

## **Accredited Learning Support Assistant (ALSA)**

ALSA stands for Accredited Learning Support Assistant.

This is an expanding area of accreditation and gives learning support assistants recognition for their skills in supporting dyslexic children in the classroom under the supervision of the class teacher.

For more information and to request an application form please email Katherine Dumas at [katherined@bdadyslexia.org.uk](mailto:katherined@bdadyslexia.org.uk) or call 0845 251 9003 and select Option 4.

### **An ALSA Course should meet the following criteria:**

Based on successfully running CLANSA courses the following minimum recommendations are made for the content of ALSA courses.

They should aim to provide:

- an understanding of key issues related to dyslexia;
- information about typical problems faced by pupils with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties;
- indications of ways in which such children tend to reveal these difficulties;
- different approaches to teaching pupils with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties in the classroom;
- knowledge of a range of available materials;
- skills in creating learning games and activities in the areas of literacy and numeracy; and
- an understanding of the underlying social and emotional needs of pupils with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties.

### **Basic Requirements**

To be accredited by the BDA the course would need to meet the following basic requirements:

- clearly defined outcomes;
- relevant numeracy and literacy skills entry criteria;

- formal external validation;
- clearly described course content of the above nature; and
- trainer qualifications at AMBDA or ATS or equivalent (e.g. OCR Diploma or Certificate).

### **Criteria for Course Content**

Background awareness and knowledge:

- awareness of theories of teaching and learning as applied to specific learning difficulties;
- knowledge and understanding of how specific learning difficulties are manifested in the classroom;
- awareness and understanding of screening and assessment procedures for specific learning difficulties;
- understanding of how assessment relates to the design of appropriate learning programmes for pupils dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties; and
- knowledge of the range of approaches and resources suitable for the support of pupils with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties.

### **Necessary skills:**

- ability to employ a range of approaches and resources suitable for the support of pupils with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties;
- ability to communicate effectively with the pupil both in support of learning and in encouraging the growth of self esteem and independence;
- ability to select and/or construct suitable materials;
- ability to record and report pupils' response to support; and
- ability to communicate effectively with significant others (e.g. teachers, parents SENCOs etc).

It would be particularly helpful if learning support assistants could also be helped to develop a working knowledge of:

- the role and function of support professionals;
- key aspects of the National Curriculum;
- the Code of Practice;
- specific LEA policy and practice with regard to specific learning difficulties; and
- the role and application of information technology in supporting learning together with the ability to use a computer.