

DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF BEXLEY BROMLEY GREENWICH & LEWISHAM



TRUSTEES' REPORT 1st JANUARY - 31st DECEMBER 2007



“I would like to say how much I really appreciate what you did for me, helping sort out the school, and getting me into college and setting me in the right direction. I doubt very much that I would be in the same situation I am in now without all the support you gave my parents and me”

Trustee's Annual Report for period 1st January 2007 to 31st December 2007

Charity Name: Dyslexia Association of Bexley Bromley Greenwich & Lewisham

Charity Registration No: 1114382

Company Registration No: 5725573

Registered Office: Community House, South Street, Bromley, Kent. BR1 1RH

Telephone Nos: 020-8315 2526 (admin) 07000 50 50 55 (helpline)

Trustees (Appointment by members at the Annual General Meeting)

Mr Trevor Hobbs (Chair)

Mr Charles Yates (Company Secretary & Treasurer)

Mrs Lindy Springett (Vice Chair & Correspondence Secretary)

Mrs Elizabeth Carabine-Khoulfy

Mrs Margaret Cooper

Mr Michael E. Corrigan (Adult Group Leader)

Mrs Catrin Cox

Miss Samantha Fletcher

Mrs Linda Harvey

Mrs Margaret Hatzidakis

Mrs Fiona Lewington

Mr Malcolm Parker

Amanda Sutton

Observers on Management Committee (Non-voting):

Mr Peter Stanton

Mrs Anne Burger (Minutes Secretary)

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated in 2006 and registered as a charity in 2006. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Objects of the Charity

The Objects of the Charity are to help children and adults to overcome the problems of dyslexia and associated learning difficulties by such means as the Charity shall decide and will, whether directly or indirectly, promote those ends: provided that any activity carried on shall be charitable.

Bankers

Lloyds TSB, 9 Market Square Branch, Bromley, Kent BR1 1ND

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Report

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees:

Signature:

Full name: *Trevor Edric Hobbs*

Position: *Chair
Secretary*

Date: 4th June 2008

Signature:

Full name: *Linden Elizabeth Springett*

Position: *Vice Chair/Correspondence*

Date: 4th June 2008

DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF BEXLEY BROMLEY GREENWICH & LEWISHAM

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Our mission is:

To help dyslexic people of all ages by providing information and support

It has now become clear that our new name has made it much easier for both the Local Authorities and the general public to instantly recognise who we are and which areas we cover. We still do receive enquires from across Kent and London, and where possible we give advice and direct callers to their nearest association.

Our two main areas of work have been:

- ❖ Direct Services to our Membership and the General Public
- ❖ Changing policy and Promoting Best Practice across the whole dyslexia community

We have performed well during the year, as our feedback shows:

“My appreciation and gratitude for all the help and support that you have so kindly and selflessly given to us. I have had such a long and frustrating battle in trying to gain some help and support for my son.”
Mother of 15 year old boy

“I do wish you continued success with the Association, which provides such a tremendous service for dyslexic students and their parents”
Retiring teacher

Our major achievements for this period have been:

Direct Services to our Membership and the General Public

- A well-run Drop-In/Resource Centre, staffed by volunteers
- A busy and informative helpline run by volunteers, providing support for parents, dyslexic people, teachers, medical professionals, employers, probation support and other voluntary and statutory agencies etc.
- Successful outcomes to Befriending/Advocacy cases, including mediation
- Six Open Meetings for the main group, ten for the Adult Group and Meetings at Bexley SNAP
- A one-day Conference held in Greenwich
- A Christmas Event celebrating dyslexic talent
- Strong Adult Group with highly effective meetings
- Information-giving at various events
- A constantly up-dated selection of books available for sale
- A Dyslexia Screening Service for Adults and Children

Changing Policy and Promoting Best Practice

- Success in the Dyslexia Friendly Schools initiatives in Greenwich and Bexley
- Membership of Parent Partner steering groups
- Input into policy and documentation for Police, Probation Service, Training Companies, Retailers etc.

Eight of our thirteen hard-working committee members are dyslexic themselves, giving us their typically dyslexic creativity and problem-solving skills. We have a mix of parents, teachers and individuals with business and fundraising skills.

Direct Services to our membership and the general public

Drop-In/Resource Centre

Our centre continued to be well used by the public, and a mountain of work was efficiently handled by the volunteers – Mary Margaret Yates, Amanda Sutton, Michael E. Corrigan and Lindy Springett. We were delighted to obtain the services of a volunteer to help with grant applications, as we still aim to employ a volunteer co-ordinator. Our very grateful thanks go to all our superb volunteers, including Julie Dennis for our wonderful newsletter.

Helpline and Befriending (Advocacy) Service

Our helpline team of Linda Harvey, Trevor Hobbs, Michael E. Corrigan, Mary Margaret Yates and Lindy Springett successfully handled a wide variety of calls from all our boroughs (and far beyond too with adult-based enquiries). These were broken down as follows:

- 426 Parents/carers
- 187 Adult callers
- 63 from other sources, such as employers, doctors, housing associations, teachers etc.

Of these, 148 were email enquiries.

“Thank you for listening to me and not treating me like a crazy woman”
Mother of 9 year old girl

“He said ‘Thanks for all the advice. I will do as you suggest, and can I call you again when I have the results?’ He did, and sounded so much more confident. That’s what makes the Adult Helpline so worth while doing” *One of our adult helpliners*

Our befriender/advocacy service has been very active again. There is a limit to the advice that we can give over the phone and the more complex cases need the expertise of our trained befrienders, who have attended many meetings at schools to support children and their parents/carers.

“I would like to say how much I really appreciate what you did for me, helping sort out the school, and getting me into college and setting me in the right direction. I doubt very much that I would be in the same

situation I am in now without all the support you gave my parents and me” Man in his early twenties

We also actively pursued concerns voiced on our helpline that money intended for dyslexic pupils may not be appropriately spent at some local schools. We had much liaison with councillors, the schools and the Freedom of Information Commissioner. Our liaison with councillors included the potential provision and siting of a new secondary speech and language provision.

At adult level we have been talking to line managers about ways of improving the working environment for dyslexic people, resulting in better working practices for *all* the staff, not just the dyslexic employees.

Meetings & Events

We had four well-attended Open meetings this year with interesting, professional speakers and some very interactive sessions. Our meetings always include time for participants to relax with a beverage and a chance to swap experiences with other parents/carers/teachers and get expert advice from committee members. We were pleased to see a rising number of children attending these meetings, with most beneficial contributions from some of them. Margaret Cooper has restocked our bookstall with a wide range of books for parents and professionals working in the field of specific learning difficulties, plus maths games and common word flash cards too.

In October we ran a very successful one day dyslexia road show in Greenwich for parents/carers, teachers and adults – “The Consumers’ Guide to getting help for Dyslexia”. Parents/carers and their off-spring were delighted with our provision of a children’s craft table. We, in turn, were most impressed by the quality and inventiveness of the work turned out by these youngsters.



Craft work at the Road Show

December saw our Christmas Party, celebrating success and achievement – “I’m a Celebrity, get me into here!” This was a true celebration of the very wide range of dyslexic talent, which much impressed the attending Mayors from Bexley, Bromley, Dartford, Greenwich and Swanley. Particular thanks go to Eleanor May, Philip Alexandre, Samantha Fletcher and Amanda Sutton, amongst others, for the amount of work they put into this. Also to our many generous sponsors, a full list of whom can be seen on our website (www.dyslexiawise.co.uk).



Christmas Event



Adult Group Meetings

Under the excellent leadership of Michael E. Corrigan, ably assisted by Malcolm Parker, Sam Fletcher and Trevor Hobbs, our Adult group is a great success, attracting an eclectic mix of people from all walks of life and a wide geographical area. It is the longest running adult group in the country and acts as a model for others. We are often asked for our help and advice for setting up Adult Dyslexia groups around the country.

The popular meetings have covered diverse subjects such as “Guide to dyslexia in the workplace”, “Spellcheckers”, “What is dyslexia?” and “How dyslexic adults see themselves”.

“I never realised that all I have to say is I need some help with that, and you all come up with such wonderful ideas” Adult Group participant, thanking other participants for their help

Dyslexia Screening

Mary Margaret Yates and her team successfully started up our screening programme, which ascertains the probability of dyslexia. This is proving to be an extremely popular service.

“I was embarrassed to tell the lady for the Dyslexic Association that we couldn’t help these children”. A Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, who then went on to formally assess her pupil and get help for him, after a positive screening result

Bursary

Two bursaries were given during this year.

“The assessment did conclude that there was indeed a reason for my son’s struggle at school, but more than that, these conclusions have now given him a whole new world of opportunity, for he can now study again without pressure” single parent of 14 year old boy

Bexley SNAP

We work in partnership with Bexley SNAP, the organisation for parents/carers of children with disabilities in Bexley, in their running excellent drop-in sessions. Margaret Cooper attends these meetings to give advice about dyslexia.

Events

Samantha Fletcher wrote to many publishers to ask them to donate books suitable for dyslexic children. We were then able to donate over 250 books to our existing collections in Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich Libraries. Our official hand-over ceremony was held in New Eltham Library, and attended by many signatories and members.

Several exhibitions and events were again attended this year, where we gave out information and literature.

Changing Policy and Promoting Best Practice

We consider the changing of policy and promoting best practice to be of overwhelming importance in our work. We are acutely aware that only a small proportion of dyslexic people and parents/carers will have the benefit of contacting us and getting our help and advice. By far the most effective way forward is to endeavour to ensure that society at large (and especially in schools) is a productive and understanding place for dyslexic people. We have made great progress in this respect during the year.

“You do really affect the lives of so many people, children and their families.” *Member of a local authority*

Local Authorities

Margaret Cooper has jointly been spearheading the Dyslexia Friendly Schools initiative in Bexley, which has been taken up by the schools with great enthusiasm. By the end of the year, 13 schools managed to achieve the exacting standards required for the award.

Linda Harvey and Lindy Springett were delighted to help steer Greenwich to the position of having the first 7 schools sign up to become Dyslexia Friendly Schools, with more schools queuing up behind them. So many schools are now realising that dyslexia-friendly teaching does not just benefit the dyslexic pupils alone, but is the best teaching for *all* pupils.

Mary Margaret Yates sits on the Parent Partnership Steering Group in Bromley, alongside many other voluntary organisations, and is instrumental in jointly developing new policy and practice. Lindy Springett does the same in Greenwich with the Voluntary Sector Liaison Group (planning strategy and events) and also attends the Bexley Voluntary Sector Network meetings.

Liaison with Statutory, Non-Statutory and Voluntary Groups

Adult Group representatives have continued to work with organisations to produce a dyslexia-friendly society. During this period this covered Transport, the Police, Media layout, Presentation, Signage and retail customer treatment. In summary, the statutory, non-statutory and voluntary groups the Association has worked with are:

- ◆ Local authorities in Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich & Lewisham
- ◆ National Autistic Society (Bromley and Greenwich branches)

- ◆ Mencap
- ◆ Greenwich Toy Library
- ◆ Parent Partnership Officers
- ◆ Connexions
- ◆ DANDA (adult Dyspraxia)
- ◆ Bexley SNAP
- ◆ Local Colleges and Universities
- ◆ School Governors – Margaret Hatzidakas and Trevor Hobbs have influential input into Governors’ meetings and magazines
- ◆ Greenwich Learning Champions
- ◆ Employers and Retailers
- ◆ Police and Probation Services
- ◆ Employment and Training Companies
- ◆ Transport for London
- ◆ Housing Associations
- ◆ Social Housing Trusts
- ◆ Streetwise
- ◆ Educational Psychologist
- ◆ Support teachers and Classroom Assistants
- ◆ Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (Bexley branch)
- ◆ Speech and Language Therapy Service
- ◆ Employment Services
- ◆ Retailers
- ◆ Other Dyslexia Groups around the country

Training for Volunteers

As an advice-giving organisation, we consider it vital that our skills and knowledge are kept updated. Helpliners and Befrienders have attended high-powered training courses with the Educational Law Association during the year. Other courses included: child protection, effective communication and fundraising courses.

National Involvement

We are proud that our knowledge and experience continues to be sought at national level.

Our Chair, Trevor Hobbs is a trustee of the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), and is the South London representative on the BDA’s Local Association Board which moulds and develops national policy and liaises between the BDA and the 80 Local Associations across the country.

The BDA’s Chief Executive, Judi Stewart, came to visit our Association for a day, to see how an effective Local Association is run. We took her to meet the people running the Dyslexia Friendly Schools initiative in Bexley and Bromley, and she attended our Adult Group meeting in the evening. The new Chair of the BDA, Margaret Malpas, has also had meetings with our Association to gather our thoughts and opinions.