

SEND Green Paper: *Right support, right place, right time.*



SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) response:

Spend to Save on SEND: To meet need, historic underfunding requires massive reversal and increased specialist assessment and intervention.

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What is SASC?

Chaired by Lynn Greenwold, OBE, SASC is the UK’s independent, not-for-profit standard-setting group concerned with the diagnostic assessment of specific learning difficulties. The organisation was created in 2005 at the behest of the DfES to set standards of practice in diagnostic assessments submitted as evidence of specific learning difficulties in applications for the Disabled Students’ Allowance. The authority for this committee and its remit stem from the SpLD Working Group 2005/DfES Guidelines.¹ The committee seeks to extend the principles of good practice contained in the Guidelines across all age ranges and throughout the profession. Since 2005, SASC has had a

¹ See SASC website www.sasc.org.uk

pivotal role in liaising closely with the DfE regarding standards, a code of practice, and agreed and accessible formats for all professionals involved in diagnostic assessment reports received as evidence of a specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia) for application for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

SASC and its subcommittees are a collaborative and 'umbrella' group of professionals working in a similar field to agree standards of practice. No single organisation or individual dominates. SASC strives to bring about change through consensus. Decisions and guidance go through a consultation process with the organisations involved in SASC and, where possible, with a wider audience of individual assessment practitioners, academics, trainers and teachers/tutors. SASC works closely with representatives from a wide range of professional groups working in or for primary schools, secondary schools, teacher training institutions, local authorities, multi-disciplinary health and learning support units, higher education and further education institutions, prisons and workplace HR. SASC also holds regular consultations with an even broader range of academics, specialists and professionals.

The SASC decision-making Board represents multiple professional organisations and includes representatives from these organisations, as well as expert independent assessors. Members of the SASC board and its subcommittees contribute their time voluntarily.

In 2019 the Department for Education (DfE) waived the age requirement for assessment evidence supporting applications for DSA. The requirement for a post-16 years assessment was removed on the basis that dyslexia (or another SpLD) should be considered a lifelong condition, so only one 'diagnosis,' made at any age, was required. Since assessment and reporting guidelines laid down by the Specific Learning Difficulties Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) are required to be met for any report being used as evidence of a SpLD for a DSA application, SASC responded by producing new guidance for the production of an assessment report carried out pre-16 years old. See SASC Pre and Post 16 Report Formats and Additional Guidance.²

SASC is, therefore, uniquely placed to present a holistic view of the current situation in special educational needs across the whole population.

Why are we responding to the Green Paper?

SASC feels strongly that, as the standard setting body in this field, we are ideally placed to play a prominent and key role in advising on proposed changes in National Standards for special educational needs, with particular consideration of children with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. We can advise on typical types and forms of assessment, from screening materials, interim and formative assessments, digital assessment models, to full diagnostic assessment. We have expertise in the types of interventions and support that can assist a learner with a specific learning difficulty.

Since January 2021, SASC has been working with academic and professional partners to produce a major consultation paper on the '**Identification of and effective intervention for literacy difficulties in children and adults. Implications for the assessment of dyslexia**'. This draft paper can be accessed on the SASC website www.sasc.org.uk.

The consultation has provided an opportunity to reflect on the **broad landscape of literacy difficulties** in the UK. The paper ends with **10 key recommendations** for ways in which progressive

² <https://www.sasc.org.uk/Downloads.aspx>

specialised assessments and interventions might be adopted to support individuals struggling with literacy acquisition, including those with more persistent and complex needs and an identified specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia.

Key points in response to the SEND Green Paper (in the context of the Education White Paper 2022).

1. A **state-funded** route to diagnostic assessment and the identification of specific learning difficulties, where appropriate, for all children.

Education White Paper statements...	SASC suggests that there is therefore a need to...
<p>The White Paper emphasises “early and accurate identification of needs, high-quality teaching of a knowledge-rich curriculum, and prompt access to targeted support where it is needed.” It includes a desire to “improve mainstream provision... through excellent teacher training and development and a ‘what works’ evidence programme’ to identify and share best practice, including in early intervention.”</p> <p>“all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with their school, including special and alternative provision, in a strong multi-academy trust (MAT), or with plans to join or form one, sharing expertise and resources to improve outcomes”</p> <p>The Education White Paper 2022 introduces a parent pledge designed to support the Government’s commitment that any child falling behind in Maths and English will have additional support and to ensure that “schools communicate this work to parents, ensuring parents are fully engaged in their child’s education” (DfE 2022 p37).</p> <p>This pledge also covers children with SEND who should “not need a diagnosis in order to access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a consistent, equitable, and state-funded assessment and intervention system that addresses the majority of reading difficulties at primary school level. This system should identify and support those children at greatest risk of prolonged and persistent difficulty <i>before</i> those difficulties start to affect access to the curriculum, self-concept and motivation to learn. What is required is a needs-led system that also incorporates a nationally accessible, state-funded pathway to the identification of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. • Employ specialist teachers in schools / Multi Academy Trusts to help coordinate and, where necessary, commission such additional support from outside agencies. Specialist teachers can help train classroom teachers in a range of techniques and strategies to harness the child’s interests, talents and abilities to re-engage with what is often experienced as an arduous reading process. This will encourage enjoyment of reading, confidence in maths skills and a belief in an ability to write. Specialist teachers can also communicate effectively with parents, so that they can also be involved in programmes to support their children. • Implement a progressively more specialist plan in schools for screening, assessment, teaching and learning for those who require additional and longer-term support in literacy and other key skills acquisition. For example, at Chadsgrove School in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, the Head of the Support Service, himself a qualified specialist teacher, has created a Diagnostic Decision Panel, comprised of specialist teachers who discuss all assessment reports presented, with the majority of the panel having to be in agreement for a diagnosis to be given. The panel reviews: history of need and intervention, assessment

<p>academic support.” (DfE 2022 p37), i.e. “the vast majority of children and young people should be able to access the support they need to thrive without the need for an EHCP or a specialist or alternative provision place.”</p>	<p>report and findings, and outcomes. This helps to quality-assure all diagnostics as well as ensuring a consistent approach to assessing and reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate assessment criteria and eligibility for access points to differential levels of support in all early literacy intervention schemes and policies, including Assessment Through Teaching and Response To Intervention schemes. This is because conceptualising all or most reading and learning difficulties as remediable with the same instructional programme, is highly unlikely to meet the needs of those with persistent and longer-term difficulties. • Combine frequent light-touch assessment of learners struggling with literacy acquisition at regular time points between 4-9 years with a consistent, equitable, and state-funded assessment and intervention system that addresses the majority of reading difficulties at primary school level. This should include a requirement for schools to comprehensively assess, by 8/9 years old, any child still not showing signs of significant age-related progress in literacy acquisition, despite standard interventions. Both specialist teacher assessors and psychologists are qualified and experienced in carrying out these types of assessments and they are best done by practitioners employed in or contracted to provide assessment by the schools they are working with. <p>The proposals above can identify and support those children at greatest risk of prolonged and persistent difficulty <i>before</i> those difficulties start to affect access to the curriculum, self-concept and motivation to learn.</p>
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2. National Standards

The SEND Green Paper, ‘*Right support, right place, right time*’ proposes ‘to bring forward legislation to place the standards on a statutory footing within the early years and education sectors and revise the SEND Code of Practice.’ Given its role as a standards setting body, SASC is in a perfect position to provide guidance to the DfE regarding the identification and assessment of students with specific learning difficulties within the schools and education system.

For example:

SEND Green Paper statements...	We suggest that...
<p>The National Standards will...</p> <p>“Set consistent processes for decision-making on how a child or young person’s needs are identified and recorded and instruct on how and when an assessment should take place”</p> <p>and</p> <p>“Set out clear processes for accessing and reviewing the support that is put in place in mainstream settings”</p>	<p>SASC can work with partners and stakeholders in this field to provide criteria for how and when an assessment should take place. There need to be key literacy and numeracy assessment ‘checkpoints’ built into the Years 1-6 curriculum. Criteria should be established for onward referral to progressively more specialist assessment and intervention when required. A new national strategy would set out plans for frequent light-touch assessment of learners struggling with literacy or other skill acquisition at regular time points between 4-9 years, and we suggest the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KS1 Phonics Screening Check needs to be re-thought, moving it away from a pass/fail test, which encourages ‘teaching to the test’ towards a collection of diagnostic tools, adding in oral language and listening comprehension elements, to check readiness to read. This would alleviate pressure on teachers to ‘teach to the test’ and means that literacy instruction could be designed with the child’s needs in mind, not the test requirements. • The outcomes of this diagnostic check could then be used as an early indicator of those children who require additional and immediate intervention. It could be followed up with a similar teacher-led and designed assessment the following year and a plan for intervention integrated into whatever scheme the school uses for those children struggling with literacy acquisition, if they also incorporate a referral process for more specialist assessment and intensive interventions for children who prove to have persistent difficulties and who do not make the expected progress, despite the implementation of the intervention programme. • Greater resource provision needs to be put into developing children’s oral vocabulary and communication skills. These skills also require monitoring at regular intervals to assess a child’s readiness for more formal reading instruction. However, if a child has good or very good oral vocabulary and articulation skills but is still struggling with the initial stages of alphabetic knowledge acquisition and sound-symbol mapping, other possible reasons for lack of progress must be investigated, with dyslexia considered as a possible explanation and a process for assessment and additional support put in place.

SEND Green Paper statements...	We suggest that...
	<p>While it is extremely important to develop whole school strategies to assisting struggling readers, these criteria should not be used as a reason to delay individual assessment, given that children learning to read have a short developmental ‘window’ between 5-9 years, where such crucial learning usually takes place. The longer-term impact of even a short period of developmental delay during these years can be profound. The purpose of identification should always be focused around refining and improving effective interventions. The following criteria can inform when it could be appropriate to refer for assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative to age-expectations, the child’s difficulties in reading accuracy, fluency and/or reading comprehension have been persisting or worsening for at least six months, despite appropriate, sustained and monitored interventions put in place. • A child appears to be able to sustain progress in literacy acquisition or academic progress in subjects heavily dependent upon literacy acquisition only with a high level of support and intervention. • A child is showing signs of distress and/or behavioural difficulties that appear to be linked to difficulties in literacy attainment. • A child’s difficulties in literacy contrast markedly with other aspects of their achievement profile. • A range of co-occurring difficulties (developmental, psycho-social, medical) is contributing to a complex picture of need, requiring specialist recommendations for intervention. • Other (non-developmental) explanations for persisting difficulties have been considered e.g. frequent school moves, frequent school absence due to ill-health, trauma, the impact of learning loss during the COVID 19 pandemic, inappropriate or inconsistent instruction/intervention strategies etc. <p>To ensure continuity of provision, there also needs to be a clearly defined mechanism for the transfer of records of assessment and intervention to class teachers and support staff within and between schools, especially on transfer at Year 7. Regular review and re-assessment is useful and important and is most effective when informed by previous records. GDPR considerations must be taken into account but schools are in urgent need of a consistent, ‘passport-type’ national system for the documenting of assessment, intervention, identification of need/disability, and access arrangements for children and young adults with SEND whether or not they have an ECHP. This should be openly</p>

SEND Green Paper statements...	We suggest that...
<p>“Set consistent processes for decision-making on how a child or young person’s needs are identified and recorded and instruct on how and when an assessment should take place, who should be involved in the assessment process, and how the information and evidence collected should be recorded and monitored.”</p> <p>“Set out the full range of appropriate types of support and placements for meeting different needs. This will include setting out when needs can and should be met effectively in mainstream provision, and the support that should be made ordinarily available in mainstream settings to facilitate this.”</p>	<p>accessible to parents, and to young adults over the age of 16 years.</p> <p>Consistent processes would be enhanced through the employment of specialist teachers in or available to all schools (see Appendix 2 below), who can advise on decision-making processes, alongside best systems for recording and monitoring assessment processes to ensure consistency is achieved. Ideally, specialist teachers and psychologists carrying out summative assessment for suspected dyslexia will be aware of the type of reading instruction used in the school, the attainment of the child to date, and the results of any school-based testing. They will gather a background history from parents/carers and seek the views of the child. The process to refer a child for an individual specialist assessment will include an analysis of the quality of teaching and interventions that have taken place before the specialist assessment was considered. The assessor will demonstrate an understanding of the policies and practices affecting literacy teaching and interventions in the particular jurisdiction they work in, alongside a theoretical grasp of typical and non-typical reading development. The assessor can offer concrete, implementable suggestions and recommendations for specialist teaching and learning objectives to support the child.</p> <p>Specialist teachers can work effectively in or for school-based teams providing additional knowledge of appropriate types of support, onward referrals and placements for meeting different needs both in and outside mainstream provision. Children with dyslexia may take considerably longer to acquire automaticity in the sub-components of reading and can need more intensive, specialised support alongside conventional literacy instruction. For children at risk of dyslexia, intervening sooner and more intensively, is likely to be cost-effective. In the longer term, interventions such as the provision of access arrangements in examinations and technological support may still be required but literacy support may not need to be so intensive.</p> <p>‘Ordinarily available provision and support’ requires, first and foremost, that SENCOs are part of school senior leadership teams, and that these teams implement SEND strategies robustly and effectively. Secondly, initial teacher training and continued professional development must embed knowledge of the needs of children with SEND and how their support is embodied in the Graduated Response,</p>

SEND Green Paper statements...	We suggest that...
<p>“Set out clear guidance on the effective use and deployment of teaching assistants to support children and young people with SEND as part of the national standards. “</p> <p>Set out pathways for “co-production and communication with children, young people and their families so that they are engaged in the decision-making process around the support that they receive and the progress they are making.”</p>	<p>alongside core values and pedagogic principles that support this understanding.</p> <p>Specialist teachers can work to provide high-quality training to teaching assistants in or for school-based teams. They can also advise on and develop the role of teaching assistants and teachers to employ assistive technologies (ATs) in supporting children with developmental reading and associated literacy difficulties. They, alongside their psychologist colleagues, already provide training modules in SEND adapted to the needs of National Professional Qualifications³.</p> <p>Initial and post qualification teacher training and support should also cover the value of home-school collaboration for supporting learners with SpLD/Dyslexia (Lamb 2022, Ross 2020). National standards in the development of co-production with parents should be developed (e.g. Rotherham’s ‘four cornerstones’ approach).</p>

3. Funding.

The historic under-funding of support for SEND, combined with the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, has produced a well-documented and severe crisis for SEND support in schools and in Further Education. It absolutely **cannot** be allowed to continue and worsen. Regarding the proposed changes in the Green Paper, any future accountability measures to be applied will be meaningless unless schools have the funding and human resources to ensure effective implementation. In the Green Paper, the lack of detail regarding funding is therefore of grave concern. There needs to be a robust, legally binding and continued future commitment to significant additional funding for SEND, especially for early years/primary level support. **‘Spend to Save’** is not just a slogan in this context: there is robust research and experience that demonstrate the effectiveness of early intervention and shows that such intervention reduces the need for costly measures at a later point.

SEND Green Paper statements...	SASC suggests that ...
<p>“We will move to standardise the calculation of schools’ notional SEN budgets in the context of full implementation of the direct National Funding Formula (NFF) for mainstream schools in which DfE rather than local authorities, will determine budget allocations for individual mainstream</p>	<p>A single, national formula needs to incorporate a ring-fenced facility for individual schools so that such funding can only be spent on SEND. Such formulas need to allocate a substantial and significant boost to funding for specialist teaching, assessment and support services. Any national formula should also ensure that schools in areas with high levels of potential SEND receive commensurate funding, so that rationing of support does not continue in these areas.</p>

³ For example, see Real Training <https://realtraining.co.uk/effective-sen-support-provision-middle-leaders>

<p>schools through a single, national formula.”</p> <p>“While we are clear that some threshold should be retained, we will consider whether £6,000 per pupil, per year remains the right threshold beyond which schools can expect to draw down additional high needs funding.”</p> <p>“As part of the new national SEND and alternative provision system, we propose the introduction of a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for high needs funding, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the new national SEND standards.”</p>	<p>Any system of funding should include funding for access to and referral for a summative diagnostic assessment for a suspected specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, when considered necessary. These costs need to be built in to any funding formula. Access to such an assessment should not depend on parental means (as it now does) and should be undertaken in a timely fashion, and centrally funded (Ross 2020, Norwich 2005).</p> <p>If more is going to be expected directly from academy trust schools (White Paper) then we need to improve schools’ currently limited ability to commission their educational psychologist, specialist teacher-assessor and other expert services (Ross, 2019). This will require flexible, not rigid, funding bands that provide scope to move away from the current two-tier support system, to more progressive, nuanced and increasingly specialised systems of support, adapted to the needs of children throughout their education.</p>
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Contact Us:

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Appendix 1: Further information about SASC

SASC’s work has involved four key elements:

- First, to maintain a publicly accessible list of qualified specialist assessors able to identify a specific learning difficulty.
- Second, to identify a selection of tests that can be used by appropriately trained and qualified professionals, alongside guidelines for practice and training.
- Third, to propose standards and a code of practice for all those involved in assessments including the production of reports in an agreed and accessible format.
- As one of the DfES’ Working Group’s overall aims was to establish evidential requirements that (organisations) could confidently regard as providing a reliable professional judgement that a student has a SpLD(s), the fourth area of work was to support the implementation of updated guidance around the assessment of SpLDs, providing advice about identifying and assessing students with SpLDs.

The fourteen (14) current Board Directors include senior members of four different professional bodies for Specialist Teacher Assessors (STAs);

- The British Dyslexia Association (BDA)
- The Dyslexia Guild
- The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS)
- The Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE)

Representatives from the British Psychological Society (BPS) and ACHIPP (Association of Child Psychologists in Private Practice) also attend meetings, contributing to discussions and liaising with their organisations. There are a number of independent members of the Board, all professionals with a long history of experience in the field.

Appendix 2. Good practice models of specialist assessment, intervention and support for specific learning difficulties:

The Rose Review (2009): specialist teacher-assessors in schools.

The Rose Review 2009 concluded that there is a need to develop better access for schools, parents and children to the advice and skills of specialist teachers, who can devise tailored interventions for children struggling with literacy. While the review acknowledged that a specialist in every school was unlikely to be achievable, it suggested that specialist teachers may need to serve more than one school and take a strong monitoring and training role in supporting other teachers, within a clear policy promoted by governors and headteachers. It recommended that there should be funding to train a number of teachers to provide such specialist expertise.

There are, currently, relatively few specialist teacher-assessors or psychologists employed directly in schools, despite the recommendation of the Rose Report 2009 above. Some such teachers were trained but in nothing like the numbers required to support coherent, nationally delivered policies of specialised intervention and support. Where they do exist⁴, they are likely to face considerable individual workloads, especially if they carry out assessment and/or tuition, and may not always have the support of higher management, regarding policies and teaching approaches. They can and do provide training and support to colleagues but this is likely to remain at the school level, rather than be shared across schools, unless the teacher works within, for example, an Academy chain.

Learning support teams (i.e. teaching assistants, learning mentors etc) in schools, consisting of a variety of people with a range of non-teaching qualifications, are often tasked with delivering direct support to children. However, without specialist knowledge and training and year-round employment contracts and appropriate levels of pay, there are limits to what can and should be expected of this group of staff in delivering planned, specialist support.

Assessment/intervention models

A number of good practice models have arisen, many of which have excellent features and could be drawn upon to formulate a more coherent national system of assessment, support and intervention for SEND. However, the patchiness and variety of such models currently contributes to the postcode lottery identified by Hutchinson (2021), in her major report on assessment of SEND. There is an

⁴ In the economic downturn, there was a massive decrease in all specialists as a result of cutbacks. The funding for schools was subsequently substantially reduced so school placements for them and other specialists disappeared. See Driver Youth Trust (2020).

urgent need to base future provision on a coherent plan that draws upon the best-evidenced elements of each of these models.

The models described below vary in methodology but most have the following factors in common:

- **A focus on intensive and sustained early intervention**, which reduces chances of later referrals for higher level support, ECHPs, behavioural support, mental health services, additional support at H.E. level etc. Early intervention is also likely to reduce school drop-out, youth and adult offending. **Impact** is greatest the **earlier and more regularly** the intervention takes place.
- Educational psychologists and/or specialist teacher assessors provide a wide range of effective interventions for phonics, reading, spelling, writing and maths, including the use of assistive technologies, and can also **support, devise, deliver and train others in needs-led, targeted and personalised assessment and/or intervention plans.**
- Educational psychologists and/or specialist teacher assessors can help establish **progressive systems in schools** to **assess, monitor and evaluate** pupil progress and adjust level and purpose of assessment and interventions accordingly.

The local 'hub' or 'outreach' specialist multidisciplinary team model.

There are many examples of these services in England, e.g. in Wandsworth, Greenwich, and Tyne and Wear. The principle that underlies them is of the development of a local 'hub' of specialist assessment and intervention services, staffed by highly trained and qualified specialist teacher-assessors / psychologists / other professionals such as speech and language therapists, whose services are bought in by schools, MATs or local authorities to provide direct assessment and periods of time-limited specialist individual or small-group support to children identified as being in need of those services, and, in some cases, to provide an advisory service to teachers regarding children with SEND. With greater levels of funding, it is plausible that MATs themselves could develop such hubs of shared expertise.

This model can offer:

- Specialist well-informed and evidence-based interventions from a multidisciplinary team of experienced and knowledgeable staff.
- Collaborative services, working with schools to support and train staff, including learning support and teaching assistants.
- Advice on embedding 'dyslexia-friendly' practice and strategies in the classroom.
- Access to additional, more specialised resources and technological aids for children who could benefit from them.
- The management of parental expectations regarding support.
- Evaluation, assessment and monitoring of interventions and pupils' progress.
- Referral routes to other services.

EXAMPLE 1: WANDSWORTH LITERACY & NUMERACY SUPPORT SERVICE

This service supports children in schools who have been identified as having special educational needs in the areas of literacy and mathematics. The L&NSS is now a bought in service.

- Individual schools 'buy in' a Specialist Literacy or Numeracy Teacher for a morning, an afternoon or a whole day per week for one academic year.

- The teacher then provides specialist assessment/report, advice/consultation, teaching, project work and in-service training in the area of either literacy or mathematics.

Pupils must be referred to the service through their school SENCo, with permission of their parents/carers.

The L&NSS organises sessions for parents about identifying and supporting literacy and numeracy difficulties. These are usually held termly and are advertised through schools and the council website.

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/kb5/wandsworth/fsd/service.page?id=vOUM2_MLd2l

EXAMPLE 2. SUPPORT TEAM FOR EDUCATION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS (STEPS) ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

The Support Team for Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (STEPS) is one of four SEND Outreach Services to schools maintained by the Royal Borough of Greenwich (alongside ASD, Sensory and Early Years Inclusion Teams). This provides the opportunity to work as part of a multidisciplinary team. The team shares expertise and is able to maintain a consistent approach and high standards of service across the services and across schools.

- At STEPS, there is a team of experienced specialist teachers and tutors all currently holding Assessment Practising Certificates, the majority of whom have a background in classroom teaching in a range of different settings including specialist provision and individual specialisms in SEND. There is also a Complex Needs Team of professionals, within STEPS, with a wide range of expertise, who promote the inclusion of children with SEND by supporting staff in schools across Royal Greenwich.
- The team supports schools using the graduated approach, targeting need regardless of a dyslexia diagnosis. A systematic approach is used to help schools identify needs, implement interventions and monitor progress alongside training and upskilling to empower school staff. For those with persistent difficulties, screening tools are offered to support with the referral process for a dyslexia assessment by STEPS. Those most severely affected by dyslexia have one to one specialist teaching in school; this provides an opportunity to enhance the skills of staff within the school.
- The team provides diagnostic assessments for maths, literacy, handwriting and Access Arrangements testing.
- A range of training for schools is provided, including on dyslexia, teaching reading, spelling and handwriting, maths, Access Arrangements, Assistive Technology and assessing and meeting complex needs in the classroom, as well as bespoke training. The team supports schools in gaining the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Quality Mark.
- The team supports the transition of vulnerable learners on our caseload from Year 6 to 7.

The sole purpose of this approach is to equitably reduce the barriers for all learners across the borough.

Independent and/or privately commissioned assessment and tutoring services.

A range of charities, private assessment agencies and independent self-employed specialists, both specialist teacher-assessors and psychologists, cater for parents and individuals seeking assessment

and tuition ‘outside’ the school system. The existence of and continued demand for these providers confirms a lack of appropriate provision in schools but there are only limited systems for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions of this kind (e.g. via professional re-registration and CPD monitoring processes) and no way of knowing the extent to which privately commissioned and paid for interventions contribute to the overall progress of an individual with a developmental reading difficulty.

Crucially, these services tend only to be available to those who can afford to pay for them, although some schools and local authorities ‘buy-in’ such services. For example, the government’s National Tutoring Programme offers a potential although not yet wholly effective model for contracting in the services of specialist private assessors and tutors <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/>

However, what these independent and specialist tuition providers often have the freedom and space to pursue is a very wide range of creative and personalised approaches to supporting and enabling students to understand and manage their difficulties. The relationships established can re-motivate students, can provide the important sense of being understood and listened to and can support students by modelling, exploring and using imaginative, technological, multi-sensory and skill-based solutions to their difficulties. As with specialist teachers in schools, they can also teach metacognitive strategies i.e. understanding one’s own learning strengths and weaknesses and devising strategies to tackle areas of difficulty.

For example, two powerfully motivating methods for supporting reading and writing skills are reciprocal teaching and co-writing. Both these methodologies support dialogue and communication between student and teacher, thus also building oral language skills, where they are lacking, or utilising the students’ language skills where they are not. When resources are scarce, 1:1 support may be regarded as a luxury but even a limited number of sessions of sustained and purposeful 1:1 or small-group teaching/learning, whether in person or via video platform, can have a long-lasting impact. Most specialists working in this way can provide testimonies from students to this effect.

**EXAMPLES: BRITISH DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION, PATOSS TUTOR REGISTER, HELEN ARKELL
DYSLEXIA CHARITY, DYSLEXIA GUILD, DYSLEXIA SCOTLAND**

See: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

See: <https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org>

See: <https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/>

See: dyslexiaguild.org.uk

See: www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Response To Intervention (RTI) / Assessment Through Teaching (ATT) / Dynamic Assessment and Intervention / Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework models

In primary schools, where there is failure to master a skill, Assessment Through Teaching (ATT) and Response To Intervention (RTI) schemes allow opportunities to change teaching and pedagogy, rather than labelling the child with a developmental difficulty at too early a stage. These frameworks are influenced by insights from reading science, and, where they are consistently funded and implemented and focus on upskilling teachers, provide positive examples of an assessment and intervention model that can be successful in driving up literacy attainment for most struggling

readers. The drive behind the ATT models is one of 'faultless instruction' i.e. failure to learn is to be seen as a consequence of what is taught and cannot be attributed to any characteristics (e.g. 'dyslexia') of the student. Learner errors are seen as design flaws in instructional programmes and should lead to programmes of instruction being amended or refined. SASC suggests such programmes could cater for the needs of children with SpLDs if they also incorporate a referral process for more specialist assessment and intensive interventions for children who prove to have persistent difficulties and who do not make the expected progress, despite the implementation of the intervention programme.

Key features of this approach may include:

- Encouraging schools to improve their systems for tackling literacy difficulties for *all* children struggling with literacy acquisition.
- Ability to be focused around a wide age-range, i.e. Years 1-10, including implementation in special schools.
- The promotion of skills- based assessments that can be used by all teachers, i.e. testing of the first 100 common words + approx. 60 phonic skills, which together make up 90-95% of written English. Some approaches, such as the scheme developed in Staffordshire and Warwickshire, have been developed firmly around systematic synthetic phonics.
- A focus on developing reading accuracy, fluency and generalisation, using real books to promote a love of reading and to test how well a child can read when naturally occurring English is used.
- Termly reassessment of the child's progress and subsequent changes made or further teaching topics (e.g. spelling, comprehension strategies etc.) introduced.
- The weekly collection by schools of data on children's progress through the schemes, meaning that smaller groups of children who continue to struggle can be identified.
- Specialists working directly with those most in need, while offering advice and support on implementation to large cohorts of teaching staff. Psychologists can use their time to observe and advise on scheme implementation rather than carrying out individual assessments.

EXAMPLE: STAFFORDSHIRE AND WARWICKSHIRE LITERACY APPROACH

Staffordshire and Warwickshire County Councils have developed literacy guidance documents for schools which concentrates resources on developing school's internal systems in order to identify and address literacy difficulties as soon as possible without needing to wait for specialist assessments. The Educational Psychology Services have developed a recommended approach to literacy which uses an Assessment through Teaching framework to support schools in improving reading skills and increasing the enjoyment of reading through the use of real books.

For more details please see:

[EP Recommended Approach to Literacy - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Volunteer-based, ad hoc, charity-funded or other behavioural, computer based reading /literacy intervention programmes purchased by schools and colleges.

Many schools organise volunteers to support reading practice, benefit from funding from literacy-promoting charities, or buy in other types of computer based or behaviourally-based shorter term assessment and linked intervention programmes to support children's reading and other literacy skills. While the evidence base for some of these programmes is questionable, they do differ. The reliability and validity of each programme needs to be considered. Some interventions appear to be

of dubious quality with an unclear or small-cohort research evidence base or where the apparent success rate of the intervention is amplified by an intensive short-term training, which may not lead to longer-term sustainable progress. Some are targeted learning interventions for the child, while others have features that might enable teachers to understand more about the literacy *and* cognitive difficulties faced by the child. Very few of these programmes have been evaluated (in randomised controlled trials) for their efficacy to support children with persistent trajectories of, for example, dyslexia.

The 'pathway model' i.e. an integrated early years/primary and secondary assessment and intervention model (e.g. the Scottish Dyslexia pathway)

Scotland has a child-centred, dynamic and holistic pathway to assessment for dyslexia, used by many local authorities, embodied in the *Assessing Dyslexia Toolkit (Scotland)*⁵, a national resource funded by the Scottish government. There is also a nationally agreed working definition of dyslexia.

⁵ <http://addressingdyslexia.org/>

Dyslexia Identification Pathway

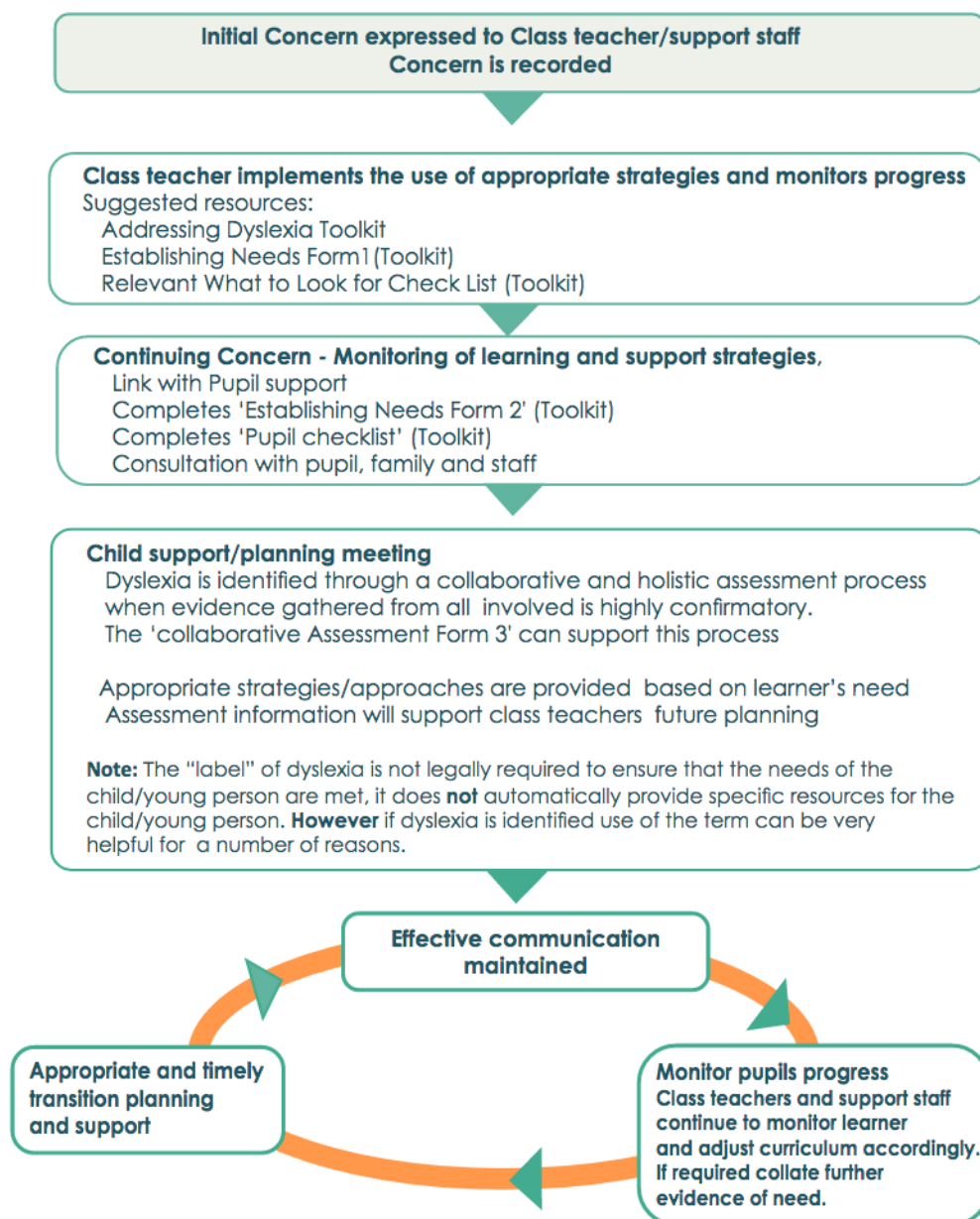


Fig 1. Dyslexia Identification Pathway Margaret Crombie and Sarah Graham 2022.

Appendix 3: References

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