



Dyslexia Scotland

Dyslexia and Drama (Performing Arts)



No **2.2** in the series of
Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum
By Moira Thomson

Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum

by Moira Thomson

DYSLEXIA AND DRAMA

Published in Great Britain by
Dyslexia Scotland in 2007

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

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ISBN 13 978 1 906401 08 5

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
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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
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- 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

Dyslexia may be defined as a difficulty in processing language-based information. Short-term memory, sequencing, directionality and co-ordination may also be affected.

It is important that secondary teachers consider dyslexia in the context of their own subject. In any subject class there will be a need to make provision to meet a wide variety of strengths and additional support needs, not all linked to dyslexia, but, teaching and learning strategies that are appropriate for dyslexic pupils can be effective for all.

Dyslexia may be difficult for subject teachers to identify, but a mismatch between a pupil's apparent ability and the quality (and quantity) of written work is often observed. Subject teachers should use the Dyslexia Indicators Checklist to confirm any suspicion of a dyslexic profile. If several indicators are ticked, referral should be made to the Support for Learning (SfL) team for further investigation.

TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES RE PUPILS WITH DYSLEXIA

Reference: Education (Scotland) Act 2004: Additional Support for Learning

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

- Recognition of and sensitivity to the range and diversity of the learning preferences and styles of all pupils
- Selection or design of appropriate teaching and learning programmes that match the range of all pupil abilities, within the curricular framework of the school
- Awareness of the learning differences related to dyslexia that may cause difficulties within these programmes
- Understanding that, while dyslexia is not linked to ability, able dyslexic pupils may persistently underachieve because of this
- Knowledge that many dyslexic pupils use strategies such as misbehaviour or illness for coping with difficulties they do not necessarily understand themselves
- Willingness to ask for advice and support from the Support for Learning team
- Commitment to the need to reduce barriers to learning linked to the delivery of the curriculum

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- Acknowledgement of the very severe difficulties that dyslexic pupils might experience due to failure to master the early stages of literacy and numeracy
- Understanding that dyslexia is developmental in nature and that some pupils who have coped with the early stages of literacy acquisition may have difficulties with higher order skills, which do not appear until upper primary or secondary
- Acceptance that some pupils with dyslexia may require additional support within the context of their subject and to consult with colleagues and specialists to determine how best to provide this
- Taking account of the difficulties experienced by dyslexic pupils when assessing progress so that subject knowledge and ability are assessed fairly by making alternative arrangements for assessments that reflect the additional support usually provided

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

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

For example, a dyslexic pupil may fully understand the subject teacher's spoken introduction to a topic but be unable to follow the written instructions to complete class activities.

Many dyslexic learners excel in performance arts and may provide very good role models for pupils who are just beginning to study Drama. Many pupils whose literacy skills are very poor have very good improvisation skills, provided the basic starting point is simple and does not involve much reading of a source. However, dyslexic pupils may struggle when they have to work from a set script, and their need to focus on the printed page may impair their ability to perform. Even when performance skills are weak, all pupils may still be involved in Drama productions, since the range of possible activities is very wide.

Significant Strengths of dyslexic pupils may include:

- Excellent oral skills
- Skills in mimicry and timing
- Excellent long-term memory for lines and movement

- An acute awareness of the environment
- A multi-sensory learning style that encompasses all aspects of performance
- An intrinsic ability to relate movement to speech
- Being highly intuitive and perceptive
- Vivid imaginations, often quirky and original
- Keen observation skills

READING/WRITING/COPYING

The underpinning literacy difficulties of many dyslexic pupils will impact on their learning in all areas of the curriculum, including Drama. Self-esteem and confidence issues may also have a powerful impact on dyslexic pupils' ability to cope with the demands of the secondary school Drama curriculum.

Barriers to Learning: dyslexic pupils may:

- Be unable to read scripts, text sources for improvisation
- Continually lose the place or read the wrong lines
- Be unable to write quickly and legibly when developing scripts
- Struggle with short-term memory, so be unable to remember simple instructions from one moment to the next
- Be unable to cope with stage directions as they may already confuse left/right etc.
- Be unable to remember what character they are trying to represent
- Struggle to keep to a story line when developing scripts
- Be unable to sequence actions in a logical way

Suggested support strategies:

- Always issue set scripts well in advance so that dyslexic pupils can prepare for reading aloud
- Issue large print versions of scripts so that dyslexic pupils can find the place more easily
- Highlight and use colour codes for pupils to find their own parts quickly
- Encourage the use of ICT for script production
- Provide simple sources for improvisation, using visual, auditory and tactile starting points
- Repeat a series of instructions one at a time
- Use large prompt cards for instructions, stage directions etc.
- Issue costumes and props to help pupils keep in character
- Encourage the use of mind maps and visual representation for developing story lines

ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENTS

SQA and other examining bodies offer a range of alternative assessment arrangements for dyslexic pupils taking examinations. These are designed to reflect the support provided for dyslexic pupils in the curriculum and to address any specific difficulties caused by the style of the examination and its impact on

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the opportunities for dyslexic candidates to demonstrate actual attainment. Consideration should be given to the following:

- It is unlikely that many dyslexic pupils will require alternative arrangements for practical assessments in Drama but many may need these for timed, written exams
- If practical assessment instructions are given orally, dyslexic pupils may need to have these repeated, possibly several times
- It may be necessary for dyslexic candidates to ask for alternative arrangements for internal assessments that involve making notes or reading to prepare for an activity
- Dyslexic candidates may ask for specific arrangements for practical assessments in order to take account of working conditions, ambient lighting etc. that may be uncomfortable for them

The range of alternative assessment arrangements available for dyslexic candidates in written exams includes:

- Linguistic support (reader, digital examination papers, scribe, transcription with correction)
- Extra time allowances
- Use of word processors with spellcheckers, specialised software and other technological aids
- Transcription without correction to remove illegibility
- Rest periods/supervised breaks when the extra time makes the exam extremely long
- Adapted question papers for candidates who experience visual distortions
- Referral to the Principal Examiner to ensure that exam scripts are marked on content, not presentation

ROLE MODELS FOR DYSLEXIC PUPILS

When at school, the impact of dyslexic difficulties often outweighs a pupil's natural abilities in a subject area – which is one reason why teachers of successful individuals often express surprise – or astonishment – at their achievements after they have left formal schooling behind.

So, perhaps some of those who have already succeeded may be the best guides to promote understanding of how to create success where there is so often failure. The giftedness of many dyslexics seems to be particularly clear in the field of performance. In this area, achievement is measured by demonstrated success, which is often more highly valued in society than traditional academic skills and paper credentials. The following personal comments and case histories may offer new insight into dyslexia and serve to encourage dyslexic pupils whose self esteem is low.

Film director, **Guy Ritchie** is very dyslexic and his abilities were completely masked by this at school. Although he couldn't write he had an awful lot to say. But all anyone ever did was teach him remedial Maths and remedial English.

Entertainer **Eddie Izzard** has commented, "I've always been crap at spelling but this fuelled my irreverence towards literature, enabling me to play fast and loose with words and have a career. I do, however, think there is a distinct link between dyslexia and creativity and if it shows that a person can be dyslexic and successful, then maybe that will inspire some young kid who spells cat with a 'k', to dream the big dream and struggle to make it come true."

Successful actress **Susan Hampshire** has spent many years publicising the negative effects of dyslexia and promoting strategies for overcoming the disability, inspiring others.

Orlando Bloom - actor

One of the busiest and most sought after actors in the industry, he struggled in many subjects at school because of his dyslexia. But he did well in the arts and enjoyed pottery, photography and sculpture as well as performing in school plays – eventually going on to drama college and a successful career.

Tom Cruise - actor

He was made fun of by other kids because of his dyslexia – an experience that made him tough inside and able to quietly accept abuse and ridicule and succeed in a very public career. He found learning demanded a terrific effort as pages turned to meaningless blocks of weird scribbles before his eyes.

Whoopee Goldberg – actor

What you can never change is the effect that the words "dumb" and "stupid" have on young people. I found out I was dyslexic when I was a grown woman. When I was a kid they didn't call it dyslexia. They called it... you know, you were slow, or you were retarded, or whatever. I knew I wasn't stupid, and I knew I wasn't dumb. My mother told me that. Everybody told me I wasn't stupid or dumb. If you read to me, I could tell you everything that you read. They didn't know what it was. They knew I wasn't lazy, but what was it?

Successful actress **Keira Knightley**, as a dyslexic schoolgirl who struggled with lessons, was considered stupid by classmates, but teachers now remember her as one of the top pupils in her year – paying little heed to the hours of extra tutoring she required to succeed at school. "I certainly wasn't one of the popular people. When I was little, kids called me stupid because I couldn't read."

Dustin Hoffman – actor

He dropped out of college after a year due to bad grades and took an acting course because he was told that "nobody flunks acting."

Danny Glover - actor

Kids made fun of me because I was dyslexic. Even as an actor, it took me a long time to realize why words and letters got jumbled in my mind and came out differently.

Sir Anthony Hopkins – actor

His childhood was "awful" because he was so hopeless at school. He was a moody, lonely, only child whose main pleasure was playing the piano and whose father worried about him not being like other boys. "I feel more responsive to

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other people because I'm not so insecure. I just feel reassured that I wasn't the moron I thought I was."

Salma Hayek - actress

Considered by many to be the most successful Latin actress in Hollywood, having appeared in more than thirty films and secured a nomination for an Oscar "...one day I could not say the lines right. I'm **dyslexic** and I was tired."

Like many people for whom reading is an extraordinary effort, actress **Lindsey Wagner** spent her high school years compensating. "I would have profound conversations with my teachers and consequently they thought of me as intelligent, yet my grades were low," says Wagner. "I never told anybody that I was having so much trouble reading. They thought I was one of those kids who never applied themselves and told me to try harder. So I would try harder and get nowhere except more frustrated, and the frustration just made it worse."

Jodie Kidd - super-model

"I got used to being told off. If I wasn't told off every day in every lesson, I was in shock." She was suspended twice and threatened with expulsion. "I hated academic work". She flunked all her seven GCSEs apart from art

Robin Williams – actor

He is known for his wild improvisation skills and impersonations. He is a talented mimic and can jump in and out of characters at an extremely fast pace. His remarkable creativity and intense impulsive humour – linked to his dyslexia - may be the reason that he is often referred to as "the poster child for ADHD," though this statement is often said with a sarcastic edge!

Jay Leno – TV talk show host

He is mildly dyslexic and got mainly C's and D's in school. But that still did not deter him from applying to and eventually graduating from the esteemed Emerson College in Boston. "The admissions officer said I wasn't what they wanted. But I sat outside his office 12 hours a day until he said he'd let me in if I went to summer school." Leno even turned his dyslexia into a competitive advantage. "One thing about many dyslexic people — they're good at setting everything else aside to pursue one goal - I'm an example of success through persistence"

FURTHER READING

Eadon H (2004): *Dyslexia and Drama*, London, David Fulton Publishers

This book is designed to help teachers enable dyslexic students get the most from drama inside and outside the classroom. It covers:

- a straightforward explanation of dyslexia
- tactics for removing problems experienced by students in drama lessons
- suggestions for setting homework
- ideas to boost students exam success
- insights into good and bad practice with case studies

Gray, Robin (2001): *Drama: the Experience of Learning IN* Peer, L & Reid, G (2001): *Dyslexia – Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School*, London, David Fulton Publishers

Hampshire, Susan (1990): *Susan's Story*, London, Corgi

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

Of particular interest is the chart of Dyslexia Friendly Classroom Strategies on page 214.

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.



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