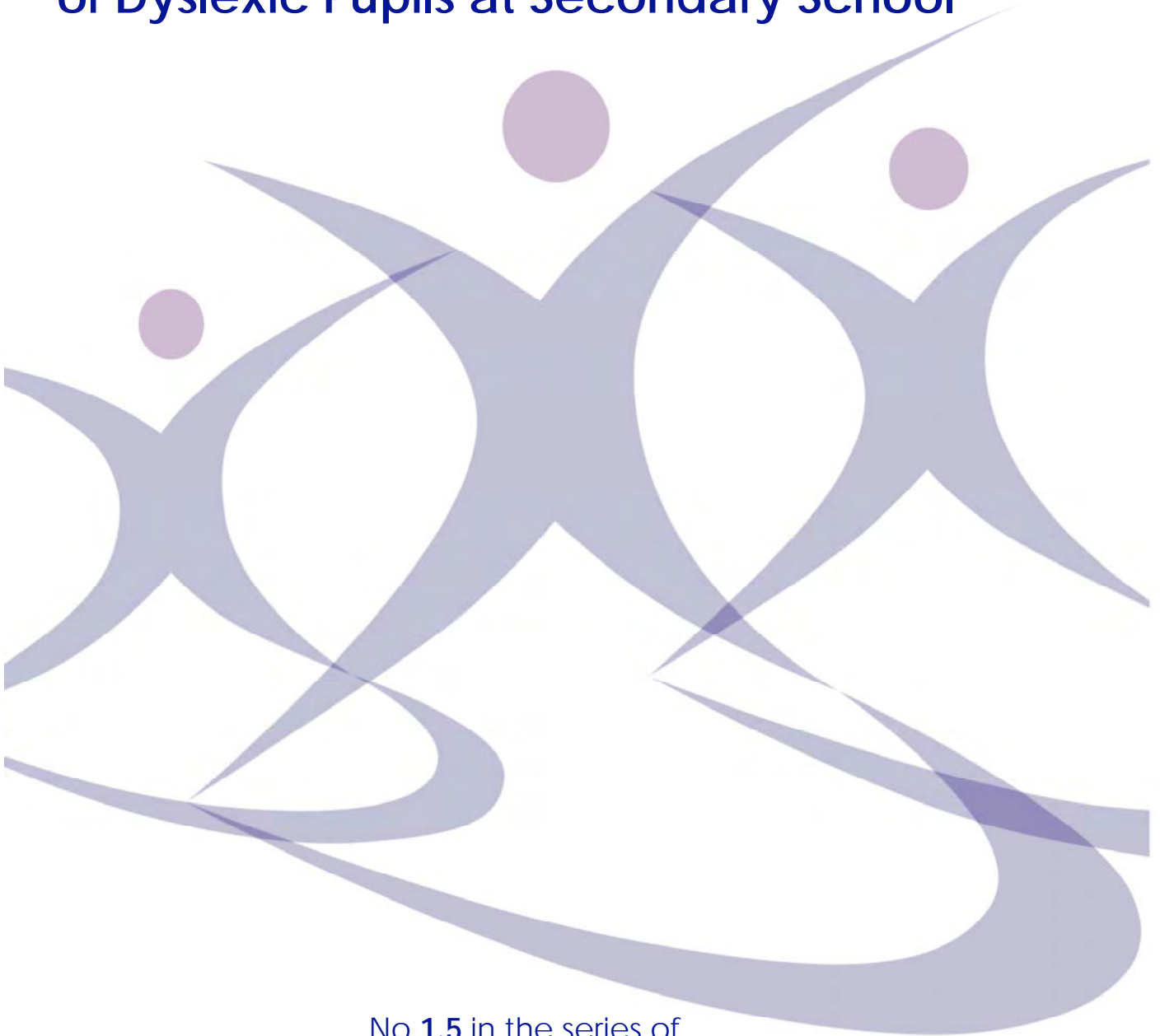




Dyslexia Scotland

Supporting and Working with Parents of Dyslexic Pupils at Secondary School



No 1.5 in the series of
Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum
By Moira Thomson

Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum

by Moira Thomson

SUPPORTING AND WORKING WITH PARENTS OF DYSLEXIC PUPILS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Published in Great Britain by
Dyslexia Scotland in 2007

Dyslexia Scotland, Stirling Business Centre
Wellgreen, Stirling FK8 2DZ
Charity No: SCO00951

© Dyslexia Scotland 2007

ISBN 13 978 1 906401 04 7

Printed and bound in Great Britain by **M & A Thomson Litho Ltd**, East Kilbride,
Scotland

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.

1.0 Dyslexia: Secondary Teachers' Guides

- 1.1. Identification and Assessment of Dyslexia at Secondary School
- 1.2. Dyslexia and the Underpinning Skills for the Secondary Curriculum
- 1.3. Classroom Management of Dyslexia at Secondary School
- 1.4. Information for the Secondary Support for Learning Team
- 1.5. Supporting Parents of Secondary School Pupils with Dyslexia
- 1.6. Using ICT to Support Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum
- 1.7. Dyslexia and Examinations

2.0 Subject Teachers' Guides

- 2.1. Dyslexia and Art, Craft & Design
- 2.2. Dyslexia and Drama (Performing Arts)
- 2.3. Dyslexia and English (Media Studies)
- 2.4. Dyslexia and Home Economics (Health & Food Technology)
- 2.5. Dyslexia and ICT subjects (Computing Studies, Business Education, Enterprise)
- 2.6. Dyslexia and Mathematics
- 2.7. Dyslexia and Modern Foreign Languages
- 2.8. Dyslexia and Music
- 2.9. Dyslexia and Physical Education (Outdoor Education, Sports, Games, Dance)
- 2.10. Dyslexia and Science subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
- 2.11. Dyslexia and Social subjects (Geography, History, Modern Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies)

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

Extra copies of individual booklets or complete sets are available from

Dyslexia Scotland, Stirling Business Centre, Wellgreen, Stirling, FK8 2DZ

Email: info@supportingdyslexicpupils.org.uk

To all my dyslexic pupils, who taught me what dyslexia really is

Acknowledgements

Dyslexia Scotland would like to thank the following for making possible the publication of this important series of books. Every secondary school in Scotland has been supplied with a copy. All material contained in the booklets and CD is downloadable free from the Dyslexia Scotland website - www.supportingdyslexicpupils.org.uk.

Special thanks to **M & A Thomson Litho Ltd**, East Kilbride, Scotland who printed the booklets at below cost – www.thomsonlitho.com.

Thanks also to Trevor Hook, Stephen Mitchell, Yvonne Cochrane and Senga Fairgrieve for their production input and Paula O'Connell for copy-editing all 18 booklets.

Moira Thomson would like to thank Meg Houston and Maureen Brice for their ongoing support and Alasdair Andrew, Karen Reid and the other members of the Dyslexia Scotland South East Committee for supporting the venture. Thanks also to David Dodds, former collaborator and colleague at City of Edinburgh Council, who was there at the beginning and contributed throughout.

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

Registered in Scotland No. 153321
Scottish Charity No. SCO00951

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 TEACHERS

All parents/carers have concerns about their child's progress and wish to play an active part in their child's education. Many parents/carers of dyslexic children will need a high level of support from the school to help them understand the challenges their children may face in the secondary curriculum and to explain the nature of any additional support that may be provided. All school/home communications should be clear, positive and constructive in order to develop a shared understanding that everyone has the pupil's best interests at heart.

School managers and pupil support teachers must reassure parents that assessment of their children's additional support needs in the context of the secondary curriculum will be done immediately after this is requested. Comments such as 'It's early days' or 'He just needs to try harder' are completely inappropriate - as soon as a dyslexic profile is suspected, by parent/carer, pupil or teacher, immediate assessment and appropriate action is required under Additional Support for Learning legislation. It may be useful to send parents/carers information about the Education Authority's Additional Support for Learning policy, highlighting their rights and/or copies of the Dyslexia Scotland Guide for Parents.

Subject teachers should be aware that to most secondary school pupils, image is all important and anything that makes them different from peers is often rejected, resulting in many dyslexic pupils deliberately underachieving and associating with slower learners or the disaffected to save themselves from being embarrassed by the effects of their dyslexia in a subject classroom. In order to help parents/carers begin to accept that dyslexia will be an aspect of their children's learning for the whole of their time at school, teachers should make great efforts to:

- Engage in an on-going dialogue with parents/carers that is sympathetic and non-judgmental, with all teachers listening to all parental concerns
- Demonstrate that the school has a dyslexia-friendly ethos, providing a structure for appropriate assessment of dyslexia, linked to the demands of the secondary subject curriculum
- Ensure that dyslexic pupils have access to a subject curriculum and materials at an appropriate level, in an appropriate format
- Offer a well-planned programme of additional support based on appropriate individual assessments and the demands of the subject curriculum
- Anticipate difficulties and stress arising from the impact of dyslexia on organisational and short-term memory by working together with parents/carers and pupils themselves to develop strategies to deal with problems concerning:
 - copying down homework at the end of the lesson
 - sending home notes and newsletters
 - relaying verbal messages
 - the amount or type of homework
- Develop a shared understanding that there is no 'quick fix' or 'cure' for dyslexia and that supporting the progress of dyslexic pupils may be a long uphill struggle for subject teachers
- Offer support for a pupil's social and emotional needs as they arise

There are additional problems that parents/carers of dyslexic pupils may experience from time to time that might be eased only by contact with others whose children also struggle with dyslexia. These include:

- **Confusion** about what dyslexia is and how it was identified/assessed
- **Guilt** about the possible inherited/genetic nature of dyslexia
- **Concern** about what the future may hold for their children
- **Anger** – often irrational - at the school, the child, self and partner for a number of reasons, some apparently unconnected with dyslexia
- **Frustration** at feelings of helplessness, sometimes linked to limitations set by their own dyslexia
- **Anxiety** about their children's feelings of confusion, distress, anger and frustration – the Why me? question
- **Over-protectiveness** developed by living with a dyslexic child and watching the daily struggle just to be 'normal'
- **Stress** because the whole family can be affected by something as simple as inappropriate homework
- **Exasperation** because it is sometimes hard to convince education professionals that parents/carers really do know their children best
- **Despair** caused by some or all of the above

In order to help them get through these feelings, the school should introduce parents/carers of dyslexic pupils to outside agencies and support groups such as Dyslexia Scotland – or perhaps form a group within the school where they may share experiences and support each other.

When parents are contacted about the possibility of their child being dyslexic, it would be useful to send home some general information about dyslexia as well as any checklist or questionnaire for them to complete as part of the assessment process. Once a pupil's dyslexia has been assessed and related to the secondary curriculum, the school should send additional information home along with details of any proposed support provision. For this purpose, many useful documents and contact details of dyslexia organizations are provided in this series of booklets and on the accompanying CD.

FURTHER READING

Dyslexia Scotland DYSLEXIA A Brief Guide for Parents from website at <http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/>

Ostler, C (1999): A Parent's Survival Guide Surrey Ammonite Books

Given B & Reid G (1998): Learning Styles: A Guide for Teachers and Parents Lancs. Red Rose Publications.

Reid G (2002): Learning Styles: A Guide for Teachers and Parents With A Little Help From My Friends – Dyslexia: An Introductory Guide For Parents, Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh.

Reid G (2004) DYSLEXIA: A Complete Guide for Parents, London, John Wiley & Sons.

DYSLEXIA - CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS (photocopiable)

Parents may have noticed some of the factors listed below and agree that investigation of dyslexia should be carried out. A specialist teacher investigating your child for dyslexia may ask if these factors have been checked; some will be known only to parents, and details may not be required for identification of dyslexia – but it may be useful to know that some of the factors listed below may contribute to your child's dyslexia.

- 1. Birth history.** Were there any problems before during or after birth, e.g. a premature birth?
- 2. Family history.** Are others in the family dyslexic? There is usually a genetic factor in developmental dyslexia, though other family members may have varying symptoms and severity.
- 3. Educational history.** Has school experience been difficult? What intervention has there been? How has this helped?
- 4. General health.** Have there been any long illnesses, involving school absence? Could there be any undiagnosed conditions, e.g. mild epilepsy or petit mal, which may look like inattention and gaps in continuity? A physical injury or a stroke may indicate acquired dyslexia.
- 5. Vision.** School medicals are not enough. Has vision been checked by an optometrist? Does the child lose his place when reading? Is the child light sensitive, does the print blur or appear to move?
- 6. Hearing.** Has hearing been checked? Did the child have 'glue ear' when younger? This may have hindered auditory perception of sounds in words.
- 7. Speech and language.** Have there been delays or deficits in speech and language development? This includes pronunciation of words, vocabulary development, complexity of spoken language and understanding of language heard. Would a referral to a speech and language therapist be advisable? Is English the first language of the child and in the home? This could have implications for test results, even for visual/spatial aspects of cognitive ability for which oral instructions are given.
- 8. Co-ordination.** Is the child clumsy or accident-prone? Does this affect gross and fine motor movements? Is the child aware of his/her own body in space in relation to people and objects? How about anticipation of the movements of others, e.g. in team games? Dyspraxia might be a possibility if verbal ability is considerably higher than visual-spatial skills in ability tests. Would a referral to an occupational therapist be advisable? Left-handedness is not significantly higher in dyslexics but life is harder for all left-handers. Cross-laterality is not significant either but late development of hand dominance or non-dominance of hand, eye, foot, seems to happen more often in dyslexics.
- 9. Attention and Emotional Behavioural aspects.** If these are present, are they primary factors or an outcome of frustration at difficulty in learning? Some behavioural difficulties appear to be controllable and are intended to disrupt or annoy. Other conditions, like Attention Deficit Disorder, with or without Hyperactivity, are involuntary, and disruptive behaviour appears purposeless and puzzling to all concerned. Lack of ability to concentrate is typical of ADD and ADHD, so weaknesses in – e.g. - reading may be a result of this.
- 10. Communication/relationship aspects.** This is different from speech and language disorders. Pupils may have difficulty making eye-contact, communicating and making relationships and showing appropriate behaviour? Is there a tendency towards some aspect of autism?
- 11. Self-esteem.** Literacy is deemed very important in our culture. It is not surprising that those who find it difficult are very frustrated, depressed and have low self-esteem. People complain about giving labels, but most dyslexics are very pleased to know that there is a reason for their difference.
- 12. Intelligence.** It is as wrong to expect too much of someone with below average intelligence as it is to expect too little of someone with high intelligence. People of high intelligence who can grasp some things quickly may be very frustrated by their slowness in literacy skills. People with lower cognitive abilities, sometimes known as global learning difficulties, may have some dyslexic characteristics but their lower ability is the primary factor. Dyslexics usually show a varied pattern of abilities.
- 13. Diet supplements and drugs.** There is no pill that makes learning to read easy. However, nutritional vulnerability or deficiencies may affect concentration and behaviour so affect learning indirectly. Research suggests that some dyslexics lack a natural production of some essential nutritional ingredients. Some people are allergic to food additives. Some drugs control behaviour, but their long term effects are not known. They should only be given on medical advice.
- 14. Individual styles for learning, working and living.** Any assessment of dyslexia should reveal strengths as well as weaknesses. Some dyslexics develop strategies for their own ways of doing things and this should be encouraged.

VISUAL PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES *(photocopiable)*

The first step in any investigation of reading difficulties must be testing by an optician for any visual impairment that may require corrective lenses. Difficulties with visual processing that continue after vision has been examined - and corrected if necessary - may be due to visual discomfort linked to over-sensitivity to the patterns of print on the page (Mears-Irlen Syndrome), or inefficient control of the eye movements needed for effective visual processing, including eye tracking.

Parents should check with the school to find out whether they have anyone trained to do a vision perception screening. This consists of a battery of screening tests and the screener will report back, issue tinted overlays if necessary and perhaps suggest referral to a qualified optician for further investigation. If the school does not have a trained specialist in visual dyslexia then the optician should be approached and asked to arrange a screening or a full assessment. There will normally be a charge for this service as it is not currently covered by the NHS. If the local optician cannot undertake the assessments, they can refer you to an optician who has been trained to do these. There may be provision for payment of the fees incurred from your school or Education Authority or other sources. Ask for advice.

Children who have visual processing difficulties may:

- Tire easily when reading
- Find reading small print very difficult or impossible
- Lose the place often when reading
- Miss words/lines or read them twice unless keeping the place with a marker
- Find reading physically uncomfortable or painful – eyes may water, itch or hurt, and reading can lead to headaches, dizziness and/or nausea

HOW PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN HELP

Be generous with praise and uncritical of errors – remember that most children assume that the way they see the page is the way everyone sees it – and they worry that others can read more easily than they can. Telling them that not everyone experiences movement and distortions in text may go a long way to restoring damaged self esteem.

It is much easier for pupils to read enlarged text. Create this either printed using a larger font and increased line spacing, or simply enlarged on the photocopier. Printing text on tinted paper instead of white is also helpful in eliminating glare and distortions caused by extreme black/white contrast. Encourage the use of a marker while reading – or a pointer, ruler, folded paper or a tinted reading ruler.

Some education authorities and Dyslexia Scotland have staff trained to screen pupils for Mears-Irlen syndrome and some local optometrists do colorimetric assessments. In both cases tinted overlays or lenses may be issued to reduce text distortions experienced – consider this if you note:

- Excessive blinking, eye rubbing, facial grimacing
- Watery eyes, or hot/dry/itchy eyes
- Letters reported to move, jump, wobble or blur
- Reports of 'rivers/snakes of white' in text
- Fatigue, headaches, nausea and migraines developing while reading

Further information available on the CD.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES (photocopiable)

Parents are always interested in good ways of helping their dyslexic children but there is a need to treat any new ideas with caution. Some 'new' programmes include well-established good practice and multi-sensory methods that are already used by specialist teachers working with dyslexic pupils. Look for evidence of success for new programmes that has been carefully evaluated before undertaking expenditure on these. Since dyslexia is not a disease, there is no 'cure'. It is a permanent condition just as left-handedness is. All dyslexic learners are different – the dyslexia affects each differently in different ways and there is no single method that will suit them all. But all can develop strategies to compensate for their dyslexic difficulties. Dyslexia is more than just an isolated difficulty in reading and spelling. It often includes problems with number, memory, organisation and self-esteem.

This checklist for alternative therapies may provide a useful guide for evaluation 'new' therapies.

1. A list of questions about the 'new' therapy – check:

- The length of time that the therapy has been used, and whether it works.
- The range of difficulties of those who received this therapy and the results.
- A list of any research that has been done showing the effectiveness of therapy.
- Whether the therapy is considered to be appropriate or unsuitable for certain groups or individuals, and details on any possible side effects.
- Signs that determine whether the therapy has been successful, and arrangements for comparing behaviour before and after.

2. A list of questions for the therapist – ask about:

- Details of how long the therapist has been using the therapy and the numbers and ages of people treated.
- Details of training in using the therapy and where the training was done, how long it lasted – e.g. Who trained you? How long did the training last? What qualifications are needed to undergo training? Can I see your certificate?
- Does anyone still monitor you to see if you are still doing the therapy correctly?
- Describe your child and the difficulties identified. How many people have you treated who have similar difficulties and what were the results?
- Can you give me the names and telephone numbers of any other parents/carers who have a child similar to my child who has received this therapy?

3. The arrangements for therapy – check:

- The number of sessions required and the **total** cost of the therapy.
- Where the therapy will take place and transport and/or accommodation arrangements - how much extra will this cost?
- When will the therapy take place? Dates, times, time span, time off school?
- Do I have to pay for the therapy in advance?
- What happens if I wish to abandon the therapy before the course of treatment is completed? How much would I have to pay?
- Will we have a written agreement about the terms and conditions?
- If my child gets worse or the condition does not change after therapy can I have my money back? Will I be entitled to compensation?

Children's first awareness of their dyslexia is failure at school – usually at the primary stage. Pupils become aware that they cannot learn like their classmates and feel that they are to blame for this – they do not know how to get help and cannot explain the difficulties being experienced. The longer dyslexia goes unrecognised, the greater the problem becomes. Many boys become frustrated and may develop behavioural difficulties and become uncooperative in the classroom. Girls may become withdrawn and spend time copying work from their friends, relying on them for help with class work. Both boys and girls may become unwilling to go to school, and they may complain of headaches or feeling sick on days when they may have assessments. A primary school may identify indications of dyslexia – e.g. disruptive behaviour, or excessive talking as the reason for pupils' difficulties and reports this at transition to secondary school. Subject teachers' expectations of pupils are informed by these reports, making the identification of a dyslexic profile less likely, as any failure to engage with the secondary curriculum will be attributed to these.

A pupil's failure to make progress in S1 often results in a meeting being arranged with the Pupil Support/ guidance teacher. If they are concerned that dyslexia might be a factor, they should request that a Support for Learning teacher attends the meeting.

Parents should prepare in advance for this meeting:

1. List the questions/points to be addressed at the meeting.
2. Identify the preferred outcome of the meeting.
3. Take someone for moral support – many parents feel intimidated by teachers and some teachers may appear to talk down to concerned parents.
4. Be positive, firm, calm and confident. This is your child's education and comparisons with other children will not be appropriate.
5. Take notes at the meeting – what you are told may be new and confusing, and you may need to refer to it later when a decision has been made.
6. Do not agree to anything unless you are absolutely sure. Sometimes you need to reflect on what you have been told, or seek further advice.
7. If anything is agreed set a reasonable time limit for the action to be taken.
8. After you have had time to reflect, put in a letter what you understood was discussed and agreed at the meeting and ask the school to confirm that they agree.
9. Before leaving the meeting, arrange for a follow up meeting – shortly after the time limit set – with the understanding that the school will contact you immediately if there are any problems.

A firm non-aggressive approach should lead to the development of good parent/teacher relationships – so be patient and persevering while insisting on an investigation of your child's difficulties. The school is required by law to carry this out, and you have a right:

- To insist that an initial assessment is completed and you have a written report of the results in good time (within 12 weeks)
- To make sure that details of the dyslexia are passed on to subject teachers and that they put any agreed support measures in place in their subject
- To try to remain positive despite any negative feelings – showing anger and bitterness can have an adverse effect

HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS (photocopiable)

Homework can be a frustrating and upsetting experience for dyslexic children and their parents on a daily basis. Here are some tips to help make homework a less traumatic experience.

First of all, **remember**: the purpose of homework is for your child to practise something that is already familiar. If homework is too difficult, you should discuss this with the teacher who issued it. Don't allow your child to become frustrated because homework tasks are beyond their skills or take too long. Setting smaller amounts of work and/or allowing extra time will often help.

1. Establishing a Routine. Develop a daily homework routine. A written or visual plan put in a prominent place is ideal. It should include a particular place set aside for homework and an agreed plan as to what happens after arrival home from school. It should also be flexible enough to take into account after-school activities. The homework place needs to be as quiet as possible, with a cleared space for work and items required at hand e.g. pens, pencils, rubber, books, etc. The kitchen table is suitable if close supervision is required at busy times. Work out the best time for your child to do homework. Keep in mind that your child may be very tired after school - they have had to work harder than other pupils because of their dyslexia. They may need a break before starting homework.

2. Getting Started

- Break homework tasks into manageable parts
- Give breaks between different tasks
- Encourage your child to produce quality work rather than rushing to finish everything in one sitting
- **Do not** arrange for extra homework to help your child catch up - a dyslexic learner can become discouraged when faced with large amounts of work

Go over the homework requirements to ensure your child understands what to do. Read instructions aloud to make sure that the task is fully understood. If necessary, practise the first example or two with them. Help your child to generate ideas for writing tasks and projects before they start writing. If necessary, revise vocabulary that they may need. Sometimes you may help to develop a writing plan.

Encourage your child to present work using personal strengths - for example, pictures could be used if the child is good at art. When necessary and appropriate, arrange with the teacher to scribe so your child can get ideas on paper more accurately.

3. Checking and Monitoring Work. Help your child to learn editing, self-monitoring and checking skills so they can develop more independence in their work as they get older. For example, a simple process like CAPS can be helpful when proof-reading work:

- C** = Capitals
- A** = Appearance
- P** = Punctuation
- S** = Spelling

Encourage your child to use the computer for written work. The use of a spell checker and touch-typing skills will have been taught in school – the Support for Learning team may have Typing Tutor programs and will help you select one that suits your child for additional practice. There are many writing aids for use on the computer – check with the school what software is used, and find out if you can provide this at home too.

If your dyslexic child is slow to complete work, encourage the use of a timer and see how much work can be completed in five minutes. But remember that if homework is regularly taking too long or is too difficult, you should discuss this with school staff.

Give your child lots of praise as they complete homework tasks. Be specific about what they have done well.

4. Organisation. Help the child to develop a comprehensive, written homework plan. Include revision of subjects as well as set homework tasks. Monitor time spent on homework and results.

Encourage your child to keep their school notes and work together in folders so they don't get mixed up lost or damaged. Organise notes into subjects, and ensure that they are filed regularly. Colour coding of subjects can greatly assist organisation and planning.

If pupils are not writing their homework down accurately, arrange for them to check with someone in the same class at the end of the day. Or ask teachers to give them written homework instructions for more complex tasks.

Liaise with teachers regularly to check that pupils are completing homework tasks and class work correctly and are handing in work at school. Check that your child is taking the correct books and equipment to school each day. Develop a visual or written plan if this is an area of difficulty.

5. Study Skills. Make sure that your child has effective plans for approaching tasks like essay writing, coursework, study for examinations. Talk to the school's Support for Learning staff about these.

Build up independent work skills and problem solving strategies for use when the child is "stuck" or not sure of how to go about homework. For example, get your child to think about several different ways they could complete the task correctly. They can also think about who to ask for help if the strategies tried are unsuccessful.

Revise work with your child before examinations. Ask the Support for Learning staff to issue advice sheets. Encourage the child to make notes, underline key words, draw pictures, etc. when studying to aid memory.

6. Using Technology. Use of a computer to present homework often makes a positive difference to results in secondary school. Access to subject textbooks, novels, etc. on tape or CD can greatly ease literacy requirements and ability to complete home and school work.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS - ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENTS *(photocopiable)*

The range of alternative assessment arrangements available to dyslexic learners from primary school to higher education is very wide, and should reflect the support or strategies normally used by an individual pupil in the classroom. Some of these may not be easily identifiable by the teacher – e.g. when teachers routinely read materials to the whole class, they may not identify this as use of a reader.

Dyslexic examination candidates should be given a combination of alternative arrangements that allow the demonstration of attained standards with the least possible level of aid. There should be no assumption that a dyslexic candidate will need the same arrangement for every assessment. For example, a dyslexic candidate may need a reader and extra time for an examination with long reading passages, but not for one where the reading content is much less.

The range of alternative arrangements available for assessments includes:

- Linguistic support
 - A reader
 - A scribe
 - Digital exam papers
 - Transcription - with correction – of the written paper
- Extra time allowances
- Use of ICT
 - Word processors
 - Use of spellchecker
 - software that reads text/digital question papers
 - Software that supports writing e.g. predictive lexicon
 - Voice recognition software
- Use of other technological aids
 - Calculator use in non-calculator Maths papers
 - Use of spelling aids
- Transcription without correction to remove illegibility;
- Rest periods/supervised breaks where extra time makes a paper very long;
- Adapted question papers for candidates with visual processing deficits:
 - Papers printed on different coloured paper
 - Enlarged print papers
 - Digital question papers (on computer)

SQA allows the referral of some scripts to the Principal Examiner to ensure that a dyslexic candidate has not been penalised by the marker for dyslexia-related errors – SQA should be consulted about which subjects/levels are eligible for this arrangement.

The actual arrangement applied to an assessment in a subject should match the support provided for normal course work in that subject. However, it might be that while a dyslexic learner is able to cope with the reading demands of a subject with extra time allowances in place, a reader is needed in a timed examination because the amount of extra time required by the individual to process the text is in excess of that permitted by the examining body, or would make the exam paper so long that fatigue becomes a limiting factor.

Arrangements for National Tests and Standardised tests may differ from those described above – further information on the CD.

SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR PARENTS

Agnew, Barlow, Pascal, Skidmore (1995): *Get Better Grades*, London, Piccadilly

Augur, J (1998): *Dyslexia: Early Help, Better Future*, London, British Dyslexia Association

Crivelli, V (2001): *Write to Read with ICT*, Wakefield, SEN Marketing

Dyslexia Scotland: DYSLEXIA A Brief Guide for Parents from
<http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/>

Geere, B: *Seven Ways to help you child with reading*, London, BDA

Geere, B: *Seven Ways to help you child with Maths*, London, BDA

Henderson, A (1998): *Maths for the Dyslexic – A Practical Guide*, London, David Fulton

Jordan, I (2000): *Visual Dyslexia A Guide for Parents and Teachers*, London, Desktop Publications

McCosh, A (1999): *A Dyslexic Child in the Family?*, London, Desktop Publications

Mellers, C (2000): *Identifying and Supporting the Dyslexic Child*, London, Desktop Publications

Nisbet, P et al ((1999): *Supportive Writing Technology*, CALL Centre, University of Edinburgh

Ostler, C (1999): *A Parent's Survival Guide*, Surrey, Ammonite Books

Given, B & Reid, G (1998): *Learning Styles: A Guide for Teachers and Parents*, Lancs, Red Rose Publications

Reid, G (2002): *With A Little Help From My Friends – Dyslexia: An Introductory Guide For Parents*, Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh

Reid, G (2004): *DYSLEXIA: A Complete Guide for Parents*, London, John Wiley & Sons

Stansfield, J (1998): *Communicating in Writing*, London, BDA

Tipper, A (1996): *Plees Help*, London, Desktop Publications

Whurr, AJ (1995): *This Book Doesn't Make Sense*, London, BDA

Various Leaflets available from Dyslexia Scotland

Unit 3, Stirling Business Centre, Wellgreen, STIRLING FK8 2DZ

Tel: 01786 446650 E-mail: info@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Web: <http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/>

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)
- ☐ Complaints 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

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.



Dyslexia Scotland, Stirling Business Centre, Wellgreen, Stirling, FK8 2DZ
Registered in Scotland No. 153321; Scottish Charity No. SC000951