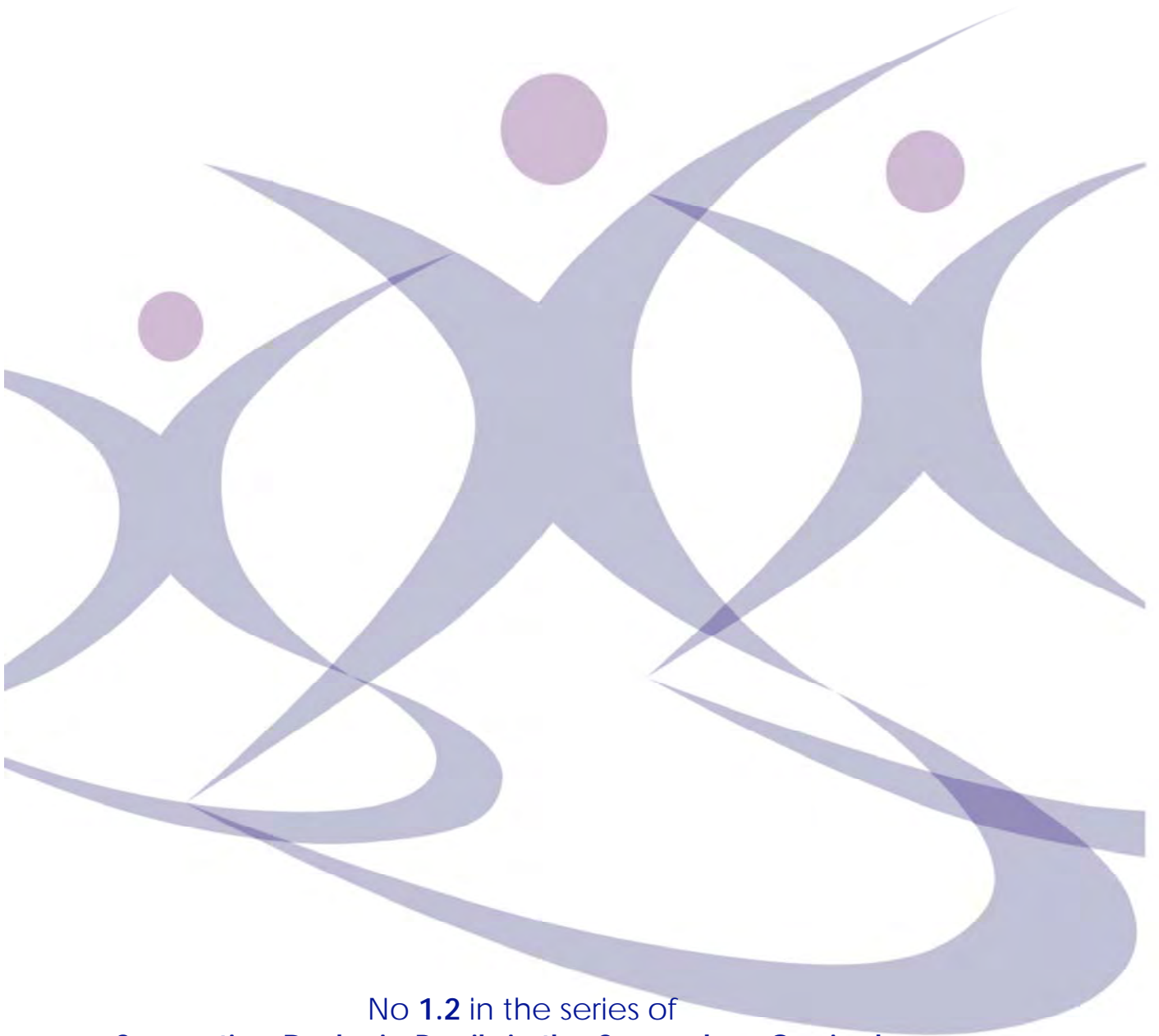




Dyslexia Scotland

## Underpinning Skills for the Secondary Curriculum



No 1.2 in the series of  
**Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum**  
By Moira Thomson

# Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum

by Moira Thomson

## UNDERPINNING SKILLS FOR THE SECONDARY CURRICULUM

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# Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum

by Moira Thomson

**Complete set comprises 18 booklets and a CD of downloadable material**  
(see inside back cover for full details of CD contents)

**Foreword by Dr. Gavin Reid**, a 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.

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- 1.3. Classroom Management of Dyslexia at Secondary School
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*To all my dyslexic pupils, who taught me what dyslexia really is*

# Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to **M & A Thomson Litho Ltd**, East Kilbride, Scotland who printed the booklets at below cost – [www.thomsonlitho.com](http://www.thomsonlitho.com).

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**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 84 84 - Monday to Friday from 10am until 4pm.

**Dyslexia Scotland**, Stirling Business Centre, Wellgreen, Stirling, FK8 2DZ  
[www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

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## FOREWORD

It is a privilege to be asked to write a foreword for this series of guides on dyslexia in the secondary school. Moira Thomson ought to be congratulated in putting together these informative and up to date guides that will both heighten the awareness of dyslexia in secondary schools and develop the knowledge and skills of teachers through the implementation of the suggestions made in the guides. Too often books and materials on dyslexia are cornered by a few, usually those who have a prior interest in the subject. Many feel it is not their concern, or they do not have the specialised experience to intervene. These guides will challenge and change that assumption. The guides are for all teachers – they contain information that will be directly relevant and directly impact on the practice of every teacher in every secondary school in the country. Not only that, the guides are up to date containing advice stemming from the most recent legislation (Education (Scotland) Act 2004: Additional Support for Learning). This makes the guides an essential resource in every school in the country.

Above all the guides provide a positive message. Dyslexia is couched in terminology that expresses what learners with dyslexia **can do** not what they 'can't do'. Any difficulties experienced by learners with dyslexia are seen as 'barriers to learning' which means that the onus is on supporting learners overcome these barriers and this places the responsibility firmly on the professionals working in schools. This reiterates the view that dealing with dyslexia is a whole school responsibility.

The breadth of coverage in these guides is colossal. It is highly commendable that Moira Thomson has met this immense task with true professionalism in providing clearly written and relevant guides incorporating the breadth of the curriculum. As well as including all secondary school subjects the guides also provide information on the crucial aspects of supporting students preparing for examinations, the use of information and communication technology, information for parents, details of the assessment process and the skills that underpin learning. It is important to consider the view that learners with dyslexia are first and foremost learners and therefore it is important that their learning skills are developed fully. It is too easy to place the emphasis on developing literacy skills at the expense other important aspects of learning. The guides will reinforce this crucial point that the learning skills of all students with dyslexia can be developed to a high level. I am particularly impressed with the inclusion of a section on classroom management. This again reinforces the point that managing dyslexia is a classroom concern and a learning and curriculum-focused perspective needs to be adopted. A focus on curriculum planning and acknowledging learning styles is essential if learners are to reach their potential in secondary schools.

The guides do more than provide information on dyslexia; rather they are a staff development resource and one that can enlighten and educate all teachers in secondary schools. I feel certain they will be warmly appreciated and used for that purpose. The guides will benefit school management as well as teachers and parents, but the real winners will be the students with dyslexia. It is they who will ultimately benefit and the guides will help them fulfil their potential and make learning a positive and successful school experience for all.

Dr. Gavin Reid,  
Edinburgh, UK  
July 2007

## **INFORMATION FOR SUBJECT TEACHERS**

Most secondary teachers assume that their pupils arrive from the primary school with the ability to read, write and compute. Even when dyslexic difficulties are identified as part of a pupil's learning profile, subject teachers may struggle to relate this to their subject. What subject teachers really want to know is **how** a pupil's dyslexia will affect learning in their particular subject - but determining this for as many as 15 different subject teachers will be a daunting task for Support for Learning teachers who do not yet know the pupil. Transition arrangements will provide secondary staff with details about a pupil's strengths and weaknesses that can be used to inform the production of a pupil profile that might be used to predict aspects of a subject curriculum that may give rise to the need for additional support.

Even when dyslexia is identified during the secondary years, subject teachers do not always find lists of underlying difficulties useful to help them determine the additional support needed in their classroom, often finding general comments about possible barriers to learning more useful e.g. This pupil experiences difficulties with processing language and may be unable to read/write at the same rate as the rest of the class. If comments of this nature are accompanied by suggested strategies for minimising the effects of the problems in the classroom, subject teachers are more likely to be able to meet the additional support needs of dyslexic pupils and adjust their delivery of the curriculum appropriately.

## **UNDERPINNING SKILLS**

The skills required for pupils to access the secondary subject curriculum are:

- **Communication skills** - reading, writing, listening, talking, and study skills
- **Memory skills** – short-term (working) memory, sequencing; & shape/symbol/directional confusion; accessing alphabetical rules; reversals of letters and numbers; time and positional difficulties
- **Co-ordination and organisation** – handwriting, team games, use of tools and equipment

Not all dyslexic pupils will experience difficulties in all of these categories, and many will demonstrate strengths in areas where other pupils may struggle. A dyslexic pupil's profile should identify both possible strengths and probable difficulties, according to each subject.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Most subject teachers expect dyslexic pupils to have problems with reading and writing – but not all will experience the same difficulties – and many may already have developed coping strategies. Reading in the subject curriculum has a number of different functions, and some dyslexic pupils will cope well with some of these but struggle with others.

### **Reading for Information**

Even dyslexic pupils who can read with a high level of comprehension are likely to read much more slowly than teachers would expect. Many have difficulty remembering what has just been read and have to re-read text several times to make sense of content, slowing their reading rate even more. It is important that teachers check that pupils' eyes have been tested by an optician to identify any visual impairment that can be corrected.

#### **Dyslexic pupils who experience visual processing difficulties may:**

- Complain of headaches, dizziness or nausea when reading
- Report that words move around the page or the text is too bright
- Experience visual distortions or discomfort
- Rub their eyes, blink rapidly and often
- Complain of scratchy or itchy eyes.

It is possible that these problems can be helped by introducing tinted overlays or lenses. There are a number of options in this area, but many of these require action by young people and their parents.

#### **Additional Support Strategies – to minimise visual difficulties:**

- Enlarging print or changing font and line spacing
- Providing text on coloured paper
- Allowing the use of coloured overlays or reading rulers
- Providing audio version of longer texts
- Scanning shorter text into a computer to take advantage of text-speech software
- Seating the pupil out of direct sunlight and away from fluorescent lighting

#### **Reading for information - dyslexic pupils may:**

- Read more slowly than classmates, so may not finish set reading tasks
- Forget what they have just read and have to re-read text in order to retain content
- Omit or insert words or sentences from another place on the page preventing comprehension of text
- Misread words, changing the meaning of text
- Lose the place often, having to start again from the top of the page
- Have difficulty locating information in a text source
- Have difficulty in pin-pointing the main idea in a passage
- Be unable to use text versions of dictionaries, directories, encyclopaedias, indexes

#### **Additional Support Strategies:**

- Highlight key words/information in text
- Deliver teacher-led class lessons when possible, using a variety of teaching styles
- Provide opportunities for discussion of topics – paired or small groups
- Use video or audio recordings to support/illustrate text content
- Number lines and paragraphs and give specific references of location of information
- Ensure that all text materials are clear and legible



- Arrange access to a scanner and a computer with text to speech software
- Provide electronic dictionaries etc

**Note:**

Try to ensure that print is not the only source of subject information for pupils. Recording or scanning materials for pupils is often less simple than it appears - be alert to copyright issues.

***Reading Aloud***

Even those dyslexic pupils who are making good progress with reading may panic if asked to read in public and progress may be jeopardised by the experience. Many of the problems experienced by dyslexic pupils when reading for information are present when shorter texts are concerned. For many, even the thought of reading aloud in class, in front of peers is a nightmare. However, it is possible for the teacher to arrange a signal to alert a dyslexic pupil when they will be called on to read, allowing some preparation time – or even arrange and rehearse a passage in advance. This includes the dyslexic pupil in the class activity and may lead to improved self esteem and developing confidence.

**Barriers to reading aloud - dyslexic pupils may:**

- Experience visual distortions, especially when they are stressed, that make it difficult for them to focus on text to be read
- Have to sound out longer, and unfamiliar words, preventing them from reading with fluency and often obscuring meaning
- Reverse words or phrases, insert or omit small words, sometimes changing meaning of text
- Unintentionally insert words/phrases from the line above or below
- Lose the place when reading, for no apparent reason
- Be very sensitive to being corrected publicly, adversely affecting self esteem
- Be embarrassed by their lack of reading fluency, resulting in distress or inappropriate behaviour

**Additional Support Strategies:**

- Never ask a pupil with dyslexia to read aloud **without advance warning**
- Ensure that key subject information is read aloud only by a teacher or a competent reader
- Provide visual support that will enable dyslexic pupils who have auditory-verbal difficulties to process the information being read aloud
- Accept the dyslexic as a volunteer reader – sometimes pupils prepare a section of text and want to read it to the class, so provide the opportunity for this to happen
- If reading aloud by pupils is an essential part of a lesson, ensure that dyslexic pupils are given their segment well in advance to allow them to rehearse and resolve any possible difficulties

### ***Testing Subject Knowledge – close reading***

In many subjects, understanding of a topic may be tested or reinforced by a reading passage followed by a number of questions, by multiple choice exercises or by pupils filling blanks in a passage using key words (Cloze). In exercises of this nature, the reading ability of a pupil will often determine success rather than knowledge or understanding of the facts or concepts being tested. Subject teachers should bear in mind that it takes dyslexic pupils longer to read the questions, compose answers in their heads, and get them down on paper, and that their entitlement to additional support extends to all assessments, even spot topic tests.

#### **Barriers to close reading assessments - dyslexic pupils may:**

- Be unable to complete close reading in the same time as peers
- Struggle to locate the key words in the text
- Be unable to recognise key words out of context
- Have difficulty remembering subject vocabulary
- Have to re-read an entire passage from the beginning so that it makes sense
- Be unable to relate the questions to the passage
- Have difficulty with multiple-choice questions due to the volume of reading required to answer these correctly and the similarity of choices offered

#### **Additional Support Strategies:**

- Use pair or group discussions to complete revision exercises
- Create the opportunity for pupil/teacher discussion
- Set practical tasks instead of using tests requiring fluent reading skills
- Encourage pupils to draw up tables, or to complete charts rather than filling-in blanks
- Provide alternatives to reading passages, such as using illustrations for interpretation of subject content
- Conduct a class review session before the test
- Provide a study guide for pupils with key terms and concepts
- Always provide a list of vocabulary required to complete any Cloze exercise
- Encourage the use of ICT to complete Cloze exercises
- Arrange extra time for dyslexic pupils to complete a test

#### **Note:**

Dyslexic pupils should be given the same level of support for assessments that is normally provided in the subject classroom.

### ***Handwriting***

Many pupils with dyslexia find the mechanical aspects of writing a problem. Graphic skills are poor and writing is slow, laboured and non-automatic, lacking fluency. There are some pupils for whom handwriting is a physical and emotional struggle. Not only may handwriting be illegible, but words and letter strings may be transposed. Diagrams may be wrongly proportioned or reversed and columns may be misaligned. Dyslexic pupils may produce unusual spatial organisation of the page with words widely spaced or tightly pushed together, margins are often ignored and writing is not on the line.

**Barriers to learning - when writing, dyslexic pupils may;**

- Have illegible handwriting and poor layout of written work
- Have neat handwriting, but write very slowly
- Have difficulty forming letters
- Have an unusual pencil grip, e.g. the thumb on top of the fingers (a "fist grip")
- Grip the pencil so tightly that the hand cramps
- Put their head down on the desk to watch the tip of the pencil as they write
- Write letters with unusual starting and ending points
- Have great difficulty getting letters to "sit" on the horizontal lines
- Confuse upper and lower case letters and have difficulty remembering how to form capital cursive letters
- Tightly pack writing into one section of the page instead of being evenly spread out
- Telescope letters, perhaps omitting vowels
- Be unable to write continuously without frequent rests
- Take an unusually long time to write anything
- Transpose words and letter strings

**Additional Support Strategies:**

- Allow pupils to put pencils down and shake out their hands
- Issue blank jotters and paper **only if** pupils request them
- Provide blank copies of diagrams, charts etc. for completion, clearly indicating where responses should go
- Allow alternatives to hand-written responses e.g. ICT
- Do not penalise a dyslexic pupil for poor presentation of work or bizarre spelling

**Note**

Subject teachers are not expected to teach dyslexic pupils handwriting, but, where graphic skills are part of the subject curriculum, they may teach strategies for improving this.

***Written Assignments***

The written work of dyslexic pupils is often illegible, with bizarre spelling, little punctuation and poor organisation. While most can, with an effort, produce some written work, which is legible by teachers who know them, this may take a very long time to produce. Dyslexic pupils are often acutely aware of their difficulties and are very self-conscious about written work, often feeling frustrated by their inability to express their understanding through writing. This makes it difficult for them to demonstrate their grasp of a subject to the same extent as other pupils. There is often a huge difference between their ability to tell you something and their ability to write it down. They tend to avoid writing whenever possible and may have developed a range of strategies to avoid writing.

It is very difficult for dyslexic pupils to plan written work and follow an ordered sequence in the development of their ideas. In some subjects, like English, teachers actually teach how to write essays of different types and give pupils a

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framework, or plan to follow. There may be an assumption in other subject areas, that pupils already know how to produce well structured extended written responses, and teachers do not see it as their responsibility to teach this. However, no matter what the experience and skills of the rest of the class, dyslexic pupils do need subject specific instruction in how to structure written work, as they are often unable to transfer skills acquired in one subject to a different context. Many subject teachers who undertake this teaching input have identified great improvement of the written work of all pupils, not just those who are dyslexic.

### **Barriers to Learning – dyslexic pupils may:**

- Avoid writing whenever possible
- Produce a poor standard of written work compared with oral ability
- Find it difficult to plan and organise extended writing
- Produce scrappy, illegible written pieces full of spelling mistakes
- Tire more quickly than others when writing so that the quality of writing deteriorates over time
- Have slow laborious handwriting and be unable to keep up with speed of thought, resulting in many omissions
- Have difficulty in selecting appropriate subject terminology
- Cross out spellings several times, even when correct
- Be unable to spell the words they want, so they will use simple alternatives
- Have difficulty with punctuation and grammar, often writing everything as one very long sentence
- Lack fluency, writing very little, but often to the point
- Produce only brief written responses that do not reflect the full extent of subject knowledge and understanding
- Have difficulty sequencing their written work logically
- Become confused and lose the thread of their writing, having to start again, or draw arrows and lines to show where things should be
- When proof-reading, read back what they wanted to say, not what is actually written on the page
- Have difficulty identifying errors in their writing, making redrafting very difficult

### **Additional Support Strategies:**

- Issue writing guidelines and paragraph headings to support the structure of extended writing
- Provide a framework for extended writing and model different types of subject writing
- Use mind mapping, bullet points etc. to help with planning and structure
- Encourage pupils to work in note form, concentrating on key words or terms
- Provide ICT for written work and make sure that editing features and spellchecker are used
- Allow rests when extended writing is required
- Permit alternatives to extended writing e.g. charts, diagrams, pictorial representations
- Permit the use of tape/digital recorders to be saved as voice files or transcribed later
- Highlight errors in writing and suggest possible corrections/amendments for redrafting

- Do not penalise a dyslexic pupil for poor presentation of work or bizarre spelling, mark only on the content of an assignment

## ***Study Skills***

### **Note taking**

Dyslexic pupils may also have great difficulty taking dictated notes. For those who have an auditory-verbal processing deficit or short term memory problems, it may be impossible. They may also have great difficulty taking personal notes from text, video, audio or ICT sources.

#### **Barriers to learning - when taking notes, dyslexic pupils may:**

- Be unable to keep up with the writing rate of the rest of the class
- Have difficulty processing what the teacher is saying
- Find it impossible to listen and write at the same time
- Get stuck on how to spell a particular word and be unable to proceed
- Have difficulty in understanding their own notes
- Be unable to organise personal notes into sections that make sense for study and revision
- Copy chunks of text instead of writing notes in their own words

#### **Additional Support Strategies:**

- Provide printed or electronic notes in advance
- Identify a partner whose notes can be photocopied
- Have copying done as soon as possible after a lesson
- Allow the use of a recorder (digital or tape) so that dictated notes are accurately taken
- When dictating, spell out any technical or difficult words for all pupils
- Provide summaries of chapters of books to support pupils' note taking skills
- Provide a framework for note-taking to help dyslexic pupils organise their own notes
- Teach the use of bullet points and summaries for note taking
- Allow the use of mind maps, charts and diagrams for note taking

## ***Copying***

For pupils who have dyslexia copying may be impossible. The results will certainly be unreliable and inaccurate. When copying, a dyslexic pupil looks up and visually "grabs" just one or two letters at a time, repeatedly sub-vocalising the names of those letters, then stares intensely at the paper when writing those one or two letters. This process is repeated over and over, with the pupil concerned rarely demonstrating any comprehension of the content of the copied material.

#### **Barriers to learning - when copying, dyslexic pupils may:**

- Find looking from board to desk every few seconds slow, painful, and tedious
- Have very poor handwriting
- Be unable to read their own writing after an interval - even a very short one
- Frequently lose the place

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- Misspell copied words
- Not always match capitalisation or punctuation when copying

### **Note:**

For younger pupils, the teacher should make clear arrangements for the copying rather than leave it to the discretion of the pupils. When older, pupils can be expected to take the responsibility for copying. **Unsupported copying should NEVER be the ONLY source of information.**

## *Listening and Talking*

Some dyslexic pupils experience auditory processing difficulties like misuse of familiar words, incorrect sentence structure and difficulty remembering new or unfamiliar words - resulting in reluctance to talk in class. Some have even undergone extensive hearing tests because of the significant delay between hearing something and responding to it. Dyslexic pupils often struggle to respond appropriately to questions due to the need to process the language first before being able to process the question.

If a teacher speaks quickly, or gives too much information at once, dyslexic pupils will probably catch only parts of this, and may be reluctant to admit that they missed information, preferring the teacher and classmates to believe that they were not paying attention. Dyslexic pupils may be slow to respond to a teacher's spoken instructions and find that the rest of the class is getting on with a piece of work while they have no idea where to begin e.g. a dyslexic pupil may ask "What page are we on?" immediately after the teacher has told the class the page number.

### **Barriers to learning – dyslexic pupils may:**

- Become confused when asked to talk in class
- Have word finding problems or be unable to name an object
- Misunderstand complicated questions
- Fail to respond to questions even when they know the answer
- Think they are listening but cannot concentrate
- Be unable to process teacher talk at the required speed and 'hear' only part of this

### **Additional Support Strategies:**

- Always give 'thinking time' to allow dyslexic pupils to process input and construct an appropriate response
- Set up a gesture code so that dyslexic pupils know when they will be called upon to answer
- Ask pupils to repeat aloud the question you have just asked
- Encourage the use of physical prompts e.g. listing items using fingers
- Provide an attention focus for listening that is directly relevant to lesson content
- Always summarise any discourse and use questioning to support dyslexic pupils to fill gaps

## **Discussion**

Some course requirements require the promotion of discussion within the classroom for all pupils. Teachers may introduce topics in formal or scientific language, but it will be understood by all pupils in terms of how they can relate it to their own language and past experience, a process best promoted through discussion.

### **Barriers to learning - in discussion, dyslexic pupils may:**

- Be unable to hold a list of discussion questions/instructions in memory
- Have problems with turn-taking and interrupt others to make comments
- Confuse the sequence of responses required
- Contribute apparently irrelevant remarks
- Hesitate to participate, limiting spontaneity
- Have to process the language, then the content of other's remarks, causing them to respond after others have moved on

### **Support Strategies for discussion:**

- Give a structure for discussion – even issue a 'script'
- Encourage pupils to suggest explanations, test hypotheses, challenge each others' understanding, in turn
- Be aware that short-term memory problems contribute to difficulties with turn-taking and relevance
- Ensure that other pupils are aware that some will take much longer than others to contribute appropriately

## **MEMORY & SHAPE/SYMBOL/DIRECTIONAL CONFUSION**

### ***Short term (working) memory***

The secondary curriculum offers additional challenges that put considerable pressure on dyslexic pupils, who have problems with their short-term memory and organisational skills. Many experience short-term memory limitations, finding it hard to remember arithmetic tables, the alphabet or classroom instructions. They may have difficulty organising life around a timetable and forget which books to take to school on any given day and they often cannot remember instructions just after they were given.

### **Barriers to Learning – dyslexic pupils may:**

- Have difficulty in remembering instructions
- Struggle to learn the alphabet, days of the week, months of the year in order
- often forget names of common objects and people
- Be unable to learn multiplication tables, number bonds and other sequences
- Be unable to hold numbers in their heads while doing calculations
- Forget what they were going to say, while waiting for a pause in the conversation or in the middle of a sentence

### **Additional Support Strategies:**

- Encourage the use of pocket notebooks and personal checklists
- Teach mnemonics and rhymes to aid memory

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- Bear in mind that all pupils remember bizarre or amusing incidents more easily and incorporate these in subject delivery to teach key concepts

### ***Shape/symbol confusion***

Some pupils with dyslexia have problems with the identification of shapes and symbols and in discriminating between different symbols – e.g. degrees, percentages etc. There may be a particular problem when writing indices, as these may be portrayed inappropriately. Many dyslexic pupils are unable to transfer skills/knowledge gained in one subject to another context resulting in increased confusion where shapes/symbols may be used differently.

#### **Barriers to learning – some dyslexic pupils may:**

- Mix up the signs + x % °;
- Not understand or confuse subject language referring to symbols and shapes
- Have particular difficulties with formulae notation
- Be unable to relate the properties of a shape to its name
- Have difficulty making connections between shapes
- Have no idea of scale

#### **Suggested Support Strategies:**

- Always allow enough time for the dyslexic pupil to process the nature of a problem
- Teach the subject words that refer to symbols and issue reference cards
- Display symbols charts in the classroom so that pupils may check these unobtrusively
- Teach notation slowly and issue formulae prompts
- Issue templates or stencils to emphasise the different qualities of shapes
- Use colour to code lines and symbols that identify aspects of shapes
- Always use visual representations of shapes to illustrate properties and names
- Issue illustrated notes showing key words, diagrams explaining shape/symbol use

### ***Directionality and time***

Dyslexic difficulties linked to orientation and direction may affect the understanding of patterns and sequences time and co-ordinates. Dyslexic pupils may also have difficulty with the vocabulary of directionality, time and sequence.

#### **Barriers to learning – some dyslexic pupils may:**

- Reverse letters and numbers when writing
- Have little or no sense of direction e.g. confusion of left and right
- Confuse place/directional terminology – e.g. above/below; forward/back
- Have problems reading figures in the correct direction or order
- Have difficulty counting backwards
- Be unable to sequence the steps in an activity correctly



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- Become muddled when working on a set task and start over again – more than once
- Experience difficulty in learning to use analogue clock or watch
- Be unable to judge the passing of time or estimate how long an activity will take

### **Additional support strategies:**

- Give lots of practice writing letters/numbers often reversed
- Issue templates to develop kinaesthetic familiarity
- Help pupils to develop their own strategies for knowing left/right – e.g. **R**ing on **R**ight hand etc
- Use arrows and movement to help with directions
- Use visual and kinaesthetic activities like drawing arrows to illustrate the directionality of place/directional words
- Issue flow charts/numbered steps for set activities and encourage pupils to tick each step completed
- Use digital clocks initially but introduce comparisons with 'round' clocks
- Teach language of time specifically – relate round clock to familiar items like pizza and relate quarter and half hours to sharing
- Continually remind pupils how much time has passed
- Use a stopwatch or countdown digital clock to show time actually passing

### ***Co-ordination and organisation***

Some dyslexic pupils appear clumsy and uncoordinated and many also seem to lack personal organisation and spend a disproportionate amount of time looking for books and equipment. There may be a need to open a dialogue with pupils and parents about the need for e.g. slip on shoes to avoid embarrassing moments in changing rooms or about arranging extra lessons and a lot of practice - after school or out of school – for complex physical activities and road safety.

### **Barriers to Learning - dyslexic pupils may:**

- Be unable to do up buttons and tie shoelaces
- Have illegible handwriting and a strange way of holding a pencil
- Frequently forget essential books, equipment and homework
- Have great difficulty learning to swim or ride a bike
- Struggle with team and ball games – often missing the ball
- Have poor depth perception and be unable to judge distance
- Have difficulty estimating speed of objects, especially in traffic

### **Additional support strategies:**

- Use multi-sensory teaching strategies whenever possible
- Remain aware of the implications of pupils' fine/gross motor problems when planning classroom activities
- Offer a range of cushioned/shaped pencil grips or special pens for writing
- Ensure that dyslexic pupils have access to ICT for all writing activities
- When practical/complex physical activities are planned, give dyslexic pupils advance notice so they may rehearse the movements involved

## *Underpinning Skills for the Secondary Curriculum*

- Involve peers in developing strategies for inclusion of dyslexic pupils in team games
- Be sensitive to the embarrassment of dyslexic pupils e.g. asking them to take off shoes
- Provide personal checklists for equipment required
- Introduce strategies to help pupils determine their own position in relation to others
- Develop exercises that will help pupils to anticipate common hazards like doors opening towards them, passing people on stairs etc.
- Teach road safety in a multi-sensory way, ensuring that dyslexic pupils use all their senses to decide when it is safe to cross a road

### **Note:**

Teachers' use of multi-sensory teaching methods will enable dyslexic pupils to use their strengths to support difficulties in other areas – for example, a pupil with weak visual processing may compensate for this with strong auditory verbal skills.

## **FURTHER READING**

**British Dyslexia Association** Dyslexia Friendly Schools Pack 5<sup>th</sup> edition – free download from <http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk/extra29.html> or order from REM at <http://www.r-e-m.co.uk> (free but postage & packing will be charged)

**Cogan, J & Flecker, M** (2004): *Dyslexia in Secondary School – a practical handbook for teachers, parents and students*, London, Whurr

- Specifically for secondary
- Contents list very detailed re chapter contents
- Photocopiable summaries of some chapters at the end of the book
- Photocopiable worksheets included at the end of the book
- Has lots of checklists, diagrams and examples of pupils' work
- Has lots of suggested strategies for acquiring specific skills

**Crombie, M** (1998): *Dyslexia in the Classroom: A Guide for Teachers*, Routledge

**Fawcett, A** (ed) (2001): *Dyslexia, Theory and Good Practice*, London, Whurr

**McKay, N** (2005): *Removing Dyslexia as a Barrier to Achievement: The Dyslexia Friendly Schools Toolkit*, Wakefield, SEN Marketing

- Focuses on the issue of providing the best opportunities for learning in a mainstream classroom - making it 'dyslexia friendly'
- Recognises that what is good for dyslexic pupils is good for all pupils
- Lots of practical guidance/strategies for removing barriers to learning
- Several checklists for identification of dyslexic difficulties
- Lots of suggestions for strategies for dealing with aspects of dyslexia

**Peer, L & Reid, G** (eds) (2000): *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia – A Challenge for Educators*, London, David Fulton

**Peer, L & Reid, G** (2001): *Dyslexia – Successful; Inclusion in the Secondary School*, London, David Fulton Publishers

- Acknowledges that dyslexia is a whole school issue
- Written specifically for secondary
- Collection of papers by people who are 'expert' in their subjects
- While covering individual subject areas, there is a section covering cross curricular issues
- Brief chapter summaries included
- Includes chapters on staff development and parental issues

**Reid, G & Fawcett, A** (eds) (2004): *Dyslexia in Context – Research, Policy and Practice*, London, Whurr

**Reid, G & Green, S** (2007): *100 Ideas for Supporting Pupils with Dyslexia*, London, Continuum

## DYSLEXIA INDICATORS AT THE SECONDARY STAGE

Dyslexia is more than an isolated defect in reading or spelling. The problem may be perceptual, auditory receptive, memory-based or a processing deficit.

Subject 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 the classroom, please tick the relevant boxes and enter details of the pupil concerned and pass to the Support for Learning team for further investigation.

Pupil Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Quality of written work does not adequately reflect the known ability of the pupil in the subject
- Good orally but very little written work is produced – many incomplete assignments
- Disappointing performance in timed tests and other assessments
- Poor presentation of work – e.g. illegibility, mixed upper and lower case, unequal spacing, copying errors, misaligned columns (especially in Maths)
- Poor organisational skills – pupil is unable to organise self or work efficiently; carries either all books or wrong ones; frequently forgets to hand in work
- Sequencing poor – pupil appears to jump from one theme to another, apparently for no reason
- Inability to memorise (especially in Maths and Modern Languages) even after repeated practice
- Inability to hold numbers in short-term memory while performing calculations
- Symbol and shape confusion (especially in Maths)
- Complains of headaches when reading; sometimes see patterns in printed text; says that words move around the page or that text is glaring at them
- Unable to carry out operations one day which were previously done adequately
- Unable to take in and carry out more than one instruction at a time
- Poor depth perception – e.g. clumsy and uncoordinated, bumps into things, difficulty judging distance, catching balls, etc.

- Poor self-image – lacking in confidence, fear of new situations – may erase large quantities of written work, which is acceptable to the teacher
- Tires quickly and work seems to be a disproportionate return for the effort involved in producing it
- Easily distracted – either hyperactive or daydreaming
- Other – please give details**

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Action requested:	details of known additional needs
	investigation of problem and advice re support
	dyslexia assessment
	profile of additional needs
	suggest strategies for meeting additional needs
	advice re assessment arrangements

**Dyslexia Scotland** has supplied every secondary school in Scotland with a free copy of this publication. **All information contained in the 18 booklets and CD, including extra copies of dyslexia identification checklists, is available free to download from their website.**

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

## **CD CONTENTS:**

### **Worldwide dyslexia contacts**

### **Identification & Assessment of dyslexia**

Dyslexia checklist for subject teachers  
Classroom Observation  
Pupil Checklist for Dyslexia  
Dyslexia - self esteem issues  
Assessment Materials  
Fine Motor Assessment (writing)  
Visual Dyslexia  
Strategies to meet identified needs  
Example of a dyslexic profile  
Personal Learning Plan: Example of an information page  
Dyslexia glossary

### **Co-morbid conditions**

ADHD - teachers' checklist  
Visual Discomfort Meares-Irlen Syndrome  
Dyspraxia  
Dyscalculia  
Dysgraphia

### **Teaching & Learning**

Summary: Classroom management support strategies  
Developing Social Skills - dyslexic learners  
Dyslexia glossary of terminology  
Modern Languages Grid

### **Study skills**

Active Revision.  
Techniques for improving memory  
Study techniques Revision  
Accessible Curricular Materials.  
Writing support using ICT  
CALL project Voice recognition –  
Description for schools  
Small and Portable Devices.

### **Examinations and assessments**

SQA Guide for Candidates: Arrangements for  
Disability Support  
National Testing  
Use of a calculator in Maths noncalculator exam papers  
Modern Foreign Languages Writing  
Glossary of Exam language  
Active Revision  
Stress reducing strategy

## **Resources**

ICT resources to support developing numeracy  
ICT resources to support developing literacy  
ICT and Practising Literacy Skills  
Further Reading suggestions  
Learning & Teaching Scotland – downloadable resources  
Barrington Stoke link  
Dyslexia Shop catalogue link  
iANSYST website link

## **Information for parents of dyslexic pupils**

Enquire parent guide  
Dyslexia Scotland Guide for Parents  
Visual processing difficulties  
Using ICT to support writing  
ICT Starting Points  
Small and Portable Devices  
Alternative Therapies  
Supporting and working with parents of dyslexic pupils  
Contributory factors dyslexia  
Homework Tips for Parents  
Meeting the teacher - parent's guide  
Information for parents - Alternative Assessment Arrangements  
Suggested reading list for parents

## **Downloadable leaflets & information**

What is dyslexia  
DfES How to Identify Dyslexia  
DfES Being Dyslexic  
DfES Tips for Secondary School  
BDA Secondary School Tips  
A framework for understanding Dyslexia – DfES  
Guidance to support pupils with dyslexia and dyscalculia - DfES  
How Can Parents Help  
Dyslexia Scotland Guide for Parents  
Enquire Parents Guide to Additional Support for Learning  
Help for Dyslexic student  
Dyslexia Indications for Adults Checklist for Adults  
Dyslexic adults assessments  
Guide for Teachers  
Help At Home.  
Help with Reading and Spelling  
How Can Parents Help  
Help with Maths  
Hints for Homework

***Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum*** is a series of booklets for secondary school teachers throughout Scotland. They are intended to help them remove the barriers to learning that are often experienced by dyslexic pupils.

**The pack of 18 booklets:**

- Is an authoritative resource to help teachers meet the additional needs of dyslexic pupils as described in the Scottish Executive's ***Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice (2005)***
- Provides subject teachers with advice and suggests strategies to enable them to minimise barriers to learning that dyslexic pupils might experience in the secondary curriculum and provide appropriate support
- Offers guidance for Support for Learning staff on the identification and support of dyslexia in the secondary curriculum and on advising subject colleagues
- Addresses the continuing professional development needs arising from national, local and school initiatives
- Is packed with practical information and tips for teachers on how to give dyslexic pupils the best chance of academic success
- Is supplemented with a CD crammed with practical and helpful downloadable material

**Moira Thomson** recently retired as Principal Teacher of Support for Learning at Broughton High School, Edinburgh, after 30+ years. She was also Development Officer for City of Edinburgh Dept of Children & Families; in-house CPD provider for City of Edinburgh Dept of Children & Families; Associate Tutor for SNAP; Associate Assessor for HMIE. Moira is an independent adjudicator for the Additional Support for Learning dispute resolution; educational consultant, providing CPD for secondary teachers; secretary of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Dyslexia; member of Scottish Qualifications Authority focus groups and a committee member of Dyslexia Scotland South East.

*"I truly hope that all teachers will embrace this publication. If they can put into practice the guidance offered it will make a fundamental difference to the way dyslexic children are taught in school today. Young people in Scotland deserve this chance."*

**Sir Jackie Stewart OBE, President of Dyslexia Scotland.**



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