

# Hackney Learning Trust

**Position Statement:  
Specific Learning Difficulty - Dyslexia**

*“The fundamental aim is to raise achievement and aspiration so that every child experiences success and is enabled to make a good start in life”*

**Education Excellence, Vision for the Future in Hackney (Hackney Learning Trust, 2012)**

## Executive Summary

Hackney Learning Trust adopts the definition of Dyslexia as proposed by the British Psychological Society (BPS), (2005) and the Rose Review (2009). All pupil progress is monitored over time in schools and, in the first instance where pupils are not making expected progress in reading and spelling, school should follow their own staged process of assessment and intervention. If the child still does not make expected progress, schools should consult with external professionals e.g. Educational Psychologist and/or specialist teacher. Hackney Learning Trust in partnership with schools and families promotes early intervention and regular review following the SEND Code of Practice, using evidence based approaches in order to give each child the best chance of success.

## 1. Introduction

Hackney Learning Trust has a strong commitment to maintaining high standards, and raising attainment through early intervention, preventative strategies and inclusive education. This works best when there is a strong partnership between the pupil, parents/carers, schools and other agencies.

Development of literacy skills and particularly of reading for pleasure and purpose is viewed as the key to success for all children, throughout their school life and beyond. Alongside this, learning to read and write is one of the major tasks in school and as literacy skills develop they become one of the main tools for gaining access to the rest of the curriculum.

Difficulty in learning to read and write is likely to impede the rest of a pupil's learning. This can lead to a sense of failure which impairs their confidence as learners and has far reaching consequences.

Some young people with poorly developed literacy skills are at risk of becoming disaffected. Some are at a disadvantage because they are unduly dependent upon others. However, with help, most pupils are able to overcome their difficulties and make good progress at school.

Help can range from high quality teaching, differentiation of teaching and learning with support, to more specific/intensive teaching and support. Some pupils, however, will continue to experience greater difficulty and may require greater support. Their problems may be severe and persistent despite appropriate interventions and they may require more intensive support.

This document outlines Hackney Learning Trust's policy on the assessment of and support for specific learning difficulty, with particular reference to Dyslexia, and is for use by all Hackney Learning Trust practitioners, anyone working with children and young people and their families across settings.

## 2. Specific Learning Difficulties

The term Specific Learning Difficulty covers a number of related developmental conditions which may range in severity.

Dyslexia, dyscalculia and Developmental Coordination Disorder (dyspraxia) all fall under this umbrella. Of these, Dyslexia is the most commonly acknowledged specific learning difficulty.

Within these areas:

- Pupils may have difficulties in reading, writing, spelling, manipulating numbers or co-ordinating physical movements, which are not typical of their performance across a number of other areas. These difficulties can occur in pupils of all abilities and in pupils with additional educational needs. They will have proven resistant to a range of appropriate interventions.

- Pupils may also have difficulties with short-term memory, with remembering sequences, with organisational skills, with hand-eye co-ordination, with language development and with orientation and directional awareness.
- As with most areas of difficulty, specific learning difficulties lie on a continuum ranging from mild to severe.

### 3. Two helpful definitions

Of the many and varied definitions of “Dyslexia” the following two reflect our view:

*“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 for a staged process of assessment through teaching.”*

**(British Psychological Society, 2005, p. 18)**

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

**(Rose, 2009 p.29)**

### 4. The SEND Code of Practice (DFE, 2015) and the role of schools

As mentioned above, as with most areas of difficulty, Specific Learning Difficulties lie on a continuum, with almost all children having their needs met within mainstream schools without statements or Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs).

The Code of Practice stipulates the following:

- Schools are expected to teach literacy and this should include the systematic teaching of core phonics principles; and
- The Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Code of Practice sets out how schools should identify, assess and make provision for pupils with special educational needs, following an Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle.

The Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle will:

- Have systems in place to identify and support pupils showing signs of early difficulties with literacy;
- Actively involve the young person and their parents / carers when identifying or reviewing a need and/or provision;
- Use alternative approaches to teaching and learning in order to promote both access to the curriculum and also the young person’s self-esteem and perception of themselves as a successful learner; and
- Have provision that ranges from class based differentiation of the curriculum with support, to more focused support, based on assessment and teaching, and agreed in consultation with external services.

Provision will range from normal differentiation and SEN Support, to specific assessments, teaching and support structures agreed in consultation with external services, as appropriate. Provision offered, however, should always have been researched and shown to be effective.

As most classes may include at least one pupil with a degree of Specific Learning Difficulty, all teachers should have the knowledge and understanding to meet their needs. The response from school settings for children who are described as having Dyslexia, would be the same as those identified as having poor literacy skills.

Where the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle has identified specific needs and appropriate adjustments, including exam arrangements, it is important for schools to hold a history of needs and interventions, which is evidenced and re-assessed as appropriate.

Schools and Education Settings have a duty to make access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for internal and external exams, for those pupils assessed as needing them. They are required to follow the guidance published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) This guidance is available here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/acce>

**5. Support Available**

Where, in spite of interventions over time, the child continues to experience significant difficulties with literacy, schools can draw upon the services of external agencies such as the [Educational Psychology Service](#) or the [Inclusion and Specialist Support Team](#).

**6. References**

BPS (2005) *Dyslexia Literacy and Psychological Assessment*. British Psychological Society  
 DFE (2015) *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities*. Department for Education  
 Hackney Learning Trust (2012) *Education Excellence, Vision for the Future in Hackney*  
 Rose, S. J. (2009) *Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties*. DCSF Publications

**7. Contributors**

- Educational Psychology Service
- Inclusion and Specialist Support Team
- Literacy Strategy Team

**8. Review Schedule**

<b>Date Last Reviewed:</b>	<b>Date to be Reviewed:</b> January 2020
----------------------------	--