

Surrey County Council policy for dyslexia

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Introduction

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

Purpose

Surrey County Council's dyslexia policy aims to clarify the current use of the term dyslexia and the implications for assessment and support at school level.

We believe, as recommended in the Rose Report, that teachers should be able to identify, at a young age, children who may have a dyslexic profile and who may be finding it harder than others to learn to read, write and spell. Teachers should be able to identify areas in which children and young people are struggling and to understand that this may be due to dyslexia.

Definition

The following definitions of dyslexia are used:

“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 a basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.” **British Psychological Society: Division of Educational and Child Psychology, 1999.**

“Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.

“Dyslexia occurs across a range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there is no clear cut-off point. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

“A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds, or has responded to, well founded waves of intervention.” **Rose report:**

Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties, 2009.

There are dozens of different definitions of dyslexia, which is why the question “does this person have dyslexia?” is so difficult to answer and why no particular test or test profile is necessary or sufficient for the identification of dyslexia. What is important is the response to lack of progression in reading and writing and other areas of difficulty.

Why these definitions are used:

- The term dyslexia is used with the knowledge that each child is different and that it is not a justification for lack of progress but a step towards understanding and appropriate intervention. No label brings automatic, additional resources.
- An indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded interventions.
- Current research suggests that dyslexia can occur in children and young people of all abilities and our definitions do not rely on a discrepancy between a child’s ability in one area and attainments in others. The needs of each individual and strengths and weaknesses in their learning should be identified in order to increase their success and engagement with learning.
- Dyslexia may co-exist with other barriers to learning. This could include global learning difficulties and other specific learning difficulties. We recognise that there can be links between dyslexia and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Overcoming barriers to achievement is essential in securing children’s social and emotional wellbeing as well as increasing attainment.
- There continue to be conflicting views and debates in the field of dyslexia but this should not impede access to constructive support and understanding.

Assessment

In addition to school-based ongoing assessment in literacy, including assessing pupil progress (APP), other areas covered in the definitions should also be assessed.

A school’s response should be in line with the special educational needs code of practice (2001). Parents/carers should be consulted and informed at every stage and records should show:

- pupil performance
- adjustments made to improve performance
- monitoring over time including pupil involvement
- consultations with parents/carers, pupil, outside agencies (if involved).

Observation and informal assessment will be important in building up a profile of strengths and weaknesses that will relate to the preferred learning style and teaching approaches. These could include a child’s confidence, attitude to progress or lack of progress in learning, response to praise, listening skills, memory and peer relationships.

As part of the intervention process, schools and local authority support personnel will share with parents / carers the reasons for their choice of any individual assessment tools and will explain a

subsequent plan of action. It is important that other factors that may be contributing to a delay in learning are considered such as difficulties with hearing or vision, poor attendance or emotional difficulties.

Care needs to be taken when assessing children with English as an additional language and children from ethnic and cultural minorities so that assumptions are not made and practice is not discriminatory. No teacher should ever wait for an assessment before responding to a child's difficulties.

One aim for this policy document is to support all teachers to be able to recognise and intervene on behalf of pupils presenting with dyslexic difficulties within their own classroom/school as well as with the support of local authority specialists.

Intervention

Information on the range of help available for pupils with specific learning difficulties offered by Surrey County Council and partners is [online](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

Assessment and support for pupils with dyslexia should be in line with the guidance from the code of practice for special educational needs. Surrey's social inclusion framework and each individual school's teaching and learning policy should also be taken into account.

Schools will:

- Identify pupils with dyslexia as early as possible to ensure appropriate support can be provided. Initial identification will be through ongoing assessment for learning (AfL) and the delivery of the primary and secondary frameworks for literacy.
- Offer quality first, wave one level intervention to meet the learning needs of all pupils. All staff have access to the *Inclusion Development Programme – Primary and secondary: teaching and supporting pupils with dyslexia* - and will be aware of a range of strategies and resources, including ICT, available to help children and young people with dyslexia.
- Meet the individual needs of the majority of pupils with dyslexia within their inclusive mainstream setting, taking account of any co-occurring difficulties and be mindful of the pupil's feelings and motivation.
- Provide for the majority of pupils from the school's own resources with advice and support made available from the specialist teaching and educational psychology service (STEPS). Intervention should be evidence-based and use methods that have been proven to be successful. Specific guidance can be given regarding wave two and wave three intervention if required.
- Monitor
 - pupil progress
 - the effectiveness of intervention
 - curriculum access and the effectiveness of whole school approaches.

The local authority will:

- Provide support to develop quality school-based identification, intervention and monitoring of the provision for pupils with dyslexia. Access to this support will be through school staff training and collaborative working within the consultation process offered by STEPS.
- Provide opportunities for STEPS to work with school staff and parents (not necessarily directly with the child) to achieve a better understanding of the factors that may be helping or hindering progress and to identify ways forward.

Parents will:

- Have their concerns regarding their child's progress acknowledged, discussed and responded to as appropriate, following processes outlined in the code of practice. It is important that a parent's concern is valued and acted on. Sometimes the parent/carer and school may have different views about a child's learning profile and its impact on progress. In such situations it will be important that schools work collaboratively with parents/carers to collect evidence of the pupil's performance to inform discussion.
- Have access to advice concerning the nature of their child's difficulties and how best to support them at home.

Pupils will:

- Be regarded as active partners in the learning process.
- Be encouraged to help set learning targets with their teacher and be supported to identify their own preferred learning style.
- Receive feedback on their progress.

References

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