

## Devon SpLD (Dyslexia) Service Information

Please contact Deborah or Ann Atherton if you have any queries or concerns.

The following leaflets are available on the QE website:

- What is Dyslexia?
- Assessing for dyslexia
- Emotional Support for Dyslexic Students
- Reading at home
- Supporting Dyslexic Students in the Classroom
- How can I help my child?
- Helping with homework
- Helping your child with spelling
- Visual Stress
- Working Memory Difficulties

## Devon SpLD (Dyslexia) Service Information

For further information please visit our web page:

<http://www.qe.devon.sch.uk/school-information/partnerships/devon-dyslexia-service/>

or contact

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## Assessing for Dyslexia

Devon SpLD  
(Dyslexia)  
Service

## Assessing for Dyslexia

Understanding and identifying dyslexia is challenging. The label has been used so extensively over the past few years that it now carries many different meanings, which can be confusing. However, we believe there is a place for using the label - to help parents, teachers and students to understand that they are dealing with a **specific** learning difficulty or difference.

The government-commissioned Rose Report 'Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties'(2009) provided a definition of dyslexia:

***Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.***

The main characteristic found in all the different definitions and models of dyslexia is a weakness in reading and spelling. This is why many LEAs, including Devon, have now adopted the British Psychological Society's definition of dyslexia (1999):

***'Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent reading and /or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty'***

This definition does not identify any one cause for the problem, nor suggest a list of defining characteristics. What it focuses on is whether reading and/or spelling have failed to develop (or have done so very incompletely) and whether this problem has persisted despite appropriate interventions. In a way, the severity and persistence of the problem are important defining characteristics.

There are several contradictory theoretical positions that suggest an explanation or a cause for the literacy difficulties demonstrated by some students. As all these positions have been supported by some research evidence it does not seem useful to worry unduly about theoretical positions. Our concern is to identify the individual student's weaknesses and devise appropriate intervention or support.

It follows from the Devon definition that **there is no one test for dyslexia**. There are several screening tests on the market, but they usually claim to indicate **a likelihood of dyslexia**, not a definite diagnosis.

The Devon SpLD (Dyslexia) Service uses tests of reading accuracy and reading comprehension, spelling tests and phonological knowledge (letter-sound) tests upon which to base recommendations for schools. Further assessments may be employed (assessing phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed), to inform recommendations.

The Devon SpLD (Dyslexia) Service **cannot** provide a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. In the UK, to acquire a formal diagnosis of dyslexia, a certified assessor (Specialist Teacher or Educational Psychologist) will need to be employed to do a full diagnostic assessment. Please see the below link for further information:  
[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/how-is-dyslexia-diagnosed/dyslexia-diagnostic-assessment](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/how-is-dyslexia-diagnosed/dyslexia-diagnostic-assessment)