

# **DYSLEXIA POLICY**

**2015**

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| <b>Document Name &amp; File Location</b> | Policy for Dyslexia  |
| <b>Document Author</b>                   | Steering Group including representatives from: Speech and Language Therapy, Kent Educational Psychology Service (KEPS), Specialist Teaching Service (STS), Higher Education (HE) & Dyslexia Action   |
| <b>Document Owner</b>                    | Steering Group   |
| <b>Summary of Purpose</b>                | This policy outlines roles and responsibilities of all KCC partners in supporting, responding to and meeting the needs of children with dyslexia.  |
| <b>Review Date</b>                       | This policy will be reviewed annually. Users should ensure that they are consulting the current version of the document by accessing KELSI.  |
| <b>Accessibility</b>                     | This document can be made available in large print, or in electronic format and additional languages on request.   |
| <b>How this document was created</b>     | <p>Draft 1 : Document created by Authors June 2005<br/> Draft 2 : Document Revised July 2010<br/> Draft 3 : Consultation with stakeholders September 2010<br/> Draft 4 : Policy Ratification<br/> Draft 5 : Document submitted for director approval Sept 2011</p> <p>Document revisions in 2013 included consultation with a number of Kent schools, Kent Parent Partnership Service, Dyslexia Action, Canterbury Dyslexia Centre, Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Tribunal and legislative support, Special Educational Needs (SEN) Assessment and placement, Standards advisory team, Specialist Teaching &amp; Learning Service (STLS) and Kent Educational Psychology Service (KEPS).</p> <p>Draft 6 : Revisions completed July 2013. Approved in October 2013 as part of KCCs literacy toolkit.</p> <p>Draft 7 : 2015 Updated to include references to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the Children and Families Act 2014.</p> |
| <b>Equalities Impact Assessment</b>      | During the preparation of this policy and when considering the roles and responsibilities of all agencies, organisations and staff involved, care has been taken to promote fairness, equality and diversity in the services delivered regardless of disability, ethnic origin, race, gender, age, religious belief or sexual orientation. These issues have been addressed in the policy by the application of an impact assessment checklist.  |
| <b>Circulation Restrictions</b>          | <b>Public Policy Document at Draft 3</b>   |

| <b>Version</b> | <b>Detail of change</b> | <b>Date</b>    |
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| <b>1.0</b>     | Document created        | June 2005      |
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This document is written for Local Authority (LA) schools in Kent. Academy schools, which are independent of the LA, and other non-LA maintained schools may also wish to refer to it as well, although they are not governed by it.

Kent has produced this policy to clarify for schools and parents/carers the expectations of the LA and schools in respect of dyslexia. The purpose is to support teachers to be aware of learners who may require more differentiated teaching approaches to support their literacy development. The policy does not provide a checklist for identification of dyslexia.

## Definition of Dyslexia

The LA employs the following definition of dyslexia:

“Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the ‘word level’ and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.”

(A working definition of Dyslexia, British Psychological Society, 1999, page 18)

Consistent with the recommendations from Rose (2009), Kent’s policy is that persistent difficulties with reading and spelling are best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category.

Identifying dyslexia does not rely on identifying a particular profile of cognitive skills. Indicators that a child is at risk of finding reading and spelling particularly difficult could include:

- difficulty in processing the sounds in speech
- difficulty in linking sounds to written letters
- difficulty in short term or working memory
- difficulty in processing information about letters and sounds quickly

Failure to grasp these underlying ‘phonological processing’ skills is almost universally agreed as being the underlying difficulty for children who find learning to read and spell particularly hard. Some children may also have additional difficulty with visual memory, visual discrimination or sequencing and with fine motor skills.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) emphasises expectations for identifying SEN in schools and the assessment of children’s progress (Sections 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, and 6.19).

Kent recognises well established research evidence which demonstrates that dyslexia can occur in children of all abilities (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling & Scanlon, 2004). The identification of dyslexia does not rely on identifying a discrepancy between a child’s overall cognitive (reasoning and problem solving) skills and his or her levels of attainment in literacy.

Dyslexia is referred to in the SEND Code of Practice as a specific learning difficulty. Section 6.31 (p98) of the Code notes that;

“Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.”

It is important to note that a specific learning difficulty (that might be seen in attainment scores depressed in one area but not others) is not in conflict with the fact that the discrepancy model of identifying dyslexia has been discredited. For example a child may have a relatively good level of mathematical attainment but find reading and spelling very difficult and have low attainments in comparison to their peers in this area. This

does not equate to saying that a child's underlying ability is high and that therefore their low reading score is a sign of dyslexia – which would be a fallacious argument.

## **Reading and spelling difficulties in context**

Although there have been significant improvements in recent years, nationally there is still a strong drive to improve standards further in literacy teaching. Evidence suggests one fifth of children will have a delay in their reading and/or spelling skills at the end of primary school or when they leave school (Rashid & Brooks, 2010, Tymms, 2004).

Recent research indicates that any inherited biological contribution to a child's difficulties in an area such as reading or spelling is very unlikely to be fixed but may be epigenetic (inherited but can be altered by the environment). (Smith, 2011; Breznitz, Rubinsten, Molfese & Molfese 2012).

Compared to many other languages, written English is particularly difficult to master (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005). High quality teaching is expected and highly effective support is needed for children who find reading and spelling difficult. Kent's Literacy Strategy expects all schools to implement systematic phonics as part of a rich language curriculum to enable children to learn and develop key skills for reading and spelling.

## **Statement of Expectations**

### **Expectations**

Effective education and community settings value staff development and pay close attention to the quality of instruction and learning. In any setting where children struggle with reading and spelling, all staff need to modify the environment and consider how the curriculum is planned and taught to enable the placement to succeed.

Teaching that is good for children with dyslexia is also good practice for others.

### **Expectations of pre-school settings, schools and Post 16 provisions:**

1. All teachers must be aware of their duties under the SEND Code of Practice to identify children's needs, including those with dyslexia. Mainstream core standards are set by the LA. These standards set specific expectations such as the need to school management teams to identify staff who have had additional training to support children with long term literacy difficulties. These are available at

<http://www.kelsi.org.uk/policies-and-guidance/inclusion-and-achievement-documents>

2. Teachers should convey high expectations about progress in reading and spelling to children and parents, having confidence that "There is good evidence to show that phonological-based interventions are effective in ameliorating dyslexic difficulties." (Duff and Clarke, 2011)

3. Schools should help parents / carers understand their child's strengths and difficulties, as well as supporting the child and ensuring that all staff who work with them are aware of the child's strengths and difficulties
4. School should be able to identify and access relevant resources for advice, training and expertise from within the locality and county for use by staff and parents or carers
5. If interventions that the school put in place and evaluated over time are not effective, the school will consult specialist support teams, the specialist teaching and learning service (STLS) and staff from other schools to develop inclusive practices, at Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) meetings for example
6. Schools will provide opportunities for children to generalise skills learnt in one setting / lesson to other situations / settings
7. Children will be taught systematically from the start to become aware of the individual phonemes in speech, and how to map sounds on to the written letter(s). The earlier this is done, the easier it will be for a child to learn to read and spell
8. Information and Communications Technology can be a particularly effective medium for individuals with dyslexia and should be incorporated into their programme of support
9. Schools will work in partnership with parents/carers and families and take careful account of the views of the child and their parents/ carers. Schools are expected to ensure parents/carers are given appropriate information in order for them to understand how their child's needs are being met and how they can support their child at home
10. Schools will ensure smooth transition between settings by providing the receiving setting with accurate and up-to-date records, profiles and ways of working with the child, and where appropriate, they will work with other services or agencies to help plan for continuity of support
11. Schools should make sure they plan provision for all children who experience long term and persistent difficulties with word level literacy skills, and other skills such as comprehension, including children who are described as having dyslexia.

### **What Schools Should Provide from their Own Resources**

Kent schools receive targeted delegated budgets and it is at the schools discretion how this funding is allocated, however it is the responsibility of the school to meet the needs of all of the children in the school. Priority in targeting funding at a local level should be given to vulnerable groups including those with SEN. To meet the needs of children with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) / SEN, where this is not sufficient other areas of the budget should be used to meet the needs of the child. There is not a specific funding stream for a child with dyslexia for this is SEN which is termed 'Low Needs SEN'. These are needs which are high incidence but relatively low in terms of cost.

'Place Plus' is the finance system for all High Needs SEN pupils aged 0-24 and complies with the Children and Families Act, enacted from September 2014. Guidance on Place Plus applies to both LA Maintained Schools and Academies as it is the LAs responsibility to fund all High Needs SEN pupils. All school Special Education Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) should be aware of the eligibility to be considered as, and the process to access funding for, High Needs SEN pupils.

Further details can be found in the schools budget pages at

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/strategy-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities>

Effective schools enjoy strong leadership; value staff development and pay close attention to the quality of instruction and learning. Guidance should be drawn from the SEND Code of Practice (Sections 6.1-6.7). Headteachers have responsibility of ensuring that the ethos of the school is dyslexia friendly.

'Where schools have implemented the dyslexia friendly schools charter on a planned basis it has quickly become clear that there are wider benefits, including improvements in literacy across the curriculum, better teaching of literacy for all children, greater awareness of individual learning needs and the use of more varied teaching strategies.' (Warwick, 2000 in DFR Pack)

All schools should identify children who are experiencing difficulties in phonological processing and early word reading and/or spelling. They should be able to provide group 'catch-up' programmes for all identified children across the Foundation Stage and year one. Schools should monitor, assess and evaluate children's progress regularly particularly for those who are struggling to process the sounds in speech and having difficulty in linking sounds to written letters for reading and writing.

For children whose difficulties persist after such programmes, early years settings, schools and Further Education providers all have a responsibility to use a graduated approach<sup>1</sup> to assess, plan, implement and review SEN support for children. (See the SEND Code of Practice sections 5.39-5.46 for Early Years providers, 6.45-6.56 for schools and 7.15-7.21 for FE providers).

This should involve:

- evidence based intervention; that is intervention based on approaches which have a proven research based track record of success, and allow ongoing evaluation. National guidance is available giving criteria that provide schools with clearly defined key features of an effective, systematic, synthetic phonics programme. See the following website link

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/298420/phonics\\_core\\_criteria\\_and\\_the\\_self-assessment\\_process.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/298420/phonics_core_criteria_and_the_self-assessment_process.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> See SEND Code of Practice 6.44, page 100.

- interventions that use structured, cumulative and multi-sensory methods with the emphasis on a systematic phonemic approach for both reading and spelling, which is delivered with regularity and consistency, including the more complex correspondences between sounds and letters
- teachers will be able to use 'bypass' strategies to help children with dyslexia access the curriculum, making sure that their difficulties in reading and/or spelling do not hold them back in other subject areas – for example, the use of readers or scribes, recorded texts, ICT and other alternative means of recording information
- teachers will continue to monitor and support children (particularly at secondary school level) who have made progress with 'word level' attainment, but still have persistent difficulties with fluency, speed of accessing information, organisational skills and generalisation of skills to the classroom
- the support in place might be complemented, for example, by additional support in a small teaching group and/or individually delivered in short, frequent and regular blocks, and could form the basis of SEN support in school defined by the SEND Code of Practice (Section 6.44).
- for primary and secondary aged children the key features of successful support and intervention can be delivered in their local mainstream school

Children in such circumstances may also have co-occurring difficulties.

### **The Role of the Educational Psychologist**

Kent believes that in all schools staff should have the skills necessary to identify and to intervene early with any child who has long term persistent difficulties with word level literacy skills (dyslexia). Teachers can identify children who have persistent difficulties with reading and spelling. This does not have to be carried out by external specialists. This can be done, for example, by using standardised reading and spelling tests to measure rates of progress and simple assessments of phonological processing skills such as memory for sounds, the ability to process sound information quickly and fluently and functional reading competence.

Where a detailed investigation by an educational psychologist (EP) is called for to achieve this understanding, the EP will consider factors that are important in any assessment of long standing difficulties with learning which might include the interaction between the learning abilities of the child, factors such as emotional wellbeing and motivation, any co-occurring difficulties, progress the child has made over time and the learning opportunities and teaching methods which have been made available.

The year 1 national phonic check can be particularly useful in the early identification of children who might be at risk of finding reading and/or spelling particularly difficult.

Schools may request that an EP becomes involved with an individual child or young person through traded services and all schools can consult with a psychologist at a local planning forum such as a LIFT meeting as part of the LA core offer. A school might consult about a child who is not making adequate progress as defined in the SEND



Code of Practice and Kent's Mainstream Core Standards for all Learners. Where there are other factors affecting learning or wellbeing that mean that a child is particularly vulnerable the EP would work collaboratively with school staff, parents/carers and the pupil themselves (where appropriate) to achieve a better understanding of the factors that may be helping or hindering progress, and to identify positive action points. The primary purpose of psychological investigation and advice will be to clarify the appropriate ways forward for effective learning.

### **Advice and support for parents**

Information, Advice and Support in Kent (IASK) offer support and advice about special educational needs so children, young people and their parents can make informed decisions about education.

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/support-and-advice/Information-Advice-and-Support-Kent>

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