

Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy

Guidance on the assessment of dyslexia
and other literacy difficulties

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www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/inclusion

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Introduction

This guidance has been prepared to assist schools in developing their assessments of pupils with literacy difficulties. It has been developed in response to requests for advice on the use of standardised assessment for diagnostic purposes, target setting and programme planning.

When planning for children and young people with special educational needs, learning difficulties and disabilities, teachers need to ensure that they set suitable learning objectives through all areas of the curriculum. Pupils have an entitlement to high quality teaching and learning therefore all teachers need to have knowledge and skills in the development of literacy. 'Schools are required to make different or additional provision available (for example, equipment, resources or additional adult support, where necessary) to meet the needs of pupils with SEN, or SEN and a disability' (Education Act 1996). Under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Equality Act (2010) dyslexia is included in the range of impairments considered to be a disability.

The SEN Code of Practice specifies that schools have a duty to identify pupils' needs and make appropriate provision. The role of the SENCo is to 'take the lead in (the) assessment of the child's particular strengths and weaknesses; in planning future support for the child in discussion with colleagues; and in monitoring and subsequently reviewing the action taken'. (COP 4.16) This includes the assessment of pupils who have significant difficulties in the areas of literacy, some of whom may have dyslexia.

This guidance assists schools in carrying out detailed literacy assessments for children and young people with dyslexia and other literacy difficulties. It considers the use of National Curriculum and other curriculum-based assessments and when standardised tests may be appropriate.

The guidance on assessment supplements Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy (revised 2011) and Dyslexia: Information for Parents (2009). Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy was developed to clarify the role of schools in assessing children and young people with significant difficulties in literacy that may be classified as dyslexia.

The Assessment of Dyslexia

Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis of a staged process of assessment through teaching.

Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy, 2011 and British Psychological Society, 2005

1. Key features in defining dyslexia

- The pupil has difficulties in **reading accuracy and fluency**.
- The pupil has difficulties in **spelling accuracy**.
- Difficulties in word reading and/or spelling are one of the **priority areas of need**.
- Difficulties in **phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing** are common.
- The difficulties are **severe**. Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy uses the criterion of at least School Action.
- The difficulties are **persistent** and the pupil has received effective additional provision.
- The pupil has received **appropriate learning opportunities** through quality first teaching.

2. How to assess key features of dyslexia:

• **Assessment of reading accuracy**

At word level, high frequency word lists, such as those in Letters and Sounds, are useful for assessing accuracy. Non-word reading tests are particularly useful as they give insight into phonic knowledge and pinpoint decoding skills.

Lists of the vocabulary needed for particular subjects or personal interests may also be used.

Standardised tests of word reading provide measures of attainment in addition to diagnostic information. However, it should be noted that some reading tests are measures of text reading rather than word reading, as the pupil is able to use contextual cues, e.g. Neale Analysis of Reading Ability-II.

• **Assessment of reading fluency**

A fluent reader can read quickly and accurately. A few reading tests include measures of reading speed.

• **Assessment of spelling**

Informal assessment of spelling can be made using high frequency word lists. To supplement this information, standardised assessment using a single word spelling test should be carried out. It is also useful to assess the spelling of words that conform to common phonic patterns.

• **Reading and/or spelling difficulties are priority areas of need.**

The school needs to have considered the following areas before using the term dyslexia:

- Absence from school
- Change of school/staff
- Quality of learning and teaching
- Early development
- Family history
- Sensory impairment
- Language difficulties
- English as an additional language
- Medical conditions
- Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
- Engagement and motivation

It is recognised that some children and young people have additional difficulties that may accompany dyslexia.

• **Assessment of phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing**

Difficulties with phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing are frequently associated with dyslexia. It is also common for pupils with dyslexia/literacy difficulties to have a history of speech and language difficulties and conductive hearing problems (glue ear).

• **Measuring severity of difficulties**

The pupil would be receiving additional provision in school but continues to make slow progress.

• **Evaluating persistence**

The pupil has received effective provision in school targeting word level reading and/or spelling over at least two terms.

Provision

- Provision and progress would be monitored.
- Staff may have consulted with support services.
- Parents/carers and pupils are involved.
- **The provision of appropriate learning opportunities**

In order to use the term dyslexia, the pupil needs to have had access to:

Wave 1: Quality first teaching to promote inclusion of all children and young people in their learning. This would include ensuring that materials are accessible, age appropriate and conceptually relevant. Schools may be working towards dyslexia friendly classrooms. Staff are encouraged to use the 'Primary and Secondary Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) Teaching and supporting pupils with dyslexia' materials to help them make adjustments so that young people with dyslexic difficulties make an increased rate of progress.

Wave 3: Specific targeted approaches for individual pupils identified as requiring SEN intervention. Children and young people at Wave 3 may have particular needs related to literacy, or needs associated with other barriers to their learning.

Provision at Wave 3 may draw on specialist advice. It will involve the adjustment of learning objectives, teaching styles and additional provision in order that pupils make increased rates of progress.

Some children and young people at Wave 3 may have received Wave 2 small group provision in the past, e.g. ELS and Better Reading Partnerships. Many schools are identifying, developing and evaluating their provision through provision management.

- *The role of support services*

SENDIS

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Inclusion Service works in partnership with schools and other settings to increase their capacity to teach pupils who have SEN and/or a disability.

SENDIS aims to:

- contribute to raising achievement in order to narrow the gap for children and young people with SEN.
- develop the knowledge, skills and expertise of practitioners and work collaboratively with other divisions and agencies.
- promote early intervention.
- involve parents/carers.

The Educational Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists work through a consultation framework to:

- support schools to meet children and young people's complex needs.
- evaluate interventions and projects.
- work closely with parents/carers.

An educational psychologist will always be involved if the Local Authority is making a statutory assessment of a pupil's special educational needs.

• Parental involvement

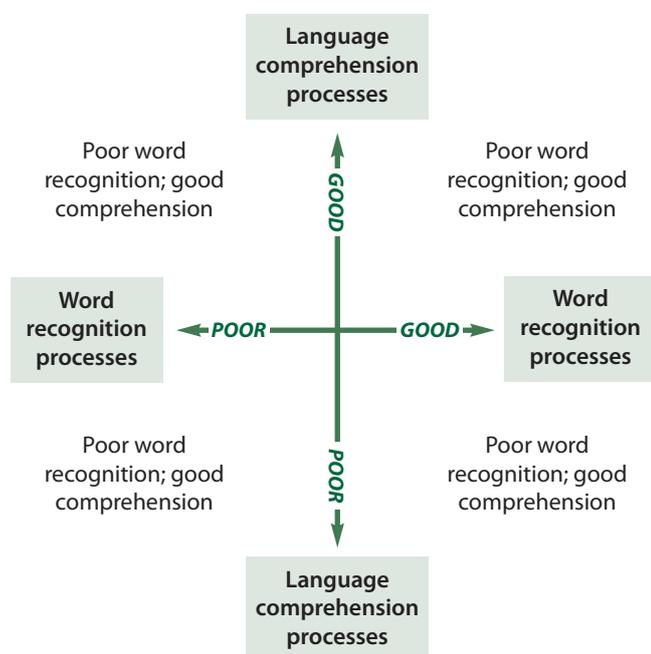
Parents/carers should be involved as soon as concerns are raised about progress in literacy. The information they provide can be valuable in identifying their child's needs and possible ways forward. Parents/carers need to be aware of the actions school is taking and their views should be taken into account. It is acknowledged that home support is invaluable. Schools should give parents/carers the leaflet 'Dyslexia: Information for Parents' available from the Educational Psychology Service.

• Pupil involvement

The pupil should be involved in setting, monitoring and evaluating their learning targets. During the assessment process, they may share insights into what helps them to learn. Some useful guidance on involving children and young people can be found in the Enabling Pupil Participation section of the Milton Keynes SEN Handbook.

3. The Assessment of other Literacy Difficulties

The definition adopted in this policy proposes that dyslexia primarily involves difficulty with reading and/or spelling at word level. However, reading is a complex process that involves both word level recognition and language comprehension. This is illustrated in the diagram of the Simple View of Reading (Rose, 2006). Some children and young people experience difficulties in language comprehension and other areas that affect their progress in literacy.



- **Comprehension**

Reading comprehension can only be assessed at text level. Informal assessment can be carried out using a range of reading books, curriculum texts, magazines, etc. taking into account a pupil's interests. Some standardised text-reading tests include miscue analysis, which provides useful information about the particular strategies being used. These can provide ideas for programme planning.

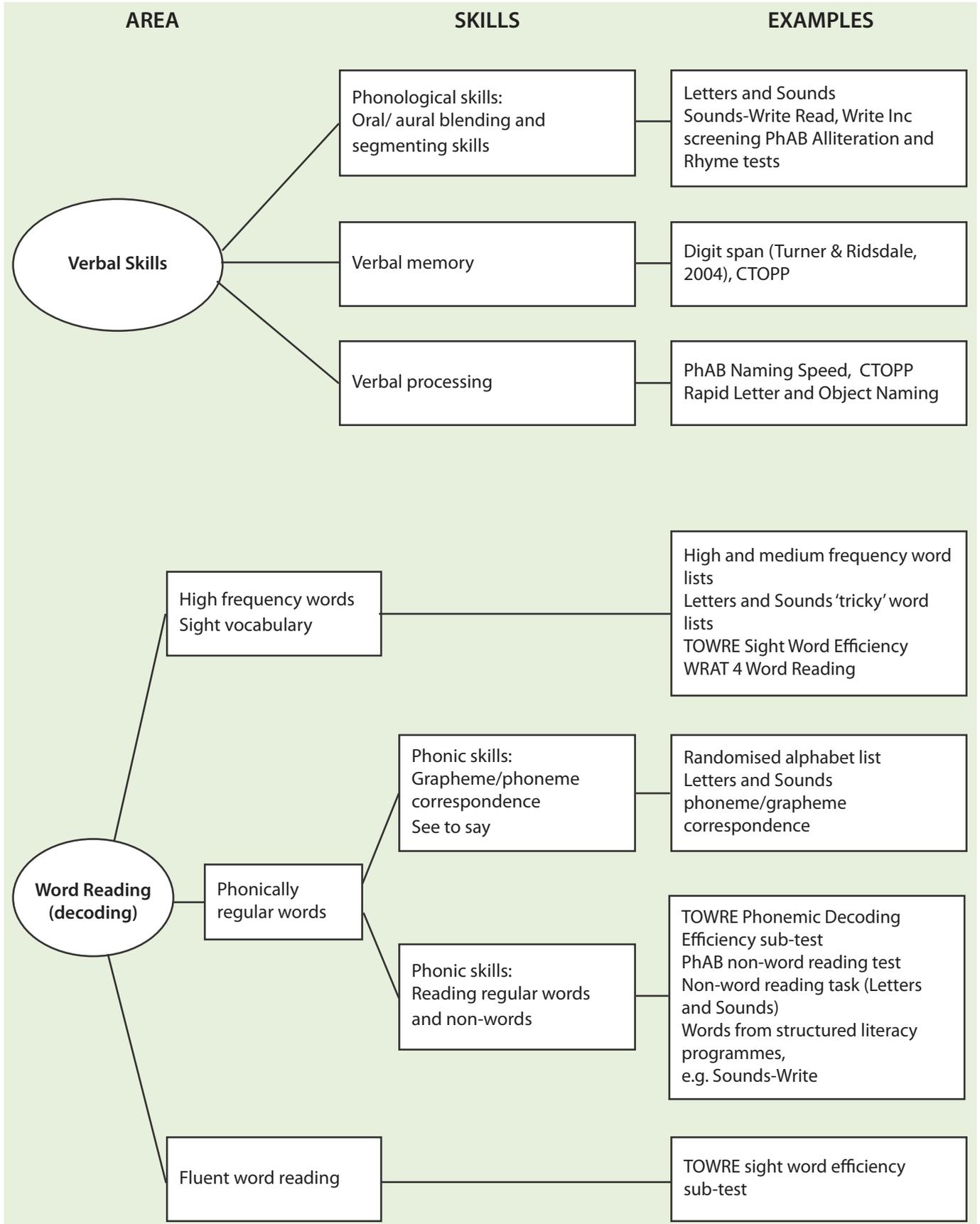
Many children and young people who have problems in reading comprehension have difficulties in language development. Advice is available to schools from support services including the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

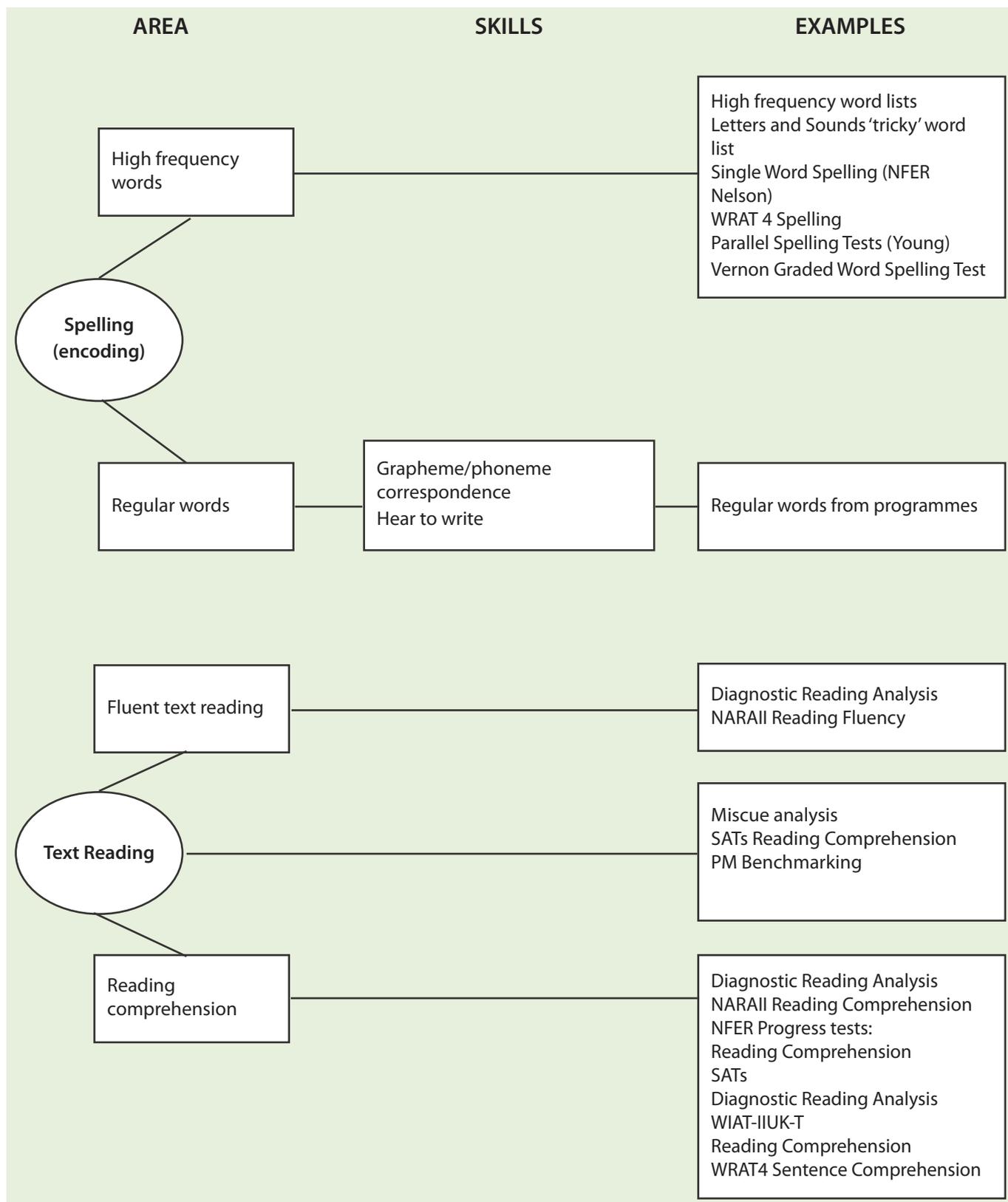
- **Handwriting:**

Some pupils with literacy difficulties have problems in developing handwriting skills. Guidance is given in the *Guidelines for supporting school-aged children with co-ordination difficulties* in the MK SEN Handbook. Further advice can be obtained from SENDIS.

Handwriting speed needs to be assessed for special arrangements for GCSEs and in some circumstances for SATs.

APPENDIX 1 Assessing Reading and Spelling





APPENDIX 2 Resources

Title	Date	Authors	Publisher	Age Range
The Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP)	1999	Wagner, R., Torgesen, J. and Rashotte, C.	Pearson	5 - 24 years
Diagnostic Reading Analysis	2004	Crumpler, M. & McCarty, C.	Hodder & Stoughton	7 - 16 years
Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, 2nd revised British edition (NARAI)	1989	Neale, M. D.	NFER-Nelson http://www.nfer-nelson.co.uk/catalogue	6 - 12 years 11 months
Parallel Spelling Tests		D. Young	Hodder Education	6.5 - 12 years 11 months
Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB)	1997	Fredrickson, N, Frith, V. and Reason, R.	NFER-Nelson	6 - 14 years
PM Benchmarking	2008	Nelley, E. & Smith, A.	Thomson & Nelson	Kit 1 KS1 & 2
Single Word Spelling	2000	Sacre, L and Masterson, J	NFER-Nelson	5 - 15 years 2 months
Sounds-Write	2004	Case, S; Philpot, D and Walker, J	<i>Available locally following training</i>	Most appropriate for 5 - 11 years
Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)	1999	Torgesen, J K; Wagner, R K and Rashotte, C A	Pro-Ed (<i>available in the UK from Harcourt Assessment</i>)	6 - 24 years 11 months
Vernon Graded Word Spelling Test	1997	Vernon, P E	Hodder and Stoughton	6 - 18 years
Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-IIUK-T)	2006	Rust, J. & Golombok, S.	Pearson	4 - 85 years
Wide Range Achievement Test IV (WRAT 4) Reading, Spelling and Arithmetic	2006	Wilkinson, G. S. & Robertson, G. J.	<i>Wide Range Inc (available in the UK from Harcourt Assessment)</i>	5 - 18 years

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- British Psychological Society Division of Educational and Child Psychology (1999) *Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment* Report by the Working Party, British Psychological Society, Leicester
- Disability Discrimination Act* (2005) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/13/pdfs/ukpga_20050013_en.pdf
- DCSF (2007) *Early Literacy Support (ELS): materials for teachers working in partnership with teaching assistants*, ref. DCSF-00767-2007
- DCSF (2007) *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics*, ref. DFES-00281-2007
- DCSF (2009) *Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties*, An independent report from Sir Jim Rose to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, ref. DCSF-00659-2009
- DfE (2011) *'Primary and Secondary Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) Teaching and supporting pupils with dyslexia'*
- DES (2007) *Primary National Strategy: Y3 Literacy Support* ref 00042-2007 FLR-EN
- DfEE (2001) *Key Stage 3 National Strategy - Literacy Progress Units*, ref 0477/2001
- DfES (2006) *The Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading*
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-0201-2006>
- DfES (2002) *The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies: Including all Children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson*, ref DfES 0465/2002
- DfES (2002) The National Literacy Strategy - *Further Literacy Support (FLS) programme*: ref 0359 /2002
- DfES (2002) *SEN Code of Practice* ref. DfES/581/2001
- Dyslexia: Information for Parents* (2009) Milton Keynes Council
- The Equality Act* (2010), p.4, www.odi.gov.uk/equalityact
- Milton Keynes Dyslexia Policy (2011) Milton Keynes Council
- Special Educational Needs Handbook* (2006) Milton Keynes Council

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