

How are children and young people with dyslexia supported in Wiltshire schools?

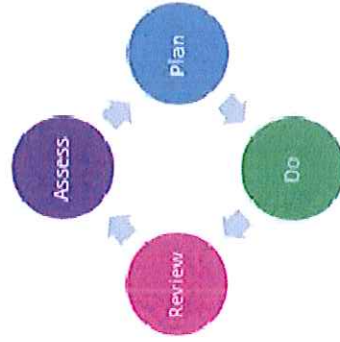
All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual children and young people who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) –teachers have the responsibility for ensuring all learners make progress.

High quality inclusive teaching that is differentiated for individual children and young people, is the first step in responding to those who are experiencing literacy difficulty.

When a child or young person makes limited progress, the teacher and SENCO should quickly arrange catch-up teaching or other evidence-based intervention, such that the child makes progress again. The parents/carers and child or young person should be involved in planning support.

Intervention should be individualised: using the child or young person's identified strengths and needs; based on reliable evidence of 'what works'; carried out efficiently; and reviewed in an agreed time scale.

This is called the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle that makes up the graduated response.



How else does the Wiltshire Specialist SEN Service support schools?

In addition to working with individual pupils, the Specialist SEN Service provides up-to-date training and information to schools. We support schools in developing differentiation and high quality inclusive teaching, raising the awareness of dyslexia and literacy difficulties.

Where can I find further information?

Further information can be found on the *Wiltshire Local Offer* website: www.wiltshirelocaloffer.org.uk

Information is also available from the *Wiltshire Parent Carer Council*. This is a voluntary organisation, managed by parents and carers for parents and carers: www.wiltshireparentcarercouncil.co.uk

Local dyslexia associations include the *Wiltshire Dyslexia Association* and the *Marlborough and District Dyslexia Association*. See:

www.marlboroughdistrictdyslexia.org
www.wiltshiredyslexiaassociation.org



Supporting Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties in Wiltshire: Information for young people, schools, parents and carers

This leaflet aims to promote a shared understanding of reading and literacy difficulties and how they are supported. This leaflet is for parents, carers and those who work with children and young people in Wiltshire schools.

Dyslexia in Wiltshire: what is dyslexia?

Wiltshire Council's Specialist SEN Service recognises dyslexia, using a definition supported by evidence from the British Psychological Society and leading dyslexia associations:

Dyslexia is a learning difference characterised by widely-acknowledged strengths in: holistic (big picture) thinking; spatial skills; 3-D visualisation; lateral thinking; and problem-solving skills.

Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty.

Difficulties persist at the 'word level' (i.e. the reading and spelling of **individual** words) despite appropriate educational opportunities and well-founded intervention.

Dyslexia can occur across pupils of all abilities.

Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.

Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor coordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not by themselves markers of dyslexia.

What is the incidence of dyslexia?

Nationally, it is estimated that around 10% of children and young people show some signs of dyslexia, particularly when it is present in other members of the family. Around five per cent of the population experience moderate to severe dyslexia.

How is dyslexia identified in Wiltshire?

Wiltshire Council Specialist SEN Service recognises dyslexia as an **educational** rather than medical identification.

Who can identify dyslexia?

As set out in the 2014 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, every school, free school or academy is required to identify and address the Special Educational Needs (SEN) of the pupils that they support. This includes dyslexia and literacy difficulties.

The identification of SEN should be built into the overall approach to monitoring progress and development of pupils, called a 'graduated response'. A graduated response is important since it builds a learning profile of strengths and areas to develop over

time. This is considered preferential to 'one-off' testing, separate from the learning environment. The *Wiltshire Graduated Response to SEND Support* is a tool which should be used by schools to build such a learning profile, to target support more effectively.

In addition, primary schools can use the *Wiltshire Early Support for Dyslexia (WESford)* resources. These well-founded materials help schools to identify and support issues with early literacy development.

When can dyslexia be identified?

For some children, dyslexia can be identified at an early age. For others, dyslexia becomes more evident as they develop, and how a child or young person responds to support can be a further indication of the severity of their learning needs.

Essentially, children and young people should be supported **as soon as they need it**; it is not necessary to wait until dyslexia is identified before intervention can begin.

When are specialists, such as educational psychologists or specialist teachers involved?

When a child or young person makes limited progress from their starting point despite evidence-based SEND support, the school should consider involving specialists as quickly as practicable. Parents must take part in any decision to involve specialists.

Schools may use their own specialists but in Wiltshire, every school can also draw on local authority specialists such as specialist advisory teachers or, where an EHCP is indicated, educational psychologists. These professionals hold appropriate qualifications to identify and support literacy

difficulties, but essentially work to identify individual differences and needs.

The identification of individual needs recognises that a dyslexic profile can differ widely from person to person, and that a 'blanket' identification of dyslexia can lead to overly generalised intervention or support that is not sufficiently tailored.

Finally, the Specialist SEN Service advises that any identification of dyslexia must be clearly understood by all, and especially by the child or young person. Importantly, identification of learning differences should be used to build on 'what's working' and what the child or young person can do, rather than solely on the remediation of difficulty.

Are dyslexia assessments carried out by independent professionals recognised?

Specialist services are not limited to educational psychologists and specialist advisory teachers. Sometimes, a parent may seek an independent assessment from a Private Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher/Assessor.

The Specialist SEN Service recommends that schools refer to independent reports when assessment is undertaken by appropriately qualified professionals, using a process that clearly relates to the child or young person's learning environment, carrying out tasks typically required of them.

We would also expect that any report, regardless of source, contains the views of the child or young person along with those who work most closely with them - their teachers and SENCOs, for example.

