



**Oxfordshire**  
Partners in Learning

Produced by the Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team (OXSiT)

# Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties

Policy and Advice 2022





**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

# **Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy and Advice 2022**



Recommendations are made for intervention programmes that have been used successfully in schools across the county. Each child is an individual and provision should be carefully matched to need: some pupils will fit comfortably into an intervention group, while others may need individually tailored support.

This document, in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Guidance for SEN Support, will help schools plan the best provision for their pupils. Advice is also given on building school capacity to support literacy difficulties, with strategies for inclusive teaching and effective ways of working with parents.

The Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy and Advice aims to provide schools with evidence-based guidance on the assessment and support of pupils with literacy difficulties. The types of difficulty that pupils may experience, including dyslexia, are discussed, and suggestions made for assessment materials that will help schools analyse barriers to learning. The Oxfordshire Literacy Assessment Pack (LAPack) is included.

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# Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy

## Introduction

The Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy and Advice is designed to give schools clear guidance on supporting children and young people with literacy difficulties.

## Principles

Oxfordshire Local Authority recognises that literacy difficulties create a barrier to learning and achievement. The principles of good practice are:

- Teachers take responsibility for the learning of all pupils, including those with literacy difficulties.
- Teachers take notice of individual differences and adjust their teaching accordingly.
- Class teaching is inclusive and promotes independent learning skills.
- Detailed assessment informs teaching and provision.
- Assessment is culturally and contextually unbiased, and literacy difficulties are identified irrespective of language, culture, socio-economic status, race and gender.
- Intervention and support are evidence-based and rigorously evaluated to ensure that it has sufficient impact.
- Early Years teachers are aware of the risk factors for literacy difficulties and identify pupils at risk as early as possible, so that intervention occurs as early as possible to prevent pupils falling further behind and frustration impacting on behaviour.
- Pupils with literacy difficulties make accelerated progress in order to catch up with their peers.
- Pupils' feelings about their difficulties are taken into account and pupils are involved in their own target setting and planning their own provision.
- Parents' concerns are listened to and parents are kept fully informed about their child's difficulties and the support that the school is providing.
- Teachers and support staff are trained to recognise and support pupils with literacy difficulties, including dyslexia.

## The Literacy Difficulties Advice gives schools guidance on:

- The causes of literacy difficulties and other related difficulties.
- Assessment and monitoring of literacy difficulties, including early identification and assessment of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- Teaching and learning, including Teaching Assistant support.
- Interventions and ICT to support literacy.
- Exam Access Arrangements.
- Building capacity of the school to support pupils with literacy difficulties.
- Working with parents and pupils themselves to plan their learning.
- Extra support that is available to schools from the Local Authority.

# Literacy Difficulties Advice

Low literacy rates are associated with low educational attainment, social exclusion, poor physical and mental health, offending, unemployment and lack of access to training and skills. Low literacy undermines individual confidence, happiness and resilience. Research shows how patterns of achievement are set in families during a child's early years.

- At the end of primary school: 1 in 8 children fail to master the basics of reading and 1 in 5 the basics of writing (Fish in the Tree 2014)
- In 2019 38.2% of students attained below grade 4 in GCSE English. (Student Performance Analysis)

Findings from the [National Literacy Trust Annual Survey \(2019\)](#) show that:

- Children who say they have a book of their own are six times more likely to read above the level expected for their age than their peers who don't own a book (22% vs. 3.6%).
- 383,755 children and young people in the UK don't have a book of their own
- Disadvantaged children are less likely than their peers to own a book (6% vs 9.3%)
- The gap in book ownership between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers had almost halved in the previous six years (from 6.1 percentage points in 2013 to 3.3 percentage points in 2019)
- At age 14, children who enjoy reading have an average reading age of 15.3 years, while those who don't enjoy reading have an average reading age of just 12 years; a difference of 3.3 years.
- Children and young people who are the most engaged with literacy have better mental wellbeing than their peers who are the least engaged (Mental Wellbeing Index scores of 7.9/10 vs 6.6/10)
- 16.4% of adults in England, or 7.1 million people, can be described as having 'very poor literacy skills.' Adults with poor literacy skills will be locked out of the job market and, as a parent, they won't be able to support their child's learning.
- 1 in 6 people in the UK struggle with literacy, with their level being below that expected of an 11-year-old.
- 6 million UK adults are functionally illiterate, meaning they cannot read a medicine bottle, food labels or fill out a job application form. 'Functional literacy' is described in the UK as Level 1. This is deemed to be the level of literacy necessary to cope with the literacy demands of everyday life. It is equivalent to a marginal pass at GCSE. Below this level is considered 'Entry level'. It is estimated that 14.9% of the population have entry level literacy and may not be able to read a bus timetable or check their wage slips. (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills: The 2011 Skills for Life Survey)



This Literacy Difficulties Advice is designed to give schools guidance on including pupils with literacy difficulties in the curriculum and for providing support for pupils to overcome their difficulties. There is advice on working with individual pupils, as well as on building school capacity to deal with literacy difficulties more generally.

**Aims**

To provide schools with the advice and guidance they need to meet the diversity of children's literacy learning needs through appropriate provision in mainstream settings.

To promote partnership with parents

To enable schools to provide a range of high-quality support for pupils with literacy difficulties by:

- Raising awareness of literacy difficulties in all schools by ensuring that all staff are trained to support pupils in the classroom.
- Ensuring that parents and carers are fully informed about pupils' learning and that parental concerns are acknowledged and addressed.
- Improving assessment and intervention practice so that children's learning differences are identified, and teaching is adjusted as early as possible in a pupil's school career and throughout all key stages.
- Making teachers aware of further training opportunities.

# Reasons for Literacy Difficulties

For some children, biological factors will adversely affect their ability to acquire literacy skills:

- global developmental delay
- poor hearing or vision
- poor short term or working memory difficulties
- specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia or developmental coordination delay (DCD)/dyspraxia
- poor spoken language skills – receptive and/or expressive
- poor attention

Literacy is built upon language, so if a child has poor language skills or has had poor experience of language, they will be approaching literacy from a low starting point. An assessment of language skills can often inform provision for language work, and it is essential that any literacy provision is implemented in the context of also addressing wider language deficits.

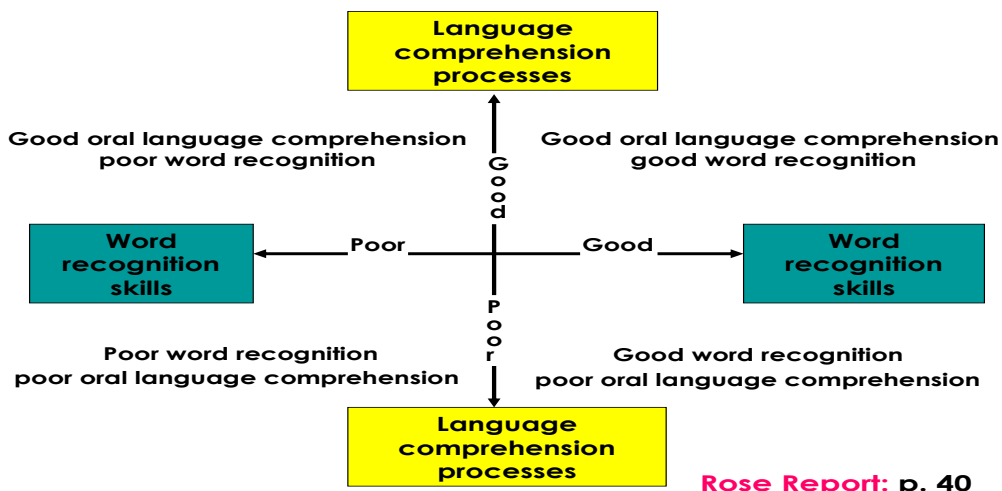
For some children environmental factors will impact on their literacy skills:

- lack of experience of literacy and books at home
- lack of preschool experience
- poor school attendance
- cultural factors
- lack of appropriate teaching
- low self esteem

It is impossible for schools to make up for what pupils may have missed out on at home but reading to, and sharing books with, children is a vital part of preparing them for literacy.

## The Simple View of Reading

The diagram below illustrates the interaction between language comprehension and word recognition skills. Depending upon which quadrant they fall into, pupils may need support in both areas.



## **Dyslexia**

'**Dyslexia**' comes from the Greek, meaning 'difficulty with words' and is used to describe a learning difficulty that hinders the acquisition of literacy skills. However, there are a number of definitions.

The British Psychological Society website states that:

*Dyslexia is a relatively common condition epitomised by chronic difficulties with reading, writing, and spelling. It can be inherited (**Developmental Dyslexia**) or can be caused by damage to the brain (**Acquired Dyslexia**).*

The Equality Act of 2010 officially defined Dyslexia as a disability, and it is estimated that around 10% of the UK population are dyslexic to some extent, with around 4% suffering from severe difficulties and impairment.

Individuals with dyslexia may require extra support in school or in the workplace, and current legislation requires all employers and educators to provide reasonable adjustments for students and employees who may have dyslexia.

More information is available through the [NHS](#) or the [British Dyslexia Association](#).

The British Dyslexia Association has adopted the following definition of dyslexia from the [Rose report \(2009\)](#)

*Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory, and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration, and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia. A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention. (Rose, J. (2009) *Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties*, DCSF, pp.9-10)*

*In addition to these characteristics, the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) acknowledges the visual and auditory processing difficulties that some individuals with dyslexia can experience and points out that dyslexic readers can show a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process. Some also have strengths in other areas, such as design, problem solving, creative skills, interactive skills, and oral skills. (BDA 2010)*

Dyslexia is a continuum with no clear cut off point. The characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in:

- identifying and manipulating the sounds in words (phonological awareness)
- retaining an ordered sequence of verbal material (verbal memory)
- processing familiar verbal information such as letters and digits (verbal processing speed)
- visual memory, tracking and processing

Dyslexia occurs in pupils of all intellectual abilities and research has shown that it is not valid to identify dyslexia on the basis of a discrepancy between cognitive ability and attainment in literacy.

If it is known that good quality intervention has been put in place and the pupil has a persistent difficulty, this suggests that the pupil's difficulties are of a dyslexic nature. Dyslexia is not a medical diagnosis and can be identified by monitoring the pupil over time. Detailed assessments and screening tools can help teachers understand a child or young person's difficulties, but a diagnostic assessment must be carried out by a certified assessor. However, schools should be able to provide appropriate support and provision without a formal diagnosis, as long as the CYP's needs are fully understood and addressed. The Monitoring and Assessment section will help schools identify suitable assessments for clarifying needs.

Schools should use the [Oxfordshire Guidance for SEN Support](#) to assess pupils' needs. The Initial Screening Tool in the guidance can be used to identify which areas of learning are causing most difficulty and more detailed descriptors help to analyse difficulties further. For pupils with difficulties around literacy it is important to look at the descriptors for Cognition and Learning-Literacy and Maths. The SEN Support guidance also gives ideas for further assessment and possible intervention.

[Oxfordshire Early Years SEN Guidance](#)  
[Oxfordshire SEN Guidance for Schools](#)

### **Co-occurring Difficulties**

Dyslexia is essentially a difficulty with word level literacy skills; however, it may co-occur with other difficulties. For instance, a large proportion of pupils with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) also have dyslexic difficulties. Other difficulties often co-occurring with dyslexia are with:

- language
- motor co-ordination
- mental calculation
- concentration
- personal organisation

These difficulties are not in themselves markers of dyslexia. When assessing pupils, it is important to look across the whole range of their abilities and difficulties to be able to tailor provision to meet their specific needs.

Development Coordination Delay (DCD) or Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia are recognised as separate specific learning difficulties but can also co-occur with dyslexia.

### **Developmental Coordination Delay (DCD) or Dyspraxia**

*Developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a condition affecting physical co-ordination that causes a child to perform less well than expected in daily activities for his or her age and appear to move clumsily. ([NHS](#))*

DCD will affect a child or young person's ability to carry out physical tasks, and difficulties with planning and organisation can also impact on learning more widely. Occupational Therapists recommend that children and young people with DCD should practise the skills they need for everyday life, rather than doing abstract physical exercises. They need opportunities to practise skills repeatedly until they are embedded. Visual timetables and checklists can be used to develop independence, for instance, changing for PE, and by decreasing support incrementally as each small skill is mastered. Support may be needed for such tasks as cutting things out or drawing shapes in maths. A focus on content rather than on presentation when assessing work will help foster self-esteem and confidence. Many children and young people will develop alternative strategies to cope with their difficulties if they are supported to develop independence through scaffolding and practice.

Use the advice and activities on the [Oxfordshire Occupational Therapy](#) website. If problems persist despite focused intervention, make a referral to the Occupational Therapy Service for assessment and advice: [oxonchildrens.therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:oxonchildrens.therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

The Oxfordshire branch of the [Dyspraxia Foundation](#) run activities for children with dyspraxia and their families.

### **Dyscalculia**

[British Dyslexia Association](#) definition.

*Dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with mathematics. It will be unexpected in relation to age, level of education and experience and occurs across all ages and abilities.*

*Mathematics difficulties are best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and they have many causal factors. Dyscalculia falls at one end of the spectrum and will be distinguishable from other maths issues due to the severity of difficulties with number sense, including subitising, symbolic and non-symbolic magnitude comparison, and ordering. It can occur singly but often co-occurs with other specific learning difficulties, mathematics anxiety and medical conditions. (Definition adopted by the British Dyslexia Association 2019)*

There are several reasons why an individual may have difficulty with maths. The range of contributing factors include some factors which affect learning more generally such as meta-cognition, language and working memory, and some factors which are specific to maths such as understanding number/quantity, understanding mathematical concepts, and learning mathematical procedures and facts. Understanding a pupil's difficulties is best achieved through individual assessment, where the teacher is able to discuss with the pupil their thinking and the rationale for their answers so that misunderstandings can be addressed.

*Dyscalculia* is the name given to a condition that affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills. The research into this dyscalculia is on-going but suggests that there is a deficit in 'numerosity' or 'number sense'. Dyscalculic learners may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts and lack an intuitive grasp of numbers. Even if they produce a correct answer, they may do so mechanically and without confidence. They have little intuitive feel for numbers and little understanding of concepts and principles of logic and often find it difficult to learn number facts and procedures.

Arithmetical development is dependent on the ability to 'subitise'. Subitising is the instant recognition of the numerosity of a set of objects, for example to see that there are 3 people without needing to count them. Therefore, children with dyscalculia may count all items in a set because they are unable to subitise; eg for  $5 + 3$  they would be unable to hold up one hand and three fingers but would need to count them all out one by one. Many children can become stuck at this developmental stage if finger flashing and subitisation are not developed at home or within EY/KS1. A dyscalculic child may find subitising and retaining dot patterns extremely difficult even with consistent support.

The following are generally agreed to be symptoms of dyscalculia but may also be present in children with more general mathematical learning difficulties:

- Has difficulty when counting backwards.
- Has a poor sense of number and estimation.
- Has difficulty in remembering 'basic' facts, despite many hours of practice/rote learning.
- Has no strategy to compensate for lack of recall, other than to use counting.
- Has difficulty in understanding place value and the role of zero in the Arabic/Hindu number system.
- Has no sense of whether any answers that are obtained are right or nearly right.
- Tends to be slower to perform calculations. (Therefore, give less examples, rather than more time.)
- Forgets mathematical procedures, especially as they become more complex, for example 'long' division.
- Addition is often the default operation. The other operations are usually very poorly executed (or avoided altogether).
- Avoids tasks that are perceived as difficult and likely to result in a wrong answer.

- Weak mental arithmetic skills.
- High levels of mathematics anxiety.

Further information can be found on the [British Dyslexia Association](#) website.

Research estimates that about 5% of the population will have dyscalculia, but that in the UK 25% may have more general mathematical difficulties.

Pupils with dyscalculic difficulties will need opportunities for a good deal of over-learning. There needs to be an emphasis on helping pupils develop strategies for solving calculations and problems, a development of 'number sense' and place value, and experiences provided to help them develop images of number that will help them understand the concepts. Many maths books and sites specifically recommend Cuisenaire rods as structured apparatus to help children with dyscalculia develop understanding. Ronit Bird and Jane Emerson are authors with very practical ideas for working with children with dyscalculia to develop number sense. As with any provision, adjustments need to be tailored to the needs of the individual.

'Dyscalculia friendly' classrooms promote models and images to develop understanding, overlearning and use of working walls to support memory and an emphasis on helping children to use what they know to derive further number facts. A classroom where maths is seen as fun, where the explanation rather than the answer is valued and where speed is not over-emphasised is helpful in reducing maths anxiety.

There are many common indicators between dyspraxia and dyslexia and many children present with elements of both. Dyslexic pupils tend towards poor organisation, poor spatial awareness and some difficulties with social situations. However, this is by no means true for all pupils with dyslexia, or necessarily for all those with dyspraxia. Both conditions have a wide range of characteristics with a significant cross over.

The Oxfordshire Guidance for SEN Support will help teachers identify individual pupil's particular strengths and difficulties. There are Dyscalculia Screeners on the market, but the Sandwell Numeracy Tests (GL Assessment) are useful in identifying areas of maths in which pupils need support.

### **Poor Comprehension**

Research has shown that pupils with poor reading comprehension often have even poorer verbal comprehension, so it is important to put some language provision in for these pupils.

A full guide and suggested activities are given in the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) [Reading Comprehension](#) document. This covers five areas for the development of comprehension skills:

- establishing context and accessing prior knowledge
- vocabulary
- sequencing

- inference
- prediction

### **Poor Short Term and Working Memory**

Children and young people with literacy difficulties will often have difficulty with short term and working memory. 'Short term memory' allows us to hold a piece of information for a short time, e.g., remembering and repeating a few digits, whilst 'working memory' allows us to hold and manipulate the information, e.g. reverse the digits. Learning is much harder for pupils who struggle with these areas of memory. These pupils will need tasks breaking down and scaffolded to decrease the 'cognitive load' on their working memory. For things they need to remember, such as high frequency words, spellings, times tables etc. children will need the opportunity to over-learn skills in a multi-sensory way that enables them to use their sensory pathways to embed their learning.



# Monitoring and Assessment

## Tracking pupils

School tracking systems allow teachers to monitor pupil progress closely. Any pupil failing to make progress should be assessed as outlined in the **Assessment of Individuals** section below and support put in accordingly. Pupils with SEND to be making accelerated progress in order to catch up with their peers. An Individual Pupil Tracker can be used to track pupils through interventions and monitor progress as they move through the school. Using a **Pupil Profile** is a useful way of sharing information about a pupil's learning with staff and parents. An example of a pupil profile for a child with SPLD is provided on.

## Early Identification and Intervention

Early identification is a key factor in improving outcomes for children. Children's brains are very flexible, and intervention put in at a young age can benefit pupils at a neurological level and improve their life-long learning and achievement.

Use of the [Early Years Foundation Profile, Development Matters](#) and the [Oxfordshire Guidance for SEN Support in EYFS](#) will help teachers to understand pupils' strengths and difficulties and help identify areas where they may need additional support.

For older children, whose needs are being picked up later, the [Oxfordshire SEN Guidance for Schools](#) will be needed.

These assessment documents encourage teachers to notice learning differences from the earliest years in school and to adjust their teaching accordingly. Early identification of literacy difficulties is important, and teaching should be adjusted from Foundation Stage onwards.

The key risk indicators for literacy difficulties are:

- speech difficulties post 5 years
- poor phonological skills, or difficulty hearing the sound in words
- difficulty acquiring letter knowledge – both sounds and letter names
- poor phoneme awareness and difficulty sounding out words for reading
- poor ability to segment and manipulate phonemes for spelling

**It is better to monitor and support pupils who may be 'at risk' in this area, than to delay intervention and allow them to fall further behind.**

## Example of a Pupil Profile for a pupil with dyslexic difficulties



Example pupil  
profile for dyslexia.c

**Example of an Individual Pupil Tracker for a pupil with dyslexic difficulties**



Example of an Individual Pupil Trac

## Assessment of Individuals

The school needs to build a full picture of the pupil's strengths and difficulties, and this is often only reached by collecting assessment evidence over time.

### Class based literacy assessments:

- Assessment of progress against age related expectations and National Curriculum objectives
- Day to day assessment against learning objectives
- Achievement of individual learning targets
- Observation of their reading and writing skills
- Analysis of written work
- Information from parents e.g. family history

If the pupil is not making progress, the class or English teacher should use the [Oxfordshire Guidance for SEN Support](#), and discuss with the SENCO.

## More Detailed Assessment

**Running Reading Records and Miscue Analysis** provide evidence of how well a pupil is reading independently. They are an invaluable way of assessing and analysing the reading strategies a pupil is using or neglecting, giving diagnostic information about a pupil's reading strengths and difficulties. Learning objectives can be identified to target the development of specific strategies. An analysis of the accuracy rate is useful for ensuring that a pupil is reading books at the appropriate level, neither too difficult nor too easy but offering them a suitable level of challenge.

To work out the accuracy rate for a passage or short book divide the number of words read by the number of errors:

$$\frac{\text{number of words read}}{\text{number of errors}} = \text{accuracy ratio}$$



Error ratio  
table.docx

## Criterion-Based Assessment

The **Oxfordshire Literacy Assessment Pack (LAPack)** included in the additional resources with this guidance, is a criterion-based assessment that helps to unpick how the pupil is progressing with the basic skills of reading. It is recommended for use with pupils in KS1 and KS2 and for some pupils in KS3.

It contains sections on:

- Phonological skills
- Sight vocabulary
- Sound/letter knowledge
- Knowledge of phonic patterns

The LAPack is an excellent tool not only for assessing pupil's skills, but for monitoring over time and recording small steps of progress. The LAPack Flow Chart helps to identify appropriate interventions following assessment with the LAPack.

### Literacy Assessment Pack



Literacy Assessment  
Pack (LAPack).docx

Flow Chart to show possible interventions for pupils having difficulties on the Literacy Assessment Pack



Flow Chart  
interventions Literacy

### Letters and Sounds Tracking Sheet



Letters and Sounds  
Tracking Sheet.doc

### Checklist for Assessing Handwriting



Checklist for  
Assessing Handwriting

### Standardised Reading and Spelling Tests

Standardised tests measure the pupil's reading or spelling against peers of precisely the same chronological age. The average standardised score is 100, with 68% of pupils falling between 85 and 115. Pupils with a standardised score below 85 may be a cause for concern, so pupils with scores approaching this should be assessed in detail. Pupils with a standardised score of 80 or below will experience a significant level of difficulty.

### Assessments Suitable for Primary Schools

**The Salford Sentence Reading Test (2021)** is easy to administer and can be used with children between Y2 and Y6 to measure progress and pick up pupils falling below age-appropriate reading levels. The test gives scores for decoding and comprehension.

**Young's Parallel Spelling** or the **Helen Arkell Spelling Test** can be used in primary with whole classes, small groups or individuals for monitoring reading progress and picking up pupils having difficulties with spelling.

**Neale Analysis of Reading (NARA II), York Assessment of Reading Ability (YARC) and Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA)** analyse reading in more detail and compare reading accuracy with comprehension levels, giving

separate standardised scores for each. The Neale and York are suitable for primary schools, whilst there is a secondary version of the York, and the DRA is for age 11+.

**The Phonics and Early Reading Assessment (PERA)** is a standardised test matched to the requirements of the DfE Year 1 'Phonics Screening Check', as well as to the teaching and assessment needs of schools both before and after the statutory test. Pera 2 can be used to assess Year 2 pupils retaking the Phonic Check.

### Assessment Materials



Assessment Materials  
2020.doc

### Reading Test Tracking Sheet



Reading Test Cohort  
Tracking Sheet.doc

### Additional Tests

#### Other tests that may be useful are:

**Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB and PhAB2)** assesses phonological awareness and memory, and processing speed. PhAB2 is suitable for 5-11 years, and the original version PhAB for 6-14 years. **British**

**Picture Vocabulary Scales (BPVS 3)** measure the pupil's understanding of receptive vocabulary. This may be useful with pupils who have scored poorly for comprehension in a standardised reading test, or for pupils with poor language development.

**Raven's Coloured Matrices** looks at a pupil's non-verbal reasoning skills. If a pupil is having literacy difficulties this can be a useful assessment for comparing a pupil's non-verbal reasoning skills with language and literacy skills.

**Renfrew Action Picture Test** is a standardised test of oral language looking at grammatical structures.

**The Record of Oral Language New Edition Update (Marie Clay 2015)** looks at recording and assessing change in children's oral language development. Proficiency in oral language is important in the development of early literacy.

**An Observation Survey of Early Literacy 3rd Ed. (Marie Clay 2013)** presents a battery of assessment covering a broad range of literacy skills including: concepts about print, individual word reading, reading in context, writing, letter knowledge and phonic knowledge. The assessment tasks are designed for systematic observation of young children as they learn and each task in the survey has been carefully structured for consistent delivery.

The **QCA checklist, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or Boxall**

**Profile** can be used to gauge social, emotional and behavioural difficulties that may affect, or be affected by, poor literacy.

**It may be necessary to consult with outside professionals such as:**

- A Speech and Language therapist (SLT) or Communication and Interaction Teacher (C&I) from the SEN Support Services (SENS) if the pupil appears to have an underlying language difficulty
- An occupational therapist if the pupil has poor motor control
- An educational psychologist if the pupil has more complex needs, or the school has been unsuccessful in helping the pupil to progress.

It is always worth asking parents/carers to organise hearing and eyesight checks, as poor hearing and sight can have a huge impact on a child's ability to learn to read.

It is also valuable to ascertain the pupil's own perception of their strengths and difficulties and what they think works and what is less effective. When pupils are involved in setting their own learning targets, they are often much more motivated to succeed.

**Assessing children with EAL and children from ethnic and cultural minorities**

Particular care needs to be taken when assessing children with English as an additional language (EAL), including travellers, refugees and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Pupils should be recorded as having a first language other than English if the language or main language they encountered as a baby or small child was a language other than English and they still have some exposure to that language. EAL is not linked to proficiency in English or first language. An EAL learner could be a complete beginner in English or could be fully fluent in English. EAL status depends on which language was learned first

The Equality Act (2010) dictates that schools provide equal opportunities for all pupils. Professionals need to be vigilant to ensure that their practice is not discriminatory. All teachers and non-teaching staff need to be aware of the linguistic and cultural bias of resources such as books and standardised tests, and should be alert to the risk of identifying a literacy difficulty where none is present or failing to identify a learning difficulty through an assumption that the issue is purely EAL.

Research evidence suggests that the response to pupils with English as an additional language who have poor phonological skills should not differ from that to their peers with English as a first language. However, the interpretation of data for individual pupils needs to take full account of the learning opportunities available.

Guidance to support identification and provide advice for schools of EAL pupils who may also have SEN



Guidance to support  
EAL pupils who may a

[Guidance for Early Years practitioners on supporting children learning English as an Additional Language \(EAL\)](#) gives advice for practitioners working with younger children.

The Bell Foundation's '[EAL English Proficiency Assessment Framework](#)' is free to download and can be used to assess pupils' level of English. There are [YouTube tutorials](#) on the assessment framework. The Bell Foundation also offer [guidance](#) on effective practice and a range of classroom resources to support EAL learners.

The Communication Trust offer best practice [case studies](#):

[NALDIC](#) (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum), is the UK's national subject association for EAL and has useful resources and guidance.

Further advice on working with pupils with EAL can be found on the Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team (OXSiT) [website](#).



# Inclusive Teaching and Learning

## The Teaching of Reading

The Rose Report (2007) concluded that for the majority of children, synthetic phonics taught in a structured way is the most successful way of learning to read, though the report emphasised that phonics must be taught within the context of rich language work and experience of books. However, the small minority of children with severe difficulties may also benefit from other teaching methods or a more holistic approach to literacy, such as Reading Recovery or the FFT Reading programme. All children need good language skills in order to fully develop their reading skills. Vocabulary is the greatest predictor of reading ability at age 11, and without the understanding of the syntax and semantics of language reading cannot progress however well phonics are taught. Many children come into school with an impoverished experience of language and literacy; they have poor spoken language and little experience of books. It is important that these experiences and skills are developed alongside the phonic work.

**Letters and Sounds** provides excellent guidance on the teaching of phonics. It is a programme designed for Foundation Stage but is a useful resource for teaching older pupils with literacy difficulties. The programme has six phases which introduce phonics in a developmental way. Phase 1 develops phonological skills and it is essential to continue this work alongside the following five phases, so that pupils develop the necessary phonological skills to meet the demands of increasingly more complex phonic work.

Many schools use other phonic programmes, such as *Read, Write Inc*, which follow a similar structure. Whatever resources are used it is important that pupils, especially those having difficulty, continue structured phonic work until they are secure in all phonic patterns. However, if pupils are struggling with phonics, other approaches, such as the teaching of sight words and re-reading familiar books, can help them take their first steps into reading. More holistic literacy approaches, such as Reading Recovery and Fischer Family Trust Reading Programme help pupils to develop skills in all aspects of literacy and are highly effective.

## Developing Phonological Awareness and Early Reading Skills



Developing  
Phonological Awareness

## Language Work

Language delay or difficulties can seriously delay the acquisition of literacy skills. Literacy is dependent upon spoken language, so it is important to develop pupils' language alongside their literacy. Rich language work in Early Years can help to build the foundations of reading. [Development Matters](#) can help to pinpoint the level of language acquisition of children in Early Years. For older pupils the British Picture Vocabulary Scales can be a useful tool for looking at the understanding of receptive vocabulary, and this gives a

standardised score, which can help to measure the severity of difficulty. If a pupil is presenting a particular concern, then it is very useful to refer them to a Speech Therapist or the SENSS Communication and Interaction Teacher for an assessment and advice. Information about these teams and referral information can be found at:

[Children's Speech and Language Therapy:](#)

Oxfordshire's [SENSS Communication and Interaction Team:](#)

Many schools across the county are successfully using the [Spirals](#) or [Talkboost](#) programmes as initial interventions in Nursery and Reception classes for children whose language development appears to be slower than that of their peers. Both programmes have been very successful in many settings, and such early intervention will help to prevent pupils falling behind. There are also versions of each programme for KS1, KS2.

The OCC [Reading Comprehension](#) document on the intranet has lots of ideas for developing language skills, and your LACAT will be able to offer advice and support for individual pupils.

### **Inclusive Teaching and Learning for those with Literacy Difficulties**

A truly inclusive school supports all pupils to become successful learners. To do this, teachers need to know where a pupil is in their learning and what very small next steps are needed in order for them to make progress. For all teachers to know where pupils are in their learning, they need access to fine-tuned assessments, and an effective Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach to teaching and learning.

One of the major barriers to achievement for pupils with literacy difficulties is being rendered dependent on adults to help them learn. This will always happen if the work set is not within the capabilities of the learner. Learning should be pitched so that pupils can work independently but still feel challenged. If children are constantly working beyond their current level of skill, they may well be at risk of 'learned helplessness' or of displaying a range of avoidance tactics. Pupils need opportunities to apply their skills, working collaboratively with other children and independently. To become increasingly independent learners, pupils will need:

- to be regularly assessed using fine-tuned assessments and formative assessment so that everyone is absolutely clear about what small step they need to take.
- independent tasks within their current capabilities that have been clearly explained and modelled for them.
- regular feedback on how they are progressing.
- scaffolded support in pairs or small groups.

- adult guidance to try out learning with collaborative support before having a go on their own.
- clear guidance to support organisational skills.
- teacher awareness of the readability of texts and how to support access.
- careful planning of TA support to guard against over-dependence.
- a range of easily accessible resources to aid independent work.
- regular teaching by a teacher in a small group rather than always being taught by TAs.
- focused, regular and consistent intervention to support the development of skills.

All pupils need to access a sequence that moves them from dependence on the teacher, through modelled, shared and guided group activities to a point where they are sufficiently skilled and confident to work independently.

### Scaffolding Writing Handbook



Scaffolding%20Writing%20Handbook.doc

### **Teaching Assistant Support**

Pupils with literacy difficulties will often have some support in class from a teaching assistant (TA) or Learning Support Assistant (LSA). The aim of the support is to allow them access to the written curriculum. It is vital that teachers plan carefully for the use of TAs so that pupils do not become overly dependent. Teachers should consider planning for these pupils as if they have no support so that they are essentially planning the next step in their independent learning. TAs can then support the development of these independent skills and work with other members of the class.

All pupils with literacy difficulties benefit from short, focused interventions to develop their skills. TAs will need to be well trained to deliver these, which should be based on well-founded research and be proven to accelerate progress.

# Intervention

For pupils who are really struggling with literacy, even outstanding classroom teaching is unlikely to address all their needs. However, it is important to use good quality intervention materials and to monitor the progress pupils make in order to evaluate the impact. TAs need to be properly trained to deliver sessions and monitored for quality assurance. Research shows that short, intense interventions have as much impact as those that carry on for longer. However, for pupils with severe levels of difficulty, daily sessions may be needed for learning to be secured and maintained. Intervening as early as possible prevents pupils falling behind further. (Brookes 2016) [What Works for Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties](#), gives an overview of successful interventions nationally, and below are summaries of intervention materials that have shown to be effective in schools across Oxfordshire.

## The Importance of Multi-sensory Teaching and Learning

Pupils with dyslexia and other literacy difficulties need the opportunity to over-learn skills and knowledge. Poor short term and working memory, as well as slow processing skills, can make learning arduous. Doing things in different sensory ways - visually, aurally, orally and kinaesthetically – helps build neural pathways in the brain, and the more sensory pathways are built up, the more secure the learning. Multi-sensory Planning Grids may be a helpful way of planning support for pupils.



Multi-sensory  
planning grid.docx

## Phonological Skills Interventions

### Launch into Reading Success

This was designed as a group intervention for Year 1 children **at risk** of reading difficulty and is an auditory training programme to develop phonological skills. It consists of 9 sections with 66 activities, which are all outlined clearly and for which resources are provided. It can be run by an experienced TA with support from the teacher. To some extent *Letters and Sounds Phase 1* covers these skills, but this programme can be useful for pupils struggling at this early stage.

### Sound Linkage

This is a programme of phonological skills training for pupils in KS2 consisting of 5 minutes a day 1-1. It can be done in isolation but can also be used as part of a longer tailored package for pupils with higher levels of need. It includes:

- Phoneme segmentation
- Phoneme blending
- Phoneme deletion
- Phoneme substitution
- Phoneme transposition
- Phonological linkage activities

## Phonic Interventions

### Accelerated Accelwrite

This programme uses a talking word processor programme to give auditory feedback to help pupils develop their phonological skills. Any talking programme can be used: Clicker, Texthelp, Read and Write, Write: Outloud, and Talking Textease, but Clicker is probably the best. Sessions are designed to run for 15 minutes a day for 4 weeks (20 sessions) but a short term also works well. Pupils can return to the programme again at a later date. Pupils memorise sentences from cards then type them into the computer, listening to check sounds and self-correct where possible. A TA needs to supervise to pick up errors missed by the pupil. The cards present phonic patterns in developmental order, so assessment is needed to find the starting point for pupils. The LAPack Flow Chart will help. Keeping a chart of their progress through the programme helps pupils to see the steps they are taking and gain confidence.



Flow chart - working  
with children with lite

### Read Write Inc and Freshstart

There are several *Read Write Inc* programmes providing a systematic approach to literacy, covering the teaching of reading, writing, spelling and comprehension.

- Read Write Inc Phonics - Systematic literacy programme rooted in phonics (ages 4-7)
- Read Write Inc Comprehension – literacy programme for children who can read (ages 7-9)
- Read Write Inc Comprehension Plus- (ages 9-11)
- Read Write Inc Spelling- 10 minutes a day spelling programme (ages 7-9)
- Read Write Inc Freshstart- intervention for struggling readers (ages 9-11)

These can be used as independent programmes or as a whole-school approach to literacy. Schools in Oxford City with high numbers of pupils with SEN and EAL have used this programme successfully. Read Write Inc Freshstart is a programme for older pupils who are struggling with reading. It is designed for KS2 and secondary.

The UK government has issued a list of approved synthetic phonics programmes. Further programmes may be added following the validation process.

## Word Level Interventions

### Precision Teaching

This is a really good way of monitoring and embedding multi-sensory teaching, and of speeding up reading for pupils who are struggling with decoding skills. It is a useful way of helping pupils learn letter sounds, sight vocabulary as well as times tables and other number facts. Using the precision grid alone is not enough to embed learning, so multi-sensory practice alongside this, is essential.

- Daily focussed session of multi-sensory teaching 1:1 or in a small group: 5-10 minutes
- Each pupil then individually completes a precision grid for 1 minute
- Sessions should be daily –less than 3x a week will not have

When addressing sight vocabulary, it is useful to focus on high frequency words (HFW). All HFW lists are pretty much the same. The list from Letters and Sounds was revised most recently, but the Dolch list is very similar. The current National Curriculum has example words for each year group which relate to the phonic patterns and spelling rules pupils should be learning. However, older pupils who are struggling with phonics and spelling may be better to focus on the words they will use most often. John Taylor's Freebies [website](#) has a tool for creating personalised grids very quickly.

### Dolch List



Dolch List.docx

## Reading Interventions

### Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Literacy Programmes

Programmes from [FFT Literacy](#) are designed to be run by Teaching Assistants with the support of a teacher. Schools will be required to send both a teacher and a TA to training sessions.

### FFT Wave 3 Reading Programme

This is a 1:1 programme designed for children in Y1 who are working within and below Book Band 2. However, it has also been successfully used for older children, including secondary pupils, and those working at slightly higher levels of literacy. The programme uses an approach based on the principles of Marie Clay's Reading Recovery with daily sessions of 20 minutes running for a maximum of 22 weeks. The focus for sessions alternates between reading and writing.

### Reading Recovery

[Reading Recovery](#) is often described as the 'Rolls Royce of literacy interventions. It is a short-term intervention for children who have the lowest achievement in literacy learning. A trained Reading Recovery Teacher works individually with these children for 30 minutes each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The goal is for children struggling with literacy to develop effective

reading and writing strategies. The majority of children taking part in the programme reach age related expectations or above and able to approach typical classroom tasks successfully.

### **Talking Partners**

[Talking Partners](#) is a small group intervention programme which aims to give children the basic life skills of how to be good communicators; it gives children the opportunity to develop the skills to listen attentively and talk confidently. TP@Primary and TP@Secondary promote risk-taking, raise self-esteem and independence, develop interactive listening and an awareness of the audience and produce measurable progress in speaking and listening. It is a TA led 10-week intervention.

### **Boosting Reading Potential @Primary and @Secondary**

[BRP](#) is a TA-lead intervention. It is a targeted, time-limited, one-to-one intervention over 10 weeks. It is designed to improve the way children read, enabling them to be independent problem solvers who read with understanding and enjoyment.

The programme is for pupils who:

- Lack skills and confidence as readers
- Require a boost to their reading age
- Need to develop their understanding of texts

### **Project X Code**

Project X Code embeds systematic synthetic phonics into a series adventure books that is targeted at struggling readers in Years 2 to 4 who are not on track to achieve appropriate levels for their age. This includes:

- children who have had problems with the Year 1 phonics screening check
- children whose reading is still not fully secure at the transition from Year 2 to Year 3

Edge Hill University, in partnership with Oxford University Press, provides [training](#) to help teachers or teaching assistants to deliver it effectively to children who need a helping hand to develop phonics and comprehension skills and a love of reading. The training ensures maximum impact from the intervention.

### **Rapid Readers**

This reading scheme from Pearson is colourful and engaging. There is an emphasis on comprehension with questions for discussion at the end of each book. There is also software available that allows pupils to read into a computer which will then highlight words they have read incorrectly and prompt them to self-correct. Pupils who are reluctant to read aloud are sometimes more confident reading into a computer. Boys particularly seem to enjoy the IT aspect and find the books interesting. Schools using the scheme have been very successful in accelerating progress in reading.

### **Rapid Plus**

This series is designed to be dyslexia friendly and support KS3 struggling, EAL, and SEN readers. The aim is for students see themselves as 'real readers', and



gain confidence across all of their subjects. Like Rapid Readers, the books come with interactive software.

## **Comprehension Interventions**

### **New Reading and Thinking / More Reading and Thinking**

These six booklets provide work on inferential comprehension at an increasingly complex level. The reading age of Book 1 is about 7 years and Book 6 is about 9 years. However, books can be used with pupils with a lower reading age either by doing the activities as listening comprehension or by buying the accompanying audio CDs. Pupils working through the books have shown huge rates of improvement both in comprehension and in overall reading. Pupils can work 1:1 but can also benefit from small group discussion. Answers do not need to be written; it is the thinking process that is important.

### **Hi Five**

Hi Five is designed for groups of 1-4 pupils from Y5 or above, working at a low Level 2 with a RA of 6.5 to 7.0. There are 4 sessions a week, each lasting 15-20 minutes, for a minimum of 10 weeks. One chapter of text is used each week. The focus of sessions is as follows:

Session 1 Guided reading and clarification

Session 2 Re-reading, questioning and summarizing

Session 3 Supported writing

Session 4 Editing

## **Writing Interventions**

### **Write Away Together**

This programme can be delivered 1:1 or in small groups (4 max). It is based on an Assessment for Learning approach and works at the editing stage of writing. A piece of the child's independent writing is used for discussion and improvement. The programme is suitable for any pupil, from those who are beginning to write a couple of sentences to those who are gifted writers.

### **1stclass@writing**

[1stClass@Writing](#) is a structured 'light touch' intervention for a small group of up to 4 pupils of 7-9 years old who struggle to write confidently and accurately. It is particularly suitable for pupils who need to work on key elements of transcription (spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation) and to apply these skills to compose a range of writing.

1stClass@Writing is an *Every Child Counts* literacy programme developed by Edge Hill University. Teaching assistants (TAS) are trained to deliver it by an accredited *Every Child Counts* literacy trainer. The training runs alongside the delivery of the intervention in the training term.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating Interventions**

All interventions used need to be rigorously evaluated. Assessing pupils at the beginning and end of a programme of work shows what impact the intervention



has had. The assessments used do not always need to be complicated or time consuming. Sections of the LAPack can sometimes suffice. The Interventions section has suggestions of suitable assessments. Schools need to ensure that interventions are effective. See also the Monitoring and Evaluating section.

### List of Intervention Materials



Intervention  
Materials 2020.doc

### Flow Chart to show possible interventions for pupils having difficulties on the Literacy Assessment Pack



Flow Chart  
interventions Literacy

# ICT to Support Literacy and Maths

There are a number of programmes available to support pupils with literacy difficulties. The ones included here are those that are used in schools across the county and are recommended by the SEN/ICT team.

## **Clicker**

Clicker is a word processing programme, suitable for primary pupils, which supports writing. The programme allows pupils to word process but gives the teacher options for providing support in different ways. Grids of words and/or phrases can be set up that relate to class topics or are specific to the individual. Pictures can be added, and the programme can be set to read back the text written. There is an option to add a library of symbols and sets of words can be downloaded from the [website](#), as well as a predictive text option. However, teachers need to be aware that pupils may still need adult support to use this programme.

## **Docs Plus**

[Docs Plus](#) is designed for secondary pupils. This has an organisational mind mapping tool to help pupils plan their writing, and other features including word bars, writing frames, predictive text to help students write and speech feedback for proof reading. There is also the facility for pupils to login from home.

## **Co:Writer**

[Co:writer](#) has similar feature to Docs Plus, but is compatible with other programmes such as MS Word, Google, blogs and email, so is more suitable for KS4/5. Features include, predictive text, word banks and screen reader. As the pupil writes, the programme interprets spelling and grammar mistakes and offers word suggestions in real time.

## **Read and Write**

[Read&Write](#) offers support with everyday tasks like reading text out loud, understanding unfamiliar words, researching assignments and proofing written work. It's also used as a digital reader for UK school examinations at GCSE and A-level, assisting students who are entitled to extra help in the exam room.

## **ClaroRead**

[ClaroRead](#) Windows supports reading and writing. ClaroRead is a simple, easy-to-use and flexible software program that helps you to read, write, study, sit exams, and increase your confidence. You can read any on-screen text out loud and improve your writing in Microsoft Word. ClaroRead Plus and Pro also let you read aloud scanned paper books and documents.

## **imindmap**

Combines mind-mapping with task management systems. There is also an app version. [iMindMap is Now Part of Ayoa. Discover Mind Mapping for Free](#)

## **CALL Scotland**

CALL Scotland is a good [website](#) for apps for schools and source of free advice on assistive technology.

## **Touch Typing**

There are a variety of touch-typing packages, including [BBC Dance Mat](#), which is free online.

However, research has shown that pupils who struggle with handwriting also struggle with typing. If when a pupil places their fingers on the home-keys they are unable to move individual fingers up and down independently, they are likely to struggle to touch-type using all their fingers and may be better to find their own method of typing.

## **Splash! City**

[Splash! City](#) produces 3 programmes to support pupils with SEN in maths.

- **Splash! Infant**  
This programme is aimed at all children between the ages of 4 and 7 but it has been specifically designed for children with special needs, so may be suitable for children over 7 working at KS1 level. It has activities for drawing, making patterns, sorting, measuring, and using numbers.
- **Splash! Junior**  
This programme is an extension of Splash! Infant designed for 7-11 year olds, and has the additional features of number square and number line tools and lets pupils set out and solve number problems.
- **Splash! Senior**  
Aimed at 11+ pupils, this programme includes drawing, geometry, measuring, and manipulating number, chemical and algebraic problems. In addition, technical diagrams and graphs can be completed easily and there are comprehensive resources which can be personalised to maths, chemistry and physics syllabuses.

The OCC [SEN/ICT team](#), part of SENSS, are able to provide advice to support pupils with complex needs.

# Exam Access Arrangements

Schools will need to consider whether children/young people with dyslexia or other literacy difficulties require any concessions to help them access public exams and assessments or Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs).

Access arrangements, or exam concessions as they are sometimes called, are designed to enable young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge around what is being tested in exams without being disadvantaged by their difficulty/disability in areas of learning that are not being tested. For instance, if a student taking a science exam has difficulty with reading, support can be given with reading the test paper, so that the student is not disadvantaged in demonstrating their ability in science.

## Secondary Schools and Further Education Colleges

Information for secondary schools and FE colleges can be found on the **Joint Council for Qualifications [website](#)**:

Exam regulations and details about assessing students' needs can be found in the [Access Arrangements Regulations](#): **Be aware that these change from year to year, so make sure you are using the current version..**

## Concessions

There are a whole range of different arrangements that can be put in place to support students, and the school should work with individual students to decide which ones are most helpful to them. Students can have different arrangements for different exams, including:

- Supervised rest breaks
- 25 per cent extra time
- Extra time of up to 50 per cent
- Extra time of over 50 per cent
- Computer reader/reader
- Read aloud and/or an examination reading pen
- Scribe/voice recognition technology
- Word processor
- Transcript
- Prompter
- Oral language modifier
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Communication Professional (for candidates using Sign Language)
- Practical assistant
- Alternative accommodation away from the centre
- Bilingual translation dictionaries with up to a maximum of 25 per cent extra time
- Modified paper, for example, coloured, enlarged and Braille papers
- Modified language papers and transcript of listening test/video

The school or college needs to consider carefully what is most helpful to students and whatever arrangements are decided on should become part of the student's normal way of working and should be put in place for controlled assessments as well as exams.

### **Who is eligible for concessions?**

- Pupils with an EHCP
- Pupils on SEN support whose learning difficulty affects their ability to access the tests
- Pupils who require alternative access arrangements because of a disability, (which may or may not give rise to a special educational need)
- Pupils who are unable to sit and work at a test for a sustained period because of a disability or social, emotional or mental health difficulty. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and have limited fluency in English.

Students with an EHC plan are eligible for exam concessions, if the school is able to submit supplementary evidence to demonstrate the level of need.

Other students whom the school considers eligible for access arrangements are assessed to check whether they meet the criteria. Access arrangements need to be applied for online and should be done as early as possible to cover the whole course, so assessments are usually done in Year 9 or 10 for Keystage 4 courses such as GCSE and BTECs, and Year 12 for A level and other post 16 courses.

**The deadline for schools applying for access arrangements is three months before an exam or controlled assessment takes place.**

The guidance on access arrangements can be found on the [Joint Commission for Qualifications \(JCQ\) website](#)

### **Primary Schools**

There are similar access arrangements available for Key stage 2 SAT tests, but the assessment process for applying for these is much simpler. Schools apply for access arrangements online by giving details about the levels at which pupils are working.

## **Building Capacity Within the School**

Expertise within a school is often built up around the specific children on roll at any one time. As staff come and go expertise changes and it is important to continually update and refresh training. Schools build capacity to deal with pupils with SEND by maintaining high levels of training and ensuring that when teachers and TAs leave, other staff are trained in their skills. In promoting good practice, Senior Leaders and SENCOs should make clear that:

- all teachers are teachers of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and literacy difficulties

- all teachers should notice individual differences in the way pupils learn and adjust their teaching accordingly
- good practice for dyslexic pupils is good practice for all

### **Staff training**

Training all staff to be aware of literacy difficulties, how to identify pupils with difficulties and how to include them within classroom teaching is perhaps the most important step a school can take. Evidence from Ofsted and SEND Reviews carried out in the county shows that schools are most successful with pupils with SEND when inclusive teaching within classrooms is good; when teachers are able to identify the next small steps in each pupil's learning and adjust the teaching to ensure those steps are met. Schools with good intervention programmes are able to move pupils' literacy skills on, but unless those pupils have a good experience back in the classroom, those skills are not always maintained and utilised, and may not impact on overall progress.

The *British Dyslexia Association* has a range of [training](#) for teachers.

Advanced Modules on the [SEND Gateway](#) provide online training in autism; dyslexia; speech and language; emotional, social and behavioural difficulties; and moderate learning difficulties. These are designed for teachers wanting to develop a deeper understanding of areas of need.

*The Inclusion Development Programme: Teaching and supporting pupils with dyslexia* (DfE 2011) provides training for all staff, teachers and TAs, in four modules:

- understanding and supporting reading
- understanding and supporting spelling
- a focus (awareness of difficulties)
- adapting practice

This gives good guidance on supporting pupils within the classroom and is a good starting point for improving the teaching of literacy across the school. The programme takes about 2 hours to complete individually, but discussion with colleagues can help staff to share good practice. The self-evaluation can help to audit existing skills and pinpoint parts of the resource that are most useful.

*Inclusion Development Programme: Teaching and supporting pupils with SLCN* (DfE 2011) is equally helpful in developing staff understanding of language issues and how to support pupils within the classroom.

<http://www.idponline.org.uk/>

### **Further training for Teachers and Teaching Assistants**

[Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team](#) (OXSiT) runs courses and in-school training for Teachers and Teaching Assistants on:

- Dyslexia Awareness
- SpLD for Teachers
- Dyslexia for Teaching Assistants
- Assessment

- Inclusive Teaching and Learning
- Fischer family Trust Programmes – *FFT Reading Programme*, *Write Away Together* and *Hi Five*

Inclusion Consultants are also available to do bespoke training for individual schools. Contact your inclusion consultant at [oxsit@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:oxsit@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

All training delivered for Oxfordshire is advertised on the [Oxfordshire Partners in Learning](#) website.

### **Training for Specialist Teachers**

Oxford Brookes University in conjunction with OXSIT runs a year's [Postgraduate Certificate of Education](#) (PG Cert) in *Working with Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties*. Teachers who complete this course then have the option of working towards the Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA) and/or an MA.

For further details contact Rachael Falkner at [rfalkner@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:rfalkner@brookes.ac.uk)

### **Assessment**

Ensuring that the school has good assessment procedures in place is vital not only for tracking progress, but for unpicking pupils' difficulties and working out what provision will help them. Use the Monitoring and Assessment section of this policy to decide the best assessments to use with each pupil and which assessment materials are most useful for the school. Ensuring that the SENCO and Foundation Stage teachers are confident about identifying pupils at risk of literacy difficulties in Early Years, will mean that support can be put in place before problems worsen and pupils fall further behind.

### **Intervention**

It is important to take an evidence-based approach to intervention and ensure that interventions used have been demonstrated to have successful results. The Intervention section will help, as the interventions recommended are ones that have been used successfully throughout the county but colleagues in other schools may be able to make recommendations too. Over time schools can build up a bank of resources that address the range of needs. Inclusion Consultants will be very happy to advise on interventions if you have any queries.

Making links between in-class provision and additional intervention can be tricky, but crucial in helping pupils to generalise their learning. It is important that the class teacher knows exactly what a pupil is learning and particularly what new skills they have gained, so that teaching can be targeted accordingly. Some schools are following up on interventions with classroom support in the following term to help pupils consolidate the skills they have gained. Having the TA who delivers an intervention also supporting in class can be highly effective.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating**

Implementing intervention programmes is not just about buying resources. Teachers and TAs delivering them need to be properly trained and monitored. Above all, provision must be rigorously and frequently evaluated. Ideally pupils should be making at least twice the rate of progress e.g. 6 months gain in reading at the end of a 3-month intervention. Where this is not happening, teachers need to investigate the cause – it might be that the intervention did not take place regularly; the assessments may not have been done rigorously enough to indicate the starting point; the intervention may have been unsuitable for the pupil; or the intervention was not delivered effectively. The SENCO's role in this cannot be emphasised strongly enough. Much time can be wasted on poorly delivered provision that makes no significant difference. Assessing pupils before and after an intervention, not only shows how much they have progressed, but indicates where they need to go next. The Intervention Materials in the Supporting Materials gives suggestions for assessments that can be used to monitor each intervention programme.



Intervention  
Materials 2020.doc

## **Using Data to Inform Practice**

Data can help identify pupils at risk of literacy difficulties as well as support the tracking of those already identified. The DfE's Analysis School Performance (ASP) data can be used to identify trends within the school and help leaders plan future action. Analysis of the school's tracking data will give a detailed picture of which groups of pupils are making accelerated progress and those where the gap is widening. Targeting resources and provision to support literacy enables pupils to access other areas of the curriculum. Schools need to focus on early intervention rather than waiting until pupils start falling further behind.



# Working with Parents

## Promoting partnership with parents

Parents' concerns regarding their children's progress should be acknowledged and addressed promptly and constructively. If parent and school have differing views about a child's progress, it is the school's responsibility to collect evidence of the pupil's performance to inform discussion. Teachers need to be confident in being able to explain children's literacy difficulties to parents and in communicating how teaching is being adjusted to help the child or young person.

Parents' worries need to be dealt with sensitively. Having a clear, detailed picture of the child/young person's strengths and difficulties helps parents to feel confident that teachers know their child; and sharing ideas about how the school can help, will reassure them that their child is being supported. The Prompt Sheets for Parents in the Supporting Materials may be useful.



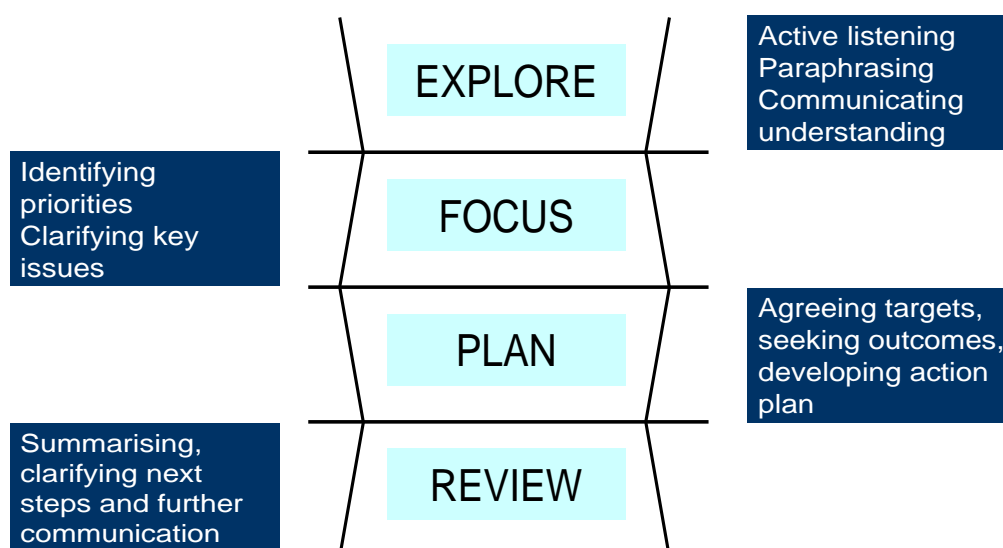
Prompt sheets for  
parents.doc

It is also important to remember that some parents have literacy difficulties themselves, and their own experiences at school may make meetings difficult for them. They may not be confident about supporting their children's reading at home, so find ways in which they can help. Perhaps make sure that younger children can read books independently before they take them home, so that the parent can still hear them read without feeling they need to teach them.

Some parents will find it difficult to accept that their child has a difficulty. Using the questions below to talk about family background may help them to see similarities with other family members. It is important that information given by the school is accurate and detailed, and that the picture is built up over time. Explaining the assessment process, interventions and support the school is giving to the child/young person can reassure parents that their child has been accurately assessed and that their needs are being addressed.

In meeting parents, teachers may find the structured conversation presented in [Achievement for All](#) (National Strategies 2010) a useful guide. This gives a framework that can help to give focus and momentum to meetings.

## Framework for the structured conversation



## Seeking information from parents

Parents can give very useful information about their child that can aid understanding of their difficulties with literacy. Here are some ideas that can be used as prompts when talking to parents.

### Literacy

- Does your child enjoy literacy activities at home, e.g. reading, hearing stories, nursery rhymes?

### Early Development

- At what age did your child reach developmental milestone, such as walking, talking

### Health

- Has your child had illnesses that have affected language, motor skills and education?
- Has your child had hearing and sight checks?

### Language

- When did your child start talking?
- Has your child ever had speech therapy?
- Has your child ever had glue ear or hearing problems?

### Motor skills

- When did your child start walking?
- How well can they do things involving motor skills, both gross and fine motor skills e.g. sports, ball skills, riding a bike, drawing, buttons?
- Which hand do they prefer to use?

### Family background

- Has anyone in the family had difficulties with literacy?

**How can parents help?**

Most parents are eager to help their children's literacy skills but may need some guidance. A consistent approach to reading between home and school is helpful, and home/school communication books can support this. 'Paired reading' and 'pause, prompt, praise' can be useful for parents, and guidance on these, as well as ways to help with spelling can be found in the Supporting Materials.

# Working with Pupils

## Promoting pupil participation

Pupils should be regarded as active participants in their own learning process. They should be encouraged to take an active role by helping to set their own targets, identifying helpful and less helpful support strategies, and receiving prompt feedback on their progress. The older the pupil the more important this process becomes.

Pupils are generally much better motivated to learn when they have identified their own targets. These may not be the targets the teacher would suggest, but confidence has a huge impact on learning, and it is vital to build and foster self-esteem.

Helping pupils to understand the difficulties they have can influence how they overcome them and improve their confidence. For instance, explaining that they have dyslexic difficulties, which make learning to read difficult for them and describing how the school will support them, can help some pupils' deal with their difficulties more positively. Knowing that they have a specific difficulty that is not their fault and realising that they are not considered 'stupid' can be extremely empowering and raise their self-esteem dramatically. Other pupils may not respond in this way, so it is important to know your pupils and spend time listening to how they feel about the difficulties they are having.

The Useful Teaching Strategies section contains resources that may be helpful for pupils.



Useful teaching  
strategies.doc



Working with  
pupils with literacy c

# Local Authority Support

## Local Authority Agencies

As mentioned in the *Monitoring and Assessment* section, the school's Education Psychologist (EP), Speech and Language Therapist (SALT), Communication and Interaction Advisory Teacher, or Occupational Therapist (OT) may be able to help unpick a pupil's difficulties and give advice on intervention and support work.

## The Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team (OXSiT)

The Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team offers a range of training courses and can offer bespoke training to schools and partnerships. Inclusion Consultants are available to advise schools on provision. Schools can buy packages of support on an annual basis but are also able to purchase one-off visits. Although the team do not offer diagnostic dyslexia assessments, schools can purchase an assessment and advice visit for individual pupils by contacting their Inclusion Consultant. Use the Working with Pupils with Literacy Difficulties Flow Chart on the next page to determine the best course of action but contact your Inclusion Consultant for advice at any point where you feel uncertain.

Information: [www.oxsit.org.uk](http://www.oxsit.org.uk)

Contact: [oxsit@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:oxsit@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Oxfordshire Partners in Learning - OPL

All training delivered by Oxfordshire teams can be found [here](#).

# How to Contact Us

Please contact us at [oxsit@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:oxsit@oxfordshire.gov.uk) if you wish to discuss any of the content found in this document.

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**Oxfordshire Partners in Learning**

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