

Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark

Removing Barriers. Transforming
Outcomes. Changing lives.



The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) - Who we are

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) is the voice of dyslexic people. Formed in 1972 to empower dyslexic people to reach their full potential in education, and in life.

Our Vision

A world where people with dyslexia can flourish.

Our Mission

To change society by removing barriers so that everyone with dyslexia can reach their full potential in education, in employment and in life.

What we do

We raise awareness

We inform and educate to encourage inclusion and inspire change.

We promote understanding

We base our expertise on evidence and research, setting professional standards and influencing policy.

We empower people

As the leading national dyslexia charity, we speak out on behalf of the dyslexia community to champion a dyslexia-friendly society.

Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM)



- Schools review, develop and embed their dyslexia provision
- External sign of approval widely recognised in the UK and internationally

The current situation



1,000,000+
School children in
the UK have dyslexia



There are
approximately
three learners with
dyslexia in every
typical class



Undiagnosed and unsupported dyslexia

3.5x

more likely that a child with dyslexia will be temporarily or permanently be excluded from school.



80%

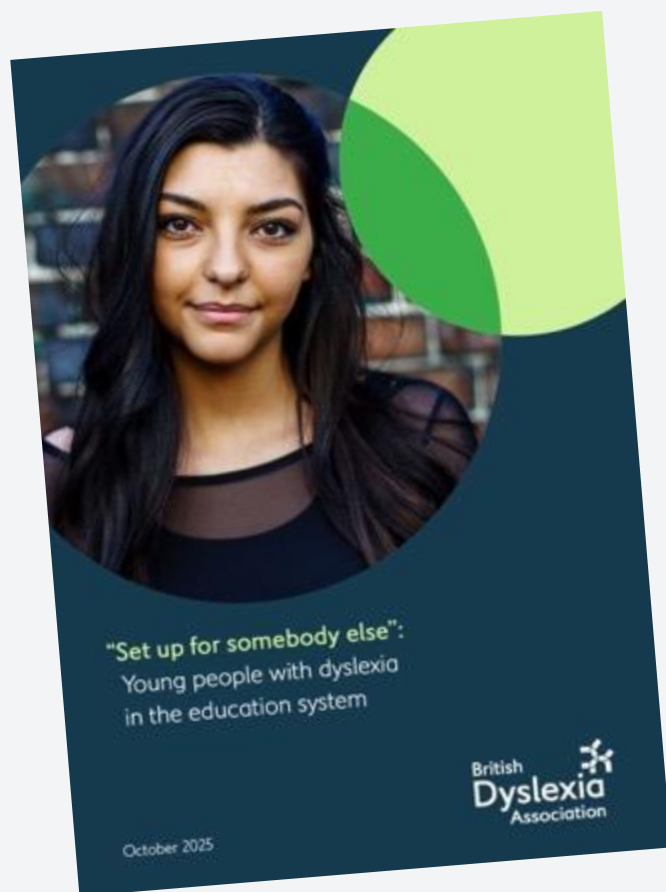
of dyslexic pupils leave school without a diagnosis leading to long-term consequences.



Dyslexic young people are over-represented in the youth justice system.
Up to 50% of prisoners show signs of dyslexia.



'Set up for somebody else' – Young people in the education system



59% of young people say they have been bullied or teased



70% of dyslexic young people feel bad about themselves



78% say that people assume they are not clever



65% of young people hide their dyslexia



'If teachers and classmates could understand how much effort it takes for me to do something simple like read out loud or write a paragraph, maybe they'd see that I'm not lazy, I'm actually really strong for not giving up.'

Young person with dyslexia, aged 14

Who Gets Diagnosed? Who gets Supported?

90% vs 43%

Children in high-income households are far more likely to receive a dyslexia diagnosis.

30% vs 86%

Support in school is significantly unequal, with **only 30%** of lower income learners reporting good support compared to **86%** in high-income households.

These disparities highlight a **major inequality in access to identification and effective dyslexia support.**

The challenge facing dyslexic learners and their families

- **No mandatory dyslexia training for teachers** despite dyslexia being the most common SpLD
- **Diagnosis not covered by the NHS** – families pay around **£700 privately**
- **80% of dyslexic children leave school undiagnosed**
- **Parents and carers shoulder the cost**, spending around **£1,000 more per dyslexic child**
- **High reliance on private tutors**, with 32,000+ users of BDA tutor listings in 2025
- **95% of parents lack confidence** to support their dyslexic child
- **Dyslexia is hereditary**, making home support harder for some families
- **Deep inequality in support**, with children from low-income households far less likely to receive effective provision

What can Educators do?

The Dyslexia
Friendly Quality
Mark.



British
Dyslexia
Association

Why education needs to be dyslexia-friendly

A dyslexia-friendly approach benefits learners, families, educational settings, and society as a whole by creating equitable, effective, and sustainable practice.

- **Builds setting-wide dyslexia expertise**, reducing reliance on private diagnosis and tuition
- **Improves early identification**, preventing learners from being missed or misunderstood
- **Supports work to narrow attainment gaps**, including the 30-percentage-point GCSE gap for dyslexic learners
- **Promotes equitable provision**, reducing disparities between low- and high-income families
- **Creates consistent, confident practice**, so families no longer have to “fight the system” for support
- **Supports families as well as learners**, strengthening confidence, wellbeing, and inclusion, and reducing the emotional impact of dyslexia (Guerra et al., 2025)
- **Improves long-term outcomes**, reducing exclusion, disengagement, and links to youth justice where around 50% of prisoners show signs of dyslexia
- **Ensures dyslexic learners can thrive** academically, emotionally, and socially

The Purpose of the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM)



Provides a framework to enable the embedding of whole-school dyslexia-friendly practice so it becomes part of the culture, led strategically by senior leaders and aligned with inclusive policies and processes.



Drive continuous improvement through ongoing audits, staff development, and monitoring of impact to ensure practice remains effective, consistent, and responsive.



Improve outcomes and classroom support by equipping teachers with the skills, confidence, and strategies to meet the needs of learners with literacy difficulties or dyslexia.



Strengthen engagement and collaboration by ensuring learners feel supported and confident, and by actively involving parents and carers through clear communication and increased understanding of dyslexia.

DFQM Framework – 4 Focus Areas



Focus Area 1 Leadership and Management



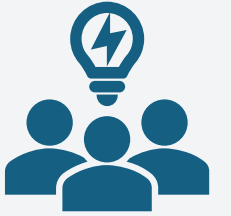
Focus Area 2 Quality of Learning



Focus Area 3 Climate for Learning



Focus Area 4 Effective Communication



Focus Area 1 Leadership and Management



Settings use a dyslexia-focused self-audit to shape its Strategic Development Plan, ensuring dyslexia support is prioritised.



Staff understand and follow the SEND Code of Practice, the SEND/Inclusion Policy, and the Equality Act. Policies ensure accessibility and inclusion for learners with dyslexia, removing barriers so they reach their full potential.



SEND governor maintains a clear and informed understanding of the setting's progress in developing inclusive, dyslexia-friendly practice.



Focus Area 2 Quality of Learning



Staff expertise is strengthened through ongoing dyslexia-focused CPD, including setting-wide awareness and induction, ensuring consistent, informed practice.



Collaboration with specialist professionals is encouraged ensuring learners benefit from shared expertise and tailored interventions.



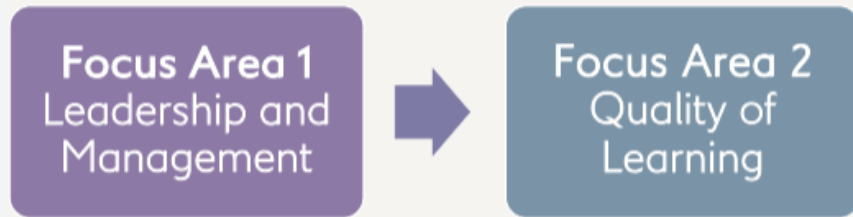
Clearly defined processes guide identification, assessment, and intervention, with transparent pathways, timely support, and measurable outcomes.



Classroom practice is consistently dyslexia-friendly, following BDA teaching and learning space principles, using multi-sensory teaching, reducing cognitive load and supporting metacognition.



Leadership sets the culture: Learning brings it to life



What this looks like in practice:

- **Shared ownership is secured.** All stakeholders understand the need and the impact.
- Policies and processes drive inclusive practice; **it's not optional provision.**
- **Responsive teaching**, consistent practice, shared outcomes for every learner.
- **Barriers are anticipated** and removed through flexible, inclusive lesson design.
- **Learners actively identify strategies** that support their learning and access the curriculum.

Focus Area 3 Climate for Learning



Learners are supported to understand their strengths and identify the strategies that help them learn best, with personalised goals and emotional wellbeing support included.



Promotion of positive attitudes towards dyslexia and SEND, celebrating diversity, recognising achievements and building self-esteem.



A culture of inclusion is strengthened through accessible resources and opportunities that build resilience and a growth mindset.

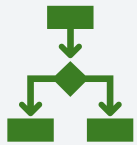


Transitions are carefully managed, ensuring learners feel confident and supported when moving between year groups or phases, contributing to a positive, low-stress learning environment.

Focus Area 4 Effective Communication



Communication with parents and carers is clear, accessible, and dyslexia-friendly. Practical advice is shared to support families.



The setting builds strong partnerships with families, ensuring they understand SEND processes and are involved in decision making.



Feedback from all stakeholders is valued and used to improve provision, gathering learner, parent, carer, and staff voices to guide ongoing development.

Shared ownership shapes the climate: Inclusive access and celebration bring success to life

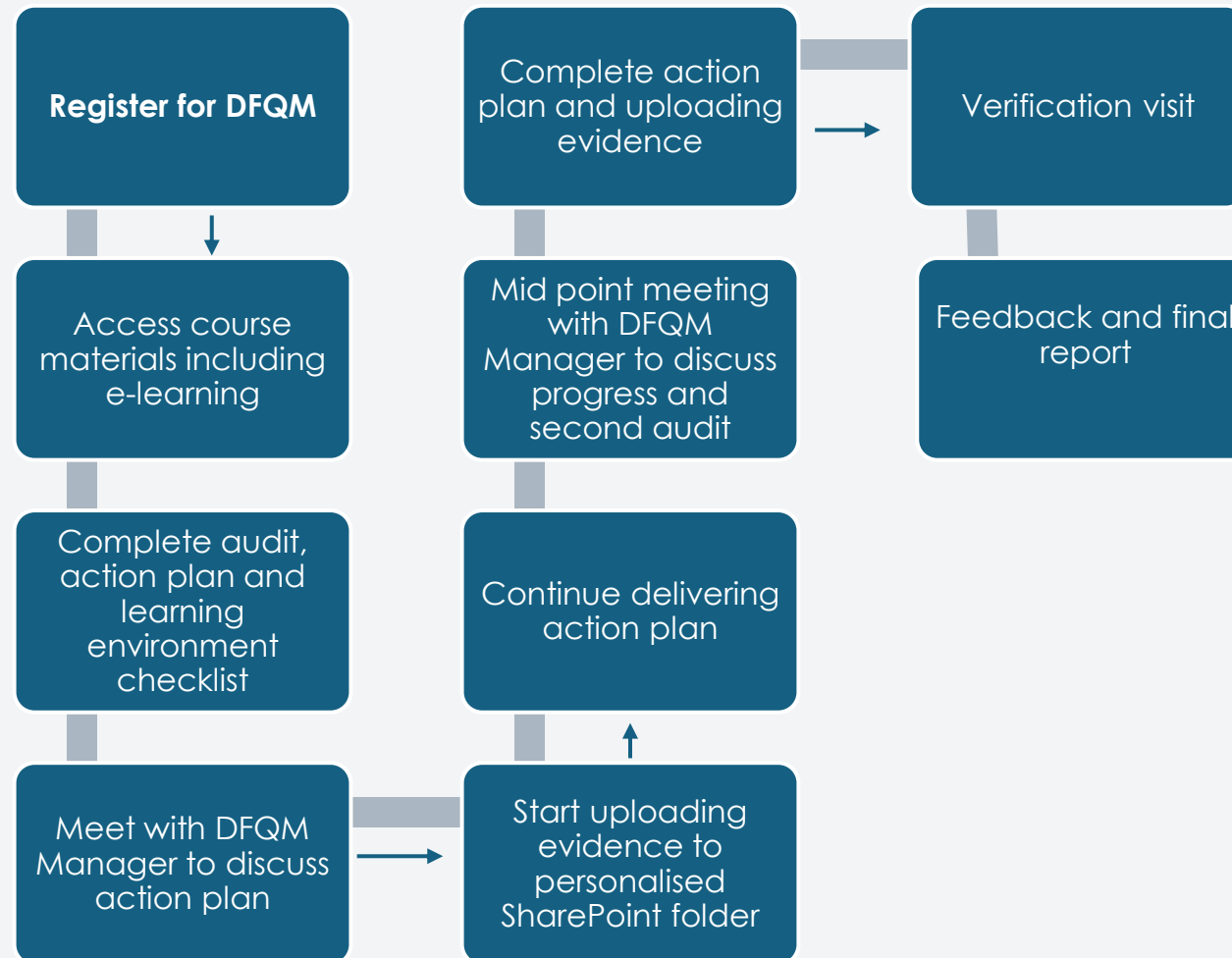


What this looks like in practice:

- **Learners and families can clearly articulate strengths, needs, and strategies**, and these are referenced consistently in lessons and all communications.
- **Targets are co-produced with learners**, reviewed regularly, are shared and are made accessible.
- **Learners confidently ask for support, explain what helps them learn, and persist through challenge**, supported by consistent adult modelling.
- **Effort and progress are recognised publicly and privately**, with academic and non-academic success celebrated across classrooms, communications, and school life.



How does the process work?





Verification : Face-to-Face

1.

- Takes place less than a year after registration, once all the evidence has been gathered
- **Option to verify sooner if ready**

2.

- Learning environment walk

3.

- 2x 20-minute observation of lessons
- 2x 10-15-minute observation of interventions

4.

- Chat with a group of learners
- View completed work

5.

- Discussions with Headteacher/Principal, SENCo/member of staff responsible for Inclusion, teachers/tutors, TA's/ LSO's, individual responsible for Governance, where applicable parents/carers

6.

- Verbal feedback. Confirmation of result. **Report sent up to 2 weeks after verification visit**

Verification and Re-verification



Verification report confirms outcome. Suggestions given to further enhance dyslexia friendly practice.



Receive a certificate and quality mark 'badge' to display on correspondence, websites and promotional materials.



Award is valid for 3 years.



After 3 years the setting is invited to apply for re-verification.



Re-verification is a document-based exercise – no visit is required.

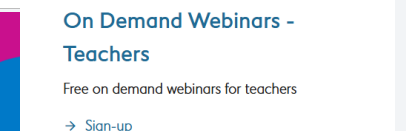
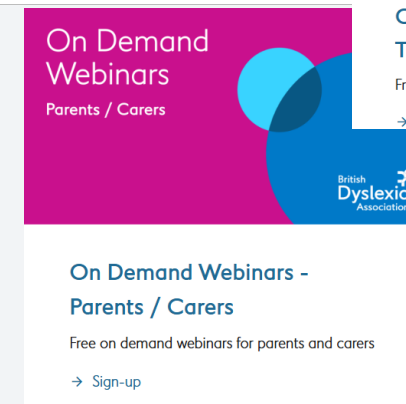
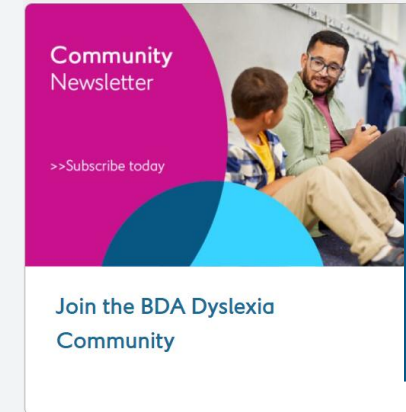
Further free downloadable resources and support



- Access Resources and free community information and helpline



- Helpline offers free, confidential, information and signposting. **Call: 0333 405 4567**





Contact Us

Email QualityMarkEd@bdadyslexia.org.uk

We welcome interest from all schools, colleges and other education provision across the UK.

References

- **British Dyslexia Association (n.d.)** *Addressing the dyslexia GCSE divide: urgent call for educational reform.* Available at: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/news/addressing-the-dyslexia-gcse-divide-urgent-call-for-educational-reform>
- **British Dyslexia Association (n.d.)** *'Set up for somebody else'.* Available at: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/news/set-up-for-somebody-else>
- **Guerra, G.C., Positano, M.T., Sperati, A., Passaquindici, I., Logrieco, M.G., Lionetti, F., Spinelli, M. and Fasolo, M. (2025)** *Supporting parents of children with learning disorders: A systematic review of intervention strategies.* **Frontiers in Psychology**, 16, 1536894. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1536894>



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