

## **Personal Statement**

Nearly 15 years ago, when I was an early-teacher, I got cross. I got cross with the lack of support for dyslexia or literacy difficulties in school. I decided that I needed to do something about it. Having been that child that felt ‘thick’ in school, with dyslexia undiagnosed until 6<sup>th</sup> form, I didn’t want others to have that same experience as me. The more I dug into it, the more I found that people with PhDs were on government papers about literacy or SEND, and that SENDCos were gatekeepers to support in school. I realised I needed to learn about SEND policy and dyslexia.

So, my journey with raising awareness about dyslexia started there.

Since working in Barnsley as an NQT, I have worked as a SENDCo and a Specialist Assessor so that I understand and can support dyslexic individuals and their families. Alongside teaching/assessing, I am an active researcher; I regularly contribute to academic journals, conferences, and wider policy debate. I have presented my research at national and international conferences, and consulted with the Office for Science and Technology to make policy and practice recommendations to government. I am currently working with Wiltshire Local Authority evaluating their county-wide Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark Project.

I work with the BDA at various levels alongside my professional and academic activities. Locally, I have been on the committee for the Wiltshire Dyslexia Association since 2014 and Chair since 2018. We run events in Wiltshire in collaboration with other stakeholders and provide advice to members. Since 2015, I have served on the Local Association Board representing the South-West, addressing some complex issues during meetings to ensure that Local Associations are appropriately supported within the wider structure of the BDA. I contribute to significant projects within the BDA at National Level: a collaboration with The BDA and John Hicks led to me speaking at the April 2019 APPG for Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties, and I have written for several forthcoming BDA publications. I regularly write for education-related organisations, provide CPD for colleagues and support young people with dyslexia.

My passion is to support dyslexic people who may not have a voice, both individually and organisationally. I believe that this passion would be well-directed in the role of Trustee of the British Dyslexia Association; I am enthusiastic, extremely reliable and enjoy working to promote inclusion and dyslexia-friendly practice. I am confident working and engaging with individuals and organisations at all levels to drive positive change, and help others understand people with dyslexia as individuals. I would relish the opportunity to work with Nick Posford and the Board in developing a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century strategy to drive the BDA forwards with vigour and integrity.