

## Useful Contacts

### **Leeds City Council, Learning Inclusion**

#### **SEN Inclusion Team (SENIT) & Educational Psychology Team**

PO Box 837, Leeds, LS1 9PZ.

[SENIT@Leeds.gov.uk](mailto:SENIT@Leeds.gov.uk)

### **Leeds SEND Information Advice Support Service**

Email: [leedssendiass@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leedssendiass@leeds.gov.uk)

Website: [www.leedssendiass.co.uk](http://www.leedssendiass.co.uk)

Telephone: 0113 3785020

### **Dyslexia Alliance Yorkshire**

[www.dayonline.org.uk](http://www.dayonline.org.uk)

Phone: [07380633826](tel:07380633826)

### **British Dyslexia Association**

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

The British Dyslexia Association

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

Tel: 0333 405 4555

Helpline: 0333 405 4567

### **Leeds and Bradford Dyslexia Association (LABDA)**

[www.labda.org.uk](http://www.labda.org.uk)

See website for contact/ helpline details

See website for details of Parent Support Group

## Family Guide to

# Dyslexia

Leeds Learning Inclusion

Specific Learning Difficulties &  
Dyslexia in Context



# What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty (or difference) that can cause problems with reading, writing and spelling. It's a specific learning difficulty, which means it causes problems with certain abilities used for learning, such as reading and writing. Many children and adults with dyslexia will also have a range of strengths and talents.

In 2009, Sir Jim Rose wrote a review of dyslexia which included a working definition. This has been adopted by schools and settings across the UK.

Here is the definition below:

- Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent **word reading** and **spelling**.
- Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in **phonological awareness**, **verbal memory** and **verbal processing speed**.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a **continuum**, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.
- **Co-occurring difficulties** may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.
- A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well founded intervention.'

It is generally agreed that the earlier dyslexic difficulties are identified, the better are the chances of putting children on the road to success. However a formal assessment is not usually carried out before the age of at least eight years.

In his definition, Rose reminds us that well founded intervention can make a difference. Most learners with a profile of dyslexia will respond well to support.

Effective interventions 'personalise learning' by matching provision to meet children's individual needs and quicken progress for those with literacy difficulties.

# Glossary—some helpful terms

**Phonological Awareness** is thought to be a key skill in early reading and spelling development. It is the ability to identify how words are made up of smaller units of sound, known as phonemes. Changes in the sounds that make up words can lead to changes in their meaning. For example, a child with a good level of phonological awareness would understand that if you change the letter "p" in the word "pat" to "s", the word becomes "sat".

**Verbal Memory** is often considered to be a type of short term memory which reflects **the ability to hold information as "active" or available in one's mind for a brief amount of time**. Short term verbal memory (STVM) involves three components: capacity, duration, and encoding.

**Verbal processing speed** describes the fluency of a verbal response to information – so the ability to verbally recall information from long term memory in response to visual or verbal information. For example, quickly naming a series of known letters, pictures or numbers.

**Co-occurring difficulties:** Dyslexia and many other learning difficulties do not always occur in isolation. It is quite common for an individual to have co-occurring conditions, such as Developmental Coordination Difficulties (DCD) or Dyscalculia.

**Intervention:** This is a timed (usually about 20 minutes daily/ three times a week) set of sequential lessons, aimed at enabling a pupil achieve specific targets.

**SPLD:** The term 'Specific Learning Difficulty' (SpLD) refers to a difference / difficulty people have with particular aspects of learning. The most common SpLDs are Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyscalculia and Dysgraphia.

**SENIT:** Special Educational Needs Inclusion Team: A group of specialist teachers working for the Local Authority. SENIT visit schools, on request to support children and young people who are struggling to make good progress in line with their peer group. They can give a professional opinion as to whether a pupil's difficulties meet the applied definition of dyslexia and advise on inclusive practice and intervention to raise achievement.

**EPT:** Educational Psychologists who work for the Local Authority

## FAQs

There are two distinct forms of reading disorders in children: dyslexia (a difficulty in learning to translate print into speech) and reading comprehension impairment. Some children with reading difficulties may be able to read accurately but struggle to understand what they have written. These children would not be described as having dyslexia. In such cases, provision should focus on developing oral and written comprehension skills.

Research into causation is still ongoing. The causes of dyslexia are complex and these may vary between individuals but are likely to include difficulties with phonological processing (including phonological awareness, phonological memory and phonological processing speed). Sensory processing issues and difficulties in becoming automatic with key literacy skills may also play a part.

Yes, this is often the case. Understanding the interaction between genes and the environment can be complex. However, long held theories that SpLD (dyslexia) can be inherited have been substantiated. This is why it is important to check whether family members have experienced similar difficulties.

Yes, whilst it can be useful to explore a pupil's cognitive ability to inform provision, assessors recognize that dyslexia can occur in individuals of all levels of ability. However, a pupil with dyslexia is likely to have an uneven profile, with unexpectedly low attainment scores in reading and spelling in relation to measures of underlying ability.

Dyslexia exists on a continuum. Not all individuals are severely affected and it is possible for individuals to succeed, with some compensatory strategies, throughout their school life and examinations without causing concerns around progress. As curriculum or subject demands become more challenging and complex, underlying difficulties may become evident. It may only be at this point that it is appropriate to investigate such difficulties further.

### Who identifies dyslexia?

A formal identification would be made by a specialist teacher with an accredited Level 7 Diploma in Specific Literacy Difficulties or an educational psychologist. However, we encourage all schools to attend training so that they can appropriately identify which CYP have a profile of dyslexia so that the right provision can be in place without the need for a formal identification.

Schools have three tiers of provision:

- **Universal:** available for all pupils in class. This includes reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning
- **Targeted:** small group intervention, usually for a set time 3-5 times per week.
- **Personalised:** one to one support. usually for a set time 3-5 times per week.

The arrangements of this will vary from school to school. Your SENCo will be able to discuss these with you.

Learning Inclusion has created a Provision Grid (part of which can be seen below) which is available on Leeds for Learning. This is designed to support our schools to plan provision across a continuum of need for CYP with a profile of dyslexia with or without a formal identification.

Our provision grid describes provision across the three tiers of provision (Universal, Targeted & Personalised). This includes links to provision and training for staff working with children and young people with a dyslexic profile. In the most severe cases, specialist support may be needed.

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## How to support your child

If you are concerned about your child's learning:

- Ensure basic health checks (e.g. eyesight and hearing) are up to date.
- Communicate with school sharing any concerns and successes.
- Ask your child's teacher how the school supports children learning to read and write. Strategies may have changed since you were at school!
- If you continue to have concerns, contact your school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and arrange a meeting to discuss.

### Homework:

1. Remember to give your child time to relax when they return from school. They may find school tiring due to the extra energy needed to 'keep up'.
2. Get into clear routines. Set regular times and places. This can encourage concentration (and willingness!).
3. If tasks appear too difficult, or take a long time to complete, discuss this with the teacher who set it. Agree adjustments such as alternative methods of recording or a later submission date.
4. At exam time encourage an early start to revision. Use alternative ways to record such as mind maps and visual (picture) supports as prompts.

### Self Esteem:

As a parent, you will no doubt place a high priority on supporting your child's self esteem. Below are a few resources to help promote a positive self image.

#### Useful Links

- [Dyslexia the Gift](#) is a website dedicated to promoting a positive view of Dyslexia. It includes examples of people who have dyslexia and achieved.
- The clip [See Dyslexia Differently](#) is a lovely way to begin a conversation about positive elements of having dyslexia.

#### Books:

- [Tom's special Talent](#) (Kate Gaynor),
- [Dyslexia and my Superpower](#) (Margaret Rooke)
- [Dyslexia Explained](#); (available free as an e-book ,paper copies can be purchased)
- [The Illustrated Guide to Dyslexia and Its Amazing People](#); (for pupils)

## How we support children

Learning Inclusion supports schools in developing their own capacity in meeting the needs of pupils through consultation and training.

School assessment and provision should enable the majority of pupils to make progress. In some cases pupils benefit from additional assessment and advice. If school feels that your child has not made expected progress, in spite of appropriate teaching and provision, and meets the criteria for Learning Inclusion to be involved, school may make a request for support and advice.

Once agreed, we will contact school. We will:

- Meet with staff and gather information from yourself to build a picture of your child's strengths as well as perceived barriers to learning.
- Use specific assessments such as reading/ spelling ability, phonic knowledge, processing speed, and memory.
- Discuss how your child responds to the assessments and explore strategies that they use.
- Consider other contributing factors to learning, such as attendance or health issues (for example, hearing or visual impairment), changes of school as well as emotional or motor difficulties.
- If we feel it is appropriate, we can identify Dyslexia after thorough assessment and consideration against the 'Rose Definition'.

