

British Dyslexia Association Policy on The Early Identification of Specific Learning Difficulties

Policy

"The policy of the BDA is that it will work for a position where all Local Authorities, regulatory bodies, schools and school governing bodies in all educational settings, in conjunction with parents and carers, will:

- honour their statutory duty to identify a child's specific learning difficulties, at the earliest opportunity in a child's school career;
- have an appropriately trained workforce that will identify and support children's individual learning needs and will deliver relevant and individually tailored programmes of learning support to those children whose profile provides evidence of specific learning difficulties;
- have a teacher who is qualified at Approved Teachers Status level (ATS Certificate in Specific Learning Difficulties) in every school or, in localities where small schools predominate, in each appropriately-sized group of schools;
- ensure that the procedures for the identification and support of specific learning difficulties in children in schools are inspected, evaluated, monitored, reviewed and developed; and
- ensure that the use of financial resources targeted for the education of children with specific learning difficulties are spent appropriately and not spent on issues outside the specific learning needs arena."

Notes to the Policy

1. The BDA will press Government and education regulatory bodies to:
 - ensure the more effective implementation of existing law and codes of practice;
 - ensure regulatory bodies are appropriately qualified and sufficiently knowledgeable to evaluate the procedures for the identification and support of children with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, during their inspection visits; and
 - include generic awareness of specific learning difficulties and specific strategies for the identification and support of children with specific learning difficulties in the ITT curriculum for trainee

teachers and in continuing professional development programmes for existing teachers.

2. This position statement links with the BDA's vision and mission to provide leadership on improving the educational and personal attainment of children with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia and to improve the dyslexia-specific knowledge and skill base of head teachers, teachers, learning support assistants and education regulatory body staff.
3. This position statement brings together recent DCSF initiatives which address the Every Child Matters agenda, providing a hitherto absent synergy which will result in an improved education for children with specific learning difficulties.
4. This policy endorses XP No to Failure and the Inclusion Development Programme, initiatives already supported by government. XP No to Failure aims to see a qualified Approved Teacher Status (ATS - certificated SpLD teacher, dyslexia) teacher in every school or, in localities where small schools predominate, in each appropriately-sized group of schools and the generic awareness training on specific learning difficulties provided by the Inclusion development programme. The XP No to Failure pyramid of expert training endorsed by the BDA demonstrates the level of expertise required to ensure that professionals at each level of the education system can identify and support children with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia.
5. Concurrently, the BDA works to improve the practical understanding of specific learning difficulties including dyslexia within the teaching profession, head teachers and governing bodies by lobbying the General Teaching Councils, Teachers Development Agency, education trades union associations and education regulatory bodies. Specifically, it will be ensuring that the early identification and support of children with specific learning difficulties is an issue which will be addressed by all of the education regulatory bodies in their inspections of educational provision.

For more information about how to recognise dyslexia in children, dyslexia screening tests, specialist teacher and learning support staff qualifications and more general information about dyslexia, please visit the BDA website at www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

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