

Useful Information for Governors

Role of the SEN Governor

Under the Education Act (1996), state schools in England and Wales are required to "identify, assess and make provision for" their pupils special needs, including dyslexia.

All schools also have a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act, not discriminate against pupils or potential pupils who may be disabled by dyslexia.

SEN Governors are involved with many matters concerning special educational needs, not just those of dyslexics, but it is now accepted that a *dyslexia friendly* teaching approach is good for all children as it caters for all learning styles - indeed in reality it is *inclusion friendly*. Our courses and workshops can aid understanding of dyslexia; the needs of children with dyslexia; the needs of parents; and the needs of all teaching staff.

We are also very keen to hear from governors about their experiences, particularly any that have been involved with the Inclusion Dyslexia Friendly Schools Quality Mark, so do contact us:

enquiries@cornwalldyslexia.org.uk

Special Educational Needs and schools

Schools place great importance on identifying SEN so they can help children as early as possible. Most children with SEN can have their needs met in a mainstream school.

Once it has been decided that a child has SEN, the child's teachers will plan their education taking account of the guidance given in a document known as the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice is a guide for early education settings (such as nurseries and playgroups), state schools and local authorities, on how they should identify, assess and provide help for children with SEN. You can read a summary of the code in the booklet, 'SEN: A Guide for Parents and Carers' or the full report, which are free from the Dept. for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF) ☎ 0845 6 02 22 60 e-mail:

dfes@prolog.uk.com. Website: www.dfes.gov.uk

A Step-by-step Approach

Children learn in different ways, and can have different levels or kinds of SEN. So if a child has SEN, the school will increasingly, step by step, bring in specialist expertise to help with the difficulties they may have. This step-by-step approach is set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

A school must tell parents if they start giving extra or different help to a child because of their special educational needs. The basic level of extra help is known as **School Action**, and could be:



School Action

- A different way of teaching certain things;
- some extra help from an adult;
- involvement of the school's SENCO;
- use of specialist software on a computer;
- use of a dyslexia teaching programme.

A child may need help through this step-by-step approach for only a short time, or for many years. Remember that you should be consulted at every step, and you should be told about your child's progress.

If a child does **not** make enough progress under School Action, their teacher or SEN Coordinator (SENCO) should talk to the parents about asking for advice from other people outside the school. This kind of extra help is called **School Action Plus** and could include:



School Action Plus

- more detailed assessment of the child's needs;
- advice for the school from one of the Dyslexia Advisors or an Educational Psychologists;
- help from a specialist teacher either one-to-one or in small groups;
- continuing use of a dyslexia teaching programme and use of computer software as appropriate.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

If a child is on **School Action** or **School Action Plus** the child's school should write a plan setting out the type of help they will give the child in something called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP could include:



IEP

- what special help is being given;
- how often the child will receive the help;
- who will provide the help;
- what the targets for the child are;
- how and when the child's progress will be checked;
- what help parents can give their child at home.

IEPs should be reviewed at least twice a year, ideally termly or more frequently for children with particular needs. Parents' views on the child's progress should be sought and they should be consulted as part of the review process. Whenever possible the child should also take part in the review process and be involved in setting targets.

Statutory Assessments and Statements

If a child's difficulties are severe and the school still cannot give the child all the help they need, the parents or the school can request a '**statutory assessment**' - a detailed investigation to find out what a child's special educational needs are and what special help the child needs.

If a statutory assessment indicates that a child's difficulties are severe enough a procedure of consultation will begin with a view to a **Statement of SEN** being produced. This is a legal document which sets out the specific difficulties a child has and the specific help they will receive. However only a very small percentage of children are given a statement and it can often be a lengthy and complicated process.

Useful Contacts

Parent Partnership: Local help and information for parents of children with SEN particularly assisting with meetings with schools.

Roger James ☎ 01209 844692 (West) Caroline Smith (East) ☎ 01579 363671

Dyslexia Action (Information about dyslexia, teaching qualifications and courses, resources and other useful information.) ☎ 01784 22 23 00

Website www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

The British Dyslexia Association National Helpline ☎ 0118 9 66 82

71 www.bdadyslexia.org.uk (Many useful information sheets to print out or the website has the facility to read out text.)

IPSEA: Independent Panel of Special Education Advisers - lists Educational Psychologists and other professionals who can give advice on SEN related matters. ☎ 0800 0 18 40 16.

ACE: Advisory Centre for Education National Helpline

☎ 0808 8 00 57 93. 2.00pm - 5.00 pm. Website www.ace-ed.org.uk

If the call is because of an exclusion ☎ 0207 7 04 98 22.

CDAHELPLINE 01872 27 48 27