

Tameside Educational Psychology Service (EPS) Dyslexia identification pathway

The phrase 'specific learning difficulty' (SpLD) is an umbrella term that includes a range of learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and specific language impairment. This document focuses upon the specific learning difficulty of dyslexia. It does not set out to address the full range of specific learning difficulties.

The aim of this document is to promote a shared rationale and understanding in the identification, assessment and support for pupils with dyslexia within the local authority. The guidelines are to be shared with all schools, settings, parents/carers, children and services within Tameside.

What is dyslexia?

There is no one agreed definition of dyslexia and, despite considerable research, the findings regarding the numbers of pupils and causes of dyslexia vary widely. The British Psychological Society (BPS) emphasises the need for a staged assessment process to take place:

'Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis of a staged process of assessment through teaching.' BPS (1999)

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities, and is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, as there are no clear cut-off points.

Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia. A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention (Rose, 2009).

Step 1: The pre-referral process

Before the involvement of the EPS, it is important that a graduated approach is followed and that schools have implemented **at least two cycles of assess-plan-do-review (APDR), over at least 12 weeks of teaching**. Parents', carers', and the pupil's views must also be regularly sought.

The pre-referral, APDR process should include the following steps:

- Every child is entitled to Quality First Teaching for literacy.
- If a child is not making expected progress with reading, writing and spelling, support at the school level should be put in place.
- Schools should provide appropriate programmes and literacy interventions which have been monitored and evaluated for effectiveness, such as Precision Teaching, Nessy etc.
- Provision of alternative methods of recording work, such as Clicker 8.
- Provision of alternatives to copying, such as providing printed materials with large fonts.
- Input from Tameside Advisory Teacher for Specific Learning Difficulties.

It is important that schools keep good records of meetings, interventions and outcomes.

If, following **at least two cycles of APDR and intervention**, the pupil's difficulties continue to be severe and persistent, a referral can be made to Tameside EPS for assessment. The referral will be made by the school SENCo, as part of the school's traded package of EP time.

Please note that a referral for identification of dyslexia may only be made for children in **Key Stage 2 or above**.

Step 2: Planning meeting with SENCo

During the initial planning meeting, the EP will:

- Gather details such as the pupil's age and overall development and progress.
- Discuss the pupil's response to intervention following 12 weeks (two cycles) of the pre-referral APDR process.
- Ensure that the school has consulted with the Advisory Teacher for advice, strategies and resources.

Step 3: Joint Objectives Planning meetings

The EP will then offer a Joint Objectives Planning meeting, as part of two cycles of EP-led APDR with schools. Within these cycles, the EP may complete assessments, which may include, but not be limited to:

- Word reading
- Reading comprehension
- Listening comprehension
- Working memory
- Processing speed
- Phonological skills

Other factors which affect learning, such as attendance, home-schooling, access to school, socio-emotional, motor difficulties or medical needs also need to be considered. Where appropriate, observation of the pupil within a setting will provide additional useful information about the child's listening skills, confidence and motivation as a learner, independent learning skills, social skills and peer relationships.

Parents or carers can provide unique and detailed information, contributing to the picture of the whole child and are an essential part of the process of any identification for dyslexia. The EP would always aim to meet with the parents or carers to gather information about their child.

Step 4: Identification of dyslexia

The EP will use information from the pre-referral process (including data from the Advisory Teacher), views of the child and their parents or carers, and their own cycles of APDR in order to identify dyslexia.

Following the conclusion of this process, (regardless of identification of dyslexia), a Joint Objectives Review meeting will be held to ensure that on-going support and strategies are identified and can be implemented in order to support the pupil in accessing the curriculum and demonstrating their knowledge and learning.

For further information, please contact your link EP directly, or email
EPfeedback@tameside.gov.uk