

Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy and Advice

LDD/Inclusion

Working for you



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**
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Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy

Introduction

The Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy and Advice is designed to give schools clear guidance on supporting pupils with literacy difficulties.

Principles

Oxfordshire Local Authority recognises that literacy difficulties create a barrier to learning and achievement. The principles of good practice are:

- Teachers take responsibility for the learning of all pupils, including those with literacy difficulties.
- Teachers take notice of individual differences and adjust their teaching accordingly.
- Class teaching is inclusive and promotes independent learning skills.
- Detailed assessment informs teaching and provision.
- Assessment is culture-fair and literacy difficulties are identified irrespective of language, culture, socio-economic status, race and gender.
- Intervention and support is evidence based.
- Intervention work is rigorously evaluated to ensure that it has sufficient impact.
- Early Years teachers are aware of the risk factors for literacy difficulties, and identify pupils at risk as early as possible
- Intervention occurs as early as possible to prevent pupils falling further behind and frustration impacting on behaviour.
- Pupils with literacy difficulties make accelerated progress in order to catch up with their peers.
- Pupils' feelings about their difficulties are taken into account and pupils are involved in their own target setting and planning their own provision.
- Parents' concerns are listened to and parents are kept fully informed about their child's difficulties and the support that the school is providing.
- Teachers and support staff are trained to recognise and support pupils with literacy difficulties, including dyslexia.

The Literacy Difficulties Advice gives schools guidance on:

- The causes of literacy difficulties and other related difficulties
- Assessment and monitoring of literacy difficulties, including early identification and assessment of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Teaching and learning, including Teaching Assistant support
- Interventions
- Building capacity of the school to support pupils with literacy difficulties
- Working with parents
- Working with pupils to plan their learning
- Extra support that is available to schools from the Local Authority

Literacy Difficulties Advice

Introduction

Low literacy rates are associated with social exclusion, poor health, low educational attainment, offending, unemployment and lack of access to training and skills. Low literacy undermines individual confidence, happiness and resilience. National research shows how patterns of achievement are set in families during a child's early years.

- Approximately 7% of children leave KS2 achieving below level 3
- 10% of boys leave KS2 reading below level 3
- Acquisition of NVQ Level 1 numeracy or literacy skills raises the probability of employment by about 5 percentage points.
- Having a secondary qualification reduces the risk of adult depression by 5% to 7%.
- A child from a deprived home has heard on average just 13 million words by the age of four, compared to 45 million in a more affluent home.

It is vital that schools address pupils' literacy difficulties as an urgent priority. *Reading by Six: How the best schools do it* (Ofsted November 2010) www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/10019 is a useful guide to looking at good practice.

This Literacy Difficulties Advice is designed to give schools guidance on including pupils with literacy difficulties in the curriculum and for providing support for pupils to overcome their difficulties. There is advice on working with individual pupils, as well as on building the schools' capacity to deal with literacy difficulties generally.

Aims

To provide schools with the advice and guidance they need to meet the diversity of children's literacy learning needs through appropriate provision in mainstream settings.

To promote partnership with parents

To enable schools to provide a range of high quality support for pupils with literacy difficulties by:

- Raising awareness of literacy difficulties in all schools by ensuring that all staff are trained to support pupils in the classroom to at least the level presented in national training programmes, such as the Inclusion Development Programme and e-learning modules
- Ensuring that parents are fully informed about pupils' learning and that parental concerns are acknowledged and addressed
- Improving assessment and intervention practice so that children's learning differences are identified and teaching is adjusted as early as possible in a pupil's school career and continually throughout all key stages
- Making teachers aware of further training opportunities

Reasons for Literacy Difficulties

For some pupils biological factors will adversely affect their ability to acquire literacy skills:

- global developmental delay or generally low ability
- poor hearing or vision
- poor short term or working memory difficulties
- specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia or developmental coordination delay (DCD)/dyspraxia
- poor spoken language skills – receptive and/or expressive
- poor attention

Literacy is built upon language, so if a pupil has poor language skills or has had poor experience of language they will be approaching literacy from a low starting point. An assessment of language skills can often inform provision for language work, and it is essential that any literacy provision is implemented in the context of also addressing wider language deficits.

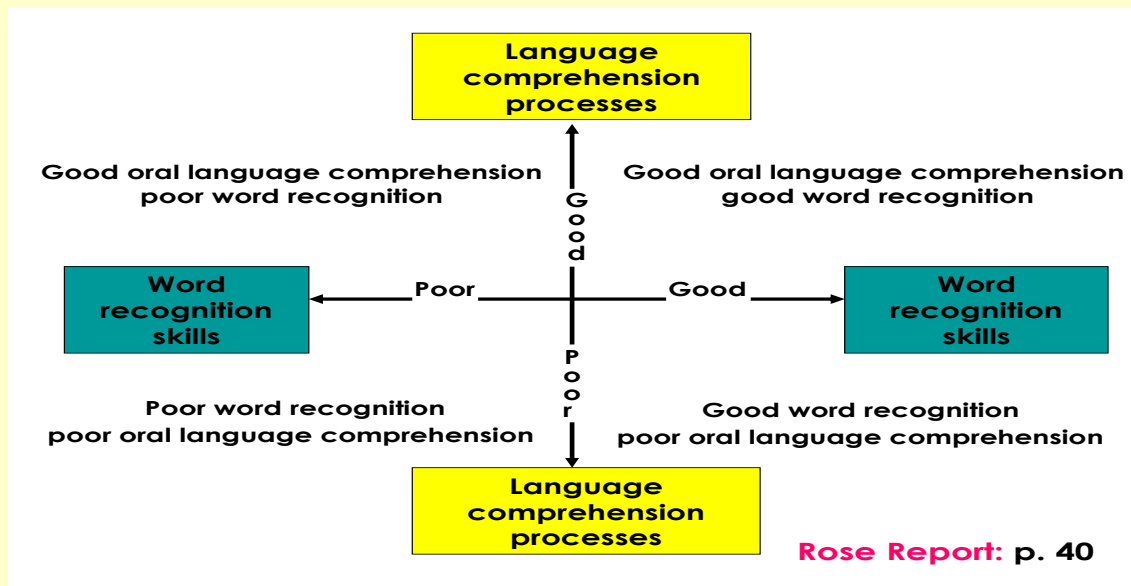
For some pupils environmental factors will impact on their literacy skills:

- lack of experience of literacy and books at home
- lack of preschool experience
- poor school attendance
- cultural factors
- lack of appropriate teaching
- low self esteem

It is impossible for schools to make up for what pupils may have missed out on at home, but reading to and sharing books with children is a vital part of preparing them for literacy.

The Simple View of Reading

The diagram below illustrates the interaction between language comprehension and word recognition skills. Depending upon which quadrant they fall into, pupils may need support in both areas.



Dyslexia

'Dyslexia' comes from the **Greek meaning** 'difficulty with words' and is used to describe a learning difficulty that hinders the acquisition of literacy skills. The British Psychological Society Report (BPS, 1999) working definition of dyslexia describes this as follows:

'Dyslexia is evident when accurate or 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.'

Dyslexia is a continuum with no clear cut off point. The characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in:

- identifying and manipulating the sounds in words (phonological awareness)
- retaining an ordered sequence of verbal material (verbal memory)
- processing familiar verbal information such as letters and digits (verbal processing speed)
- visual memory, tracking and processing

Dyslexia occurs in pupils of all intellectual abilities and research has shown that it is not valid to identify dyslexia on the basis of a discrepancy between cognitive ability and attainment in literacy.

If it is known that good quality intervention has been put in place and the pupil has a persistent difficulty, this suggests that the pupil's difficulties are of a dyslexic nature. Dyslexia is not a medical diagnosis and can be identified by monitoring the pupil over time. An independent Educational Psychological assessment is not needed for 'diagnosis.'

Schools should use the Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) descriptors in the Moderation Handbook to assess pupils' levels of need.

http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Directorates/Children%2C+Young+People+_+Families/Our+services/Special+Educational+Needs/SEN+Moderation+Handbook/LC+--+CS+--+SEN+--+Moderation+handbook

Co-morbidity

Dyslexia is essentially a difficulty with word level literacy skills; however, it may co-occur with other difficulties. For instance a large proportion of pupils with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) also have dyslexic difficulties. Difficulties often co-occurring with dyslexia are in:

- language
- motor co-ordination
- mental calculation
- concentration
- personal organisation

These difficulties are not in themselves markers of dyslexia. When assessing pupils it is important to look across the whole range of their abilities and difficulties to be able to tailor provision to meet their specific needs. Development Coordination Delay (DCD) and Dyscalculia are recognised as separate specific learning difficulties, but can co-occur with dyslexia.

Developmental Coordination Delay (DCD) or Dyspraxia

There are many common indicators between dyspraxia and dyslexia and many children present with elements of both. Dyslexic pupils tend towards poor organisation, poor spatial awareness and some difficulties with social situations. However, this is by no means true for all pupils with dyslexia, or necessarily for all those with dyspraxia. Both conditions have a wide range of characteristics with a significant cross over.

It is good practice to have a baseline assessment so progress can be measured. The Move to Learn booklet and the ABC checklist are useful for both assessment and strategies.

For those with elements of dyspraxia some of the following may help to support independence.

- practising what they can't do
- doing what they want to do
- doing what they NEED to do
- avoiding what is difficult and likely to persist
- seeking out strengths

Teachers should give pupils opportunities to practise skills repeatedly until they are embedded. It is also useful to help pupils prepare for some activities such as PE by creating a checklist or by decreasing support incrementally as each small skill is learnt. A focus on content rather than on presentation when marking work will help foster self-esteem and confidence. Support the drawing of tables, 2D and 3D shapes. Consider using a visual timetable or checklist to develop independence. The important thing is that many of these

pupils will manage to develop other strategies to cope with their disability if they are supported to develop independence through scaffolding and practice. If the problem persists despite focused intervention contact the Occupational Therapy Service.

Telephone: 01865 225342
Fax: 01865 225341
hepacpaeds.occ.therapy@orh.nhs.uk

The Occupational Therapists also run a free Move to Learn course for teachers. Contact the service for details.

The Oxfordshire branch of the Dyspraxia Foundation run activities for children with dyspraxia and offer support to parents. The current contact is Julie Lambert at julie.e.lambert@sky.com

Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia is the name given to a condition that affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills. The research into this learning difficulty is still at an early stage, but suggests that there is a deficit in 'numerosity' or 'number sense'. Dyscalculic learners may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts and lack an intuitive grasp of numbers. Even if they produce a correct answer, they may do so mechanically and without confidence. They have little intuitive feel for numbers and little understanding of concepts and principles of logic and often find it difficult to learn number facts and procedures.

Arithmetical development is dependent on the ability to subitise. This means the understanding of the oneness of one, or the fiveness of five, which underlies the understanding and manipulation of small whole numbers. If this is defective the results are catastrophic for arithmetical development and people with severe dyscalculia retain counting on their fingers in order to do calculations

Research suggests that remediation is through rote learning techniques.

Poor Comprehension

Research has shown that pupils with poor reading comprehension also have poor verbal comprehension, so it is important to put some language provision in for these pupils. A full guide and suggested activities are given in the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Reading Comprehension document. This covers five areas for the development of comprehension skills:

- establishing context and accessing prior knowledge
- vocabulary
- sequencing
- inference
- prediction

http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/LandC/Childserv/sen/advisory/reading_comprehension.pdf

Poor Short Term and Working Memory

Pupils with literacy difficulties will often have difficulty with short term and working memory. Short term memory allows us to hold a piece of information for a short time, e.g. remember and repeat a few digits, whilst working memory allows us to hold and manipulate the information, e.g. reverse the digits. Learning is much harder for pupils who struggle with these areas of memory. These pupils will need the opportunity to over-learn skills in a multi-sensory way that enables them to use their sensory pathways to lock in the learning.

Monitoring and Assessment

Tracking pupils

School tracking systems allow teachers to monitor pupil progress closely. Pupils should be making 1.5 Average Point Score (APS) per year. Any pupil failing to make progress should be assessed as outlined in the *Assessment of Individuals* section on page 8 and support put in accordingly.

The Individual Pupil Tracker (Inclusion Handbook page D89) can be used to track pupils through interventions and monitor progress as they move through the school.

Using the *Pupil Profile* sheet (Inclusion Handbook page D39) is a useful way of sharing information about a pupil's learning with all staff. An example of a pupil profile for a child with SPLD is provided on page 7.

Early Identification and Intervention

Early identification is a key factor in improving outcomes for children. Children's brains are very flexible and intervention put in at a young age can benefit pupils at a neurological level and improve their life-long learning and achievement.

Use of the *Early Years Foundation Profile*, *Development Matters* and Oxfordshire's *Guidance for Identifying and Supporting Young Children with SEN* will help teachers to understand pupils' strengths and difficulties, and help identify areas where they may need support.

Development Matters can be found on the National Strategies site on the National Archive website:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110202093118/http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears/eyfsareasoflearninganddevelopment/allareasoffocus/developmentmatters>

Guidance for Identifying and Supporting Young Children with SEN can be found on the Oxfordshire intranet under SEN at:

http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/council_services/education_learning/early_years_childcare/working_in_early_years/publications/EY_SEN_guidance_leaflet.pdf

These assessment documents encourage teachers to notice learning differences from the earliest years in school and to adjust their teaching accordingly. Early identification of literacy difficulties is vital and teaching should be adjusted from Year 1 onwards.

The key risk factors for literacy difficulties are:

- speech difficulties post 5 years
- difficulty acquiring letter – sound/name knowledge
- poor phoneme awareness and difficulty sounding out words for reading
- poor ability to segment and manipulate phonemes for spelling

It is better to monitor and support pupils who appear to be 'at risk' in this area, than to delay intervention and allow them to fall further behind.

Example of a pupil profile for a pupil with dyslexic difficulties

Pupil Profile		
Name: Molly	YG: 3	CT: Ms Higgins
RA: 4.5 year	SA: Below test	CAF/TAC: No
NC English: 1c	NC Maths: 2b	NC Science: 1a
School Action	School Action Plus ✓	Statement
<p>ANALYSIS OF NEED: Molly is not yet secure in her phoneme/grapheme links. She can recognise letters by their name but is not always able to identify their sound, which hampers her decoding. She struggles with blending and segmenting and with most digraphs and trigraphs. She is insecure about rhyming and rhythm. Her comprehension is good and she is able to retell a story orally. Molly has a good grasp of mathematical concepts but is sometimes hampered by her inability to read the question. Her written and organisational skills mean that she records numbers incorrectly on occasion. She can be disorganised, forgetting equipment and books for example, but this is improving. Her ball skills are poor.</p>		
<p>STRENGTHS: Molly has very good friends who support her well. She is aware of her difficulties and is able to talk about her feelings. She is managing her frustrations well. Her parents are very supportive and read with her regularly at home. She is a bright pupil, very articulate with excellent knowledge and understanding. She has a love of stories and narrative and a rich vocabulary</p>		
<p>STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Molly has a buddy to help with reading of texts • Regular intensive intervention such as FFT reading programme to support decoding skills • Highlight columns in maths book in different colours so that she gets the numbers in the right place • Support with drawing diagrams • Allow Molly to record her ideas on occasion • Develop use of laptop • • Build confidence by allowing her to be the expert in class where appropriate • Ensure that any homework is well within her skill level to cut down on frustration • Focus on literacy only where appropriate and support her to access other aspects of the curriculum through targeted support, peer support, technology and teacher input to build success 		

Assessment of Individuals

The school needs to build a full picture of the pupil's strengths and difficulties, and this is often only reached by collecting assessment evidence over time.

Class based literacy assessments:

- National Curriculum levels for Reading and Writing
- Assessing Pupil Progress
- Achievement of curriculum targets
- Day to day assessment against learning objectives
- Analysis of pupil's written work
- Use of Checklists in drawing together observations from 'Assessment for Learning'
- Information from parents e.g. family history

The British Dyslexia Association suggests that if after 12 weeks a child has not made progress under normal dyslexia-friendly classroom teaching, the teacher should refer the child to the SENCO.

More detailed assessments that the school may include are:

Standardised Reading and Spelling Tests

Standardised tests measure the pupil's reading or spelling against peers of precisely the same chronological age. The average standardised score is 100, with 68% of pupils falling between 85 and 115. Pupils with a standardised score below 85 meet the descriptors for School Action, so pupils with scores approaching this should be looked at in detail. Pupils with a standardised score of 80 or below meet the descriptors for School Action Plus.

Salford Sentence Reading Test is easy to administer and can be used with all children to measure progress and pick up pupils falling below age appropriate reading levels.

Young's Parallel Spelling can be used with whole classes, small groups or individuals for similar purposes.

Neale Analysis of Reading (NARA II), York Assessment of Reading Ability (YARC) and Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) analyse reading in more detail and compare reading accuracy with comprehension levels, giving separate standardised scores for each.

[List of Assessment Materials 2011.doc](#)

[Salford Cohort Tracking Sheet](#)

Formative Assessment

The Literacy Assessment Pack (LAPack) included in this guidance, is a formative assessment that helps to unpick how the pupil is doing with the basic skills of reading. It is recommended for use with pupils in KS1 and KS2 and for some pupils in KS3.

It contains sections on:

- Phonological skills
- Sight vocabulary

- Sound/letter knowledge
- Knowledge of phonic patterns

The LAPack is an excellent tool not only for assessing pupil's skills, but for monitoring over time and recording small steps of progress between NC levels. The LAPack Flow Chart helps to identify appropriate interventions following assessment with the LAPack.

[Literacy Assessment Pack.pdf](#)

[Flow Chart to show possible interventions for pupils having difficulties on the Literacy Assessment Pack.doc](#)

[Letters and Sounds Tracking Sheet.doc](#)

[Checklist for Assessing Handwriting.doc](#)

Running Reading Records and Miscue Analysis are invaluable ways of looking at the strategies a pupil is using, or not using, in his/her reading. Learning objectives can be identified to target the development of specific strategies. An analysis of the accuracy rate is useful for ensuring that a pupil is reading books at the appropriate level. If the books are too easy the pupil will not progress. If the books are too difficult there will be too much for the pupil to absorb, so again progress will be slow.

To work out the accuracy rate divide the number of words read by the number of errors:

Error Ratio	Percentage Accuracy	Reading Level
1: 20 and above	95% accuracy +	Independent Level Too easy for teaching purposes, but ideal for independent reading.
1:10 – 1:17	90 – 95% accuracy	Instructional Level Ideal for teaching. Pupil will be able to absorb new learning.
1:9 and below	Below 90% accuracy	Too Hard Too many challenges for pupil to absorb new learning.

Additional Tests

Other tests that may be useful are:

Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB) for looking at phonological skills at a higher level than the LAPack. The picture and digit naming speed tests can be used for measuring processing speed, and can be used for assessing access for extra time in KS2 SATs.

British Picture Vocabulary Scales (BPVS 3) measures the pupil's

understanding of vocabulary in isolation. This may be useful with pupils who have scored poorly on a comprehension in a standardised reading test, or for pupils in Early Years/KS1 with poor language development.

Raven's Coloured Matrices looks at a pupil's non-verbal reasoning skills. If a pupil is having literacy difficulties this can be a useful assessment for looking at the pupil's underlying general ability.

QCA checklists can be used for an assessment of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties that may affect, or be affected by, poor literacy.

ABC Movement Checklist can be used for difficulties with motor coordination.

It may be necessary to consult with outside professionals such as:

- A Speech and Language therapist (SLT)/Language and Communication Advisory Teacher (LACAT) if the pupil appears to have an underlying language difficulty
- Behaviour Support Consultant if the pupil has social and emotional difficulties that are impacting on, or resulting from, his/her literacy difficulty.
- An occupational therapist if the pupil has poor motor control
- An educational psychologist if the pupil has more wide spread difficulties, or the school has been unsuccessful in helping the pupil to make progress.

It is always worth asking parents/carers to organise hearing and eyesight checks, as poor hearing and sight can have a huge impact on a child's ability to learn to read.

It is also valuable to ascertain the pupil's own perception of his/her strengths and weaknesses and what s/he thinks works and what is less effective. When pupils are involved in setting their own learning targets, they are often much more motivated to succeed.

[\\oxfordshire\migration\WIGPEN\Public\ADVISORY\SEN FOLDER\Literacy Difficulties Advice>List of Assessment Materials 2011.doc](#)

Assessing children with EAL and children from ethnic and cultural minorities

Particular care needs to be taken when assessing children with English as an additional language and children from ethnic and cultural minorities, including travellers and refugees. The Equality Act (2010) dictates that schools provide equal opportunities for all pupils. Professionals need to be vigilant to ensure that their practice is not discriminatory. All teachers and non-teaching staff need to be aware of the linguistic and cultural bias of resources such as books and standardised tests, and should be alert to the risk of identifying a literacy difficulty where none is present or failing to identify a learning difficulty where it exists.

Research evidence suggests that the response to pupils with English as an additional language who have poor phonological skills should not differ from

their monolingual counterparts. However, the interpretation of data for individual pupils needs to take full account of the learning opportunities available.

The booklet *EAL or SEN? Guidance for schools in identifying and assessing children in Key Stages 1 and 2 with English as an Additional Language, who may also have special educational needs* will be helpful in deciding on provision that may be needed for pupils. This can be found on the intranet at: http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/LandC/Childserv/sen/advisory/EAL_or_SEN.pdf

A Language in Common, which contains more detailed advice for assessing EAL pupils, is available on the DFE website at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/eal/a0076755/english-as-an-additional-language> .

Further advice on working with pupils from ethnic and cultural minorities is available in the SEN Handbook and from the Equality and Diversity Achievement Service (EDAS).

Teaching and Learning

The Teaching of Reading

Research has shown that for the majority of children synthetic phonics taught in a structured way is the most successful way of learning to reading. However, as the Rose Report 2007 emphasised phonics must be taught within a context of rich language work and experience of books. Children need good language skills in order to develop their reading skills. Vocabulary is the greatest predictor of reading ability at age 11, and without the understanding of the syntax and semantics of language reading cannot progress however good the phonic teaching. Many children come into school with an impoverished experience of language and literacy; they have poor spoken language and little experience of books. It is important that these experiences and skills are developed alongside the phonic work.

Letters and Sounds provides excellent guidance on the teaching of phonics. It is a programme designed for Foundation Stage, but is a useful resource for teaching pupils with literacy difficulties whatever their age. The programme has six phases which introduce phonics in a developmental way. Phase 1 develops phonological skills and it is essential to continue this work alongside the following five phases, so that pupils develop the necessary phonological skills to meet the demands of increasingly more complex phonic work.

Many schools use other phonic programmes, such as Read, Write Inc or Jolly Phonics. Whatever resources are used it is important that pupils, especially those having difficulty, continue structured phonic work until they are secure in all phonic patterns.

Language Work

Language delay or difficulties can seriously delay the acquisition of literacy skills. Literacy is dependent upon spoken language, so it is important to develop pupils' language alongside their literacy. Rich language work in Early Years can help to build the foundations of reading.

Development Matters on the National Strategy/National Archive website can help pinpoint the level of language acquisition of pupils in Early Years. For older pupils the British Picture Vocabulary Scales can be a useful tool for looking the understanding of vocabulary, and this gives a standardised score, which can help to measure the severity of difficulty. If a pupil is presenting a particular concern, then it is very useful to refer them to the SENSS Interaction and Communication Service for an assessment and advice by a Speech and Language Therapist or LACAT.

Information about this team and a referral form can be found on the Oxfordshire intranet:

<http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Directorates/Children%2C%20Young%20People%20%20Families/Our%20services/Special%20Educational%20Needs/Special%20Educational%20Needs%20Support%20Service%20%28SENSS%29/CYPF%20-%20SEN%20-%20SENSS%20Integrated%20Speech%20Language%20Communication%20-%20Main%20Page>

Many schools across the county are successfully using the *Spirals* programme (*Developing Language and Communication Skills through Effective Small Group*, 3rd Ed. by Marion Nash with Jackie Lowe and Tracy Palmer, Routledge 2011) as an initial intervention in Foundation Stage for pupils who appear to have poorer than age-equivalent language. This programme has been very successful in many settings, and such early intervention will help to prevent pupils falling behind.

The *Reading Comprehension* document on the intranet has lots of ideas for developing language skills, and your LACAT will be able to offer advice and support for individual pupils.

http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/LandC/Childserv/sen/advisory/reading_comprehension.pdf

Inclusive Teaching and Learning for those with Literacy Difficulties

A truly inclusive school makes all pupils into successful learners. To do this, teachers need to know where a pupil is in their learning and what the very small next step is in order for them to make progress. In order for all teachers to know where pupils are in their learning they need access to fine-tuned assessments and they need to use an Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach to teaching and learning.

One of the major barriers to achievement for pupils with literacy difficulties is being rendered dependent on adults to help them learn. This will always happen if the work set is not within the capabilities of the learner. Pupils with SEN like 'hard work they can do' (Lamb Review 2010). If children are constantly working beyond their current skill level they may well be at risk of 'learned helplessness' or of displaying a range of diversionary and delaying tactics. Pupils need opportunities to apply their skills, working collaboratively with other children and independently. To become increasingly independent learners, pupils will need:

- to be regularly assessed using fine-tuned assessments and formative assessment so that everyone is absolutely clear about what small step they need to take;
- independent tasks within their current capabilities that have been clearly explained and modelled for them;
- regular feedback on how they are progressing;
- scaffolded support in pairs or small groups;
- adult guidance to try out learning with collaborative support before having a go on their own
- clear guidance to support organisational skills
- teacher awareness of the readability of texts and how to support access
- careful planning of the use of TAs to guard against over dependence.
- a range of easily accessible resources to aid independent work

- regular teaching by a teacher in a small group rather than always being taught by TAs
- focused, regular and consistent intervention to support the development of skills.

All pupils need to access a sequence that moves them from dependence on the teacher, through modelled, shared and guided group activities to a point where they are sufficiently skilled and confident to work independently on their own.

Adjusting the teaching.doc

Teaching Assistant Support

Pupils with literacy difficulties will often have some support in class from a teaching assistant (TA). The aim of the support is to allow them access to the written curriculum. It is vital that teachers plan carefully for the use of TAs so that the pupil does not become overly dependent. Teachers should consider planning for these pupils as if they have no support so that they are essentially planning the very next step in their independent learning. TAs can then support the development of these independent skills or work with other members of the class.

All pupils with literacy difficulties benefit from short, focused interventions to develop their skills. TAs will need to be well trained to deliver these interventions which should be based on well-founded research and be proven to accelerate progress.

Intervention

It is important to use good quality intervention materials and to monitor the progress pupils make in order to evaluate the impact. TAs need to be properly trained to deliver sessions and monitored for quality assurance. Research shows that short, intense interventions have as much impact as those that carry on for longer. However, for pupils with severe levels of difficulty, daily sessions are needed for learning to be secured and maintained. Intervening as early as possible prevents pupils falling behind further.

The Importance of Multi-sensory Teaching and Learning

Pupils with dyslexia and other literacy difficulties need the opportunity to over-learn skills and knowledge. Poor short term and working memory, as well as slow processing skills, can make learning arduous. Doing things in different sensory ways - visually, aurally, orally and kinaesthetically – helps build neural pathways in the brain, and the more sensory pathways are built up, the more secure the learning. .

Precision Teaching

This is a really good way of monitoring and embedding multi-sensory teaching. It is useful for helping pupils learn letter sounds, sight vocabulary as well as times tables and other number facts.

- Daily focussed session of multi-sensory teaching 1:1 or in a small group: 5-10 minutes
- Each pupil then individually completes a precision grid for 1 minute
- Sessions should be daily –less than 3x a week is not worth doing

When addressing sight vocabulary, it is useful to focus on high frequency words (HFW). The HFW lists in Letters and Sounds can be used, but the Dolch list may also be useful.

Cued Spelling

When pupils are learning to spell words, it may be useful to use Cued Spelling. This is where the pupil works with an adult to work out the cues that will help them to remember that particular word. It may be a picture, a mnemonic or using a similar word that is already known, such as ‘the’ in ‘there’ or ‘there’ and ‘where’.

Letters and Sounds

Letters and Sounds gives really good guidance on the order in which to teach phonics. If pupils struggle with learning phonics they still need to complete all 6 phases, otherwise they will be missing essential aspects of phonic knowledge. Phase 1 develops phonological skills that are vital to learning and using phonics, and those skills need to continue to be taught as pupils progress through the other phases. *Letters and Sounds* can be used as a teaching guide for phonic intervention throughout every Key Stage, although materials used need to be adapted to the age of the pupil.

Launch Into Reading Success

This was designed as a group intervention for Year 1 children **at risk** of reading difficulty, and is an auditory training programme to develop phonological skills. It consists of 9 sections with 66 activities, which are all outlined clearly and for which resources are provided. It can be run by an experienced TA with support from the teacher. To some extent *Letters and Sounds Phase 1* covers these skills, but this programme can be useful for pupils struggling at this early stage.

Sound Linkage

This is a programme of phonological skills training for pupils in KS2 consisting of 5 minutes a day 1-1. It can be done in isolation, but can also be used as part of a longer tailored package for pupils with higher levels of need. It includes:

- Phoneme segmentation
- Phoneme blending
- Phoneme deletion
- Phoneme substitution
- Phoneme transposition
- Phonological linkage activities

Direct Phonics

Direct Phonics is a group phonic intervention. There are 3 books, so levels will need to be selected appropriately

- Book 1 - single letter sounds, c-v-c words and selection of sight words
- Book 2 – consonant blends and some vowel digraphs
- Book 3 – syllable recognition, polysyllabic and compound words

Each session follows a structured plan and is clearly scripted. The programme can be used to teach phonics initially, but is also good for consolidating skills and knowledge with older pupils, who may have gaps in their learning. There are options for fast tracking pupils who are doing well.

Acceleread Accelewrite

This programme uses a talking word processor programme to give auditory feedback to pupils, to develop their auditory and phonological skills. Any talking programme can be used: Clicker, Texthelp, Read and Write, Write: Outloud, and Talking Textease, but Clicker 5 is probably the best. Sessions are designed to run for 15 minutes a day for 4 weeks (20 sessions) but a shorter term also works well. Pupils can return to the programme again at a later date. Pupils memorise sentences from cards then type them into the computer, listening to check sounds and self-correct where possible. A TA needs to supervise to pick up errors missed by the pupil. The cards present phonic patterns in developmental order, so assessment is needed to find the starting point for pupils. The LAPack Flow Chart will help. Keeping a chart of their progress through the programme helps pupils to see the steps they are taking and gain confidence.

Rapid Readers

This reading scheme from Pearson is colourful and engaging. There is an emphasis on comprehension with questions for discussion at the end of each

book. There is also software available that allows pupils to read into a computer which will then highlight words they have read incorrectly and prompt them to self-correct. Pupils who are reluctant to read aloud are more confident reading into a computer. Boys particularly seem to enjoy the IT aspect and find the books interesting. Schools using the scheme have been very successful in accelerating progress in reading.

New Reading and Thinking

These six booklets provide work on inferential comprehension at an increasingly complex level. Pupils working through them have shown huge rates of improvement both in comprehension and in overall NC Reading levels. Pupils can work 1:1, but can also benefit from small group discussion. Answers do not need to be written; it is the thinking process that is the important part.

Read Write Inc and Freshstart

There are several *Read Write Inc* programmes providing a systematic approach to literacy, covering the teaching of reading, writing, spelling and comprehension.

- Read Write Inc Phonics - Systematic literacy programme rooted in phonics (ages 4-7)
- Read Write Inc Comprehension – literacy programme for children who can read (ages 7-9)
- Read Write Inc Comprehension Plus- (ages 9-11)
- Read Write Inc Spelling- 10 minutes a day spelling programme (ages 7-9)
- Read Write Inc Freshstart- intervention for struggling readers (ages 9-11)

These can be used as independent programmes or as a whole-school approach to literacy. Schools in Oxford City with high numbers of pupils with SEN and EAL have used this programme successfully. *Read Write Inc Freshstart* is a programme for older pupils who are struggling with reading. It is designed for KS2, but has also been used successfully in a few county secondary schools.

FFT Intervention Programmes

These three programmes are designed to be run by Teaching Assistants with the support of a teacher. Schools will be required to send both a teacher and a TA to training sessions.

FFT Wave 3 Reading Programme

This is a 1:1 programme designed for children in Y1 who are working within and below Book Band 2 in reading and Level 1c or below in writing. However, it has also been successfully used for older children, including secondary pupils, and those working at slightly higher levels of literacy. The programme uses an approach based on the principles of Marie Clay's Reading Recovery with daily sessions of 20 minutes running for a maximum of 22 weeks. The focus for sessions alternates between reading and writing.

Data collected from Oxfordshire schools shows that pupils made an average gain of 2.2 NC sub-levels or 3.86 APS in writing. There was an average rise of 3.05 book bands. However, there is a larger rise the lower the starting point.

Write Away Together

This programme can be run 1:1 or in small groups (4 max). It is based on Assessment for Learning, and works at the editing stage of writing. A piece of the child's independent writing is used for discussion and improvement. The programme is suitable for any pupil, from those who are beginning to write a couple of sentences to those who are gifted writers.

Hi Five

Hi Five is designed for groups of 1-4 pupils from Y5 or above, working at a low Level 2 with a RA of 6.5 to 7.0. There are 4 sessions a week, each lasting 15-20 minutes, for a minimum of 10 weeks. One chapter of text is used each week.

The focus of sessions is as follows:

Session 1 Guided reading and clarification

Session 2 Re-reading, questioning and summarizing

Session 3 Supported writing

Session 4 Editing

Monitoring and Evaluating Interventions

All interventions used need to be rigorously evaluated. Assessing pupils at the beginning and end of a programme of work shows what impact the intervention has had. The assessments used do not always need to be complicated or time consuming. Sections of the LAPack can sometimes suffice. The Table of Assessments for Different Interventions has suggestions of suitable assessments. Schools need to ensure that interventions are effective. See Monitoring and Evaluating section on p20.

[List of Intervention Materials](#)

[Flow Chart to show possible interventions for pupils having difficulties on the Literacy Assessment Pack.doc](#)

[Assessments to track interventions.doc](#)

Building Capacity within the School

Expertise within a school is often built up around the specific children on roll at any one time. As staff come and go, expertise changes and it is important to continually update and refresh training. Schools build capacity to deal with pupils with SEN by maintaining high levels of training and ensuring that when teachers and TAs leave other staff are trained in their skills. In promoting good practice Senior Leaders and SENCOs should make clear that:

- all teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs, including those with literacy difficulties
- all teachers should notice individual differences in learning style and adjust their teaching accordingly
- good practice for dyslexic pupils is good practice for all

Staff training

Training all staff to be aware of literacy difficulties, how to identify pupils with difficulties and how to include them within classroom teaching is perhaps the most important step a school can take. Evidence from Ofsted and Oxfordshire's Audit to Action process has shown that schools that are most successful with pupils with SEN are those where inclusive teaching within classrooms is good. Schools with good intervention programmes are able to move pupils' literacy skills on, but unless those pupils have a good experience back in the classroom, those skills are not always maintained and utilised, and may not impact on progress through NC levels. *The Inclusion Development Programme: Teaching and supporting pupils with dyslexia* (DfE 2011) provides training for all staff, teachers and TAs, in four modules:

- understanding and supporting reading
- understanding and supporting spelling
- a focus (awareness of difficulties)
- adapting practice

This gives good guidance on supporting pupils within the classroom. The programme is not mandatory and may be replaced by e-learning modules in future, but it is an invaluable resource, and a good starting point for improving the teaching of literacy across the school. The programme takes about 2 hours to complete individually, but discussion with colleagues can help staff to share good practice. The self-evaluation can help to audit existing skills and pinpoint parts of the resource that are most useful.

Inclusion Development Programme: Teaching and supporting pupils with SLCN (DfE 2011) is equally helpful in developing staff understanding of language issues and how to support pupils within the classroom.

Further training for Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Oxfordshire LDD/Inclusion Team runs training courses for Teachers and Teaching Assistants on:

- Dyslexia Awareness
- Assessment
- Inclusive Teaching and Learning
- Fischer family Trust Programmes – FFT Reading Programme, Write Away Together and Hi Five

Inclusion Consultants are also available to do bespoke training for individual schools.

Training for Specialist Teachers

Oxford Brookes University in conjunction with the LDD/Inclusion team run a year's Certificate of Advanced Professional Practice in *Working with Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties*. Teachers who complete this course then have the option of going on to take the Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA) and/or an MA(SEN).

For details contact Georgina Glenny at goglenny@brookes.ac.uk

Assessment

Ensuring that the school has a good assessment procedure in place is vital not only for tracking progress, but for unpicking pupils' difficulties and working out what provision will help them. Use the Assessment of Individuals section (p8) to decide the best assessments to use with each pupil and which assessment materials are most useful for the school. Ensuring that the SENCO and Foundation Stage teachers are confident about identifying pupils at risk of literacy difficulties in Early Years, will mean that support can be put in place before problems worsen.

Intervention

It is important to take an evidence-based approach to intervention, and ensure that interventions used have been demonstrated to have successful results. The Intervention section on p15 will help, as the interventions recommended are ones that have been used successfully throughout the county, but colleagues in other schools may be able to make recommendations too. Use the LAPack Flow Chart to help build up a bank of resources that address the various areas of need your pupils show. Inclusion Consultants will be very happy to advise on interventions if you have any queries.

Getting the balance between in-class provision and intervention can be tricky. It is really important that the class teacher knows exactly what a pupil is learning and particularly what new skills s/he has gained, so that they can target teaching accordingly. Some schools are following up on interventions with classroom support in the following term to help pupils consolidate the skills they have gained.

[Flow Chart to show possible interventions for pupils having difficulties on the Literacy Assessment Pack.doc](#)

Monitoring and Evaluating

Implementing intervention programmes is not just about buying resources. Teachers and TAs delivering them need to be properly trained and monitored. Above all, provision must be rigorously and frequently evaluated. Pupils need to be making at least twice the rate of progress i.e. 6 months gain in reading at the end of a 3 month intervention. Where this is not happening teachers need to investigate the cause – it might be that the intervention did not take place regularly, the assessments might not have been done rigorously enough to

indicate the starting point, the intervention may have been unsuitable for the pupil or the intervention was not effective. The SENCO's role in this cannot be emphasised strongly enough. Much time can be wasted on poorly delivered provision that makes no significant difference. Assessing pupils before and after an intervention not only shows how much they have progressed, but indicates where they need to go next.

[Assessments to track interventions.doc](#)

Using Data to Inform Practice

Data can help identify pupils at risk as well as support the tracking of those already identified. Raise Online data can be used to identify trends and to plan future action. School tracking data will give a detailed picture of which groups of pupils are making accelerated progress and those where the gap is widening. Tracking the progress of LLDD rigorously in comparison with their peers ensures that they are closing the gap. Targeting resources and provision to support literacy enables pupils to access other areas of the curriculum. Schools need to focus on early intervention rather than waiting until pupils start falling further behind.

Working with Parents

Promoting parent partnership

Parents' concerns regarding their children's progress should be acknowledged and addressed promptly and constructively. If parent and school have differing views about a child's progress it is the school's responsibility to collect evidence of the pupil's performance to inform discussion. Teachers need to be confident in being able to explain children's literacy difficulties to parents and in communicating how teaching is being adjusted to help the child.

Parents' worries need to be dealt with sensitively. Having a clear, detailed picture of the child's strengths and difficulties shows parents that teachers know their child, and sharing ideas about how the school can help, will reassure them that their child is being supported. The Prompt Sheets for Parents may be useful.

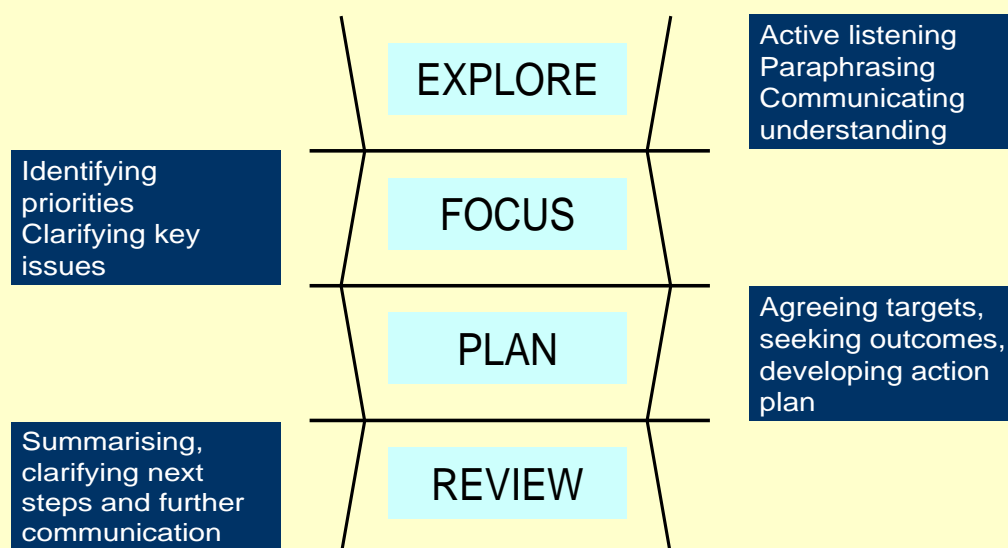
[Prompt sheetsparents.doc for](#)

It is also important to remember that some parents have literacy difficulties themselves, and their own experiences at school may make meetings very difficult for them. They may not be confident about supporting their children's reading at home, so find ways in which they can help. Perhaps make sure that the child can read books independently before they take them home, so that the parent can still hear them read without feeling they need to teach them.

Some parents will find it difficult to accept that their child has a difficulty. Using the questions below to talk about family background may help them to see similarities with other family members. It is important that information given by the school is accurate and detailed, and that the picture is built up over time. Explaining the assessment process, interventions and support the school is giving to the child, can reassure parents that the child has been accurately assessed and that their needs are being addressed.

In meeting parents, teachers may find the structured conversation presented in *Achievement for All* (National Strategies 2010) a useful guide. This gives a framework that can help to give focus and momentum to meetings.

Framework for the structured conversation



<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218194057/http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/253583>

Seeking information from parents

Parents can give very useful information about their child that can aid understanding of their difficulties with literacy. Here are some ideas that can be used as prompts when talking to parents.

Literacy

- Does your child enjoy literacy activities at home, e.g. reading, hearing stories, nursery rhymes?

Early Development

- At what age did your child reach developmental milestone, such as walking, talking

Health

- Has your child had illnesses that have affected language, motor skills and education?
- Has your child had hearing and sight checks?

Language

- When did your child start talking?
- Has your child ever had speech therapy?
- Has your child ever had glue ear or hearing problems?

Motor skills

- When did your child start walking?
- How well can they do things involving motor skills, both gross and fine motor skills e.g. sports, ball skills, riding a bike, drawing, buttons?
- Which hand do they prefer to use?

Family background

- Has anyone in the family had similar difficulties with literacy?

How can parents help?

Most parents are eager to help their children's literacy skills, but may need some guidance. A consistent approach to reading between home and school is helpful, and home/school communication books can support this. 'Paired reading' and 'pause, prompt, praise' can be useful for parents, and guidance on these, as well as ways to help with spelling can be found in the Prompt Sheets for Parents section.

Working with Pupils

Promoting pupil participation

Pupils should be regarded as active participants in the learning process. They should be encouraged to take an active role in their own learning by helping to set their own targets, identifying helpful and less helpful support strategies, and receiving prompt feedback on their progress. The older the pupil the more important this process becomes. 'Voice of the child' sheets from the Inclusion Handbook might be useful as a basis for discussion with pupils (Section H *Involving Children and Young People*).

Pupils are generally much better motivated to learn when they have identified their own targets. These may not be the targets the teacher would suggest, but confidence has a huge impact on learning, and it is vital to build and foster self-esteem.

Helping pupils to understand the difficulties they have can influence how they overcome them and improve their self-esteem. For instance, explaining to a pupil that they have dyslexic difficulties, which make learning to read difficult for them, and describing how the school will support them can improve pupils' attitude to their difficulties. Knowing that they have a specific difficulty that is not their fault and realising that they are not considered unintelligent can be extremely empowering, and raise their self-esteem dramatically. Other pupils may not respond in this way, so it is important to know your pupils and spend time listening to how they feel about the difficulties they are having.

The Useful Teaching Strategies section contains resources that may be helpful for pupils.

[Useful teaching strategies.doc](#)

Local Authority Support

Local Authority Agencies

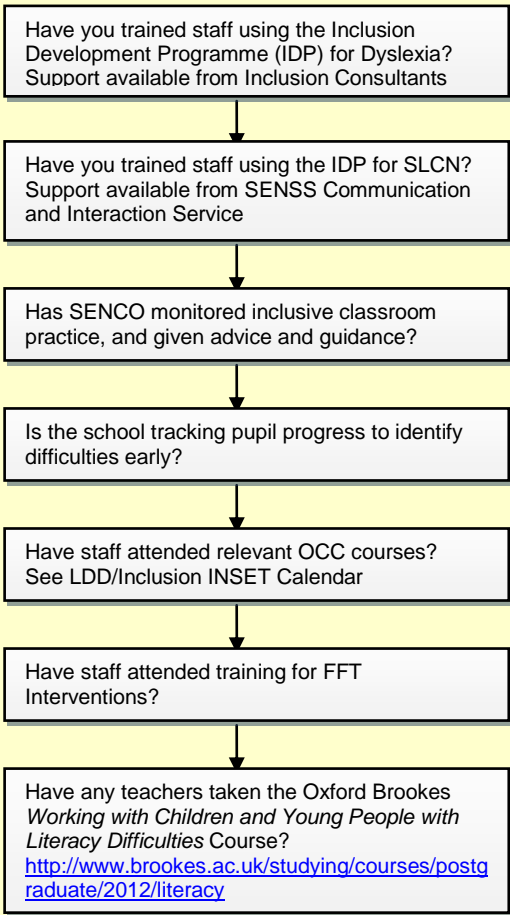
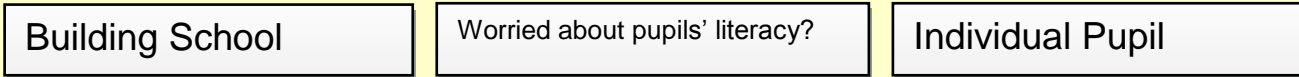
As mentioned in the *Monitoring and Assessment* section, the school's Education Psychologist (EP), Speech and Language Therapist (SALT), Language and Communication Advisory Teacher (LACAT), Special Needs Advisory Teacher (SNAAT) or Occupational Therapist (OT) may be able to help unpick a pupil's difficulties and give advice on intervention and support work.

The LDD/Inclusion Team

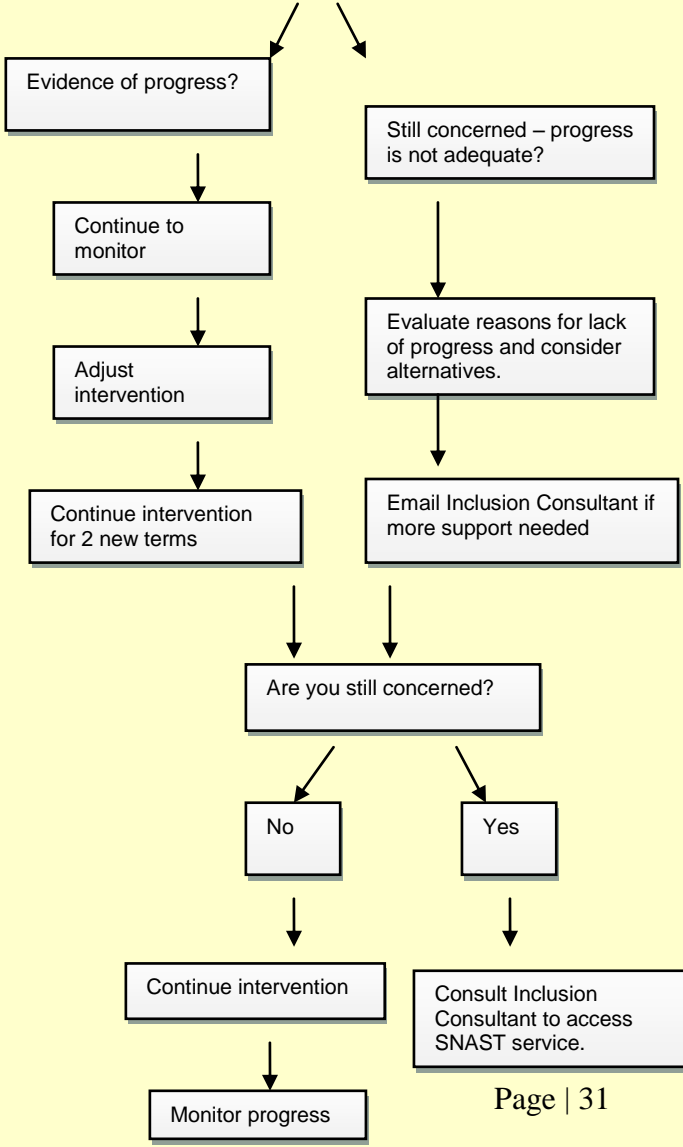
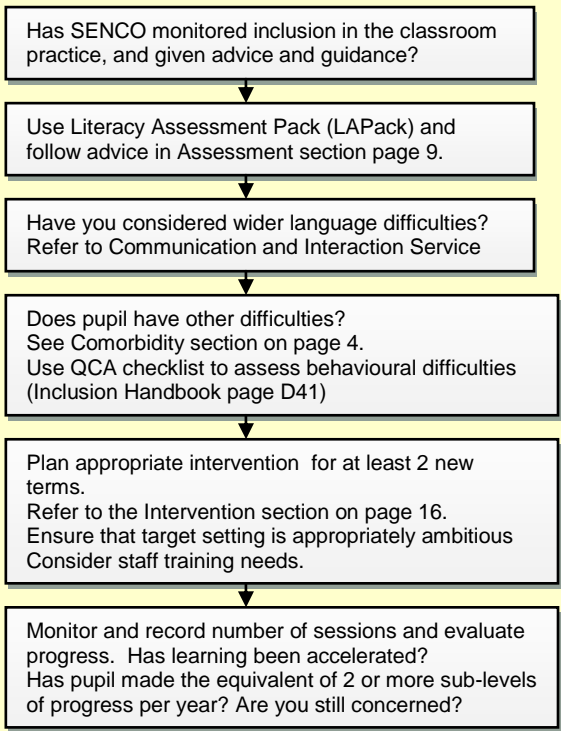
The LDD/Inclusion Team offer a range of training centrally, and can offer bespoke training to schools and partnerships. Inclusion Consultants are available to advise schools on provision. Schools can buy SNAAT support on an annual basis through QUEST, but are also able to pay for an assessment and advice visit for individual pupils by contacting their Inclusion Consultant. Use the *Working with Pupils with Literacy Difficulties* Flow Chart on the next page to determine the best course of action, but contact your Inclusion Consultant for advice at any point where you feel uncertain.

Working with pupils with literacy difficulties

Contact your Inclusion Consultant for support



Contact your Inclusion Consultant for support



To contact your Inclusion Consultant email:

North:
christine.dickinson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Central:
lucy.mettyear@oxfordshire.gov.uk

South:
rachael.falkner@oxfordshire.gov.uk