use the term, there is no longer controversy about whether it exists and how to define it.

#### ***We have shown, on the negative side that:***

- Parents still report that it is a struggle to get their children's special needs recognised at school.
- Access to resources is still seen as a battle by many parents.
- Teachers report that they receive little training in dyslexia and many feel insecure in their abilities to respond to the needs of children with dyslexia.

### 7.2 An opportunity

The Children and Families Bill is due to be enacted in 2014 and provides the opportunity to address some of these issues. Building on the Green Paper (2011) and reports such as those of Lamb (2010), Rose (2009) and OFSTED (2010), the Government has signalled its intention to create a system which is: a) less adversarial b) less bureaucratic c) gives parents a greater say in decision making and d) puts resources in the hands of practitioners. The goal is to find ways of sharing knowledge and spreading effective practice of systems that work.

The partners in The Trust are offering a positive way forward through the key activities outlined in this report:

- Providing a framework for specifying the skills and competencies required for teachers to address the needs of pupils with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties.
- Publishing and disseminating evidence about effective, evidence-based, interventions and support.

### 7.3 Action Needed

#### 7.3.1 Training

All children with dyslexia need to have access to good teaching in all lessons. A co-ordinated plan is needed to improve awareness and understanding of dyslexia for people in all roles in education. This should include:

- A compulsory module on Special Educational Needs, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, as part of their Initial Teacher Training.
- A requirement for all teachers to access Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the area of SEN.
- A plan, with resources behind it, to ensure that all schools have access to a specialist teacher who has a postgraduate diploma in dyslexia and literacy.
- A scheme to enable more teaching assistants to receive training in specific interventions and methods of support as well as a career structure allowing them to undertake more specialist roles as their skills and knowledge increase.
- Making special needs a higher priority in the training and professional development for those in leadership and governance roles.
- Producing guidance and advice for use by inspectors in relation to effective support and interventions for those with dyslexia.

#### 7.3.2 Identification and Assessment

This is an area of practice where improvements are badly needed. More information needs to get to practitioners so they are confident - when making their first observations of children who may be having difficulties - of assessing the nature of those difficulties and determining special arrangements for formal examinations. Recent discussions around the use of the Phonics Check and exam access arrangements reveal worrying levels of ignorance about the use of assessment tools to support improved learning and achievement.

There needs to be:

- Better tracking and monitoring of children as they progress from pre-school through to adulthood.
- A clear policy on where the responsibility for tracking sits and better use and co-ordination of centrally-held data along with individual observations, to avoid the unacceptable delays in identifying those who need extra help.
- Better advice and guidance around the Year 1 Phonics Check, especially about the actions that should follow from low scores.
- Better access to easily-administered 'screening' assessments and a clearer policy about how information is shared with colleagues and parents.
- Training for all teachers, at all levels, so that they can identify signs of dyslexia-SpLD and know what to do in terms of further assessment and advice.

#### 7.3.3 Sharing Good Practice

Effective support and interventions can be delivered in practice (as highlighted in this report) but knowledge of this practice needs to be shared and communicated more widely.

Support needs to be given to:

- Developing and maintaining forums for exchange of practice locally, nationally and virtually.

- Ensuring that expertise from the voluntary sector and from those engaged in research is fully utilised.
- Developing and evaluating new intervention models in schools and specialist centres so they can learn what works.

#### 7.3.4 School Improvement

It is encouraging that OFSTED has been asked to focus now on what schools are doing for the pupils in the bottom 20% and that programmes such as Achievement for All is being adopted. However, the pace of change here must increase and further action and support is needed so that schools can produce credible Local Offers under the new SEN reforms.

- Schools need to demonstrate, through the Local Offer and in other ways, what they are doing to support children with dyslexia and literacy difficulties.
- Schools should show evidence that they have engaged with 'best practice' as highlighted in this report's Intervention Table.
- Funding arrangements for schools should reflect that developing an effective Local Offer is a priority and they should be encouraged to draw widely on expertise, including that from the voluntary sector to help develop and deliver these plans.
- OFSTED should require schools to include these plans and their success in implementing them as part of school inspections.

The proposed Children and Families Bill, building on the SEN Green Papers, provides the opportunity to deliver comprehensive improvements in literacy throughout the system. Our view, however, is that strategies to improve literacy skills will continue to fail however, unless the Government incorporates specific provisions for those with dyslexia and other SpLDs. We urge Government to take on board the recommendations and proposals we make in this report - together we can improve the UK's literacy standards.

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