

Frequently Asked Questions

Teachers and parents often ask the following questions, or similar ones along the same theme:

Teachers

Q. One of our children has some specific difficulties, but we don't believe it to be dyslexia. The child is quite slow, and doesn't read well, but the class teacher who is very experienced thinks the child is just not very bright. Parents have recently come to the school, and said they are taking the child for private assessment. I'm not sure that the school should accept this.

A. On occasions parents may approach the school, and wish an assessment to be carried out. If school staff are aware of difficulties then these should previously have been discussed with parents (and the child if at an age and stage when s/he can understand). The child should have been put onto a **staged (or stepped) process of intervention**.

Paperwork should be in place, and this can be discussed with parents. If parents are not happy with the school's process of assessment and planning this may result in them having their child assessed privately. This should not be necessary, and parents do have a right to insist on a full assessment of their child's needs within the school and local authority system, and the school must comply if this is the case.

On occasions, parents may have their child assessed without prior discussion in school. Some schools feel they should not accept an assessment that they have not agreed to. This is unhelpful, and could result in parents (and the child) feeling alienated, additional workload being incurred by the school and local authority and needless stress on all sides. In reality, if the child has been assessed by an appropriately qualified individual, then school staff should accept the findings of the assessment and these should be considered alongside any assessment that has already been gathered. The school should be prepared to work with parents and the child in the circumstances, thus ensuring the learners' needs are met.

Parents

Q. *I have been working closely with the school, and teachers are helpful, but when I ask for an assessment they seem to keep putting me off. I feel I need to know whether the difficulties my child is having are due to dyslexia or not. I also feel my child needs to know. Should I arrange for a private assessment?*

A. It is important to establish whether your child has dyslexia but you shouldn't have to spend a lot of money on a private assessment. The school should have recommended that your child goes through a staged process of assessment and intervention. A staged approach requires that a child's needs are monitored over time, and that may be why you feel the school are putting you off. Parents should be included in the staged process so you should talk to the school to find out the stage (or step) your child is at. You'll find explanation of the Staged Process of intervention [here](#).

If you are still not happy, then you have the right to request that your child's needs are assessed, and you should expect that to be done within a reasonable period of time. However, this can be done within the school system, and shouldn't involve taking your child out of school, or paying for it privately if your child is in a local authority school.

If your child has already undergone a private assessment that has been carried out by an appropriately qualified individual, then school staff should accept the findings of the assessment, and these should be considered alongside any assessment information that has already been gathered.