

Three levels of identification and assessment: A summary

Adapted from ROSE 2009¹

Table 2: Three levels of identification and assessment of literacy and dyslexic difficulties.

<p>1. Monitor progress Adapt teaching in the classroom Wave 1 Quality First Teaching Alert parents to concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Teachers notice individual differences and adjust their teaching. In Early Years, this can entail monitoring of children's responses to the content of Phase One in Letters and Sounds (sound discrimination, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, oral blending and segmenting) for example. In the reception class, monitoring responses to letter recognition, and to blending and segmenting short vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant combinations.✓ Bearing in mind that children's rates of progress may vary considerably, these observations provide a useful initial step in identifying children with early language or literacy difficulties. Throughout, teachers will also observe children's progress in relation to the language comprehension areas of literacy. Records of a child's progress through the phases of Letters and Sounds (or similar materials) will also signal a need for closer observation.✓ It is important to ensure that a child's hearing and vision have been checked, and that the possibility of any unidentified learning disability is considered. Concerns about literacy difficulties should be discussed with the child's parents or carers. <p>For older children, the following points are particularly relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ School records of previous progress/concerns, interventions (e.g. Wave 2 or 3), and the child's response to them provide the basis for further action.✓ Classes/age groups can be screened through standardised reading and spelling tests to identify those who struggle with literacy. Group spelling tests are easy to administer and an analysis of the errors made by those performing with difficulty provides useful initial information.
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¹ Adapted from Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties: An independent report from Sir Jim Rose to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families June 2009.

1. Monitor progress Adapt teaching in the classroom

Wave 1 Quality First Teaching

Alert parents to concerns

- ✓ Within primary schools, teachers will know the children in their classes. Reviews of progress, together with parents/carers and the children themselves, will point to difficulties that need further investigation/action.
- ✓ In secondary schools, subject teachers noticing literacy and dyslexic difficulties should bring learners to the notice of those in their school with knowledge in this area.
- ✓ As dyslexic difficulties range from mild to severe, an 'open door' approach is needed that gives pupils (and their parents/carers) easy access to appropriate advice. Learners with relatively mild difficulties, or those whose reading difficulties seem to be well-compensated, may struggle with aspects such as spelling, reading fluency and writing speed, and should be encouraged to discuss their concerns – for example with their personal tutor.

2. Skills assessment

Inform Wave 1 and consider appropriateness of Wave 2 or Wave 3 interventions

- ✓ The children's parents/carers will already have been involved at the monitoring stage of assessment. They now become part of the team formed by the class teacher and available specialist teachers to undertake closer observations. The views and experiences of the children themselves are also important here.
- ✓ Curriculum-based assessment establishes a clear starting point for a teaching approach that is systematic and repetitive (particularly in relation to phonics) and also takes account of language comprehension processes in literacy learning.
- ✓ Skills assessment examines the child's approaches to learning, e.g. how fluent/effortful it is to recall letters and words, how many repetitions seem to be required before new learning is retained. Weaknesses in phonological processing and memory can be assessed or inferred from these observations and supplementary tests of these skills.
- ✓ Standardised tests of reading and spelling enable comparisons to be made in relation to children whose progress is not causing concern.
- ✓ The possibility of co-occurring difficulties (see chapter 5) need to be considered. It is also essential to take account of the feelings of frustration and anxiety that the child may have.

For older children there is likely to be a need for:

- ✓ Investigation of the extent to which basic reading and spelling continue to be problematic.

2. Skills assessment

Inform Wave 1 and consider appropriateness of Wave 2 or Wave 3 interventions

- ✓ Administration of individual standardised tests of reading, spelling and writing speed.
- ✓ Closer examination of phonological and memory processes and the learner's approaches to reading and spelling, e.g. how fluent/effortful it is to read and write.
- ✓ Discussion of associated problems, coping strategies, curriculum access and examination arrangements where appropriate.
- ✓ Evaluation of possible co-occurring difficulties.
- ✓ Discussion with all concerned how feelings of frustration and anxiety can be alleviated.

Where a learning difficulty is identified and requires special educational provision, the child will be given an Education, Health and Care Plan. Parents or carers with mild to moderate learning difficulties such as dyslexia should be able to seek additional help through support services detailed in the Local Offer.

3. Comprehensive assessment

Usually Wave 3 intervention but may need to be more long-term and/or entail specialist teaching

- ✓ The school decides to seek outside advice and help from specialist teachers and educational psychologists and from other professionals as necessary, such as speech and occupational therapists.
- ✓ Parents' views are sought and they are kept fully informed throughout the process.
- ✓ All the information gathered so far forms part of a comprehensive appraisal of the nature and extent of the child's difficulties.
- ✓ Further assessments examine more closely the child's individual strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ Complex problems, such as those associated with marked co-occurring difficulties or emotional and social circumstances, are likely to need the advice of educational psychologists. Where a learning difficulty is identified, that requires special educational provision to be made, the child will be put on an Education, Health and Care Plan. The parents or carers must be informed if a decision is made that the child has special educational needs.

Monitoring impact of Interventions

The three levels of identification and assessment are focused on:

- (a) Identifying those children who require additional support and
- (b) Assessing strengths and difficulties to plan that support. It is also important that the impact of support – and adaptations to teaching – are monitored and fed back into further assessment.

Monitoring impact of Interventions

The effectiveness of support should be judged in relation to targets that are informed by consideration of evidence reviewed in Chapter 3; where difficulties are relatively mild, progress within a short period of time – as little as 10 weeks – should be expected. Use of standardised tests of reading and spelling are important for evaluating progress, along with evidence of progression through a structured programme.

Although expectations should be high, it must be acknowledged that there is a significant minority of children who do not respond well to well-founded programmes of intervention. Those children should not have to repeat programmes that are less effective for them, but should instead have their needs considered through comprehensive assessment, so that more long-term intervention can be planned, implemented and, in turn, evaluated.