East Lothian
Council

Practice Guidelines: June 2019

Supporting Children & Young People's Learning

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT & INTERVENTION OF
PERSISTENT DIFFICULTIES IN READING AND/OR SPELLING

getting
it right
for every child

Executive Summary

This guideline outlines East Lothian Council's approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with persistent difficulties in reading and spelling. It summarises good practice in the teaching of reading and spelling and offers advice to support the development of these areas. It provides the definition of dyslexia adopted by East Lothian Council and outlines the assessment and intervention approach that should be followed when children experience barriers in the development of these skills. The use of Information and Communication Technology; transition arrangements and Alternative Assessment Arrangements are also considered and guidance provided. There is an extensive array of published literature debating the definition, cause and intervention with regard to dyslexia and it is not the intention of these guidelines to replace this literature. Those who are interested in extending their knowledge beyond the overview presented here should refer to 'The Dyslexia Debate' (Elliot & Grigorenko, 2014).

Contents

Section 1 - Introduction

East Lothian Council aims to promote the highest possible levels of achievement in literacy for all pupils and recognises that literacy skills are the key to improving all educational outcomes. The National Curriculum for Excellence literacy benchmarks and the East Lothian Curriculum Framework for Literacy set out clear statements about what teachers need to know and be able to do to achieve success in the teaching of literacy. These frameworks streamline and embed a wide range of existing assessment guidance, including the significant aspects of learning and progression frameworks, providing effective resources to support professional practice in the area of literacy.

"Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence" Scottish Executive (2006)

Curriculum for Excellence and the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards make it clear that all teachers have responsibility for promoting language and literacy development. Class teachers (primary) and subject teachers (secondary) are responsible for curriculum delivery for all pupils attending their classes. They may be supported in their role by support for learning staff working collaboratively with them to contribute to literacy assessment and intervention. Support for learning staff also have a role and responsibility to deliver and co-deliver identified components of literacy learning and intervention.

"Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum. Because of this, all teachers have responsibility for promoting language and literacy development. Every teacher in each area of the curriculum needs to find opportunities to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which will help them to develop their language skills further" Scottish Executive (2006)

In accordance with the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009), when a pupil experiences difficulty in learning to read, teaching staff will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parent/carer to identify clearly additional support needs and remove barriers to learning to ensure that they can achieve their fullest potential.

East Lothian Council recognises that a significant number of pupils will continue to struggle with the acquisition of accurate and fluent reading and/or spelling skills, despite the provision of the same teaching and learning opportunities as their peers. Individuals will have varying patterns of difficulty (a continuum of need) and will require a variety of assessment and intervention strategies to be put in place.

For a small number of children and young people the difficulties will be severe and persistent and can be described as dyslexia. Dyslexia is a common additional support need and includes children of all abilities and social classes. Dyslexia is a mainstream issue requiring that all schools and all teachers are competent in supporting pupils through effective identification, assessment and intervention.

Section 2 – Core Principles in Teaching Reading and Spelling

Reading and spelling are complex skills that do not necessarily develop naturally. These skills need to be taught and children need to learn and practice the skills involved. Reading is the skill of <u>decoding</u>, spelling is the skill of <u>encoding</u>: it is best to teach these two closely related skills together. Parents/carers and school staff have a vital role in helping children master these skills and it is important they are aware of and confident in the best way to do this.

In order to learn to read successfully, pupils need to develop a number of inter-connected skills. A balanced programme teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension is therefore required during the early stages of learning to read. Hattie (2007; 2012) has referred to these skills groups as the 'five pillars' of reading:

1. **Phonemic awareness:** This is the ability to hear and recognise the smallest units of sound in a word that can change the meaning e.g. if you put 'w' (the sound,) in front of 'ig' (the sound), you have a different word and meaning from 'dig'. Phonemic awareness is the basis for learning phonics.

2. **Phonics:** This is the ability to bolt the sounds of the language onto its symbols, e.g. 'w' (the sound) can be represented by 'w' (the letter). When pupils learn to read they develop their decoding skills through the teaching of phonics. In this way pupils learn about the structure of language and become aware of the sound structures of words and syllables e.g. being able to separate 'cat' into 'c-a-t' or 'foot' into 'f-oo-t'. There are 26 letters in the English language and, it is generally agreed, 44 phonemes.

3. **Fluency:** This is the ability to decode running text with automaticity. Reading, like any skill, requires regular, repeated practice in order to bring about automaticity and fluency. Engaged readers read more, get more reading practice and quickly become proficient. Teaching for engagement and fluency leads to an increase in vocabulary and word knowledge.

4. **Vocabulary:** This refers to both word definitions and associated connotations. Teaching both core and subject specific vocabulary supports achievement in all areas of the curriculum.

5. **Comprehension:** This can be seen as something that happens after reading, rather than part of the reading process. Children can be good at decoding but struggle with comprehension. Comprehension skills need to be established early and continue if pupils are to benefit from reading. Hattie's research tells us that students achieve better results when they are explicitly taught comprehension skills.

The skills numbered 1- 3 above constitute critical foundation skills that all young readers need to acquire completely; they can be thought of as '*constrained*' skills e.g. there is a finite number of possible letter combinations in the English language and you need to know all of them to be a competent reader. Likewise, there is a limit to the rate of reading that can be

achieved without sacrificing meaning and accuracy. Whereas, numbers 4 and 5 are skills that we continue to acquire over a lifetime: there is no endpoint. Once numbers 1 to 3 are acquired, the teaching of vocabulary and comprehension may take on a more prominent role.

Section 3 - Core Principles in the Teaching of Phonics (The Alphabetic Code)

Typically children are wired for sound – they are born ready to acquire sounds (phonemes) and to learn to speak (this skill evolved tens of thousands of years ago). They first need to learn to differentiate between sounds through experience and practise.

The act of reading and spelling are inventions that occurred more recently – only about 6,000 years ago. We therefore need to teach pupils the way to represent sounds in print by using letters (f/h/i etc) and letter patterns (e.g. oa/ea/sh/igh/ough, etc.) called graphemes. Our code is a phoneme based code, not a part word, syllable, or whole word code. So, pupils must be trained to hear the individual sounds in words and then how to blend and/or disconnect (unglue) them.

Teaching phonics can be thought of as teaching the body of knowledge and skills about how the alphabetic code works. Phonics programmes should teach pupils the grapheme/phoneme correspondences (the alphabetic code) in a clearly defined sequence. Pupils should be taught to apply these skills to decode (read) and encode (spell) words from beginning to end. Phonics should always be the first strategy applied in attempting to read a word (see National Reading Panel, 2005).

To successfully learn the code, pupils must be able to:
- see and discriminate accurately between the 26 letters
- hear and discriminate between the 44 sounds (phonemes) in our language
- match visual symbols to auditory sounds
- memorize the letter-sound correspondences
- visually scan from left to right
- engage readily in learning tasks

Once these skills are in place, a good, systematic phonics programme can be used to teach the code. It is likely to include the following elements:

- ✓ Include instruction in both 'phoneme–to-letter' and 'letter-to-phoneme' correspondences, i.e. teaching that the code is reversible. Reading and spelling should be taught together in order to emphasis the reversible nature of the code.
- ✓ Teach how to segment words phoneme by phoneme.
- ✓ Start with simple one to one mapping where one sound = one letter symbol.
- ✓ Move on to teach variation / overlap. Variation is when there are different ways to spell the same sound e.g. the sound 'ee' can be represented by ei/ee/ea. Overlap is when the exact same pattern of letters can represent different sounds e.g. ou is different in touch/soul.

Section 4 – Definition and Identification of Dyslexia

The term 'Dyslexia' comes from the Greek works 'dys' meaning impaired and 'lexia' meaning words. It is a complex and often contentious construct and can mean different things to different people: many different definitions exist. For some people dyslexia refers to anyone who experiences a particular difficulty in decoding text. For others, it is only applicable to a particular subset of poor readers / spellers. For others again, it also includes problems with a variety of self regulatory and organisational behaviours such as, directionality, sequencing, orientation problems. This leads to confusion.

Research has shown that there are many different reasons why pupils experience difficulties with reading and spelling and these can be these reasons can be grouped in to 4 main categories:
- Biological e.g. a sensory impairment
- Cognitive e.g. a processing information affecting the speed at which information is taken in
- Behavioural e.g. experiencing frustration
- Environmental e.g. not being supported to attend school regularly.

It is likely that research will point to more reasons over time and a definition of dyslexia must therefore transcend all possible causes and focus on the core skills relating to the difficulty in being able to read. For this reason, East Lothian Council have adopted the British Psychological Society definition of dyslexia as outlined below:

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.

British Psychological Society (1999)

Dyslexia is indicated where the evidence gathered from all of these three areas is highly confirmatory:

1. Accuracy and Fluency of Word Reading and Spelling
Evidence is required that word reading and/or spelling have developed / are developing very incompletely i.e. the word reading / spelling difficulty is shown to be severe and persistent. The conclusion that the acquisition of reading and/or spelling is 'very incomplete' depends on the age and developmental stage of the learner.

2. Learning Environment
Evidence is required that adequate and appropriate learning opportunities have been consistently provided over a reasonable period of time and that the pupil has been able to access these. This will mean gathering evidence in keeping with a plan/review do cycle.

3. Support Over time

Evidence is required that much additional effort, instruction and/ or resources have been provided over a reasonable period of time and that despite this support, limited progress has been achieved.

It is important that we talk about the 'identification' of dyslexia rather than 'diagnosis' which is a medical term and should not be used as a result of an educational assessment. Parents and education professionals must work with the pupil in relation to deciding whether the label should be used or not. Individual circumstances should be taken in account and whether the label would help them and/or others to understand the pupil's strengths and difficulties. Meeting the needs of the pupil should be seen as more important than the acquisition of a label (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007).

Section 5– Assessment

Pupils struggle to learn to read for a variety of reasons. The first step in assessment is to consider information that is already held and available. Further information may then be gathered, according to the nature of the concern and any hypotheses held. The assessment and intervention for any pupil with difficulties in acquiring literacy skills should take place within a model of staged assessment and intervention.

Good practice in assessment is evident when:

- o Assessment is based on an understanding of individual development and learning and of the context in which learning takes place (e.g. make use of Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR) Environmental Checklist, classroom observations).

- o Assessment techniques are sensitive to the cultural, linguistic, social and emotional development of children and young people (e.g. careful consideration needs to be given to assessment practice for pupils whose first language is not English).

- o Assessment is collaborative in nature and takes account of any past or current information supplied by other agencies (e.g. assessments of hearing or vision).

- o Assessment includes both the pupil and their parents/carers as participants and will take into account their views (e.g. consider using "Myself As a Learner Scale" (Burden, 2009) and the "What I Think" tool to collect pupil views)

- o Assessment is broad in terms of the information gathered, in the first instance. It takes account of the child's progress in learning throughout their school career.

- o Assessment activities are chosen according to the specific nature of concerns arising and current information already held in school about the pupil (e.g. pupils' records and any other agency reports, current and historical assessment records, classroom jotters, examples of work, reading records, observations made by school staff, data from standardised tests e.g. PIPS, INCAS, EDI).

o   There is consideration given to a range of information types, including both summative and formative information (see 'Literacy and Dyslexia – Identifying and Meeting Needs' for checklists for identifying learner needs, a running record of reading and miscue analysis, measurement of error rate, checklist of reading behaviour)

o   Assessment takes place over a period of time rather than being a 'one off' activity. Assessment is not separate from intervention, but rather, is part of an ongoing cycle of 'Plan-Do-Review'. It considers the child's response to a range of strategies tried.

o   The results of assessment are presented in ways which are clear and accessible to those to whom they are presented and are used to inform teaching and learning. It is recommended that a written record is made of a child/young person's needs, confirming the nature of their literacy difficulties/dyslexia, and shared with all relevant parties.

Independent Practitioner Assessment Reports

Parents/ Carers may sometimes present an independently commissioned assessment report to school. These reports add to information already held/ being gathered and should be given due consideration alongside other sources of information. It is important to ensure any assessment or reports being taken into account are in line with local and national good practice, use evidence based assessment practice, and meet relevant Professional Standards and guidance (e.g. Health and Care Professions Council, General Teaching Council for Scotland).

Section 6- Intervention

Intervention planning should follow logically from the outcomes of assessment. Further information and guidance can be found in 'Literacy and Dyslexia – Identifying and Meeting Needs'.

Good classroom teaching remains central to effective practice in supporting learners with literacy difficulties. However, classroom teaching alone (without additional targeted intervention) does not ordinarily enable pupils who experience significant and persistent difficulties to catch up and these pupils will require targeted support.

Targeted intervention is required whenever a pupil is not making the progress expected for their age. Intervention with reading, as with any other area of the curriculum, may be required at any stage; and should involve the planning of SMART (Small, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed) targets and specific strategies that can be objectively reviewed and assessed in terms of their effectiveness for each pupil. Parents and pupils must be included in accurate target setting and monitoring of progress.

Interventions are most effective in the early years and should proceed once a delay is noticed. Interventions with older pupils work best when the pupil fully understands the goals of the intervention and is motivated to participate in it. It can also be helpful to consider a cost / benefit analysis of taking time out of subject areas.

Current evidence suggests that structured, systematic, comprehensive and individualised reading instruction is the best approach to overcoming reading difficulties. Pupils may need intensive support to help them abandon inaccurate strategies and relearn new ones. If the problem is primarily a decoding/encoding one, the use of a systematic and individualised phonics programme is currently the most successful, evidenced based approach.

"Good impact – sufficient to at least double the standard rate of progress – can be achieved, and it is reasonable to expect it" (Brooks, 2016).

Research suggests that in order to work best, intervention programmes should be structured and systematic; sessions need to be frequent (most recommended schemes require three to five sessions per week) and sufficient in duration (most recommended schemes require sessions of 15 to 30 minutes, others sessions of up to 60 minutes). It is important to follow the guidelines of individual programmes. Diluting the intervention will dilute the impact.

Factors that support a good response to intervention

Pupils are more likely to respond to effective teaching and to well-structured interventions when:

- They have had positive early experiences of exposure to print in various forms
- Key adults at home and school value reading
- Home and school work effectively in partnership to support the pupil's progress
- They have a positive view of themselves as learners
- They have a strong phonological awareness
- They recognise letters, sounds and have good rapid automatic naming
- They have good memory skills (short term; working; long term retention and retrieval) which is central in learning to read
- They have good oral language skills and the teaching of reading is embedded within a broad approach with clear links to speaking and listening.

Section 7 – Recommended Resources

The universal teaching of literacy will allow the majority of pupils to learn and make the expected progress in reading and spelling. Some pupils find learning to read and spell difficult and this occurs for a range of reasons. We should always be concerned when a pupil is not making the progress in reading and spelling expected for their age and stage of development. These pupils require to be considered using a staged intervention approach whereby teachers will plan teaching approaches based on assessment; implement those approaches and review the outcomes in terms of progress. Through this approach barriers to learning should be identified, and appropriate and proportionate intervention planned and implemented.

It is important to note that the majority of needs in the classroom can be met by teachers using differentiated approaches to curriculum delivery. East Lothian Council recommend the following resources to support this practice:

The Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR)
https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sac17polaar.aspx

POLAAR is a tool designed to enable P1 teachers to identify and assess children who are most at risk of developing literacy difficulties. It includes an Early Literacy Environment Assessment which can be used by the teacher to assess the learning environment provided for all children. Once the areas for action in the class environment have been identified using this tool, more accurate judgements about the child's own literacy development can be made. In addition, it provides observational assessment and three minute assessments that can be used to gather information when there are concerns about an individual child's progress.

Literacy and Dyslexia: Identifying and Meeting Needs

Produced by City of Edinburgh Council (2013) this resource is available on a CD which has been distributed to East Lothian Schools and at: Education/Educational Psychology Service/Literacy/Literacy and Dyslexia

This resource is a further source of guidance in relation to identifying learner needs and appropriate supports and strategies in relation to the Early Years, Primary and Secondary stages.

Within the 'Identifying learning needs' section there is a detailed checklist for use with each age range. In addition a 'Diagnostic Literacy Assessment' provides the materials needed to assess: reading phonic and common words, reading non-words, reading in context, spelling phonically regular words, spelling common words, assessment of syllabification and sequences, assessment of writing sequences, handwriting and story writing. It is anticipated that this would be used by support for learning staff. Signposting to standardised tests of reading, reading comprehension, spelling and single word understanding is also provided.

Addressing Dyslexia: A toolkit for the identification and support of learners exhibiting literacy difficulties (Scottish Government)
http://www.addressingdyslexia.org/

The National toolkit is a comprehensive resource, built on curriculum for excellence, with graded materials and advice designed to support all staff in schools. Many strategies for pupils experiencing literacy difficulties are appropriate and beneficial for supporting the development of literacy for all learners.

Section 8 - Dyslexia: Key Messages

- East Lothian Council does not support a 'discrepancy' model of dyslexia
  In the past, dyslexia was used to describe difficulties in literacy learning that were found to contrast with a pupil's general ability. This model of dyslexia was referred to as the "discrepancy model" and has been widely discredited. Current research has shown that dyslexia can occur in children and young people of all abilities. The definition does not rely on the identification of a discrepancy between abilities in one area and another, it is solely based on reading and/or spelling development.

- Literacy difficulties exist on a continuum
  There is no clear or absolute cut off point where a pupil can be said to be dyslexic and there is a continuum with mild to severe forms. A child can be seen as having dyslexia if they have difficulties at the word level resulting in reading and spelling skills that have developed incompletely or with great difficulty and the problem is severe and persistent. Professional judgement will be required to make a decision.

- Resources in schools are allocated according to *need* and are *never* dependent upon identification of dyslexia
  Within a school it is not uncommon to have pupils with similar needs, some who are described as having dyslexia and some who are not. Sometimes, a request for a label comes about as an attempt to obtain resources for a pupil. Resources are not linked to labels within East Lothian schools.

- Reading interventions designed for those with Dyslexia are equally beneficial for groups of children who do not have this label
  There is no such thing as a resource which can be beneficial only to those who have dyslexia. Pupils with dyslexia do not have a specific profile that is different to any other child that may be described as a poor reader.

- It is unhelpful to identify dyslexia prematurely
  Assessment involves the implementation and evaluation of targeted intervention over a significant period of time. For this reason a formal identification of dyslexia would not usually occur prior to P4 as this would require evidence of robust assessment and targeted intervention over time. Although it is unusual to identify dyslexia in the early years, all young children will benefit from monitoring and tracking to ensure appropriate progress is being made.

- It is not appropriate to identify dyslexia on the basis of a single test
  There is no single test that can be used to identify dyslexia. It is not possible to gather the evidence that would be required to consider this question using only a single method of assessment. The identification and assessment of dyslexia requires an ongoing process of information gathering as per the guidelines outlined in this paper.

- Dyslexia is a difficulty at the word level
  Dyslexia is defined as severe and persistent difficulties at the 'word' level i.e. reading and spelling of individual words, rather than comprehension of text.

Section 9 - Information and Communication Technology

It is well documented that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Digital Technology can provide powerful and enabling support to motivate learners and help in the acquisition of skills for reading, spelling and writing. ICT offers teachers a range of strategies and provides pupils who have persistent difficulties in reading and/or spelling with support across the curriculum.

Many pupils who struggle to develop skills in reading and/spelling respond well to multi-sensory approaches to learning and need lots of over learning. Effective use of ICT allows teachers to create a multi-sensory learning environment where pupils look, listen and touch.

Teachers should ensure that these pupils have opportunities to learn in a multi-sensory way across the curriculum.

A range of ICT resources are available to support pupils with dyslexia. Word processing can make writing tasks less laborious; composition and editing can be improved and; spelling, grammar and sequencing can be modified easily. Help with spelling can be provided through the use of predictive software. Tailoring the word processor to the needs of individual pupils is achieved by changing screen colour, font, text size, line and character spacing. The portability of some word processors, such as laptops, means that pupils can have access to ICT within most classroom situations and, where appropriate, at home.

Parents should be made fully aware of ICT available and demonstrations given if necessary to enable them to encourage use in school or at home.

Useful Web Resources

http://www.callscotland.org.uk/information/dyslexia/

http://www.callscotland.org.uk/information/dyslexia/writing/

http://www.callscotland.org.uk/information/dyslexia/reading/

https://sites.google.com/a/edubuzz.org/asnhub/dyslexia/weblinks

https://sites.google.com/a/edubuzz.org/asnhub/ict-to-support-asn-pupils/assistive-software

In exams:

https://sites.google.com/a/edubuzz.org/asnhub/ict-to-support-asn-pupils/ict-in-sqa-exams

Section 10 – Role of the Educational Psychology Service

Teachers have the skills necessary to identify literacy difficulties/dyslexia; assessment does not need to be carried out by 'experts' or Educational Psychologists. The Educational Psychology Service can be involved in consultation with school staff when pupils are not making the progress expected. They will work with school staff (not necessarily directly with the child) to achieve a better understanding of the factors that may be helping or hindering progress and identify ways forward. In very few cases would an Educational Psychologist contribute directly to an assessment in order to achieve this understanding. Educational Psychologists undertaking any assessment will make use of the most relevant professional National and Local guidelines (e.g. British Psychological Society, 2014).

Section 11 – Involving Pupils and Parents

Collaborative working with children, young people and parents/carers is vital in order that appropriate support is given both in school and at home. Schools have to be proactive in their communication and involvement of parents and pupils in conversations about learning. It is essential that teachers and other school staff are very clear in their discussions with parents and pupils about the actions they are taking to support learning. Up-to-date

assessment information should be shared with parents about attainment, rate of progress and future learning targets. Parents should also be given an opportunity to air any concerns.

East Lothian Council does not advocate that pupils with dyslexia are exempt from homework; however, tasks and activities need to be planned carefully for pupils with additional support needs including those with literacy difficulties. Schools should allow for due consideration to be made as to the frequency, type and general expectations regarding homework. Schools should make every effort to ensure that parents understand how their child or young person can be best supported at home in order to succeed fully in homework tasks.

More generally, parents should be provided with additional information at curriculum evenings, parents' evenings and other such events to demonstrate the school's approach to supporting pupils with additional support needs including dyslexia.

Section 12 - Transition Arrangements

Smooth and effective transitions are extremely important for all children, but particularly for pupils with additional support needs. It is therefore vital that all those involved with a pupil who has difficulties in reading and spelling are made aware of any difficulties and the additional support they require to fully access the curriculum. It is important that all staff are prepared to be accountable for responding to the needs of pupils who have additional support needs including dyslexia.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 requires that: Schools must seek and take account of relevant advice and information from other agencies **no later than 12 months** before a child or young person, who has additional support needs, is expected to have a change in school education or move on to post school provision. For a **pre-school child**, the timescale is **six months**.

In Secondary Schools, information should be passed to colleagues in all subject departments. Each school will have its own systems in place for disseminating information; depending on the severity of the additional support needs including dyslexia, the pupil may be the subject of a case discussion.

Information should be shared with employers and further/higher education establishments in preparation for a young person entering a post school placement. Pupils should disclose their literacy difficulties/dyslexia in application forms, highlighting the support they receive at school, and should also ensure that they retain the paperwork outlining their needs. Pupils should also be encouraged to attend college and university open days, where they can get more detailed information from Disability Services about supports that are available.

Section 13 - Alternative Assessment Arrangements

Alternative Assessment Arrangements (AA) can be made available for all internal and external assessments and examinations. However, arrangements should only be put in place provided there is sufficient classroom based evidence of significantly improved performance as a result of the intervention. AA should reflect, as far as possible, the pupil's normal way of learning and producing work. Requirements for AA should be considered on a subject by subject basis.

It is important to emphasise that entitlement is based on evidence. Identification of dyslexia is not a necessary requirement for the provision of AA: conversely, on its own, identification of dyslexia is not sufficient evidence for the provision of AA.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) provides guidelines on how and when to apply for concessions during formal examinations and more detailed information can be found at this link: **http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html**

It should be noted that guidance, produced by the Joint Council for Qualifications on behalf of other UK Awarding Bodies, **does not apply** to SQA's National Qualifications. SQA operates different processes and procedures in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements. It is the schools responsibility to determine the impact of a candidate's particular disability or difficulty on teaching and learning, how this is supported and whether this support is necessary in the assessment situation.

Section 14 - Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Is there a place for IQ testing in literacy assessment?
No. The 'discrepancy' model of Dyslexia has been widely discredited. Measurement of a child's IQ or reference to a 'Dyslexia profile' derived from IQ testing form no part of the BPS definition of Dyslexia that has been adopted in East Lothian and are therefore not required as part of the assessment process.

Question: What programmes would you recommend for teaching literacy?

East Lothian Council does not make specific recommendations about resources (e.g. reading schemes, assessment tools, intervention programmes). Schools are well placed to make judgements regarding their own context and pupil needs and to match these with the most appropriate resources. When selecting resources, schools and individual staff should use the principles in this document, work within CfE frameworks and apply professional judgement to identify those suitable to meet the needs of their pupils.

There are publications available which provide an overview of resources available and any evidence of their effectiveness for example:

> 1. What Works for Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties by Greg Brooks (2016): A summary of the main structured literacy intervention schemes available – in terms of how to deliver them, how much time is needed, which age group they are useful for, together with details of the evidence base for their

effectiveness. http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/assets/What-Works-5th-edition-Rev-Oct-2016.pdf

2. Phonics teaching materials: core criteria and self-assessment: Guidance document on the core criteria that define the best features of an effective phonics teaching programme, and how these core criteria are used within the self-assessment process.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-teaching-materials-core-criteria-and-self-assessment

Question: Is there a place for IT based literacy programmes and assessment tools?

There is no requirement to use an IT based assessment tool as part of a Dyslexia assessment. If an IT based assessment tool is used in this way, teaching staff should apply the principles of assessment outlined in this paper. IT based assessment tools should never be used as the sole source of an assessment and should never form the only element of an intervention.

As with any teaching resource, IT based literacy programmes can be effective when well matched with the learners' needs and when they form part of a comprehensive intervention. These questions may be useful when considering Intervention Software:

- Have you had a trial of the software?
- Have you read any available research on the Intervention? e.g. http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/
- What is the evidence that this Intervention works?
- Has it been recommended by someone who has seen it in use?
- Is it used elsewhere in the Authority?
- Does it require a software install or is it web-based program?
- How big is the learning curve for users/administrators?
- Does it require staff training in order to support pupils working on it?
- If needed, is any staff training be procured as part of the investment?

Question: When should letter names be introduced to children?

Guidance differs regarding when it is best to introduce letter names to pupils. Ultimately all pupils need to acquire both letter sounds and names. Different schemes suggest the introduction of letter names at different points but teachers also need to consider the individual needs of the learners in their class. Children within one class may be introduced to this information at differing points on their learning journey. It is important that you should follow the guidance of the reading scheme that is used in your school.

Question: Do children benefit from being given the "Dyslexia" label?

In line with the Additional Support for Learning Act (2009) all pupils will be provided with support based on their additional support needs, regardless of any label they may or may not acquire.

There is some evidence to suggest that labelling a pupil may have adverse effects on expectations for that pupil because labelling implies a 'within-child deficit'. It can also

encourage a 'fixed mindset' for all those involved, again, limiting beliefs regarding learning potential.

Some pupils and families may find it helpful to be identified with dyslexia e.g. to help them understand the nature of additional support needs and a way of explaining this to others. Each case needs to be considered on an individual basis with the full involvement of the pupil and parent/carers.

Question: Can a child who has difficulties in learning in all areas of the curriculum also have Dyslexia?

Yes. Pupils experiencing significant difficulties with literacy may also have difficulties in other or all areas of the curriculum. As outlined in this paper previously, these needs are not defined within a 'discrepancy' model.

Question: Do coloured overlays help children with Dyslexia?

There is no clear evidence base for children with reading and spelling difficulties making better progress when supported by the use of coloured overlays/ paper. Some children do express a preference for using them when reading. When a pupil expresses a preference for working with coloured overlays/paper teaching staff should form an understanding of the barriers and gather relevant assessment information on the pupil's reading efficiency in line with SQA guidance. Assessment information from other professionals can form part of this evidence but the final decision rests with school. Schools should consider all relevant information and be mindful that adaptations should not be made on the basis of a diagnosis or label but on:

(i)   how the candidate's disability/difficulty impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom

(ii)   the candidate's normal way of working in the school, (considered on a subject by subject basis) and

(iii)   the support given

Every child should undergo routine vision testing and if any error is detected should use the regular prescribed glasses/ lenses.

Question: Who is qualified to assess and identify Dyslexia?

School staff are qualified to identify dyslexia provided they use robust assessment by applying the guidance provided in this paper. There is no requirement for the involvement of other professionals e.g. Educational Psychologist. Staff should engage in appropriate CLPL opportunities to ensure awareness of up to date research, practice and guidance in this area.

Question: What interventions would you recommend?

In order to improve reading skills, intervention should focus on the five pillars of literacy (described earlier) and the pupil's individual support needs within this framework. There are a range of interventions sometimes suggested to support dyslexia: many of these resources lack an evaluation of effectiveness and caution is required before purchasing or implementing such an intervention.

Question: My child has just been identified with dyslexia: what support/resources will he/she get?

Pupil's additional support needs should be recognised irrespective of having or not having a label. All schools offer a range of support packages to whole classes, small groups and individuals within their schools in response to identified need. All schools have access to a suite of ICT resources suitable for pupils with difficulties in reading and/or spelling. Likewise, a range of strategies and resources are available in all classrooms to improve literacy skills and facilitate the pupil's access to the wider curriculum.

Section 15 References

British Psychological Society (2014) Position Paper: Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland**. Available at http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/Quals/aspep-sdep_assessment_position_paper_2014.pdf (accessed 7 Feb 2017).

British Psychological Society (1999) *Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment.* Available from the BPS.

Brooks, G. (2016) What Works for Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties (Online). Available at http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/assets/What-Works-5th-edition-Rev-Oct-2016.pdf (Accessed 20 December 2016).

Burden, R (2009) Myself as a Learner Scale. Imaginative Minds.

Dyslexia Scotland (2010) *Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit* (Online). Available at www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/addressing-dyslexia-toolkit (Accessed 20 December 2016).

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. Available at

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/contents (Accessed 2nd February 2017)

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009) (online) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/7/contents (Accessed 13th January 2017)

Education Scotland (2016) *Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR)* (Online). Available at https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sac17polaar.aspx (Accessed 2nd February 2017).

Elliot, J. G. and Grigorenko, E. L. (2014) *The Dyslexia Debate.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hattie, J (2007). Visible Learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta analyses relating to achievement. Abingdon: Routeledge.

Hattie, J (2012). *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning.* London: Routledge.

Karande, S. and Agarwi., A. *Ophthalmic abnormalities in children with dyslexia: A look at current research.* Journal of Postgraduate Medicine (serial online)2017 (cited 2017 Feb 6);63:1-3

Lauchlan, F. & Boyle, C. (2007) Is the use of labels helpful in special education? *Support for Learning*, 22(1), 36-42.

National Reading Panel (2005) Available at http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED489535.pdf (Accessed 2nd Febraury 2017).

Scottish Executive (2006) *Curriculum for Excellence* (Online). Available at www.acurriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk (Accessed 20 December 2016).

Scottish Government (2012) *Addressing Dyslexia: A toolkit for the identification and support of learners exhibiting literacy difficulties* (Online). Available at http://www.addressingdyslexia.org/ (Accessed 20 December 2016).

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) *Assessment Arrangements* (Online). Available at http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html (Accessed 20 December 2016).

The City of Edinburgh Council (2013) *Literacy and Dyslexia: Identifying and meeting needs (Online).* Available from www.edinburgh.gov.uk/learningpublications

The General Teaching Council Scotland Professional Standards (Online). Available at http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/the-standards/the-standards.aspx (Accessed 20 December 2016).

All information correct at the time of publication.