

**The Scottish Government's
response to the report
Making Sense: Education
for Children and Young People
with Dyslexia in Scotland**

June 2014

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

I would like to thank Education Scotland, and the many people who contributed to the review, for the work that has led to the production of Making Sense: Education for Children and Young People with Dyslexia in Scotland. I welcome this important report and I believe it can help to make a positive difference to the educational experiences of Scotland's children and young people with dyslexia.

Every pupil in Scotland should experience the broad general education they are entitled to under Curriculum for Excellence. However, many of our children and young people face barriers to learning that could prevent them from realising their true potential without appropriate support.

Dyslexia can bring strengths in terms of creativity and abstract thinking, ably demonstrated by the pupils of Kyle Academy at the launch of the report. However, it can also bring real challenges. The ability to read and to communicate ideas in writing is critical if a pupil is to access the full range of educational opportunities found in our schools. Without appropriate support, a pupil with dyslexia may fall behind their peers, lose confidence in their own abilities, and potentially disengage from learning altogether.

This report shows that while we have made much progress in provision for pupils with dyslexia, more needs to be done. Early identification of dyslexia needs to be a priority for all our schools.

The statistics in the report also indicate that pupils with dyslexia are not yet achieving parity with their peers in terms of academic attainment or in accessing higher education. Being diagnosed with dyslexia does not diminish a pupil's potential and I will not accept any limits being placed on their ambitions. This is why I asked Education Scotland to carry out an independent review into why this is happening and to identify and share the good practice that I know exists across Scotland.

The Scottish Government and Education Scotland have an important role to play in supporting local authorities, schools and teachers to live up to the expectations we place on them. For example, the Scottish Government have supported developments such as the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit and the National Framework for Inclusion. In addition, the Scottish Government has met with partners, including Dyslexia Scotland; the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland; the Scottish Teacher Education Committee; the General Teaching Council for Scotland; and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, to discuss taking forward the recommendations from the report.

I want to put an end to the days of pupils with dyslexia disengaging from learning through lack of support. There is no reason why every pupil in Scotland with dyslexia should not be identified early and receive the help and support they need to grow and prosper. That is their entitlement and this Government will do everything in its power to make that a consistent reality across Scotland. I believe the report and this response can help us do that.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Russell', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

MICHAEL RUSSELL
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

INTRODUCTION

The review of education for children and young people with dyslexia in Scotland began in Easter 2013. The report was launched on 12 May 2014 at Kyle Academy in Ayr. This is the Scottish Government's response to the report and its recommendations. This response will set out what we intend to do in response to each of the recommendations.

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The Education Scotland report was the outcome of an independent review of education for children and young people who have dyslexia which had been carried out on behalf of the Scottish Government. The review covered the experiences of learners in primary, secondary and special schools. It also looked into the provision made by local authorities and at the programmes of initial teacher education currently offered by universities in Scotland.

A previous report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), [Education for Learners with Dyslexia](#) (2008), looked at services provided by local authorities, colleges and schools for learners with literacy and language skills difficulties. HMIE found that the range and quality of learning and teaching approaches were appropriate in the majority of schools and in a few schools, were considered to be highly effective. In approximately half of the education authorities surveyed, there were no specialist facilities offered, however, effective support was often provided by educational psychologists, learning assistants or network support staff.

The main aspects of effective learning and teaching of students with dyslexia were identified as multi-sensory in nature, well-structured and interactive. Although most parents had the opportunity to attend reviews of their children's progress and contribute to targets, very few parents or pupils were provided with sufficient information regarding the authority's or school's policy regarding dyslexia. The extent of involvement available to parents varied and some parents criticised delays in accessing specialist support.

This report drew on information which had been collected from a range of sources by Education Scotland staff:

- Information from primary, secondary and special school inspections (Easter-October 2013);
- Information about provision for trainee teachers in initial teacher education (ITE) institutions, provided by these institutions;
- Information about local authority provision across Scotland, provided by local authorities;
- Focus groups of parents;
- Focused visits to a sample of primary, secondary and special schools by Education Scotland staff, including discussions with pupils, parents, school staff and local authority officers;
- Discussion with the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia; and

- Discussions with Scottish Government, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and Dyslexia Scotland.

THE RESPONSE STRUCTURE

The response sets out the actions that the Scottish Government will take in relation to the recommendations. Where the recommendation is directed towards another organisation, the Scottish Government has not commented on their acceptance, or otherwise, as these are for those organisations to consider themselves. However, the Scottish Government has met with those organisations to discuss how the recommendations in the report will be taken forward and will continue to work with those organisations.

CONTEXT

As we consider the educational provision made for learners with dyslexia in Scotland, it is important to acknowledge and consider the legislative, policy, and guidance context within which teachers and their partners work. Appendix 1 provides further details on this. Below are key elements in the delivery of the recommendations.

Literacy Action Plan

The Scottish Government's [Literacy Action Plan](#), published on 27 October 2010, sets out the vision to raise standards of literacy for all, from the early years through to adulthood. There is a particular focus on breaking the link between deprivation and poor literacy skills and addressing the issue of early identification of literacy difficulties. The Plan contains a specific commitment to work with Dyslexia Scotland to promote their web-based resource for teachers for the assessment of a range of literacy difficulties and dyslexia. Other commitments include to encourage all local authorities to introduce personalised literacy assessments and diagnosis at Primary 1 and at other appropriate stages, and encourage all local authorities to put in place early identification of support needs.

Dyslexia Scotland

Dyslexia Scotland is an independent charitable organisation which supports people with dyslexia in Scotland and campaigns on their behalf. A number of its initiatives have been funded by the Scottish Government, including the online [Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit](#) (referred to hereafter as The Toolkit). This resource was launched at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2012 by Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages. It provides information for teachers, guiding them through the process of assessing literacy difficulties, which may be dyslexia, and gives details of relevant approaches and strategies, cross-referenced with [Curriculum for Excellence](#). The Toolkit also has sections containing information for parents and carers, and for children and young people. It is continually updated and enhanced by a group which includes practitioners from across the country. This review set out to find out about awareness of this resource, its use and how it is impacting on meeting the needs of children and young people with dyslexia. Schools, local authorities and ITE institutions were asked about their use of this

freely accessible resource, and this is noted in the appropriate chapters. Dyslexia Scotland is also working with the Scottish Government to look at the possibility of developing a standardised national Dyslexia Friendly School approach.

Other relevant aspects

The revised GTCS Standards for Full Registration; and the Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC) National Framework for Inclusion which has been refreshed to make sure it links directly with the revised GTCS standards.

RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Teachers, support staff, learners and parents should have access to up-to-date practical advice and guidance on dyslexia:

1. Local authority websites, including guidance for parents, must contain information and contact details relating to provision for children and young people with additional support needs, including those with dyslexia, in line with responsibilities under section 26 of the [Additional Support for Learning Act](#).
2. Local authorities should ensure that teachers have access to Dyslexia Practice Guidelines, linked to their literacy strategy.
3. Establishments should have a whole school approach to dyslexia as part of each school's literacy strategy and inclusive practices, linked to staff professional learning opportunities.
4. Dyslexia Scotland should work with local authorities and schools to encourage all teachers to be familiar with, and make appropriate use of, the Toolkit.
5. Education Scotland should produce national guidance for teachers on education for children and young people with dyslexia in the wider context of additional support needs.

The Scottish Government is generally supportive of this recommendation. However, it is also for the relevant organisations in this area to consider and act upon these issues themselves.

Recommendation 2

Teachers, support staff and local authority staff should have access to a wide range of high quality career-long professional learning opportunities at school, local and national level related to meeting the needs of children and young people with dyslexia.

1. Teachers should ensure that they develop their skills to be able to meet their responsibilities in relation to additional support needs in line with the GTCS standards and should consider applying for GTCS Professional Recognition for relevant continuing professional learning.
2. Local authorities should extend the range and quality of career-long professional learning related to meeting the needs of children and young people with dyslexia and make these available on a regular basis.
3. Education Scotland should work with Dyslexia Scotland and other relevant stakeholders to develop a comprehensive dyslexia professional learning package which can be used by local authorities to increase the capacity of teachers to meet learning needs.
4. Local authorities should record centrally information on teachers' specialist skills and qualifications in meeting the needs of learners with dyslexia.

The Scottish Government is generally supportive of this recommendation. However, it is also for the relevant organisations in this area to consider and act upon these issues themselves.

Recommendation 3

Initial teacher education and postgraduate awards and courses should give a high priority to developing knowledge and skills in relation to dyslexia and additional support needs.

1. The Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC) should continue to work with the Scottish Government, GTCS, Education Scotland and all ITE institutions to ensure greater consistency of initial teacher education course content across Scotland in relation to dyslexia and additional support needs.

Part 1 of this recommendation was welcomed by the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government will continue to work with STEC, and other partners, to ensure greater consistency of initial teacher education content across Scotland in relation to dyslexia and additional support needs. The Scottish Government have provided funding to STEC to refresh the National Framework for Inclusion and ensure it links directly with the revised GTCS standards.

2. STEC and GTCS should also work together to standardise the quality and content of postgraduate awards and courses relating to meeting additional support needs, where possible accrediting them with Professional Recognition.

The Scottish Government is generally supportive of part 2 of this recommendation. However, it is also for the relevant organisations in this area to consider and act upon these issues themselves.

Recommendation 4

Schools, local authorities and national partners should take action to improve the quality of educational outcomes for children and young people with dyslexia.

1. Schools and local authorities should improve their practices in identifying, planning and the range of approaches used to meet the needs of children and young people with dyslexia with a high priority given to early intervention.

2. Parents, children and young people should be more involved in discussions and strategies related to dyslexia, in line with responsibilities under section 12 of the [Additional Support for Learning Act](#) and staff should seek and take account of their views.

3. HM Inspectors should continue, through inspections, to monitor the quality of provision and outcomes for children and young people with dyslexia.

The Scottish Government is generally supportive of parts 1-3 of this recommendation. However, it is also for the relevant organisations in this area to consider and act upon these issues themselves.

4. The Scottish Government should work with Dyslexia Scotland to consider national accreditation schemes for Dyslexia Friendly Schools and Dyslexia Friendly Authorities.

Part 4 of this recommendation was accepted by the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government will continue its work to identify the best ways to improve educational outcomes for children and young people with dyslexia. A part of this will be to give full consideration to national accreditation schemes for Dyslexia Friendly Schools and Dyslexia Friendly Authorities.

In addition, Education Scotland will continue to build and extend inclusive practices to further improve the outcomes for those with dyslexia.

Recommendation 5

The availability and use of reliable information on children and young people's needs, development and achievement should be improved.

1. In partnership with the Scottish Government, local authorities should improve the quality and use of data regarding the number of children and young people identified as having dyslexia.

2. The Scottish Government should review the data which it is intending to collect for the census and improve the clarity of instructions for school/pupil census submissions to improve the quality of data available regarding children and young people with dyslexia.

This recommendation was accepted by the Scottish Government.

In relation to both parts of this recommendation, the following action will be taken:

The Advisory Group for Additional Support for Learning considered the issue of data and outcomes in April 2014. The group considered a proposal to change the types of information recorded within the statistical collection and to consider other ways in which learning outcomes can be considered in relation to Additional Support for Learning.

The outcome of that consideration is that a fundamental review of the use of the statistical data collected will be undertaken, to clarify how the data is currently used and by whom. This information will inform the decision on how the statistical collection should be modified. Following this review, guidance will be developed to support those providing information to Management Information Systems and to improve consistency and accuracy of data collected and published. Any change to the data collection takes a significant period of time to effect and, therefore, will not change the system for a period of approximately 3 years.

It has, therefore, been agreed that a review of the current guidance to authorities and schools should be undertaken with a view to improving consistency of data. This will be undertaken and refreshed guidance will be produced by December 2014.

CONCLUSION

The Scottish Government is supportive of the 5 recommendations. We have already met with the relevant organisations to discuss taking these forward. In addition, we will continue to engage with those organisations to monitor progress of the recommendations.

APPENDIX 1: LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BACKGROUND

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000

This [Act](#) sets out the rights of children to school education and the related duties of education authorities. The nature of the duties on education authorities is “to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential”. The [Act](#) introduced the policy of ‘presumption of mainstreaming’, meaning that all children will be expected to attend mainstream school unless certain circumstances apply. Specialist provision can be considered if this is the case. In almost all cases, children and young people with dyslexia are educated in mainstream educational establishments. 98% of all children and young people in Scotland are educated in mainstream schools.

Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records Act 2002

This [Act](#) places education authorities, independent schools and grant-aided schools under duties to prepare Accessibility Strategies to, over time, improve physical access, access to the curriculum and access to school information for disabled pupils.

Equality Act 2010

The [Equality Act 2010](#) requires responsible bodies to actively deal with inequality, and to prevent direct disability discrimination, indirect disability discrimination and discrimination arising from disability and harassment or victimisation of pupils on the basis, or a perceived basis, of protected characteristics, including disability¹. The provisions include:

- prospective pupils
- pupils at the school
- in some limited circumstances, former pupils

In addition, under the Equality Act 2010 responsible bodies have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and provide auxiliary aids and services. The duty is ‘to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the substantial disadvantage’ to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of a school or by the absence of an auxiliary aid or service.

¹ These duties apply to all protected characteristics related to schools duties (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).

Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 (as amended)

The [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) (as amended) provides a framework for local authorities and other agencies to support all children. It came into force in November 2005 and its main provisions included:

- establishing the concept of 'additional support needs', which includes dyslexia;
- placing new duties on local authorities and other agencies;
- setting out rights for parents;
- establishing mechanisms for resolving differences for families and authorities, mediation, dispute resolution; and
- establishing the Additional Support Needs Tribunals Scotland (ASNTS).

The 2009 Act included the following amendments:

- the rights of parents to make out of area placing requests;
- following a successful out of area placing request parental access to mediation and dispute resolution from the host authority;
- increased parental rights in respect of access to the ASNTS; and
- the provision of a new ASNTS national advocacy service.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) makes provision about the rights of children and young people and provides a legislative basis for many aspects of the GIRFEC approach.

Children's Rights

To ensure that children's rights properly influence the design and delivery of policies and services, the Act will:

- Place a duty on the Scottish Ministers to keep under consideration and take steps to further the rights of children and young people, to promote and raise awareness and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and to prepare reports describing this activity;
- Place a duty on the wider public sector to report on what they are doing to take forward realisation of the rights set out in the UNCRC; and
- Extend the powers of Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, so that this office will be able to undertake investigations in relation to individual children and young people.

Wellbeing and Getting it Right for Every Child

To improve the way services work to support children, young people and families, the Act will:

- Ensure that all children and young people from birth to their 18th birthday, or beyond if they remain in school, will have access to a Named Person;
- Put in place a single statutory planning process to support those children who require it;
- Place a definition of wellbeing in legislation; and
- Place duties on public bodies (Community Planning Partnerships) to coordinate the planning, design and delivery of services for children and young people with a focus on improving wellbeing outcomes, and report collectively on how they are improving those outcomes.

Teaching Scotland's Future – Report of a Review of Teacher Education in Scotland (2010)

Graham Donaldson, former HM Senior Chief Inspector of Education, was asked by the Scottish Government to conduct a review of teacher education in Scotland. The Review commenced in February 2010 and reported to Ministers in January 2011. His report, [Teaching Scotland's Future](#), contained 50 recommendations that spanned the full breadth of a teacher's career from selection to an initial teacher education course to enhancing leadership and accomplished teaching. The Government responded to Teaching Scotland's Future in March 2011 and accepted all recommendations in full, in part or in principle.

Key recommendations include:

- The highest priority must be given, at all levels, to strengthening both teacher quality and leadership in Scotland's schools;
- Selection for initial education should be thorough, broad and rigorous and carried out in assessment centres;
- All teachers should be skilled in supporting the development of literacy and numeracy skills and in overcoming barriers to learning such as dyslexia;
- The B.Ed degree should be replaced with degrees that combine academic study beyond education with professional studies;
- Teacher education should be seen as a career-long process, with much closer working amongst schools, universities, local authorities and national organisations;
- The professional development of experienced teachers should be guided by a new set of standards developed by GTCS; and
- A greater range of teachers' professional development should be accredited with Masters-level credits built into Initial Teacher Education qualifications.

Curriculum for Excellence

The original report of the Curriculum Review Group, a [Curriculum for Excellence](#) (Scottish Executive, 2004) indicated that all children and young people should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work. By providing structure, support and direction to young people's learning, the curriculum should enable them to develop these four capacities. The curriculum should complement the important contributions of families and communities.

The design principles which schools, teachers and other educators should use to implement the curriculum are:

- Challenge and enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

Within [Curriculum for Excellence](#), personal learning planning is at the heart of supporting learning. The conversations about learning, reviewing progress and planning next steps are central to this process. Planned opportunities for achievement which focus on the learning and progress made through activities across the full range of contexts and settings in which the curriculum is experienced also contribute to the universal aspect of support. It is the responsibility of all practitioners and partners to deliver this universal entitlement within their own teaching environments.

In addition, all children and young people should have frequent and regular opportunities to discuss their learning and development with an adult who knows them well and with whom they have a mutually trusting relationship. This key member of staff has the holistic overview of the child or young person's learning and personal development.



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