

Key Stages 1 and 2 Checklist

Signs which may suggest Specific Learning Difficulties

Do any of your pupils struggle with spelling, writing, reading or mathematics? Do they not progress as quickly as their classmates - or worse, not seem to progress at all? There are obvious inconsistencies in these individuals, many of them exhibiting abilities alongside weaknesses.

You have been teaching well and hope that, like other pupils in your class, this child will improve their basic skills over time but you see little or no change.

How can you tell if they might have a Specific Learning Difficulty? Look out for the following signs, but remember not all children have the same cluster of difficulties and abilities. Watch out for strengths in areas of creativity and/or highly developed verbal skills.

General

- Speed of processing: spoken and/or written language slow
- Poor concentration
- Has difficulty following instructions
- Forgetful of words
- Has difficulty remembering anything in a sequential order, e.g. tables, days of the week, the alphabet

Written Work

- Has a poor standard of written work compared with oral ability
- Produces messy work with many crossings out
- Is persistently confused by letters which look similar, particularly *b/d, p/g, p/q, n/u, m/w*
- Has poor handwriting, possibly with 'reversals' and badly formed letters
- Spells a word several different ways in one piece of writing, e.g. *wipe, wype, wiep, wipe*
- Makes anagrams of words e.g. *tired* for *tried*, *breaded* for *bearded*
- Produces badly set-out written work, doesn't stay close to the margin
- Has poor pencil grip
- Produces phonetic and bizarre spelling: not age/ability appropriate
- Uses unusual sequencing of letters or words

Reading

- Makes poor reading progress
- Finds it difficult to blend letters together
- Has difficulty in establishing syllable division or knowing the beginnings and endings of words
- No expression in reading
- Comprehension poor
- Hesitant and laboured in reading, especially when reading aloud
- Misses out words when reading, or adds extra words
- Fails to recognise familiar words
- Loses the point of a story being read or written
- Has difficulty in picking out the most important points from a passage

Mathematics

- Lacks a natural feel for numbers
- Can learn procedures mechanically but does so with little understanding
- Difficulties with estimation
- Caught in 1:1 "counting trap"
- Shows confusion with number order: e.g. units, tens, hundreds
- Is confused by symbols such as + and x signs
- Has difficulty remembering anything in a sequential order: e.g. times tables, days of the week, the alphabet
- Difficulty learning and applying key number facts: e.g. number bonds to 10
- May reverse numbers

Time

- Has difficulty in learning to tell the time
- Shows poor time-keeping and general awareness
- Has poor personal organisation
- Has difficulty remembering what day of the week it is: e.g. birth date, seasons of the year, months of the year

Skills

- Has poor motor skills, leading to weaknesses in speed, control and accuracy of the pencil
- Has a limited understanding of non-verbal communication
- Is confused by the differences between left and right, up and down, east and west
- Has indeterminate hand preference
- Performs unevenly from day to day

Behaviour

- Employs work avoidance tactics, such as sharpening pencils and looking for books
- Seems to 'dream', does not seem to listen
- Is easily distracted
- Is the class clown or is disruptive or withdrawn (these are often cries for help)
- Is excessively tired due to amount of concentration and effort required