

Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide – Abridged Version

Edited by Katrina Cochrane, Joanne
Gregory and Dr Kate Saunders



British Dyslexia
Association



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Edited by Katrina Cochrane, Joanne Gregory and Dr Kate Saunders.

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The British Dyslexia Association

Unit 8 Bracknell Beeches, Old Bracknell Lane, Bracknell, RG12 7BW

Helpline: 0845 251 9002

Administration: 0845 251 9003

Website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Cover illustrated by Dianne Giblin

www.diannegiblin.wordpress.com

Enquiries for Dianne Giblin can be made via admin@bdadyslexia.org.uk

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The BDA Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide is a celebration and acknowledgement of the hard work and dedication of teachers, children's services and local authorities around the UK who have adopted and developed dyslexia friendly practices. We gratefully acknowledge the professional input to this book from many contributors including:

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Editorial Note

The views expressed in this book are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily represent the policy of the British Dyslexia Association.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information given in this handbook, the BDA cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any errors or omissions in that information.

In certain articles the masculine pronoun is used purely for the sake of convenience.

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Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide

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British Dyslexia Association
Unit 8, Bracknell Beeches, Old Bracknell Lane, Bracknell RG12 7BW
Helpline: 0845 251 9002
Administration: 0845 251 9003
Fax: 0845 251 9005
Website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

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Introduction

Joanne Gregory, Quality Mark Development Manager, BDA

Welcome to the British Dyslexia Association Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide, abridged version.

The BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark award, is an external sign of approval widely recognised not only in the UK but also internationally. The BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark aims to provide a framework of support and understanding for schools within which the dyslexic individual can build on existing skills and talents as well as develop new skills. Such a framework ensures that all within the school have a good knowledge of the needs of the dyslexic individual and that resources are available to meet such needs. This in turn is likely to lead to greater levels of achievement and retention for all learners.

The philosophy underpinning the BDA Quality Mark is that changing practice to accommodate dyslexic individuals often results in good practice for everyone.

Holding the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark is a very positive statement that tells learners, parents, staff and stakeholders that your school is a safe place for dyslexic individuals.

The Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for schools is made up of standards that cover 4 key areas, these are:

- **Standard One: Leadership and Management**
The criteria that make up this standard are concerned with policies embedded within the school to support dyslexic learners and requires schools to evidence that such policies are firmly rooted into day to day practice within their learning environment.
- **Standard Two: What is the quality of learning?**
This standard comprises criteria that investigate the level of expertise and knowledge of staff to identify and support dyslexic learners as well as evidence of effective use of appropriate intervention strategies.
- **Standard Three: Creating a climate for learning**
The criteria stipulated will, for example, investigate evidence of appropriate marking policy being utilised throughout the school, demonstrating that students are marked on their knowledge and understanding rather than poor spelling etc.

- **Standard Four: Partnership and Liaison with Parents, Carers, Governors and other Concerned Parties**

The criteria will explore the signposting opportunities provided to parents and how accessible they are. It will also look at the processes in place for response to concerns raised by parents.

Please note that a full set of the standards for the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark award for Schools is provided in this book and contains full guidance notes for achieving the standards. Alternatively, you can visit the BDA website at <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/quality-mark-and-accreditation.html> to download a set.

Chapter 1 - How Does a School Achieve Dyslexia Friendly Status?

Joanne Gregory, Quality Mark Development Manager, BDA

1. Complete the BDA's registration document; downloadable from <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/quality-mark-and-accreditation.html>, and return it to the BDA who will acknowledge receipt of this. The school has two years in which to achieve the Quality Mark from the date of registration.
2. Using the Standards document carry out a self audit of the school. There is also a guidance document to explain what each of these standards means and the sorts of evidence that you will need to collect, again this document is included in chapter 2 of this publication. Keep in mind that you will need to provide hard evidence at the point of verification to show that you have met the criteria.

When carrying out the self audit try to assess whether or not the school meets the criteria or whether more development needs to take place in a particular area.

- Focusing means you have identified that this is an area that needs work.
- Developing means that work is taking place in this area
- Established means that this is happening (standard has been achieved)
- Enhancing not only has the standard been met but additional work is being done over and above that required by the standard.

Once you have completed the self audit you should have a clear picture of how dyslexia friendly the school already is and what areas require further development in order to reach the standard.

3. Draw up an action plan of the areas that need further development. A template is included within the standards documentation; downloadable from <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/quality-mark-and-accreditation.html>. An action plan will enable you to clearly identify and plan the activities that need to take place in order to meet the criteria. Ensure that the targets that are included within it are **SMART**:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound

4. Once you have completed the self-audit and the resulting action plan you might have identified that you require some additional support, this could be some training, or simply advice and guidance.

The BDA is able to offer a full support service should you need it. This could include training for teachers, parents and/or governors on basic dyslexia

awareness through to specialist training that covers the areas of screening and identification or teaching literacy to dyslexic individuals. Training can be tailored to meet individual needs. Alternatively, you may simply need some advice as to whether or not the evidence that you have meets the criteria, this can often be done via the telephone or email or a site visit can be facilitated. The BDA even offers a mock verification service. Although there is a charge for some of these services, one of the benefits of registration is that you receive significant discounts on such services so that costs are kept to a minimum.

5. The next part of the process is to identify the evidence. In order to make this process easier it is suggested that you use the “Record of Evidence” form (included within the standards documentation; downloadable from <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/quality-mark-and-accreditation.html>). On this form you will need to make a note of what form the evidence is in and where it is located. For example a lot of evidence may be contained within an individual pupil’s record file if this is the case then note this and then note the location of these, for example, “in the filing cabinet in the school office or in the classroom”. You do not have to have all of the evidence centrally located at this time. Again this process should help you to identify if there are any gaps, if there are then they can be added to the action plan or if you are unclear about what is required seek advice from the BDA.
6. When you are happy that all the evidence is in place the next stage is book a verification visit. Please allow a 6 – 8 week lead time for this. The BDA will allocate you a verifier and arrange a date. You will also need to send a copy of your record of evidence document to the BDA so that it can be passed on to the verifier prior to the visit.
7. The verification visit should be a positive experience for all concerned although it is appreciated that it can be a nerve wracking experience! All BDA verifiers are from an appropriate educational background and have experience of carrying out these processes, they are not trying to trip you up, they want to recognise what a good job you are doing!
8. Two weeks before the date of the verification you will be sent the verification sample template. This will identify the criteria that the verifier will be sampling. They will look at a selection of criteria from each of the standards and examine the evidence that relates to these criteria. It is asked that the evidence for the ones being sampled is readily available and it is really helpful if this evidence can be referenced to the criteria it relates to. Sometimes it is also helpful to attach a brief explanation of why you feel that this particular piece of evidence meets this particular criterion. It is also recommended that at this point all the

paper based evidence that will be required for the visit is gathered in a central point for ease of access.

9. Prior to the actual visit the BDA will contact you to agree an agenda for the day. Verifiers will try to cause as little disruption as possible to the normal activities of the school. There are, however, certain activities that verifiers will need to undertake within the verification day these are:
 - Examine all paper based evidence relating to the criteria being sampled
 - Observe some teaching sessions, observations can be flexible to suit the normal school day and usually last between 30-60 minutes. Verifiers will usually try to observe at least 3 sessions (depending on the size of the school) that reflect the make-up of the school in terms of age, subject, etc. If it is a particularly large school the BDA may send more than one verifier.
 - Interview key staff including, head teachers, SENCOs, Teaching Assistants, class/subject teachers.
 - Interview at least one group of dyslexic pupils
 - Meet with parents to discuss their perspective
 - Meet with school governors, ideally the Chair and those with responsibility for SpLD. It is appreciated that in the case of parents and governors it may be difficult for such individuals to attend a meeting within the working day so if necessary verifiers will be happy to talk to them on the phone at a time that is convenient to both parties.

Sample documentation such as Teaching Practice Observation Checklists have been included within Chapter 3 of this publication to provide an example of the questions that a verifier may ask and the sorts of things that they will be looking for. These documents are also likely to be very useful for self audit purposes.

10. At the end of the verification visit the verifier will, where possible, provide some verbal feedback to the school. Although please be appreciative of the fact that there will be a lot of information to assimilate so they will probably not be able to give a definitive answer as to whether or not the school has achieved the Quality Mark.
11. Following the visit the school will receive a written verification report. This will contain detailed feedback and also confirm the outcome from the visit. This outcome may fall into three categories:
 - The school has achieved the Quality Mark
 - The School has achieved the Quality Mark subject to it completing certain action points. Such action points will be detailed within the report and include a timescale for their achievement

- The school has not yet achieved the Quality Mark and details will be provided within the report as to what further actions need to be taken to meet the required standard. A timescale will be suggested for these and where possible a further verification date set.
12. If a school disagrees with the outcome of the verification visit they have a right to appeal. In such cases they should write to the Head of Quality Mark, at the BDA Head Office, outlining the reasons for their appeal and this will be investigated.
 13. Where a school has successfully achieved the Quality Mark written confirmation will be sent from the BDA office along with a certificate of recognition and an electronic copy of the Quality Mark logo that can be used on the school's letter head, publicity materials, etc.
 14. The school may hold the Quality Mark for 3 years, although during this time the BDA does reserve the right to visit the school to ensure that standards are being maintained, will investigate should any complaints arise and can, if it feels it necessary remove the Quality Mark. It is recommended that schools also inform the BDA of any changes that could impact on the Quality Mark such as changes in staffing, etc. After 3 years the school will be re-verified.

For further information please contact:

Joanne Gregory - Quality Mark Development Manager

Tel: 01656-724-585 (office); 07786-071-020 (Mobile)

Email: joanneg@bdadyslexia.org.uk

Chapter 2 - British Dyslexia Association Dyslexia Friendly Schools Quality Mark Standards

These school standards set out clearly what the criteria are for dyslexia friendly practice in each key area. These are also guidance notes below each standard to make it clear and explicit how these requirements can be met. The aim here is to make the process transparent and achievable.

Standard One – Leadership and Management:

- 1. Evidence is found in the School Development Plan that targets have been set to achieve Dyslexia Friendly Status, and how this will be monitored and evaluated on an on-going basis. This should be:**
 - **Developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents/carers; and**
 - **Effectively communicated to those stakeholders.**

Copies of the school's development plans clearly identify dyslexia as a priority area of development. Development plans with clear targets of how developments in the area of support for dyslexic pupils will be implemented and an appropriate timescale within which this will take place. Evidence should also be provided of how this development plan will be reviewed and evaluated and how it will be ensured that the identified targets are being met.

Development plans should show:

- Consultation with parents, pupils, stake holders, etc.
- Clear targets for support for dyslexic pupils
- Review and evaluation strategies
- How policy is to be communicated to parents, pupils, stakeholders, etc. for example through parents handbooks, circulars, etc.

(See sample questionnaires for parents and pupils)

- 2. Evidence can be found of guidelines for meeting the needs of pupils with dyslexia within other whole school key policy documents. For example:**
 - **SEN, differentiation and inclusion;**
 - **Teaching and learning;**
 - **Pastoral Care;**
 - **Subject, key stage;**
 - **Assessment and monitoring;**
 - **Marking homework;**
 - **Partnership with parents;**

- **Behaviour;**
- **Exclusions.**

Copies of the relevant policy documents with elements of where dyslexia is specifically mentioned highlighted, plus examples of where such policies have been utilised.

3. Evidence can be found in the planning documentation of all staff that they are promoting dyslexia friendly practice to meet the needs of pupils.

Evidence of these criteria should be covered by planning documents included for the first statement and by planning documents supplied by individual teaching staff, e.g. schemes of work, lesson plans, etc. Such plans and schemes of work should demonstrate for example that multi-sensory approaches are applied as a matter of course within all sessions, work is differentiated as appropriate to meet individual needs, assessment/marking strategies take account of the dyslexic pupil, etc.

4. School governors and parents are involved and understand the role they can play in promoting dyslexia friendly practice. Evidence can be found that these groups have participated in training (e.g. awareness, homework support etc).

A signed statement from the Chair of Governors is available outlining the support that they provide to the school in terms of supporting the individual needs of dyslexic pupils. Case studies outlining examples of where support has been provided to a number of pupils from different age groups are produced. Evidence of dyslexia training delivered to school governors is available.

Evidence of communications to parents that provide them with information about dyslexia, for example, information sheets, etc. In addition evidence should be provided to show that parents have the opportunity to participate in training such as dyslexia awareness, homework support, etc. Such evidence could be invitations sent to parents, course registers, course outline and course evaluations.

5. Evidence of a plan for on-going in-service development can be found (through school or Local Authority) in relation to Dyslexia Friendly Status. Examples include -

- **Whole school awareness training**
- **Teaching / Learning Assistants receiving on-going training and support**
- **Courses leading to an award – one teacher with a Diploma and OCR level 7 (with AMBDA) certificate where possible per school or cluster of**

schools. Alternatively, access to such expertise within the Local Authority

- **Catch up arrangements for absent staff (on a rolling programme basis)**
- **Supply staff provided with guidelines on dyslexia friendly teaching / pupil profiles**
- **Review and up-dating of in-service development in view of changing needs**

Evidence of staff development/training that has taken place in this area, schedules for continuing training and development, evidence of how many staff both academic, administrative and support have received such training, including a breakdown of percentages of total staff who have attended to date. Evidence could take the form of: training attendance registers, evaluations from training activities and summaries of training content.

It would be anticipated that all staff within a school will have undertaken dyslexia awareness training before the school will be accredited with the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark.

Evidence of induction materials for new/supply staff should be supplied and that such induction materials should include information on dyslexia such as appropriate teaching/support strategies and pupil profiles.

6. Evidence is available that school induction procedures for new staff (and supply staff) make explicit reference to expectations of Dyslexia Friendly status.

As above

7. Data should be available to indicate the following, demonstrating changes over time to reveal the impact of dyslexia friendly practice:

- **The numbers of pupils needing external support for dyslexia. This should reduce with the introduction of dyslexia friendly provision.**
- **The level of incidence of literacy and numeracy difficulties.**
- **The percentage of children with very low attainment in literacy and/or numeracy at the end of their key stage, compared to similar schools.**
- **The value added progress for children starting their key stage with well below average attainment in English and/or mathematics, compared to national transition matrix data.**
- **Parents / Carers general satisfaction levels with how the school is meeting their child's needs.**
- **Where appropriate, the number of requests from the school for support training and assessment of specific learning difficulties.**

- **Where applicable the number of tribunal cases and reasons for proceeding.**

Evidence should be provided to cover all of the above areas. Where a school is unable to provide data that demonstrates improvement in these areas, for example, if they have only recently implemented a dyslexia friendly approach then a statement will need to be provided from the senior management team as to how they are going to monitor and evaluate these areas and what actions would be taken if improvements were not demonstrated over a specifically identified period of time. If the data provided by the school does not demonstrate improvement in performance in these areas then evidence would need to be provided that explains how the senior management team is addressing the relevant area(s).

8. Evidence that resources are allocated to ensure effective implementation of the initiative, linking targeted resources to measurable outcomes.

Evidence of what resources, financial, staffing, time, etc are allocated to dyslexia within the school and how the effective use of resources are monitored and evaluated.

9. The school has established a framework for self-evaluation (e.g. an audit document). This should show a continuum of development for effective inclusion including dyslexia friendly practice.

10. The school works with the Local Authority (where appropriate) to access targeted (data driven) and cross departmental external support and training resources for dyslexia friendly provision and challenge where required to maintain and achieve standards.

Evidence of what external support is accessed by the school in relation to dyslexia that provides this support. Evidence that the school seeks external support if required. This might be evidenced through a number of individual pupil case studies and/or through evidence of utilising externally provided training provision.

Standard Two: What is the quality of Learning?

Supporting school improvement for dyslexic learners:

1. Underpinning knowledge:

- **Demonstration that staff with specific responsibilities (e.g. SENCO has dyslexia expertise gained through appropriate training) has a working knowledge of indicators, and appropriate interventions at an early stage, in-class strategies and programmes of support.**

An adequate number of staff have specific responsibility for dyslexia within the school, such staff have suitable qualifications and experience. It would be expected that there will be at least one member of staff within a school who has achieved a specialist qualification in dyslexia or SpLD. Where this is not the case, for example, if the school is particularly small, alternative evidence can be supplied that identifies how the school is able to access specialist support. Evidence should be given of appropriate qualifications/training, e.g. CVs of the relevant staff.

Evidence should also be supplied to demonstrate that qualified staff apply their knowledge and experience within the school such as through the implementation of identification, screening and specific programmes of support. They should also be able to provide evidence of where they have given support/advice/guidance to other members of staff and parents, evidence could be drawn from minutes of staff meetings, ILP review meetings, meetings with parents, etc.

- **Evidence that training is to be updated through in-service development.**

Evidence from standard 1 measure 5 should cover this in conjunction with the CVs from relevant staff that show CPD.

- **Class and subject teachers know the indicators of dyslexia and strategies for support and how to access available sources of information (e.g. Dyslexia Friendly Status guidelines, SEN handbook, entitlement handbook). They also know when to refer to extra support.**

Evidenced through interviews with members of teaching staff, examination of staff CVs to identify that recent training has been undertaken in this area (if training is required).

- **Demonstration that Teaching / Learning Support Assistants are valued members of the teaching team and apply support strategies for pupils with dyslexia. They are supported by the class teacher and SENCO) and know when to refer back for extra support or different strategies.**

Evidenced through interviews with Teaching/Learning Support Assistants, examination of staff CVs to identify that recent training has been undertaken in this area (if training required), notes/minutes of planning and teaching meetings.

- **Demonstration that pupils are taught about the nature of their difficulty where appropriate, including areas of strength and preferred learning styles**

Evidenced through informal interviews with pupils and Individual Learning Plans.

- **Demonstration that teachers are aware of the suitability of their teaching styles.**

Evidenced through interviews with teaching staff and observation of practice.

2. Assessment and identification.

- **Evidence that systems and assessments are in place to identify pupils with literacy difficulties throughout their education, including dyslexia early and specific interventions (see below).**

Evidence of what systems are in place to identify pupils with literacy difficulties and when and how frequently such systems are implemented, examples of assessment tools used including those specifically for dyslexia. Evidence could take the form of assessment records.

- **Pupils' progress and targets are closely monitored and evaluated regularly. Adjustments are made to support provision where necessary.**

Evidence of the monitoring process for individual pupils, with particular evidence of those identified with difficulties with literacy and/or dyslexia, such as Individual Educational Plans, etc. Such evidence should clearly identify where reviews and subsequent updates and changes have been implemented. As a part of the verification process it would be anticipated that the school will be able to supply a list of names of children on the school roll with those who are identified as being dyslexic clearly identified. Verifiers may request to see a random sample of the above documents for individual children.

- **Evidence that there is regular monitoring of the whole class to assess the progress in reading and spelling to reveal unexpected difficulties. Attainment in other curriculum areas is similarly monitored.**

How is progress in literacy monitored? Verifiers may request to see examples of whole class progress monitoring documents.

3. Programmes of learning - Evidence.

- **That there are clearly defined classroom based intervention and support strategies.**

Evidence of intervention and support strategies are in place. Evidence of the selection process used to identify pupils who will participate in such programmes and evidence of how such programmes are monitored and evaluated to assess progress and achievements.

Evidence can be supplied through planning documents, e.g. lesson plans schemes of work, etc. but it would also be anticipated that verifiers will be able to observe such programmes taking place.

- **Appropriate, evidence-based intervention programmes are implemented. There should be clear evidence that suitable learning challenges are set.**

As above and such programmes should be identified in within individual pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

- **Diverse learning needs are met and potential barriers to achievement are overcome.**

Evidence of meeting this criteria should be within IEPs, case studies and observation of practice and/or case studies that illustrate where this criteria has been met.

- **Pen portraits of all pupils with SpLD include individual teaching and learning strategies and are available to all staff including supply teachers.**

Evidence of such pupil "pen portraits" from a range of staff and/or a range of subject teachers.

- **Pupils work in a variety of groupings. They have opportunities to work collaboratively in mixed ability groups, as well as working with an adult in groups formed on the basis of appropriate, shared literacy or mathematics learning objectives. Care is taken to ensure that pupils' cognitive ability is taken into account in any setting or streaming system so that teaching presents dyslexic pupils with an appropriate level of cognitive challenge.**

This will be evidenced through observation of teaching practice and discussions with teaching/support staff, IEPs and samples of individual pupil timetables..

4. Evidence that teachers use methods that enable pupils with dyslexia to learn effectively by recognising their different learning styles and providing the following approach to the whole class:

Multisensory teaching and learning opportunities.

- Pupils are taught a range of learning methods e.g. Mind Mapping®, summarising questioning etc.
- There is provision for one to one and small group teaching and specialist support which is dictated by need. For example for literacy, numeracy, concept reinforcement etc.
- Small group work should use multisensory teaching methods. These lessons should be scheduled with adequate frequency that reflects the IEP.
- Work is recorded using a range of formats where possible (e.g. bullets, story board, flow chart, scribed oral/recorded etc).

Evidence of all of the above should be clearly identifiable within lesson plans, schemes of work, IEPs and verification of these areas will include examination of such documents and observation of teaching practice, and discussions with teachers, TAs and pupils.

5. Evidence that teachers use methods that enable pupils with dyslexia to learn effectively by recognising their different learning styles and providing the following approach to homework:

- **Provided on separate sheets, scribed into homework diaries or recorded on a dictaphone.**
- **Differentiated including choice of recording method.**
- **Discussed with parents as required.**

Verifiers will expect to be able to see examples of pupils work and homework that demonstrate that the above standard has been met. In addition, evidence should also be provided to demonstrate that whenever possible teachers communicate effectively with parents.

6. Evidence that the school is also ensuring the following:

- **A marking and assessment policy ensures pupils are assessed on the basis of their knowledge (rather than poor spelling). Marking should be for success and identifying development and improvement points.**

Evidence will include marking policies, including curriculum meetings where dyslexia is discussed, examples of marked work with feedback to students, evidence to demonstrate that diverse methods of assessment have been used and different approaches have been used where appropriate for dyslexic pupils. Samples of assessed work should include testimony to identify how and why

changes were made to accommodate the needs of the dyslexic student. These should be authenticated by the teacher and pupil.

- **Procedures are in place for ensuring smooth progression through school, particularly during all transition phases.**

Evidence should include a statement of how transition phases are managed with supporting evidence drawn from individual case studies.

- **Pupils are encouraged to develop ‘life skills’, such as problem solving, decision making, stress management, communication and emotional literacy.**

Areas where such skills are developed are identified within schemes of work and lesson plans.

- **Expertise is in place to manage reasonable examination adjustments and for school tests. Provision is made in good time and throughout the school career so that pupils are taught how to use the time and any resources appropriately.**

Evidence should consist of an explanation of the process and procedures for managing and implementing examination concessions. In addition, evidence should be provided that demonstrate that such processes have been implemented, for example applications for examination concessions.

7. Whole school awareness (e.g. including occupationally specific for non teaching staff) for all staff. This is likely to take up to one day.

Provision of one term modular course (or equivalent) for one teacher or high level teaching assistant in each school. This could be delivered by the LEA, an HE provider or by distance learning (e.g. Open University). This should be in place and operational, or you should be working towards it.

Example course content:

- Theoretical background to dyslexia.
- Identification and assessment.
- Empirically validated intervention programmes and strategies at primary or secondary level.
- Whole school strategies.
- Inclusive classroom strategies.

- Ways to support self esteem.

Located within the school or spread throughout the Local Authority so that all schools benefit from access to:

- **Teachers holding a SpLD Diploma or Advanced (level 7) Certificate (e.g. OCR with AMBDA).**
- **Ongoing programmes of training in place for the SENCO networks.**
- **Ongoing Governor training programme.**

Evidence will be provided to demonstrate that such training is available and accessed by the school. Evidence from standard 1 point 5 may also cover this point. Evidence should also be provided to demonstrate that the SENCO attends and is active within a SENCO network. This could be demonstrated by evidence of minutes of such network meetings, schedules that demonstrate the frequency of such meetings and could include a signed testimony from the Head of School.

8. Schools should have at least two of the following in place, at least one must be qualitative and one must be quantitative:

Quantitative

Measure 1: Primary

Increase the percentage of children below level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 who progress to reach at least level 3 at the end of year 6.

Measure 2: Secondary

Increase percentage of children who are below level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2 to level 4 plus at the end of Key Stage 3.

Measure 3: Key stage 4

Increase percentage of children who are below level 4 at the end of Key Stage 3 to achieve 5 GCSEs A* – C or equivalent at age 16.

Measure 4: Primary Years 4, 5 and 6

Assess how many cases have occurred where the rate of achievement has been doubled over 3 years through the locally agreed Wave 3 interventions.

Statistical evidence should be available to meet these criteria.

Qualitative

Measure 5: An enquiry into the self esteem of children and some observable impact on this through introduction of dyslexia friendly practice. Evidence to show how the data is used to inform practice

- **What do children say about their experiences? Set up focus groups to provide answers to key questions.**

Evidence of gathering feedback from children with regard to their school experiences and evidence that demonstrates that this feedback is used to inform school practice.

Measure 6: Measuring the confidence of stakeholders

Through SEN focus groups, questionnaires, Governors, AGMs for parents, or parent working groups etc.

Evidence that the school gathers feedback from the above groups and that this feedback is used to inform school practices

9. The School is able to report on measurable outcomes of their inclusive practice.

Evidence that the school is able to provide statistical evidence data to demonstrate that their inclusive practice is being effective and having a positive impact.

Standard Three: Creating a climate for learning

1. Implementation of access strategies and dyslexia friendly teaching strategies and support is evidenced across all curriculum subjects.

Evidence that the school has an access strategy/policy that is used across the whole school. The evidence will be a copy of such a strategy, how it is implemented and monitored. This area will also be verified by observation of practice within the school.

2. Evidence of adapted classroom organisation is found and attention is paid to the following adaptive practices:

- **Seating, lighting and the position of resources.**
- **Key words and clearly labelled resources.**
- **Information on non white paper (e.g. cream) where relevant with an accessible font and layout.**
- **Alternatives to copying from the board.**
- **Use of overlays where appropriate.**
- **Collaborative learning and peer support.**

- **ICT is used to support pupils learning. Computer screens and text size is adjusted where appropriate.**
- **There is an audit of resources available within school for supporting pupils with dyslexia and SpLD. For example:**
 - **magnetic letters;**
 - **ICT software;**
 - **electronic spellers;**
 - **literacy games;**
 - **'goody box' of resources (word mats, coloured filters, alphabet on the wall etc).**

Evidence of what resources are available, where they are and how they are accessed. Training is provided to pupils in their use. Verifiers will confirm the above standard is achieved through observation of practice within the school and examination of the types and availability of resources.

3. Demonstration that self esteem is promoted through:

- **valuing the individual and their diversity;**
- **praise for effort and achievement in all areas;**
- **promoting strengths;**
- **providing opportunities for success; and**
- **providing a stress free learning environment**

How is self esteem promoted within school? This criteria will be verified through informal discussions with pupils in addition to paper based evidence associated with this area, such as feedback from assessed tasks, award or reward systems that are in place, policy documents, mission statements, etc.

4. Evidence that effective measures are in place to deal with harassment or bullying related to SEN.

Evidence of policies relating to this area in addition that such policies provide for situations of not only pupil/pupil incidents but also staff/pupil incidents. Where possible evidence that provides an example of where such policies have been implemented should also be provided.

Standard Four: Partnership and Liaison with Parents, Carers, Governors and other Concerned Parties

1. Evidence that parents are aware of, and have confidence in, arrangements to meet the special educational needs of their children.

- **Effective communication is in place for parents to understand dyslexia and the basis on which the dyslexia friendly school teaches and supports their child. This should include:**
- **reference to the Code of Practice;**
- **school systems for keeping parents informed, and vice versa;**
- **progress monitoring for effecting and attending reviews for parents expressing concerns that the school may not have noticed especially about the emotional wellbeing of the child.**

Evidence of how the school communicates and liaises with parents, for example, have parents received information on the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Initiative, are they involved in the monitoring process of pupil progress, are they encouraged to attend monitoring/review meetings, have access to teaching/support staff to discuss concerns, etc. Does the school actively seek out opportunities to communicate with parents?

2. Evidence that the school has a process in place for notifying parents of concerns at an early stage and listens actively to the concerns of parents.

Evidence from the above criteria 1 can also be used as evidence for this standard.

3. Evidence that the school actively involves parents in planning provision for the child through a variety of means of engagement. Promoting ongoing working partnerships with parents which contribute to effective learning at home and school. Parents should be encouraged to express concerns as they occur and schools should ensure that parents know to whom to address them.

Evidence from criteria 1 can also be used to meet this standard.

4. Evidence of the procedures followed to log and take action on parental concerns e.g. awareness of complaints procedures

Evidence that the school has a complaints/grievance procedure, in addition, case studies that demonstrate actions taken by the school in response to parental concerns should be included.

5. Demonstration of working in partnership with pupils.

- **Involve pupils. Help them to understand their dyslexia and value their achievements**
- **Help with emotional and behavioural issues.**
- **Assist pupils in identifying their own learning strategies. Help them to implement them, record and disseminate information to all teachers.**
- **Involve pupil in IEP planning.**
- **Find out about pupil's interests, strengths and weaknesses. Include these on their IEP and in planning.**
- **Promote the pupil advocacy service, mentors and counsellors where appropriate.**
- **Promote a "can do" culture.**
- **Raise an awareness of dyslexia and SEN amongst peers. Remove the stigma and provide positive role models for all pupils.**

How does the school work with pupils to address the above points? Verifiers will hold informal interviews/ discussions with pupils to gauge their view on the support available within school and their learning experiences. Evidence should also be provided that identifies the availability of pastoral care within the school. Evidence should also be included that demonstrates that the pupil has had the opportunity to input into their IEP and that the school takes the opinions of the pupil seriously and where possible/appropriate acts upon them. Awareness of dyslexia should be raised amongst all pupils within the school in a positive way.

6. The school is aware of external forms of community based support and sign-posts accordingly (e.g. parent to BDA Local Association or Support Group etc)

Evidence provided should demonstrate that the school is aware of other external agencies, such as BDA local associations, that can provide support and has information available to pass on to individuals who may require it, for example a contact list, leaflets, etc. from such organisations.

Document extracted from the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark award for Schools standards. For a full copy of this document please visit the BDA website at: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/qualitymark/schools> to download a set.

Chapter 3 - Making Your School Dyslexia Friendly

Introduction

Joanne Gregory, Quality Mark Development Manager, BDA

The strategies outlined in this chapter are intended to make the classroom conducive to learning for all students. It is now widely accepted that by teaching in a dyslexia-friendly style all students benefit and develop confidence, self-esteem and emotional intelligence which are the keys to maximising strengths and minimising weaknesses.

Many apparent learning difficulties can be explained as learning differences. Dyslexic learners may have strengths in other areas e.g. problem solving, creativity, verbal skills and leadership. By acknowledging dyslexia as a specific learning difference, the focus is firmly placed on how all lessons are planned, resourced and taught. This is not about SEN, neither is it the responsibility of the SENCo as student needs are dealt with through a differentiated curriculum.

“Dyslexia-friendly’ teaching techniques will be helpful to children without specific difficulties, while children who have dyslexia may not be able to learn effectively without particular consideration of their needs. What is essential for the learner with these specific difficulties will be helpful for all those developing their literacy”.

Leicester City Council – Education and Lifelong learning: MIN SpLD

Regardless of learning need, the majority of students appear to make better progress and achieve better results when taught in a dyslexia-friendly way.

Best practice is to teach all students as if they are dyslexic.



Source: Nottingham City Guide to Dyslexia Friendly Schools

How Dyslexia Friendly Are You?

British Dyslexia Association

The following section of this chapter contains some useful checklists and resources for use within your classroom or school to support your dyslexia-friendly activities.

The first of these is the Teaching Observation Checklist. This document has been extracted from the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark award standards and is the checklist that is used on site by the verifier when conducting the inspection visit. The checklist clearly identifies the criteria for a dyslexia friendly learning environment and teaching practice.

Teaching Practice Observation Checklist

No.	Environment	Achieved Y/N	Comments
1	The room is well ventilated and at an appropriate temperature		
2	The room is well lit ideally with natural light		
3	Dyslexic pupils are placed near to the front of the class within easy view of the teacher		
4	Dyslexic pupils are positioned so that they have a clear view of the board		
5	Dyslexic pupils have sufficient space to accommodate their work, particularly left handers		
6	The classroom is as quiet as possible to avoid noise disturbance		
7	Movement around the classroom is minimized to avoid visual disturbances		
8	Sources of equipment/resources are clearly labelled and organized		
9	Key words/vocabulary are placed strategically around the classroom to support current topics		
10	Desk top aids are available and their use encouraged		

No.	Teaching Practice	Achieved Y/N	Comments
1	Clear objectives are stated at the start of the lesson (the big picture is given)		
2	Links to previous learning are made		
3	Priority points and/or new/key vocabulary are given, explained and recorded clearly, such as through bullet points, wall displays, etc.		
4	The teacher utilizes a multi-sensory approach for all learning points throughout the session, taking into account all learning styles		
5	There is a minimum requirement for dyslexic pupils to record/copy information from the board or from books.		
6	Teacher notes/hand outs that contain the learning points are readily available for pupils		
7	Pupils are encouraged to record information in a variety of ways, e.g. mind maps, diagrams, bullet points, pictures, etc.		
8	All pupils are actively encouraged to make verbal contributions and take part in discussions		
9	Dyslexic pupils are not made to read or write in front of the class		
10	Resources/handouts are tailored to meet the needs of dyslexic pupils		
11	Collaborative working is encouraged including, group work, the sharing of notes, learning buddies, etc.		
12	The pace of the session should take into account the needs of learners with time built in for thinking time/brain breaks		
13	Frequent and effective use is made of questioning both open & closed questions to check understanding		

No.	Teaching Practice	Achieved Y/N	Comments
14	Pupils are not expected to multi-task and tasks are clearly demarcated as looking, listening and writing with an equal balance of such tasks being evident		
15	The lesson follows a logical sequence with each learning point leading on from the previous. Links between these learning points are frequently reinforced and made explicit		
16	Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and make oral contributions		
17	Additional time is allowed within sessions for dyslexic pupils to process information and for reading and writing		
18	Key points are reinforced and highlighted both orally and visually		
19	Effective use is made of colour, visual aids, etc. within presented information to highlight key points		
20	Instructions and information are broken down into small steps with no more than 3 clear pieces of information being given at one time. Checks of understanding are made after each stage		
21	Hand outs conform to dyslexia friendly guidelines		
22	Positive and constructive feedback is given to pupils at appropriate intervals		
23	Homework tasks are clearly explained and homework instructions are written down for dyslexic pupils. (Home work is not set in that last few minutes of the session)		
24	Marking criteria are clearly explained to pupils		
25	There is a recap of the objectives and key learning points at the end of the session		

No.	Marking/Assessment	Achieved Y/N	Comments
1	Homework set is appropriate for the individual pupil, where necessary it is differentiated		
2	Pupils are encouraged to record homework in a variety of ways, if appropriate		
3	Where appropriate homework is marked for content rather than accuracy of spelling, etc. Recognition is also given for effort		
4	Feedback should be positive and constructive		
5	A clear indication of the time to be spent on homework should be given		
6	Clear and realistic deadlines for the submission of homework should be set, communicated and confirmed with the pupil and clearly recorded for them		
7	Parents and pupils are encouraged to comment on the homework set and such comments are reviewed and utilised to inform future practice		
8	Pupils know how to access additional support with homework if required		
9	Reminders, such as notebooks, personal checklists, etc. are used to help pupils remember specific items/equipment for future sessions		

Document extracted from the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark award for Schools standards, Additional Useful Documents, section. For a full copy of this document please visit the BDA website at:

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/qualitymark/schools> to download a set.

Making my Classroom Dyslexia-Friendly: 10 Top Tips

Leicester City Council

1. Celebrate strengths and success across a wide range of endeavours (deliberately and frequently); create opportunities for dyslexic pupils to succeed, using specific praise to help them build an accurate picture of their strengths.
2. Have visual aids available for every lesson, or ask pupils to create some, as part of the lesson. Make good use of multi-sensory sources of information.
3. Actively teach study/note taking skills e.g. key word notes, spider plans and encourage pupils to use them. Provide notes for a focus on meaning and annotation, rather than copying.
4. Vary input and outcomes, such as through the use of small groups, discussion and audiotapes to maintain interest and provide memorable experiences!
5. Avoid long lists of instructions given verbally and provide a clear lesson structure – use the board to provide information visually, where appropriate.
6. Make sure that high frequency work lists and subject-specific key wordlists are available on each table for any writing task (and letter sounds sheets for Key Stage 1).
7. Always have a ready supply of parallel reading books and other suitable reading material.
8. Encourage alternative ways of recording: always have a range of materials available e.g. individual white / black boards (be aware of glare off the boards) and coloured pens, tape recorders; large sheets of paper and felt pens; writing frames.
9. Label classroom resources clearly and keep clutter to a minimum, to create an orderly, structured yet attractive environment.
10. Do not draw attention to their difficulties; avoid: copying from the board; reciting times tables; reading aloud; undifferentiated spelling tests.

“All of the above draw attention to a dyslexic’ pupil’s difficulties. Many dyslexic adults claim that if only these four activities had been avoided, they would have been much happier and more confident at school”

And finally ... always be prepared to explain a learning point again, in a different way, if the dyslexic pupil has not understood the first time.

Leicester City Council – Education and Lifelong Learning: MIN SpLD

Is your school dyslexia inclusive?

Nottingham City Council

How many of these strategies do you have in place?

1. **Buff or cream backgrounds on interactive whiteboards and hand outs.**
None Some Many
2. **Symbols used to support written information e.g. resources in classrooms, notices around the school and menus in the dining hall**
None Some Many
3. **Colour coding to highlight curriculum or subject areas, including resources, equipment, displays.**
Many
5. **ICT used to support pupils' learning. Computer screens, text size and font adjusted**
None Some Many
6. **Resources on tables and walls to support multi-sensory learning e.g. word banks, magnetic letters, alphabet strips, small whiteboards and pens, b/d memory joggers**
None Some Many
7. **Evidence around the school of celebration of achievements – for example, displays, motivation charts.**
None Some Many
8. **Evidence of pupils 'showing what they know' in different ways through displays around the school e.g. concept maps, posters, ICT, drama**
None Some Many
9. **Examples of school marking policy which praises content and (although encouraged) does not just focus on accurate spelling or punctuation.**
None Some Many
10. **Displays in classrooms of keywords and information to support organisation – for example when to bring in PE kit. Also visual timetables in classrooms.**
None Some Many

Multi-sensory Teaching

Nottingham City Council

Multi-sensory teaching methods are essential when working with dyslexic pupils. Multi-sensory means that all parts of the brain are being stimulated at the same time, e.g.

see.....hearsaywrite

allowing the stronger senses to overcompensate for the weaker senses. A lesson that impacts on more than one sense is more memorable than one that is heard only or seen only. Multi-sensory teaching stimulates the auditory, the visual and the kinaesthetic (speech and touch) channel.

In school pupils are using their senses all the time. What they may find difficult is linking what they have seen with what they have heard or what they may write or say. Some sensory experiences are passive, for example sounds are automatically heard or letters within the field of vision are seen. However, for some children unless their attention is focused on looking at or listening to those things they will have little impact.

Multi-sensory teaching helps children to use all their senses at the same time to ensure that the whole learning experience is more memorable and therefore more likely to be learned and remembered.

Differentiation

Nottingham City Council

Differentiation by Task

Different groups of pupils within the classroom are given different tasks linked to the teaching of the lesson.

One technique is to have different cards, worksheets or exercises for different students.

Many teachers worry about the self-esteem and confidence implications of giving different work to different pupils. It is perhaps worth reflecting that it is much more damaging to give a child something that is totally beyond them. They are bound to feel demoralised and inadequate.



A further technique is through group work. Different groups within the class can work on different activities towards the same topic or class project. The class can be asked 'Who is good at drawing?' 'Who is good at thinking of ideas?' etc.

A third method of differentiation by task involves worksheets that get progressively more difficult. The early tasks are much easier, and those who need to can move quickly onto the harder activities, some pupils, however, will simply do the easier version of the activities. The one drawback for many teachers is that too much time could be wasted at the start for the more able pupil.

Differentiation by Outcome

This is perhaps the most widely used of all forms of differentiation. Everyone is given the same task but it is expected that the completed task will vary in quality, length and complexity depending on the levels of ability of the pupils. If, for example, the task is to record what they know about a science topic, some pupils may write several paragraphs, others a few sentences and others a mind map or a sketch. Very different outcomes result from the same task or piece of work.



This type of differentiation should not be overused. It can be very easy for a busy teacher, who has not thought through what the objectives are for each of the children and the outcomes they expect, to simply set the same task without a strategy behind it.

Differentiation by Support

All of the pupils get the same task and are expected to complete it to a similar standard but some pupils get more support than others. This support could vary widely from adding structure to the task, e.g. writing frames, or adult support may be needed to complete a part of the task. Group working allows pupils to support each other, e.g. a creative dyslexic thinker may want to work with a more competent reader so that they both may benefit from the other's strengths. ICT support may also enable a poor writer to record ideas more easily.

Differentiation by resource or text

Students who are working with resources, for example a piece of text, a reading book or a play may all need to access the resource at a different level. The text may need to be simplified for some groups of children, an easier version of the same reading book may be needed or simplified transcript which explains the play may be required.

Students could be answering the same question in lesser or greater detail.

This type of differentiation takes much forward planning as time will be needed to gather or create the necessary resources.

Another application is through group work. Some teachers use rolling activities in which different stages of a project are handled by different ability-based groups, depending upon the difficulty of the task involved.

A third technique to achieve differentiation by task, involves worksheets that get progressively more difficult. The early tasks are much easier, although that is as far as some students get. The later tasks are much more difficult and are only tackled by able students who have raced through the earlier questions. Some teachers find this more acceptable, as the same sheets are given to everybody. The danger is that too much time could be wasted at the start for the more able.

Differentiation by pace

Some students need to move forward very gradually or they become confused. Others may need to move at a different pace. Some students may need to overlearn and constantly recap what they have learned whilst others move forwards to new concepts. Again forward planning is key to know how far and how long each pupil may get within a topic.

Chapter 4 - Dyslexia and English as an Additional Language (EAL) / Multilingualism

Liz Horobin, Head of Training, BDA

The aims of this chapter

It is often said that techniques recommended to support dyslexic pupils are equally effective with all learners. The same is true of multilingual pupils. The dyslexia-friendly techniques described elsewhere in this guide will be of great help to children for whom English is an additional language whether or not they have been identified as having a SpLD.

However, there are additional factors that should be taken into account when working with multilingual children and it is the aim of this chapter to explore these.

EAL and multilingualism: why should we be concerned?

According to the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 1997 – 2011 (cited by NALDIC, www.naldic.org) the total number of pupils in schools in England whose first language is other than English has almost doubled from just below half a million in 1997 to almost one million in 2011. Not only this, but the number of languages represented has increased to around 300.

We know that around 10% of the UK population has some degree of dyslexia and there is no reason to suppose that this statistic does not also apply to the English as an Additional Language (EAL) population. However, there may be a reluctance to identify dyslexia in bilingual pupils, often linked to the fear of confusing a temporary second language acquisition (SLA) problem with a learning difficulty. Certainly, the task of identifying dyslexia in EAL children is by no means straightforward. Issues arising from learning English as an additional language can be very similar to those arising from dyslexia. Many children will speak a first language which differs from English not only in its sounds and pronunciation (its articulatory patterns), but also in the way it is structured (its grammar and syntax) and written (its orthography). These differences may result in patterns of behaviour, such as problems with phonology, reading, and letter confusions, which are often considered characteristic of dyslexic learners.

The structure of a pupil's first language (L1) will also have an impact on how they learn English. Pupils from non-alphabetic systems such as Chinese or Japanese may rely on whole word recognition rather than decoding skills or knowledge of phonemes and syllables. On the other hand, those who have previously learned a

regular, transparent language such as Spanish or Italian, may over-rely on decoding and have problems with the irregularity of English.

Identifying dyslexia in multilingual children

While the above issues should demonstrate the need for caution, nonetheless, there is a great deal to be gained from assessing the needs of multilingual children who are failing to make progress. Not least is the insight that can be gained from building a detailed picture of your pupil's strengths and weaknesses. This will give you the knowledge not only of which areas require attention but also which abilities you can draw on to support learning.

A number of factors should be considered, however, when screening or assessing multilingual children:

- Remember that most commonly used tests and screeners will have been normed on an English speaking population. Therefore, it may be inappropriate to focus on standard scores when assessing a bilingual child. More value can be gained by considering the individual profile of strengths and weaknesses indicated by the various tests.
- Certain tests, including tests of rapid naming (e.g. colours and digits) or short-term and working memory (using digits forward and reversed), may be delivered reasonably easily in the L1. A comparison of the pupil's performance in the L1 versus the L2 can be a useful indicator of how far difficulties may be attributable to SLA or SpLD.
- A range of language skills should be assessed, including a comparison of oral v. written productive skills and aural v. reading receptive skills.
- Various explanations for literacy and other learning difficulties should always be considered fully before leaping to the conclusion that a pupil has a SpLD. These may include second language acquisition issues or L1 influence. See the table below (Multilingual learners – Difficulties, possible causes & suggested solutions) for suggestions for identifying problems and their causes.
- In assessing any child it is of paramount importance to build up as full a picture of their background as possible, and this is particularly important when working with multilingual children. Many factors may contribute to apparent learning difficulties. Issues connected with the L1 have already been mentioned; however, the possibility of past traumas should also be explored – for example, has the child experienced life in a war zone? Has (s)he spent time in a refugee camp or detention centre? How many countries has the family lived in?
See the Multilingual Pupils' Profiler for suggested questions to ask when building a profile of your pupil.

- The pupil's response to intervention, as suggested in the Rose Review, can be one of the most useful tools in distinguishing between a SpLD or a temporary learning delay. In the case of multilingual children, a process of dynamic assessment is particularly useful as many of the issues which would persist in a severely dyslexic child should be gradually overcome by an EAL learner.
- Multilingual children may bring particular strengths to their learning. These can be dangerous as they can mislead a teacher into believing that the pupil is more advanced linguistically than they actually are. However, they can also be useful in providing ways of supporting weaknesses.

Possible multilingual strengths

- Good ability to decode regular words (where the child has learned literacy skills in a transparent L1).
- Good aural discrimination.
- Good aural memory and ability to repeat new words.
- Good ability to use context to guess meaning.
- More knowledge, understanding and critical awareness about language and communication (see Jessner in http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/studies/documents/study_on_the_contribution_of_multilingualism_to_creativity/compendium_part_1_en.pdf).
- More creativity and flexible thinking (due to having learned two or more words for each object and idea).
- Enhanced concentration and attention to relevant information (see Martin-Rhee and Bialystok, 2008).
- Increased sensitivity to listener needs, due to having to make decisions about which language to use at which times and to whom. (see www.bbc.co.uk/wales/schoolgate/aboutschool/content/3inwelsh.shtml).

Structuring an intervention programme for multilingual pupils

In 2010, the British Dyslexia Association, in association with Bath Spa University, began the two-year Big Lottery funded project, 'Dyslexia and Multilingualism: Identification and Intervention'. This project set out to explore the identification and support of multilingual children at Key Stage 2 who showed signs of being at risk of dyslexia.

The project found that daily half-hour sessions focussing on reading and spelling skills delivered by a TA working with two children together over a 15 week period, were highly successful in raising standards in literacy (see Mortimore et al, 2012).

Gains made in reading skills by children involved in the full intervention were maintained 15 weeks after the intervention had ended, as were gains in vocabulary, although to a lesser extent. Gains in spelling and writing were less likely to be maintained, suggesting that ongoing support in these areas is required.

Recommended features of an intervention programme

- Individual attention from an adult.
- A daily, structured, cumulative intervention programme.
- Fun, motivating materials. In the case of the Dyslexia and Multilingualism project, *Rapid Reading* (Pearson Education) and *Nessy* (Net Educational Systems Ltd) were used together for the full intervention, while a programme of paired reading which allowed children to select their own books was used as an alternative intervention. Both interventions were successful in raising standards, although the full intervention resulted in greater gains in spelling, in particular.
- A focus on discussion and activities to promote vocabulary development and communicative skills.

What to include in an intervention programme for multilingual learners

Phonological awareness

As mentioned above, features of the L1 may have a negative impact on a child's ability to recognize or produce the sounds of the English language. For example, a child from a Japanese background may have extreme difficulty in distinguishing between the sounds /r/ and /l/, while a Chinese speaking child may have difficulty in pronouncing final consonants.

In such cases, it will be necessary to put in place a cumulative structured programme focussing explicitly on the pupil's problem areas and on hearing and saying the phonemes of the English language. This should be fully supported by multi-sensory work (see the earlier chapters in this guide for suggestions regarding multi-sensory methods).

Vocabulary development and reading comprehension

The Big Lottery funded project, Dyslexia and Multilingualism, identified word poverty as a major issue for all children involved (Mortimore et al, 2012). Performances of children in the *British Picture Vocabulary Scale*, a test of receptive language skills, were generally well below the expected levels.

Many of the children's teachers were surprised by this finding; however, multilingual children often develop good basic interpersonal communication skills or BICS (see

Cummins, 1979) which enable them to ‘get by’ in everyday conversation and this can mask the fact that they actually possess a very limited range of language.

Additionally, they may never be exposed to a sufficiently wide range of vocabulary to enable them to develop academic language proficiency or CALP (Cummins, 1979). As vocabulary knowledge beyond a certain level of basic communication is generally acquired through reading, the importance of creating enthusiasm for books can’t be stressed enough.

Reading programmes such as *Rapid Reading* and *Rapid Plus* (Pearson/Heinemann) or *Project X* (OUP) make use of attractive pictures, motivating content and storylines, and IT components, which are designed to interest boys in particular. However, to get the most out of any reading programme, oral language work and discussion should be built in to help enrich vocabulary and develop communicative competence. Paired reading with a proficient partner, whether an adult or a peer, can be used to increase a pupil’s knowledge of language and culture, as well as their confidence in expressing themselves.

Discussion can also explore higher level comprehension strategies including use of context, prediction, and inference, as well as awareness of grammar, punctuation, and word building.

Recommendations for reading programmes

- Choose materials that reflect children’s interests and preferences and, if possible, allow them to select their own books/texts.
- Start slightly below your pupil’s level – it’s easier to move upwards than downwards.
- Encourage reading as a shared and active experience with lots of discussion of language as well as content.
- Draw on children’s own experiences and knowledge and show that these are valued.
- Develop an awareness of different features of writing – vocabulary, grammar, syntax, style, punctuation, etc.
- Develop meta-cognition of reading strategies such as prediction, use of context, inference, etc.

Spelling and word grammar

Not all multilingual children will have learned an alphabetic first language; therefore, the principles of phoneme/grapheme decoding may be unfamiliar. Equally, children whose L1 is completely transparent and regular may over-rely on decoding as a strategy and this will cause problems when dealing with irregular words. Multilingual pupils, as all dyslexic children, will benefit from explicit teaching of rules and a strong

focus on word-grammar and word-building, including morphology and affixation. Students working at higher levels will also benefit from an analysis of the origins and derivations of words and may even be able to link some of this into their knowledge of other languages.

Recommendations for spelling programmes

- Phoneme-grapheme correspondence
- Common irregular words
- Word families (using e.g. onset + rime)
- Spelling rules
- Syllable patterns

And at higher levels

- Morphology and word-building / affixation
- Semantic families
- Origins and derivations of words

Over-learning and multi-sensory techniques are crucial aspects of developing automaticity. Computer based spelling programmes such as *Nessy* (Net Educational Systems Ltd,) *Wordshark 4* or *Progress With Quest* can provide fun and motivating practice to help in the acquisition of spelling rules.

Writing skills

L1 interference may affect all aspects of writing skills, from physical handwriting to accuracy in spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation, to issues of vocabulary range, style, and structure.

Children who have already learned to write in a different orthography may have developed a very different style of writing from that required by the English language. For example, the logographic characters of the Chinese language are built up from short, individual strokes, while Arabic script flows from right to left.

Some children may not have had the opportunity to learn writing skills prior to arriving in the UK and may not have developed the fine motor control required to master a pen or pencil. In this case, exercises may be necessary to build hand and finger strength and co-ordination.

The structure of the L1 is likely to differ in many ways from English, especially in terms of word order, verb endings, expression of time and tense constructions, and use of articles. Punctuation also differs between languages and so it can't be assumed that a pupil who is literate in their L1 will be familiar with the system used in the L2.

Moreover, different cultures have differing attitudes towards style and expression, some cultures preferring to avoid strong, direct statements. At higher levels, pupils from an Asian background may have very little understanding of Western attitudes towards plagiarism. The development of writing style is best tackled through exposure to good models of writing; therefore, at the heart of all good writing is extensive reading.

A lack of experience of written texts in the L2 will result not only in a lack of familiarity with different writing styles and structures, but also a lack of knowledge of vocabulary. This, in turn, is likely to lead to a reluctance to write and an apparent lack of ideas. Techniques such as brainstorming and concept-mapping or use of scaffolds and sentence frames can help pupils build confidence and overcome their initial inhibitions. Viewing writing as process rather than product-oriented can also help, as can sympathetic and constructive marking of work.

Although many of the errors apparent in the work of multilingual children may appear similar to those of dyslexic monolingual children, it is important to keep an open mind as to the root causes of problems. While all of the techniques which are recommended for use with dyslexic English language children will be equally useful in working with multilingual children, the table below (Multilingual learners – Difficulties, possible causes & suggested solutions) outlines some of the most common issues for this group of learners and gives suggested reasons and solutions for dealing with them.

Recommendations for writing programmes

- Structured hand-writing course where necessary to develop co-ordination and motor skills.
- Extensive reading and exposure to a range of texts and writing styles to enrich vocabulary and raise awareness of features of English texts.
- Explicit teaching of grammar, syntax, and punctuation.
- Explicit teaching of word grammar and morphology.
- Use of sentence frames and scaffolds to support writing.
- Initial discussion, brain-storming and concept-mapping to activate ideas, vocabulary, and existing knowledge.
- Use of process writing techniques to encourage re-working.
- Group writing activities to encourage peer support and learning.
- Constructive marking, preferably in the presence of the pupil, so that feedback and explanation can be given orally.

The full version of the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide is available from the BDA store, www.bdastore.org.uk.

With over 300 pages of information and contributions from local authorities, regional children's services, schools and eminent specialists, this book will enable specialist teachers, classroom teachers and teaching assistants to see the best strategies and ideas for working with dyslexic children. It will also enable policy makers, advisors and senior leadership teams in schools to adopt and embed Dyslexia Friendly good practice.

There are chapters on the process of becoming a Dyslexia Friendly School, as well as help to identify children with dyslexia, and support for reading, spelling, writing, maths and teaching of foreign languages. There is a Dyslexia Friendly classroom observation checklist which is extremely useful, as well as a helpful dyscalculia lesson checklist.

This excellent resource showcases good dyslexia friendly practice from around the United Kingdom and is a hugely valuable tool in the teaching of dyslexic children as part of a whole school approach.

Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide – Abridged Version

This abridged version includes key sections from the full Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide.

To mark the 40th anniversary of the British Dyslexia Association the BDA have produced their Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide, compiling good practice from Local Education Authorities, regional children's services and schools across the UK. The result is a hugely valuable resource of tried and tested practical teaching tips and methods, within a whole school approach.

Included within this abridged version, topics covered include Dyslexia Friendly Schools Quality Mark, implementing dyslexia friendly best practice with examples from local authorities and working in a multilingual environment.

Further details about the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Schools scheme are available from the BDA website www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

The British Dyslexia Association would like to thank all those who work in support of dyslexic individuals.

Together we can build a Dyslexia Friendly World!

