

Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)



Overview

West Berkshire has two Language and Literacy Resource Bases (LALs) that provide additional support and provision for pupils attending mainstream schools. These pupils will have Specific Learning Difficulties (dyslexia/literacy) as their primary need. The provision is designed to allow pupils to make progress in reading and spelling as well as enhance their self-esteem and confidence. Each resource provides specialist teaching for one two-hour session a week, starting in September and finishing in June. It is for pupils in Year 5, each resource takes 24 pupils.

The pupils who will be seen as potential candidates for LAL will be those who have not made progress in acquiring literacy skills despite appropriate, targeted, and sustained provision within their school. Applications for a LAL place must be submitted by the pupil's school following discussion with the Cognition and Learning Team (CALT), the pupil, and their parents/carers during Year 4.

The LAL panel meets annually in the summer term to allocate placements for the following year. Schools will be notified of the closing date for applications for LAL, the date of the panel, and whether or not the pupil has been offered a place.

Eligibility Criteria

The admission criteria for LAL is based on the Rose Definition (2009) for Dyslexia:

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.

Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.

Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor coordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

Pupils will be considered at panel if they meet the following criteria:

1. *Difficulties with **fluent and accurate word reading and spelling** - a standard score of 84 or less in a standardised reading test and will also usually have difficulty with spelling.*
2. *Difficulties in **phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed** – below average standard scores in tests of phonological processing and working memory.*
3. *Is likely to **respond to a structured, cumulative, multisensory intervention.***
4. ***Most likely have SpLD** as their primary need.*
5. *Have a **level of ability within the range expected in a mainstream school.***



Frequently Asked Questions

Where are the LALs?

West Berkshire has two Language and Literacy Resource Bases (LALs) which are based at The Winchcombe School and Theale C of E Primary School.

What support is provided?

Pupils attending the LAL receive a teaching programme that follows a structured, cumulative, multisensory approach with opportunities for overlearning. This is considered to be the best practice in improving dyslexia/literacy difficulties. They attend LAL for one two-hour session per week.

What qualifications/experience do staff in the provision have?

There is one Teacher in Charge of each resource and they have Qualified Teacher Status and a Post Graduate qualification in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia).

What training and support are offered to mainstream staff?

The Teacher in Charge provides training to the teachers and Teaching Assistants of those pupils attending LAL. The training takes place in September when school staff visit the LAL (before the teaching sessions begin). This enables them to support the pupil with ongoing reinforcement and overlearning in their school.

Are parents/carers charged for the provision?

There is no charge, the provision is funded by the local authority.

How are places allocated?

Applications to the LAL Panel are made by the pupil's school. The panel meets in the summer term of each school year to decide which pupils will have a place for the following year. The Panel is usually made up of:

- The Teachers in Charge of the LALs
- The Cognition and Learning Team
- The Learning Support Services Manager

Pupils who meet the criteria cannot be guaranteed a LAL place; decisions will be made by the panel based on need. It is the responsibility of the referring school to inform the parents whether or not their pupil has been offered a place at LAL.

What transition process do you have?

Before the teaching sessions start, the LAL Teacher will visit the pupil in their school then the parent(s) and pupil are invited to attend a group information session in the LAL classroom. After the teaching sessions finish, a report is provided by the LAL Teacher, which includes ongoing targets for post-LAL support.

What are the transport arrangements?

Pupils are transported to and from their school to the LAL by taxi. The taxi companies used are organised and vetted by West Berkshire's Transport Services Team. All drivers have full DBS checks and mandatory Safeguarding and Disability Awareness training.

How long is a LAL session and what is the teacher-to-pupil ratio?

One LAL session last two hours and takes place once a week. There are three pupils in each LAL group. Pupils will attend either during the morning or afternoon and will attend on the same day and time each week (during term time).

How are the pupils grouped in the LAL?

Pupils from the same school may be in the same teaching group. However, a group may consist of pupils from three different schools, the pupils soon get to know each other and feel comfortable.

What support can parents/carers provide at home?

Specific information will be provided at the Information Sessions held in September to enable parents/carers to support their child at home.

When do the teaching sessions start and finish?

LAL begins in September of Year 5 and continues through the academic year until the first week of June.

How will progress be assessed?

Pupils will be assessed in reading and spelling skills before, during, and at the end of their attendance at LAL to measure their progress in literacy skills.

What happens after LAL?

Schools are advised on how to continue to support the pupil during year 6 so that they can continue to make progress.