



Dyslexia Scotland

The Upper Primary



No **3** in the series of
Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH DYSLEXIA AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

THE UPPER PRIMARY

**Adapted by Dyslexia Scotland, South East from
Dyslexia: Primary Handbook by Meg Houston**

Published in Great Britain by
Dyslexia Scotland in 2011

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Stirling Business Centre,
Wellgreen,
Stirling FK8 2DZ
Scottish Charity No: SCO00951
Registered in Scotland No: 153321

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ISBN: 978 1 906401 22 1

Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School

Every primary school in Scotland has been supplied with a free copy of this important publication. All material in these titles is downloadable free from the Dyslexia Scotland website – www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk.

Dyslexia Scotland would like to thank Meg Houston and the committee members of Dyslexia Scotland South East for producing these important resources for primary teachers in Scotland.

Thanks also go to M & A Thomson Litho Ltd, East Kilbride, Scotland who printed the titles at below cost – www.thomsonlitho.com and Paula O'Connell for copy-editing all titles.

An education grant from the Royal Bank of Scotland has funded Dyslexia Scotland's support for these booklets.

Dyslexia Scotland is the voluntary organisation representing the needs and interests of dyslexic people in Scotland.

Mission statement

To encourage and enable dyslexic people, regardless of their age and abilities to reach their potential in education, employment and life.

Dyslexia Helpline: 0844 800 8484 – Monday to Friday from 10am-4pm.

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Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School

Complete set comprises of 8 booklets

- 1 The Early Years
- 2 The Middle Primary
- 3 The Upper Primary
- 4 Identification of Dyslexia in Primary School
- 5 The Role of Support for Learning
- 6 The Role of School Management
- 7 Working with Parents
- 8 Resources and Assessment Instruments

Foreword by Dr. Gavin Reid, formerly senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Studies, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. An experienced teacher, educational psychologist, university lecturer, researcher and author, he has made over 600 conference and seminar presentations in more than 35 countries and has authored, co-authored and edited fifteen books for teachers and parents.

ALL information contained in the booklets can be downloaded free of charge from the Dyslexia Scotland website – www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

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Foreword by Dr. Gavin Reid

It is a pleasure to be asked to write a foreword for this new pack of booklets on 'Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School'. One of the striking features of the booklets is the detail and comprehensiveness which Meg Houston and her colleagues have included in this excellent pack.

They leave no stone unturned. They cover the full range of stages in the primary school from nursery to the upper primary and provide guidance for parents and school management. They also comment on the crucial area of transition between primary and secondary school. I am heartened that they have provided a working definition for dyslexia as defining dyslexia is often an area of confusion, and teachers can be uncertain as to what dyslexia actually means. Teachers need this type of guidance on dyslexia. There are many aspects relating to dyslexia that can be misunderstood unless a clear set of materials, such as this pack, are available. These booklets are therefore timely and essential.

I am impressed with the detail included in providing advice for all stages of primary school from pre-school to upper primary and also on the role of parents and particularly the issues relating to homework. It is heartening to read comments such as "it is very easy for teachers to create the optimum conditions at school that will avoid the 'homework' problem. An aware senior manager can take the lead by setting the tone and creating the ethos, developing a dyslexia friendly homework policy that will make a huge difference to many children's – and their parents' – lives". I have found from my experience that this is one issue that can cause a great deal of consternation for both students and families, and of course teachers.

The booklets also focus on the emotional aspect of dyslexia in addition to the cognitive and learning issues. This is important as students who are emotionally ready for learning, will make more progress than those who are not. Often children with dyslexia can have problems in this area because they have experienced too much failure, too often, for too long. It is important that this ceases to be an issue and this set of booklets will go a long way to making the educational experience a more comfortable and successful one for many children with dyslexia.

The booklet on the role of management states that management should have a "recognition of, and sensitivity to the range and diversity of the learning preferences and styles of all children". This is crucially important. There are also excellent sections summarizing support strategies for students with dyslexia and a section with a comprehensive annotated description of key resources that can be accessed by teachers. The booklets also indicate, quite rightly, that the key to success is effective learning and this means effective teaching. This does not cost money, does not necessarily require vast expenditure on expensive resources, but rather needs management consideration to ensure that teachers have adequate preparation time, appropriate training, opportunities to develop differentiated materials and are able to recognize individual learning styles and importantly are able to, and have the opportunity, to use this information to develop good practice in classroom

teaching and student learning. The role of teacher education is also a key area: this has not gone unnoticed and the reference to the 'Framework for Inclusion: Assessing Dyslexia – Toolkit for Teachers' will be helpful to all teachers assessing this resource.

The section on dyslexia in the early years will also be warmly welcomed by many as there is clear evidence that early identification can lead to successful intervention. But often there is uncertainty about what to look for, how to identify high risk students and how to take this further in terms of intervention. This section will provide early years teachers with the confidence, strategies and the framework to pursue the identification of children at risk of dyslexia with some confidence and with the support of management.

We are fortunate in having dedicated professionals, such as Meg Houston and Moira Thomson, available to write these booklets. It never ceases to amaze me when I travel to other countries and continents to speak about dyslexia how far advanced we are in Scotland. This is often due to relatively few dedicated and insightful professionals and parents who have achieved a great deal in terms of acquiring government support and securing government initiatives. It is very pleasing to consider the number of significant initiatives in dyslexia that have taken place in Scotland in recent years. This has without doubt made Scotland a key player on the world stage in good practice on dyslexia. Booklets such as these developed by Meg Houston and her colleagues in Dyslexia Scotland and Dyslexia South East go a long way in confirming that view and with full backing and appropriate support these booklets will make a difference – a difference to children, families, schools and to the quality of education for all in Scotland.

Gavin Reid, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
October 2010

Working Definition of Dyslexia (Scottish Government, January 2009)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/welfare/ASL/dyslexia>

The following working definition of dyslexia has been developed by the Scottish Government, Dyslexia Scotland and the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia in the Scottish Parliament. This is one of many definitions available. The aim of this particular working definition is to provide a description of the range of indicators and characteristics of dyslexia as helpful guidance for educational practitioners, pupils, parents/carers and others. This definition does not have any statutory basis.

Dyslexia can be described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, write and/or spell, which persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities. These difficulties often do not reflect an individual's cognitive abilities and may not be typical of performance in other areas.

The impact of dyslexia as a barrier to learning varies in degree according to the learning and teaching environment, as there are often associated difficulties such as:

- *auditory and /or visual processing of language-based information*
- *phonological awareness*
- *oral language skills and reading fluency*
- *short-term and working memory*
- *sequencing and directionality*
- *number skills*
- *organisational ability*

Motor skills and co-ordination may also be affected.

Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across the range of abilities and socio-economic backgrounds. It is a hereditary, life-long, neuro-developmental condition. Unidentified, dyslexia is likely to result in low self esteem, high stress, atypical behaviour, and low achievement.

Learners with dyslexia will benefit from early identification, appropriate intervention and targeted effective teaching, enabling them to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.¹

¹ Learning & Teaching Scotland
<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/inclusionandequality/sharingpractice/organisations/dyslexiadefinition/index.asp>

This book examines the identification and support of children with dyslexia in the upper primary. It is part of a series of eight titles and it is recommended that this book is read in conjunction with:

- Identification of Dyslexia at Primary School
- Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School: Supporting and Working with Parents
- Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School: Resources and Assessment Instruments

All titles in this series are free to download from Dyslexia Scotland's website – www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk.

It is recommended that readers also refer to the online 'Assessing Dyslexia' toolkit which can be found at the following link: <http://www.frameworkforinclusion.org/assessingdyslexia>

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH DYSLEXIA IN UPPER PRIMARY

One person in ten is thought to experience barriers to learning due to dyslexia and of these the learning of one in four could be severely affected.

Teachers should use the Dyslexia Indicators Checklist to confirm any suspicion of a dyslexic profile. If several indicators are ticked, referral should be made to Support for Learning (SfL) or senior management for further investigation.

TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING PUPILS WITH DYSLEXIA

References: Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended:
Scottish Government Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice 2010

It is a teacher's responsibility to provide a suitably differentiated curriculum, accessible to all children, that provides each with the opportunity to develop and apply individual strengths. Responsibilities for meeting the additional support needs of children with dyslexia are the same as those for all children, and should include approaches that avoid unnecessary dependence on written text. Teachers may be expected to use teaching and learning strategies that include:

- Recognition of and sensitivity to the range and diversity of the learning preferences and styles of all children
- Selection or design of appropriate teaching and learning programmes that match the range of all abilities, within the curricular framework of the school
- Awareness of the learning differences related to dyslexia that may cause difficulties within these programmes
- Understanding that dyslexia is not linked to cognitive abilities and that able children with dyslexia may persistently underachieve in relation to their academic potential
- Knowledge that many children with dyslexia use strategies such as misbehaviour or illness for coping with difficulties they do not necessarily understand themselves

- Willingness to ask for advice and support from Support for Learning staff or specialist dyslexia teams
- Commitment to the need to reduce barriers to learning linked to the delivery of the curriculum
- Acknowledgement of the very severe difficulties that children with dyslexia might experience due to failure to master the early stages of literacy and numeracy
- Understanding that dyslexia is developmental in nature and that some children who have coped with the early stages of literacy acquisition may have difficulties which do not appear until later primary years
- Acceptance that some children with dyslexia may require additional support and that consultation with colleagues and specialists to determine how best to provide this is necessary
- Taking account of the difficulties experienced by children with dyslexia when assessing progress so that knowledge and abilities are assessed fairly by making arrangements for assessments that reflect the additional support usually provided

Many children with dyslexia constantly meet barriers to learning across the curriculum and may become discouraged very quickly due to lack of initial success in class. This can result in teachers assuming that children are inattentive or lazy, when they are actually working much harder than their classmates, but with little apparent effect. For children with dyslexia the experience of success may be rare, if not totally absent. They may:

- Lack self-confidence
- Have a poor self image
- Fear new situations
- Confuse written and verbal instructions
- Be very disorganised
- Lack stamina
- Appear to avoid set work

Each child with dyslexia will have a very distinctive profile and learning style, so comparisons with other known children with dyslexia **may** not be useful, although there is often some common ground. The information given by Support for Learning and specialist dyslexia teachers, and the teacher's own experience in the classroom will be the best guide to what is appropriate for an individual child. Many of the following characteristics, but not all, may be present and each individual will have his own individual combination of strengths and weaknesses. Children with dyslexia may:

- Underachieve academically
- Perform well orally but find reading difficult
- Spell phonetically or erratically
- Be considered clumsy
- Have a low tolerance of their own lack of achievement
- Appear restless, with poor concentration span
- Seem inattentive, forgetful, easily tired

Children with dyslexia can be talented in many ways eg they may have strongly developed spatial awareness, have good problem solving skills and often present themselves well orally. Teachers should be aware that:

- The impact of dyslexia can range from mild to severe and individual profiles can be very different, each with strengths and weaknesses
- Dyslexia can occur at all levels of intellectual abilities
- Children with dyslexia often experience difficulties in education, some of them hidden
- Children with dyslexia often have natural talents, creative abilities and vision

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

A dyslexic learner will usually experience some of these as they progress through the curriculum.

Inappropriate Behaviour

The first manifestations of a child's dyslexia are often behavioural. Dyslexia may result in a child appearing to lack interest or application. Frustration at being unable to carry out an activity as effortlessly as other children may lead to disruption. These behavioural characteristics are often attributed to children being inattentive, lazy or aggressive – without consideration of the underlying cause. In the later stages of primary school, the imminent move to secondary school may add to the stress of children with dyslexia who may misbehave in order to:

- disguise learning difficulties
- avoid activities that expose weaknesses
- alleviate boredom
- vent frustration or anger
- combat the effects of fatigue
- gain attention from teachers
- distract from an expectation of failure
- compensate for low self esteem

Check:

- that instructions were understood – perhaps by asking the child to repeat them
- that children were given time to discuss an activity before starting as talk can clarify and reinforce understanding of the activity
- that the environment is conducive to the teacher expectations, e. g. the child who is a kinaesthetic learner is not expected to sit completely still during a listening activity

Different Learning Styles

Preferred learning styles affect the efficiency with which we learn. Pupils with visual processing problems may rely heavily on auditory memory. Those who have auditory processing difficulties will need visual reinforcement to learn effectively.

Check:

- that rules are taught directly and explicitly
- that information has been presented in all modalities – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic/tactile
- that opportunities for discussion have been given
- that kinaesthetic learners are not labelled 'naughty' because of their need to move
- that opportunities are given to practise new terminology

Organisational Difficulties

Children with dyslexia may have difficulty prioritising, sequencing, looking after possessions, packing a schoolbag, responding to multiple instructions, getting from A to B, taking notes, organising homework, completing activities on time.

Check:

- that there is opportunity for practice/rehearsal
- that multiple instructions to the class are broken down to single units for the child with dyslexia
- that activities set are realistic
- that unfinished work is not automatically set as homework
- that timetables, written or visual, are given and their use reinforced regularly
- that correct use of 'aides memoire' is supported, e. g. colour coding, sequence lists, etc
- that parents are involved and given necessary support to help develop use of coping strategies, eg colour checklists, etc

Effects of Fatigue

Children with dyslexia may start well but their work may quickly deteriorate. Pupils may lose concentration, become confused, become restless and disruptive, complain of minor ailments, ask to go to the toilet, or engage any of a range of avoidance techniques. Lack of automaticity may mean that huge effort is required to complete an ordinary task.

Check:

- that activities are short and well defined
- that activities are varied

- that activities have time limits
- that activities change frequently
- that there is opportunity for purposeful movement
- that children are supported in learning to pace themselves
- that children are set alternative activities rather than 'time out' as every minute counts in the education of a child with dyslexia

Poor Self Image

This often comes about due to feelings of failure and can lead to various behavioural responses such as aggression, withdrawal, hypersensitivity, over-reaction, clowning or depression. Sometimes the frustration and sense of failure is much greater in more able children with dyslexia in comparison with their peers.

Check

- that adult response to these behaviours is appropriate and aware
- that encouragement and appreciation of efforts are employed rather than inappropriate use of praise
- that oral contributions are encouraged
- that strengths are acknowledged and appropriately rewarded
- that the child is never set up to fail, i.e. the task is matched to the learner
- that a sensitive whole school marking policy, such as the 'nearly right' system is in place
- that negative attitudes from others are dealt with appropriately
- that other dyslexic people such as Jamie Oliver, Keira Knightly, Sir Richard Branson and historical 'great' dyslexics like Albert Einstein and Sir Winston Churchill are discussed
- that the child is helped to stay positive

READING AND WRITING

Reading Rate

Pupils with dyslexia usually read at a much slower rate than their peers and extended reading diminishes the rate even more.

Check:

- that parents know that they can take over and read homework to the child when the rate diminishes to the point where understanding is lost
- that reading activities in class are appropriately supported or that someone is available to read to a child with dyslexia
- that sufficient reading practice is achieved incrementally, remembering that the child with dyslexia needs more reading practice, not less

Reading Aloud

For some children with dyslexia there comes a point where reading aloud becomes a nightmare. Even those children who are making good progress in reading may panic when asked to read aloud in front of the class, and progress may be jeopardised by the experience.

Check:

- that the point where reading aloud becomes detrimental is recognised
- that reading aloud for instructional purposes takes place on a one to one basis, in private
- that only a teacher or competent reader reads to the children when key information is important
- that texts are 'warmed up' through discussion using the language and illustrations of the book

Reading for Information

Pupils with dyslexia often need support when extracting information from a lengthy text passage. Most children with dyslexia do not have difficulty with comprehension but a slow reading rate or short term memory problem may cause facts to be lost.

Check:

- that page and paragraph references are available
- that a framework of 'what to look for' has been taught, is constantly reinforced and is available as a checklist
- that children can turn a question round to form the answer (eg What were the items to be found on the treasure trail? The items to be found on the treasure trail were _ _ _ _.)
- that the children have been taught how to use different coloured highlighter pens to identify key content
- that children know how to look for key words in a text
- that teacher exposition is used when necessary
- that group discussion is employed
- that source materials are well laid out and presented
- that print is enlarged if necessary
- that font or line spacing is clear and unambiguous
- that **bold** - not *italics* or underlining - is used to highlight key text

Handwriting

Many children with dyslexia find the mechanical aspects of writing a problem. There are some children for whom writing is a physical and emotional struggle. Handwriting may be

small, cramped and heavily indented if the child displays the 'white knuckle syndrome' and holds the pencil too tightly. It may be large, faint and spidery if the child holds the pencil too loosely. It may display reversals of letters and/or words if the child has orientation difficulties. Spacing and laterality problems may also be evident. Lack of writing fluency may be helped by practising writing patterns to music. In the later primary stages, when clear presentation of work is essential, children with dyslexia benefit greatly from the introduction of IT and the use of word processing – and they may develop – for the first time – a pride in their written work. The rhythm of writing automaticity that may develop when writing to music is enhanced by the clicking of the computer keys, and the movement differences between keyboarding and handwriting often make extended writing easier for children with dyslexia. Physical handwriting often improves as keyboarding skills develop and children are finally able to visualise how a page of writing should look.

Check:

- that letters are taught as a single fluid movement with entrance and exit strokes
- that writing is taught on lined paper, preferably that with two blue lines inside two red lines to establish the size of the letters and the height and depth of the ascenders and descenders
- that a hand-exercise corner is available to ensure that children with muscle tone (too tight or too loose) problems can exercise daily to promote strength and flexion (Graded Activities for Children with Motor Difficulties, J Russell, Cambridge)
- that the amount of writing asked of these children is not such that pain is induced. Watch for signs such as frequent breaks, hand shaking or avoidance strategies
- that small white boards and felt pens are available to practice 'lazy 8's' and writing patterns to promote fluidity and flow
- that cursive writing is introduced as soon as possible to help eliminate reversals and inversions, reinforce the learning of spelling and demarcate space between words
- that the language of movement is understood, eg up, over, around, down.

Compositional or Response Writing

Pupils with dyslexia often feel frustrated by their inability to express their feelings, creativity or understanding through writing. This makes it difficult to demonstrate their grasp of a subject to the same extent as other children.

Check:

- that visualising and verbalising strategies are taught
- that opportunities are available to respond in an alternative way, eg ICT, dictation to a scribe or recording device, drawing, drama, oral responses, etc
- that group writing, with one child recording ideas in a brainstorming session, is occasionally employed

- that writing frames and story skeletons are used
- that transcription of children's written work takes place to display good content
- that lots of practice is given in writing familiar stories before creating own stories
- that dictation practice using controlled vocabulary is frequent to allow attention to spelling and punctuation
- that mind mapping strategies are used when appropriate

Copying

For many children who have dyslexia copying may be impossible. Whether from the board or from a book, it will certainly be inaccurate and unreliable. Many children with dyslexia will seldom complete a copying task within the time given.

Check:



- that photocopies or notes printed in advance are used when appropriate
- that homework is never required to be copied down at the end of the day
- that if copying cannot be avoided, the child with dyslexia is supported and his copying is checked by the teacher or other adult
- that unsupported copying is never the only source of information

Spelling

For most children with dyslexia spelling is the greatest challenge to be overcome. Experienced Support for Learning teachers agree that spelling is the area that presents the most difficulty.

Check:

- that Simultaneous Oral Spelling, a multisensory procedure for teaching the spelling of irregular words is employed
- that, if the child is known to be a kinaesthetic learner, tracing, in the air, on the back, on the palm of the hand, in colours (rainbow writing) is employed
- that if the child is known to have a strong auditory channel spelling by signing or chanting is used (at home or in private)
- that spell checkers (eg Franklin Spell-master) are introduced when the child's spelling skills are at an appropriate level
- that mnemonics are used appropriately. Auditory mnemonics such as mispronunciation of Is-land, be-a-uti-ful, Feb-ru-ary, Wed-nes-day, etc are useful for auditory learners

- visual mnemonics such as  and  are useful for visual learners
- alphabet mnemonics are used for learners who respond to quirky memory prompts such as Big Elephants Can Add Up Sums Easily
- that spelling is taught daily in an interactive, direct teaching format throughout the whole primary curriculum from P1 to P7
- that syllabification is addressed from P1 to P7 and that children practice chin wags (one chin drop on the back of the hand) to count syllables. (this helps reading as well as spelling)

Using ICT

The use of ICT can increase independence and improve the self-esteem of children with dyslexia. It can re-motivate learners, boost their self-confidence and encourage them to develop strategies to compensate for their difficulties.

Children with dyslexia today are more fortunate than in the past, as access to ICT is now commonplace, at home as well as in school. There are many reasons why most children with dyslexia work well with computers, but a major advantage is that the work produced by word-processing tends to reflect the intellectual ability of the child more accurately. The child with dyslexia is also less likely to be de-motivated by excessive “red-pen” marking and by the need to undertake laborious re-writing to obtain a ‘fair’ copy. For many, but not all, children with dyslexia word processing leads to:

- less stressful composing
- better sequencing as it is easy to review what was written earlier
- faster, less laborious redrafting that does not introduce additional errors
- more easily corrected spelling and punctuation
- the motivation of well presented legible work
- an extended concentration span
- less pressure on the short term memory as activities are divided, eg punctuation, spelling, sequencing, expression and the elimination of handwriting

Check:

- that suitable equipment is always available in class for producing normal class work (parents may help here)
- that children with dyslexia have priority access to limited classroom IT equipment
- that keyboard skills are specifically taught eg Type to Learn
- that portable versions of full sized keyboards eg Alphasmart Neo or I-Books are available

- that programmes such as Co:Writer, Inclusive Writer, Talking Textease, Write Outloud and Talking Pen Down are available
- that voice-activated systems are explored, eg Dragon Naturally Speaking and Keystone 2000
- that audio books and E-books are available
- that the use of Clicker Plus and Story Book Weaver Deluxe is investigated to support writing
- that games such as Wordshark, Number Shark, Starspell , Catch Up, Nessy, Gamz-Snap and Fix, are used to support developing literacy and numeracy
- that Kidspiration is used to support mind mapping strategies

It is said that new hard and software has a six month shelf life. Such is the rate of progress in this industry. It is important for schools to try to keep up to date. Most authorities have a small group of experts or advisers who can help. (for details of the software mentioned, see the *Resources* booklet)

In order to prepare for digital exams that will be available to them at secondary, authorities should begin to invest now, in the hardware, software and staff training for primary schools so that they can prepare all children, not just children with dyslexia, for the developments in ICT that are surely coming. Children with dyslexia moving to Higher Education will be expected to produce all work using ICT. We must ensure they are automatic with the skills - which means starting in primary school and using ICT for all normal class work as a matter of course.

See also Books for All which has books in alternative formats:
<http://www.books4all.org.uk/Home/>

MATHEMATICS

Number

Some children with dyslexia have a facility with pure number work, when reading is not involved. Many children with dyslexia have difficulty with retaining number bonds and tables, number order, sequencing and place value. These difficulties are mainly due to a lack of working memory capacity which limits how much information the child can 'hold in mind' at the same time – often remembering a number means loss of capacity to perform the required calculations.

Check:

- that calculators are allowed unless the activity prohibits this
- that training in the use of calculators is given
- that tables wheels, grids and number squares are readily available

- that squared paper is used to avoid mistakes caused by spatial awareness and handwriting problems
- that a variety of approaches, including wall posters and reference cards are used to develop and reinforce number facts
- computer Maths games are available in the classroom or suggested to parents for use at home

The benefits of rote learning of number bond and doubles (eg 1+1, 10+10) may be considerable. The degree of automaticity developed is well worth the time and effort this may take. However, if this activity becomes obviously threatening and distressing for the pupil it should not be pursued in the classroom. Consideration might be given to asking parents to help develop this at home.

Symbols and Shapes

Pupils with dyslexia can have difficulty with signs such as +, -, x, =, ÷ and %. They can have problems with the identification of shapes and they may reverse numbers such as P for 9 or 53 for 35.

Check:

- that the child with dyslexia has sign cards that display the vocabulary of the sign around it and that he is constantly encouraged to use it
- that templates, shapes and tracing boards are available to reinforce the properties of shapes
- that there is ample opportunity for revision and practice
- that strategies are in place to combat reversals such as verbalising 'five, three, five-ty three, fifty three'

Time

Children with dyslexia usually have difficulty with time. Telling the time is a particular problem with both analogue and digital timepieces. The temporal experience, the feeling of time passing may also be absent, impaired or delayed.

Check:

- that over-teaching in this area takes place
- that adequate practice is ensured
- that timed activities are used throughout the school to give supported reinforcement

Teachers may find it useful to use a model analogue clock – or even draw one on the board to show where the hands will be at the end of the time allocated for an activity. Children with dyslexia may develop some sense of time passing as they see how the hands on the 'real' clock move towards the set time on the model.

UPPER PRIMARY – THE CHAMELEONS

The upper primary years are the years when teachers must be prepared for anything. The permutations possible within the constellation of difficulties added to emotions, experience, personalities and the onset of adolescent hormone change are myriad. No two dyslexic learners are the same. Being able to spot common traits does not mean that behaviour or achievements are predictable. The balance of the three types of support needed, literacy, curriculum and social/emotional, will change, often with quite notable frequency, at any given time.

Teachers must be very alert to the chameleon like behaviour which can be presented at this stage. Things are not always what they seem. In P6 and P7 many children with dyslexia are happy in their own skins and respond to good support and relationships with understanding adults. Those who do not experience this empathy and knowledgeable support at school may extend their normal, transparent, coping strategies into strategies that are somewhat more opaque and sometimes less acceptable. These more extreme measures may include:

- intellectual 'dumbing down' because it removes so much pressure and makes life easier
- self harming behaviour to release pressure
- developing eating disorders for various reasons usually unknown to the child
- acting the class clown to gain peer approval
- developing an ultra polite/ultra helpful persona to divert attention from dyslexia
- manifesting behavioural issues to divert attention from dyslexia
- developing a circle of 'best' friends who allow copying and in some instances do work for the individual
- creating a small group of bullied and intimidated peers who "allow" copying and do work for the child

In isolation, some of these behaviours may be completely normal eg developing apparently obsessional behaviours, but taken in to account with other characteristics of dyslexia, they can be an important indicator of dyslexia.

PRIMARY- SECONDARY TRANSITION

For P6 and P7 children the prospect of transfer to secondary school is looming large. This is a massive event in a child's life and the preparation for every child must be meticulous. For a child who has additional support needs there are additional considerations and enhanced transition arrangements may be necessary.

There are examples of excellent practice happening around the country as demonstrated in both the Scottish Executive's Transition Video (issued to every school) and the materials on the website. <http://www.dyslexiatransition.org/>

School clubs, cluster group clubs, summer schools, secondary/primary liaison, secondary/primary visits to meet new classmates and teachers, visits by former pupils to the primary school to talk about the secondary experience, Support for Learning led enhanced transition arrangement for individuals, are some of the initiatives in place.

Differences in Primary/Secondary transition flag up the disparity in provision for children with dyslexia across the country. It is to be hoped that as more schools view the Transition Video, the patchiness of the children's experiences will be replaced by quality provision in equal measure across the country.

Special Classes

In a staged approach to dyslexia special classes would have a place at the top of the pyramid. Some authorities have these. They are called by many names: Language Centres, Language Classes, Reading Classes or Reading Units.

The stages of dyslexia support can be progressed through at different rates and for different lengths of time before it becomes apparent that a child needs to move on to the next stage in order to have needs fully met.

Stage 1

This is Support in Class with appropriate adjustment and differentiation of the curriculum. This in-school support meets the needs of most children with dyslexia especially where class teachers have undertaken additional training and additional resources are provided.

Stage 2

This is Support for Learning or dyslexia specialist intervention and takes many forms and is provided at varying levels and degrees:

- Support teacher intervention either in-class or by extraction from class
- Providing programmes for one-to-one learning assistant input

Many children with dyslexia flourish at this stage.

Stage 3

Some authorities provide a Dyslexia Service made up of a few highly specialised dyslexia teachers. They can offer advice or input when a child has had a high level of input over time and has failed to respond to stage 1 or 2 interventions. Their service is there for schools when the in-house expert or Support for learning teacher comes up against a particularly severe or entrenched case of dyslexia or a child who fails to make any progress despite appropriate, long term, additional support.

These services often provide in-house continuing professional development (CPD) courses for the authority and because of ongoing staff changes, may provide a running programme at introductory, intermediate, advanced and maintenance levels. Staff in these services are often well regarded locally especially when they have a proven track record giving them a high “street credibility” factor.

Other authorities place Psychological Services in charge of organising assessment of dyslexia and of providing the training and resources needed by class and Support for Learning teachers to meet an individual's additional needs in school.

Stage 4

This may be a Special Class, or Language Class, or Reading Class provided on an area basis for children (from different schools) whose dyslexia continues to have a severe impact on their learning. There is usually some form of gate-keeping system at authority level. These can be traced back to the 1960's and have, over the years, provided significant support for children with dyslexia, especially those about to move to secondary school. Many authorities are now offering such provision although some authorities have closed these Units in favour of additional in-school support.

Factors that must be taken account of in creating a language class for children with dyslexia are summarised well by Rack and Rooms (1997) in their 'Hackney Mornings Revisited' article in the 'Special Children' Magazine:

We learned that:

- *the provision is not appropriate for all children with dyslexia*
- *it works best for children whose dyslexia is the primary presenting learning difficulty*
- *if a literacy difficulty has gone unaddressed for many years then problems of co-operation and behaviour can take over*
- *the composition of the group must be taken account of, as the teacher must be able to give individual attention to all children*
- *the range of difficulty within the group is a factor*
- *school support must be complementary*
- *children must be physically and mentally robust enough to cope with a split campus – some children with dyslexia need a more sheltered environment and cannot cope with travelling twice a week or so to a special provision."*

In a research paper on Reading Units or special reading classes, Houston (1997) said: 'Reading Unit children are seen to gain in confidence and self-esteem beyond the level that literacy gains would suggest possible. Pupils' comments link this to “being somewhere special” and “with children who are just the same as me”. Valuable factors of Reading Unit provision, then, are the location and the peer group. The access to specialised equipment and resources in a small group setting, among similar children in a positive learning environment lead children to believe that something very different to any input they have had in the past, something very special, is taking place and their expectations are high.'

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IN UPPER PRIMARY

The balance of the three types of support is crucial in upper primary. Social and emotional support has never been more important than in the early stages of adolescence. This is where children are looking closely for the basic human qualities in their teachers and if the teachers are going to meet the unique, personal and individual needs of each child with dyslexia they must think 'differentiation with a difference'.

What is needed now is differentiation of the interpersonal relationship. For many teachers this will come naturally. It means being a supportive adult. The requirements of this are:

- honesty and openness
- optimism
- availability
- advocacy
- maintaining a positive regard
- helping the child feel safe
- actively listening
- showing real interest
- following child's interests
- seeing learning in mistakes
- holding feeling for the child
- preserving the dignity of the child
- allowing thinking time
- valuing the child
- removing any guilt or blame
- encouraging independence
- assuming it can be done

Children with dyslexia who are respected as individuals and treated in a supportive, empathic manner do seem to be much better at coping with their difficulties and utilising strategies for daily living. The children whose teachers have not recognised or supported their dyslexia – or who are unaware of the impact that dyslexia may have on learning - are often the ones who cannot come to terms with their difficulties in later life. They often have great difficulty developing coping strategies and may continue to be burdened by a feeling of responsibility for their failure.

One severely dyslexic young adult, who had attended a Reading Unit for two years at P6 and P7 reported:

'In thirteen years at school I had 2 excellent teachers, one at a reading unit, and one a specialist dyslexia support teacher. The rest were all dreadful for me. Of the dreadful ones 3 treated me as if I was a human being and 1 actually spoke to me as an equal and made me laugh. I worked really hard for him because he liked me and I liked him. That made a big difference.'

It is hard to believe that a child with dyslexia could go through 7 years of primary schooling and 6 years of secondary schooling and that only 2 of the child's 40 teachers understood and provided appropriate tuition. Is it any wonder that many children with dyslexia are labelled as uncooperative or not interested and 'drop out' before completing their statutory education?

READING LIST

Assessing Dyslexia toolkit link (2010)
<http://www.frameworkforinclusion.org/AssessingDyslexia/>

Backhouse G & Morris K (eds) *Dyslexia? Assessing and Reporting* (2005, Hodder-Murray in association with PATOSS)

Henderson, A *Maths for the Dyslexic: A Practical Guide* (ISBN 9781853465345)

MacKay, N *Removing Dyslexia as a Barrier to Achievement* (SEN Marketing Dyslexia Friendly Schools Toolkit, 2005, ISBN 9781903842058)

Packiam Alloway, T *Improving Working Memory, Supporting Students' Learning* (2011, Sage, ISBN 9781849207485)

Plummer, D M, *Helping Children to Build Self-Esteem* (2nd Edition, ISBN 9781843104889)

Reid, G *Dyslexia: A Complete Guide for Parents* (2004, Wiley)

Reid, G *Dyslexia: A Practitioner's Handbook* (4th Edition, 2009, Wiley-Blackwell)

Reid, G *Learning Styles and Inclusion* (ISBN 97814112910644)

Reid, G & Green S, *100 Ideas for Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia* (ISBN 9780826493989)

Riddick, B *Living with Dyslexia* (David Fulton publishers, ISBN 9780415477581)

Ryden, M *Dyslexia How Would I Cope?* (ISBN 9781853023859)

Saunders, Dr K & White, A *How Dyslexics Learn –Grasping the Nettle* (ISBN 9780953931514)

Wilkins, A *Reading Through Colour* (ISBN 9780470851166)

Winter, M *Asperger Syndrome, What Teachers Need to Know* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, ISBN 978843101437)

PHOTOCOPIABLE

Dyslexia Indicators at the Upper Primary Stage (Pupils ages 8 – 12)

Dyslexia is not only a problem with reading and spelling. The problem may be perceptual, auditory receptive, memory based or a processing deficit.

Class teachers are not expected to be able to diagnose these difficulties as such, but some general indications are listed below. If several of these are observed frequently in class please tick the relevant boxes, enter details and any additional information and pass to Support for Learning and Management for further investigation.

Pupil Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

- Still has difficulty with reading
- Reads adequately but slowly, making careless errors, and tiring in extended reading situations
- Has considerable spelling difficulties
- Has difficulty copying accurately from the blackboard or a book
- Has failed to accumulate a core of common key words
- Still confuses b/d or was/saw in reading and writing
- Still has difficulty pronouncing longer common words
- Does written work very slowly
- Misses out sounds or syllables in words, spoken and/or written
- Has difficulty memorising number bonds and tables
- Reverses numbers, eg 36 or 63
- Still confuses left/right and up/down
- Still has difficulty with the sequence of days/months/the alphabet
- Has poorly formed, poorly spaced immature handwriting
- Has difficulty remembering oral instructions
- Frequently appears confused/ processes only parts of the lesson
- Has word finding difficulties
- Good orally but written work disappointing
- Poor organisation and presentation; forgets books and homework
- Behaviour difficulties, frustration, poor self-image
- Easily distracted – either hyperactive or daydreaming
- Clumsy, unpopular in team games, dislikes P.E.
- Other – please give details

Teacher: _____

Action requested:

- investigation and advice regarding support
- dyslexia assessment
- profile of additional needs

PHOTOCOPIABLE

DYSLEXIA - SELF-ESTEEM ISSUES

The **child with dyslexia** needs a great deal of support and encouragement to help face up to, talk about and analyse those confusing and conflicting emotions and behaviours that can result from what is often called the 'hidden' disability.

Dyslexic pupils, unless demonstrating a particular talent, may go through the school system never knowing the experience of success.

Pupil: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate any of the following that you suspect this pupil may be experiencing:

- lack of self-confidence
- poor self image
- a fear of new situations
- fatigue from the huge effort needed to complete an ordinary task that others can tackle automatically
- disappointment at the disproportionate return for their effort
- confusion regarding their place in the 'pecking order' of the class, which often leads to isolation or identity problems
- humiliation as their difficulties lead to embarrassing situations
- despair and exhaustion from the level of alertness and forward planning needed to sustain intricate coping strategies
- Please note any other difficulties you have observed in this pupil and return to Support for Learning

Signed: _____

Summary of Support Strategies for Children with Dyslexia

From *Supporting Students with Dyslexia in Secondary School* (Thomson, M, Routledge, 2008)

Reading for Information

- Try to ensure that print is not the only source of important information
- Highlight key information
- Use teacher-led class lessons
- Use small group discussion
- Set up tutorial groups
- Use video, audio or ICT presentation
- Give specific line, page and paragraph references
- Give source references for questions
- Encourage tinted overlay use
- Ensure source materials are clearly legible
- Enlarge print and increase line spacing

Reading Aloud

- **Never** ask the pupil to read aloud - *but* accept as a volunteer
- **Key information** should be read aloud only by a teacher or competent reader

Using Reading Exercises for Testing Subject Knowledge - alternatives

- Set practical tasks as tests
- Instigate teacher-pupil discussion
- Allow use of tinted overlay/reading ruler
- Provide the opportunity for drawing up, or completing charts, or making illustrations

Writing Tasks

- Never issue blank notebooks/paper
- Arrange transcription of written work
- Provide copies of diagrams, charts etc
- Provide a framework for extended writing
- Encourage writing for later transcription
- Allow alternatives to handwriting:
 - scribe
 - lap top computer
 - word processor
 - Dictaphone
 - voice recorder

Copying

- Provide printed notes in advance
- Make photocopies of notes
- Scan text into computer
- Identify a copying partner
- Ensure that copies are made as soon as possible after a lesson

Inappropriate Behaviour

- Check whether learners are seeking clarification of printed instructions
- Discuss the nature of set tasks before embarking on individual work
- Check that instructions are fully understood
- Ask pupils to repeat instructions aloud
- Encourage all pupils to work together

Poor Organising Ability

- Do not give complex verbal instructions
- Give only one instruction at a time
- Structure set tasks
- Be realistic in setting tasks
- Encourage correct use of homework diary and involve parents
- Provide the opportunity for practice or rehearsals of tasks
- Do not automatically set unfinished reading or writing as homework

Effects of Fatigue

- Give short, well-defined tasks
- Keep task structure simple
- Set time limits for tasks
- Teach appropriate pacing
- Vary the types of tasks
- Change activities often to create time for 'rests'
- Set clearly defined targets
- Create an opportunity for purposeful movement

Poor Self Image

- Remain aware of pupils' difficulties
- Give praise for work well done
- Encourage oral contributions
- Do not ask to read aloud or copy

Discussion

- Provide a structure for discussion

Different Learning Styles

- Present information in a variety of modes - video, ICT, teacher talk etc
- Present information in a variety of formats - text, tables, diagrams etc

Number

- Issue square/lined paper
- Allow the use of calculators for all number work
- Provide training in the use of calculators

Symbols and shapes

- Issue templates of shapes to emphasise their different properties

Practical tasks

- Provide roller/sticky rulers
- Provide left handed scissors/tools /instruments where appropriate

Mathematical language and technical terms

- Teach mathematical/technical terms
- Introduce a subject word bank
- Explain technical terms

- Highlight everyday words that have specific technical meanings
- Provide support for reading and writing eg read instructions aloud
- Check language of assignments as well as mathematical content

- Mark on content not presentation of written work
- Create opportunities for alternatives to written responses/presentations

- Encourage all pupils to suggest explanations/test hypotheses

- Allow opportunities for active learning by - discussion, role play, research /investigation etc

- Make addition and multiplication grids, ready-reckoners available
- Use a variety of approaches (including computer games) to develop and reinforce number facts

- Provide ample opportunity for revision and reinforcement

- Provide transparent rulers/ instruments for reading scales etc
- Enlarge graphs to make small details more accessible

Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School is a series of titles for primary school teachers throughout Scotland. They are intended to inform parents and teachers about how dyslexia might affect a child in order to enable them to remove the barriers to learning that they often experience.

The pack of 8 titles:

- Is an authoritative resource to help teachers when making provision to meet the additional needs of pupils with dyslexia as described in the Scottish Government's Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice 2010 (chapter 2)
- Provides class teachers with practical information and helpful tips on how to support pupils with dyslexia achieve academic success in the Curriculum for Excellence (literacy and numeracy)
- Offers specific guidance for Support for Learning teachers and school managers on their roles in supporting pupils with dyslexia
- Explores the need for direct and open communication with parents of children with dyslexia
- Includes handy photocopiable material in each of the eight titles
- Can be viewed online at www.supportingdyslexicpupils.org and downloaded free of charge from www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia at Primary School is an adaptation by the committee members of Dyslexia Scotland South East of an *original work by Meg Houston*

'There are many aspects relating to dyslexia that can be misunderstood unless a clear set of materials, such as this pack, are available. These booklets are therefore timely and essential'

Dr Gavin Reid

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