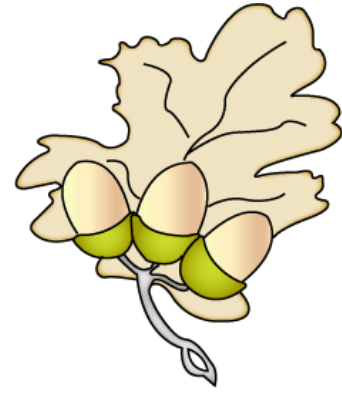


Comment

June 2011



Green Paper: Support and Aspiration : SEN and Disability

The Green Paper **Support and Aspiration: a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability** has been published by the Department for Education. It is a consultation on proposals for radical change in the way schools in England and Wales provide for children who need extra support with learning.

Responses to this Green Paper must be sent to the Department for Education by June 30th. See below for details.

We believe that the proposals will improve life for families who are looking after a child with the most severe physical and educational difficulties, needing help from education, health and possibly social services.

However, we are seriously concerned that many children with specific learning difficulties like **dyslexia** will be **less well supported** under the new proposals.

Our concerns include:

- This paper says that far too many children are currently identified as having Special Educational Needs, especially at the 'school based stages' which cover most children with dyslexia. We know that many children with dyslexia are not identified at school, or their needs are only picked up after years of struggle and failure. We think it will become even harder to get the help they need.
- This paper suggests that most children with Special Educational Needs will be identified in the Early Years, before they start school. It is difficult to make a firm diagnosis of dyslexia in such young children. We believe that dyslexic children will slip through the net and not get the support they need.
- This paper plans to improve teacher training so that all children get 'good class teaching', which it claims will meet most needs. We are all in favour of good class teaching, but we believe that many dyslexic children need a bit more: individual, specialist help at the right time to help them to overcome barriers. We see no plans to make that happen.
- This paper states that schools will no longer be recommended to write Individual Education Plans for children identified with Special Educational Needs. We believe that the IEP is often the only way parents can get a clearly documented

agreement with the school about the support their child is receiving and a structure for reporting on progress.

- This paper promises a personal budget for families of children with statements, but that will apply to very few children whose main difficulty is dyslexia.
- We believe that children with dyslexia are in danger of being seen as 'low attainers' rather than children with a specific difficulty with some parts of learning, but possibly excellent abilities in other areas.

Government ministers are telling us how good this bill will be, especially for children with multiple disabilities, but we fear it will be **bad** for most children with dyslexia.

What Next?

After the consultation period, DfE will consider all the comments that have been made, and the policies required by the Government. They will draft a White Paper which will be the basis of new legislation to be put to Parliament.

The time to state a view is **now**, before June 30th.

Have your say!

You can download the whole Green Paper (or an easy-read version) and the consultation feedback form from <http://www.education.gov.uk>, or link to <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/a0075339/sengreenpaper>

There are a lot of questions in the feedback form, but there is no need to answer all of them.

You could join the interactive online feedback forum.

You could write to your MP about your concerns.

If you would like to know more about our current activities, please look at our website, **www.dyslexia.uk.net** or call the Helpline on **0115 924 6888** (10.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday).