Literacy for all: parent and school staff perspective

Survey data analysis

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Introduction

A questionnaire was conducted to explore perceptions of literacy across the Isle of Man. It was used to gain further insight into the thoughts and perceptions of parents and school staff, in relation to the teaching of literacy skills on the Isle of Man. We would like to establish how best we can support all children and young people (including those with literacy needs/dyslexia) to secure good literacy skills.

234 Parents and 184 school staff responded to the questionnaire over 5 weeks from 19th April to 24th May 2021.

The data collected clearly demonstrates the current situation and education opportunities provided to students with literacy difficulties and dyslexia in the Isle of Man. The information gathered has informed our approach to supporting parents, school staff and professionals to recognise and respond to a child's learning difference, and achieve better outcomes for children with literacy needs/dyslexia in the Isle of Man.

The questionnaire examined the following areas:

Parents	Staff
1) Introduction	1) Introduction
2) Teacher knowledge and training	2) Teacher knowledge and training
3) Identification of dyslexia	3) Identification of dyslexia
4) Differentiation and Adjustments	4) Diagnosis of Dyslexia
5) Interventions and learning support	5) Teaching practice and knowledge
6) Manx Dyslexia Association	6) Assessment
	7) Differentiation and Adjustments
	8) Interventions and learning support
	9) Manx Dyslexia Association

Key findings

- More than 50% of parents are not satisfied with the quality of communication between their child's school and the parents.

- 65% of staff last received formal phonics training over 5 years ago, with 10% not receiving literacy training since their initial teacher training. Additionally, 51% of staff last received training for literacy difficulties / dyslexia over 5 years ago.

- 58% of school staff and parents feel there is a difference between literacy difficulties and dyslexia.

- Among the 45% of the parents that had a child with a diagnosis of dyslexia, 33% received a private formal assessment. The other 67% had been diagnosed by a SENCO or a department educational or child psychologist.

- Variation in agreed definition of dyslexia between teaching staff and parents.

  - Majority of teaching staff agreed with Sir Jim Rose's definition:

    "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 co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia."

 - Majority of parents agreed with the definition that:

    "Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty, that can occur across the range of intellectual abilities."

- 45% of the staff and parents feel diagnosis does not provide the information that is required to support a child with dyslexia.

- 80% of staff use teacher-based assessment to assess a pupil with literacy difficulties, however, 34% of staff feel this does not provide enough detail to properly understand a pupil's literacy profile.

- Of the parents, 46% have accessed a private tutor to support their child's literacy.

- 54% of parents reported their child did not use any assistive technology. While 52% of staff were not confident in using assistive technology.

- 44% of staff reported they lacked confidence in sharing literacy concerns to a parent or carer.
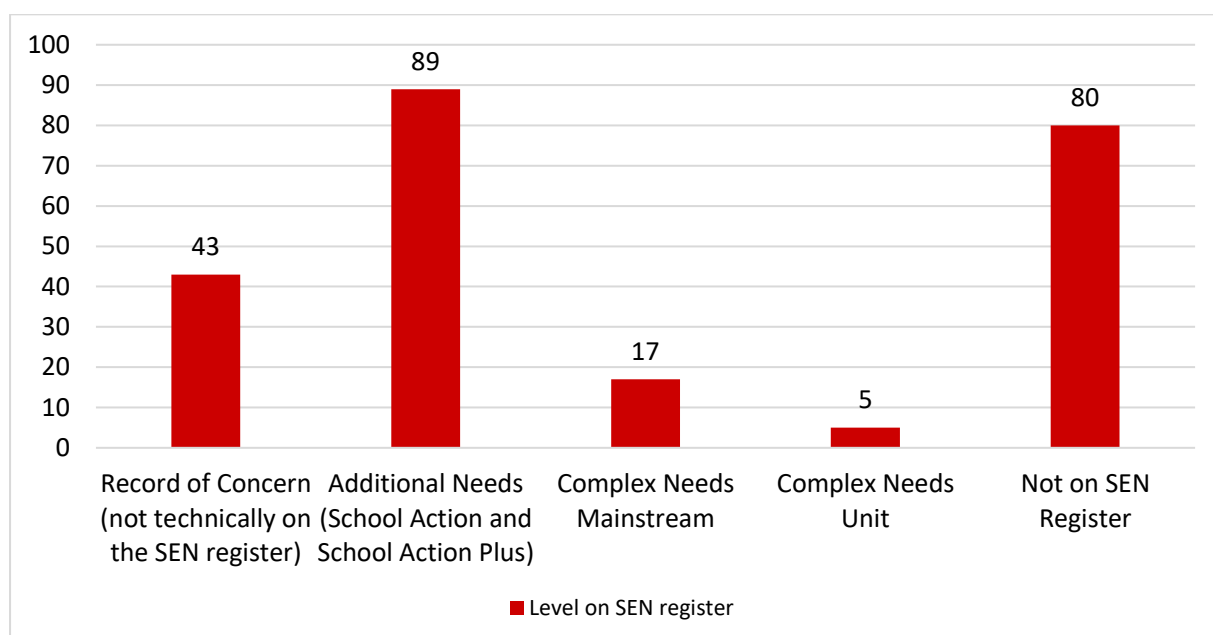
Consultation findings

Staff: What best describes your role?
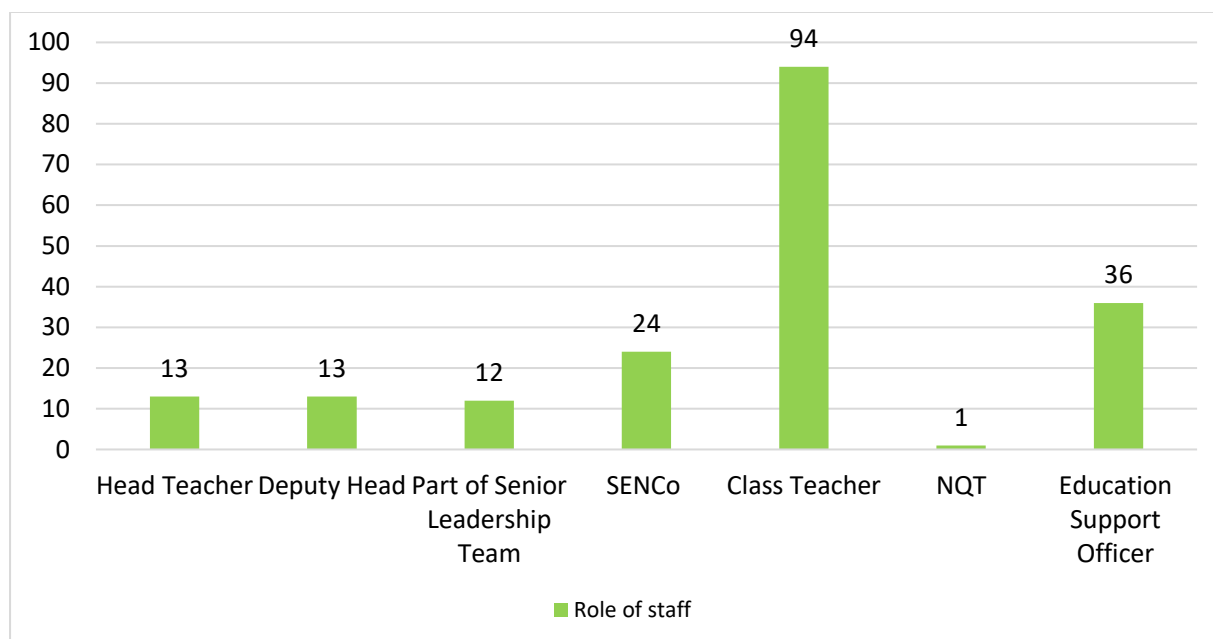
A majority of the staff who completed the questionnaire were class teachers (51%). 184 responses were received from school staff. (Please note some staff have a dual role which accounts for the number of responses)

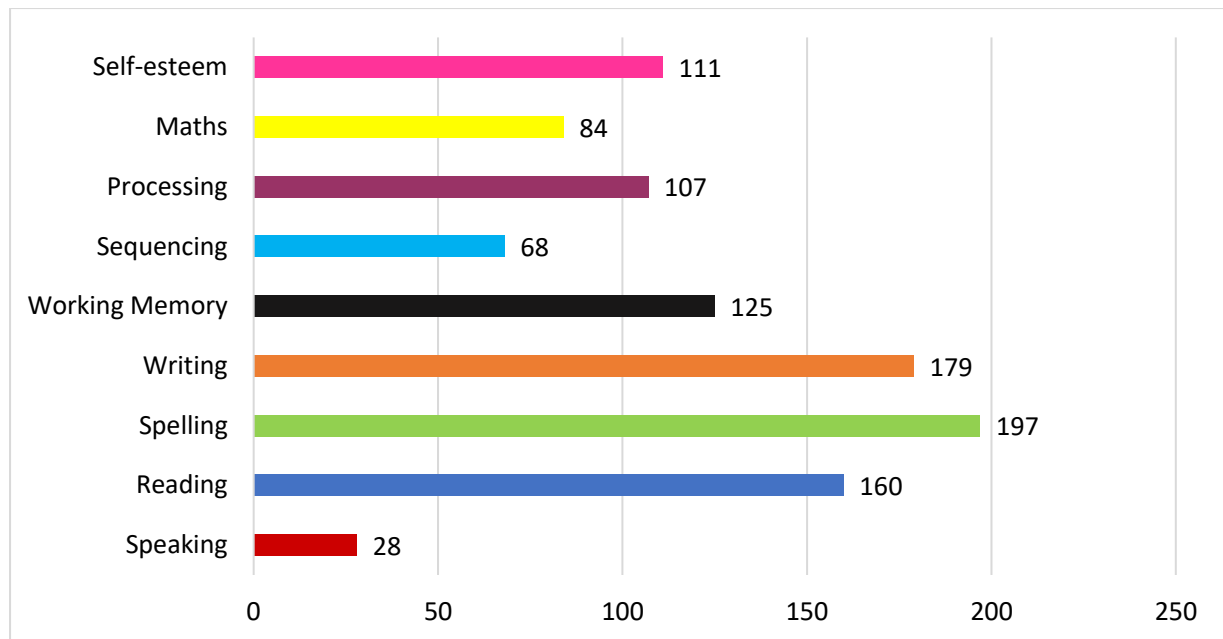Parent: If your child is on the SEN register, at what level are they staged?

A majority of the parents that completed the questionnaire had a child with additional needs (37%).

Of those parents with a child on the SEN register, most indicated that their child had primary needs of literacy (60%) or general learning needs (20%).

Parents indicated the most common difficulties amongst children were: spelling (81%), writing (74%), which was closely followed by reading (66%).

Parent: My child has difficulty with:

Difficulty	Value
Self-esteem	111
Maths	84
Processing	107
Sequencing	68
Working Memory	125
Writing	179
Spelling	197
Reading	160
Speaking	28

Teacher knowledge and training / training

Parent: Teaching staff in my child's school are knowledgeable in literacy difficulties/dyslexia

| Knowledge in difficulties/dyslexia	Value
1 Not knowledgeable	55
2	76
3	72
4	24
5 Very Knowlegeable	9
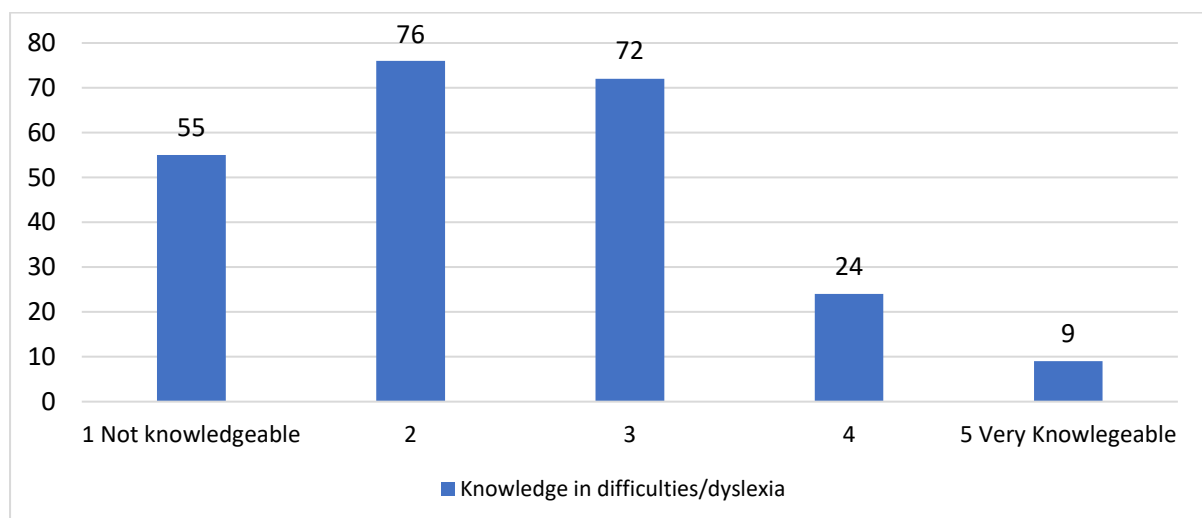
A majority of parents feel that teaching staff lack knowledge in literacy difficulties and dyslexia.

Parent: Do teaching staff in your child's school have satisfactory access to training in literacy difficulties such as dyslexia?
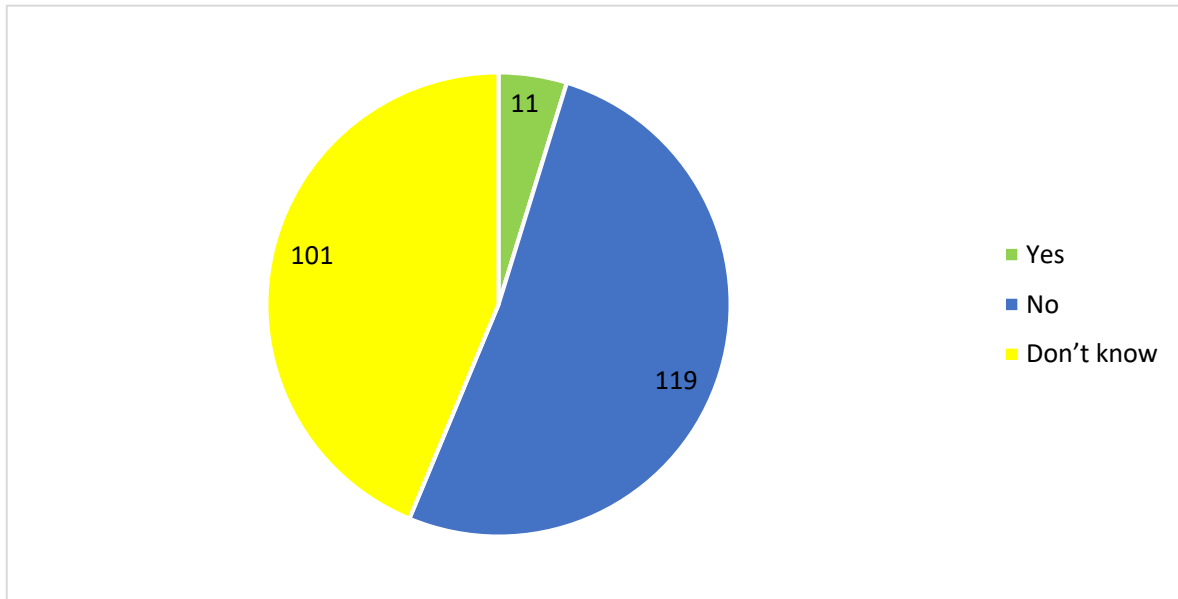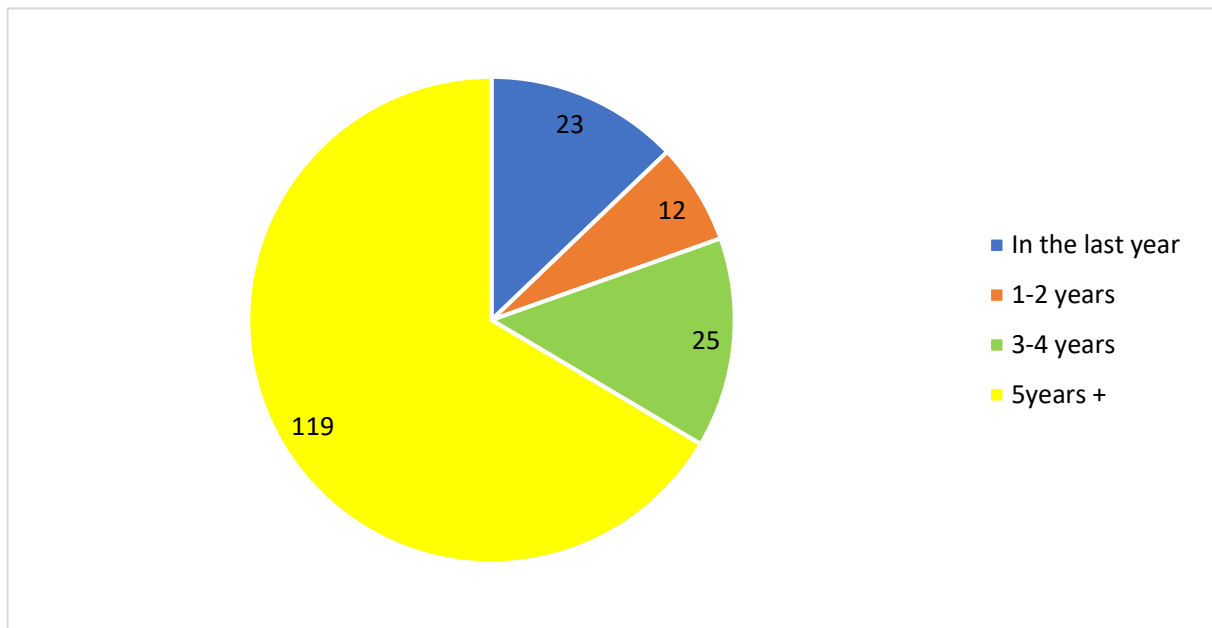

Despite parents feeling staff lack knowledge in literacy difficulties and dyslexia, they are aware it is not due to a lack of effort from staff. This finding could indicate parents are aware that staff may not be provided with the opportunities required to have a very good understanding of literacy difficulties and dyslexia.

Staff: What is the nature of literacy training you have received?
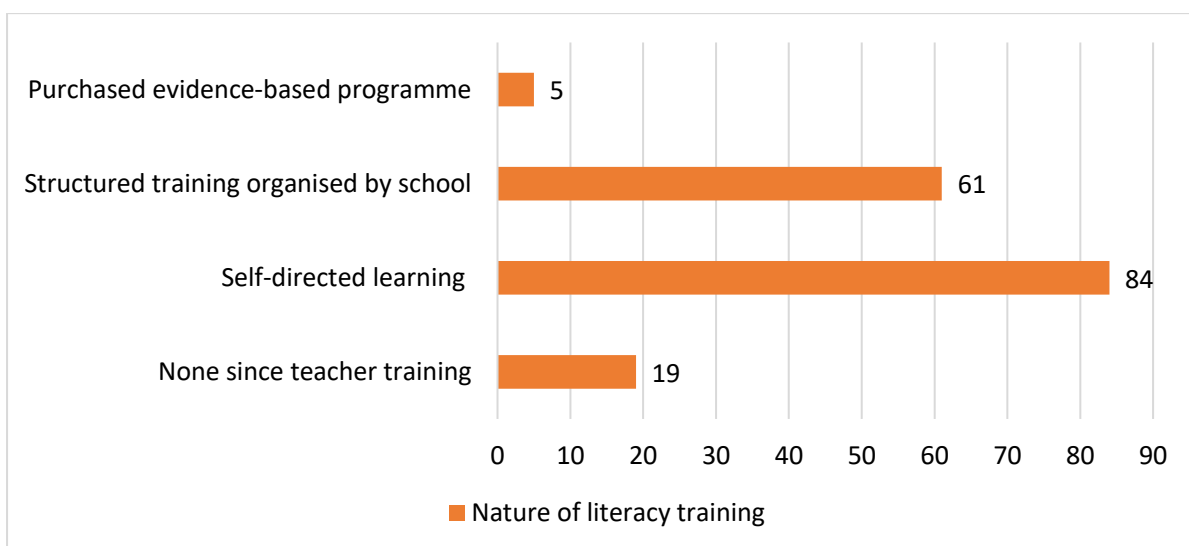
Teaching staff have accessed a mix of self-directed and school organised training.

Staff: When did you last access specific formal phonics training?

| Legend |
| --- |
| ■ In the last year |
| ■ 1-2 years |
| ■ 3-4 years |
| ■ 5years + |

Pie chart values: 23, 12, 25, 119

A majority (65%) of staff have not received training in the last 5 years, with 10% not receiving any literacy training since their teacher training.

Staff: What specific training have you received with regard to literacy difficulties/dyslexia?

Paired Reading — 29
Precision teaching — 61
Removing the Barriers — 58
Dyslexia Awareness — 97
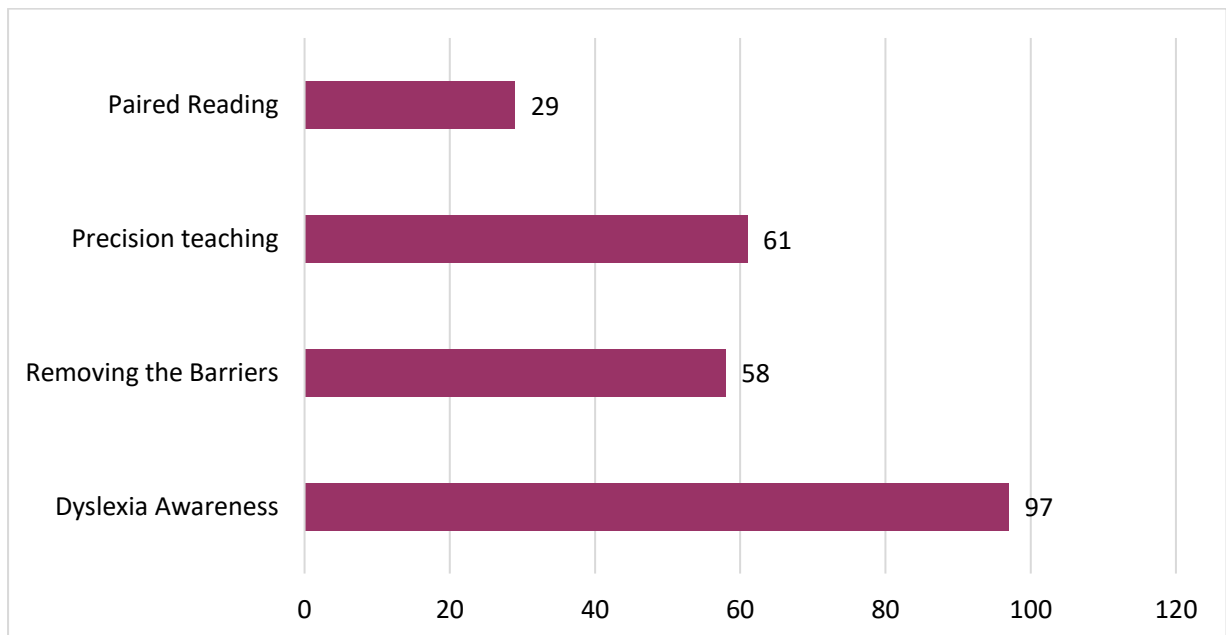
The most common training staff had received for literacy difficulties/dyslexia was dyslexia awareness (53%). Despite the importance of being aware of dyslexia, it is key that staff have the training to be able to then help the pupil once the difficulties have been identified

Staff: When did you last access specific training around literacy difficulties/dyslexia?
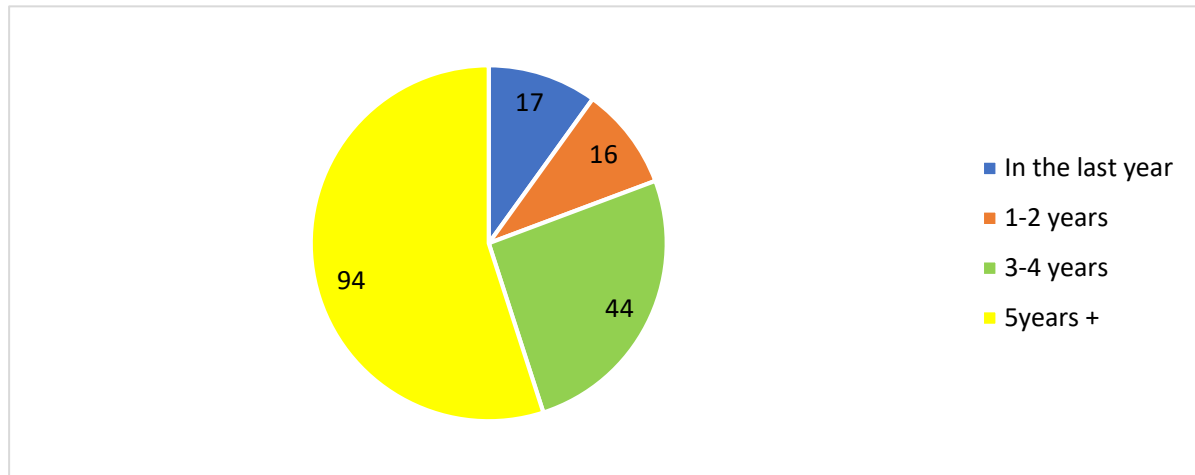
A majority of staff last received training for literacy difficulties/dyslexia over 5 years ago. This could be a factor contributing to the parental view that teachers or staff lack knowledge in this area.

# Identification of dyslexia and diagnosis of dyslexia

A majority of school staff (79%) agreed with Rose's definition:

> "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 co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia."

Whereas a majority of parents (58%) agreed with the following definition that dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that can occur across the range of intellectual abilities.
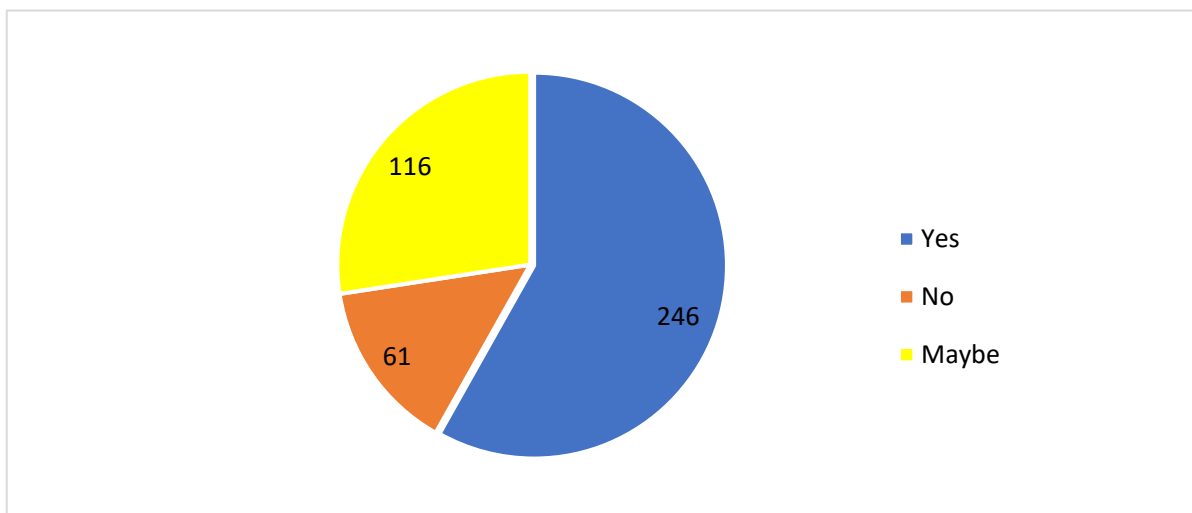
61% of parents identified that their child may have literacy difficulties.

Parent: Who was it that first identified that your child may have a literacy difficulty?
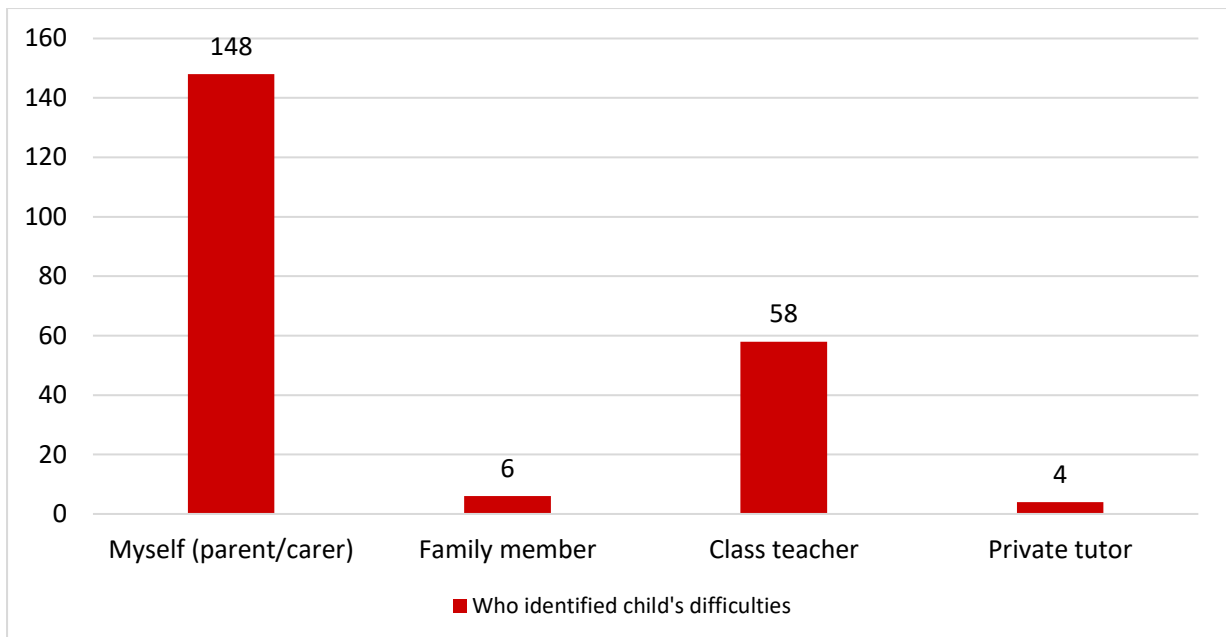
Parents report they are the first person to identify their child's literacy difficulty.

Both: Is there a difference between a child with dyslexia and those with literacy difficulties:


Over half of the staff and parents feel there is a difference between dyslexia and literacy difficulties (58%).

Parents agreed that part of the school's role in supporting additional educational needs of all learners is the identification of pupils who have dyslexia (85%) and literacy difficulties (89%).

Additionally, 83% of staff feel the identification of pupils who are struggling with their literacy skills (phonics, reading, spelling) is the role of a teacher. However, only 39% are confident in identifying dyslexia and 59% are confident in identifying literacy difficulties. Teaching staff also reported low levels of confidence when sharing literacy concerns with parents and carers.

Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire, 45% had children who have received a formal assessment or diagnosis of dyslexia. Of those children, 81% of the parents had shared the report with their child's school.

Parent: Who conducted the formal assessment or diagnosis of dyslexia.
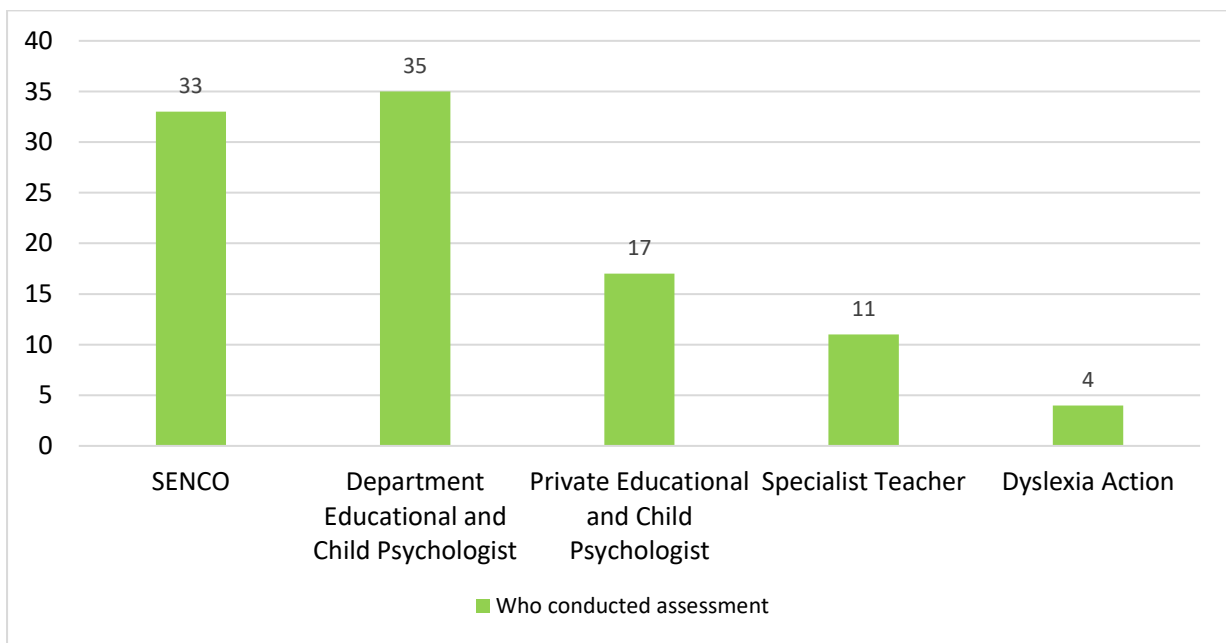
Of the parents with children with a diagnosis of dyslexia, roughly a third (33%) had a private formal assessment. Of the staff members, 36% had a child in their class who had a private assessment of dyslexia.

Parent: Does diagnosis of dyslexia provide the information required to support your teaching of literacy/to support your child?
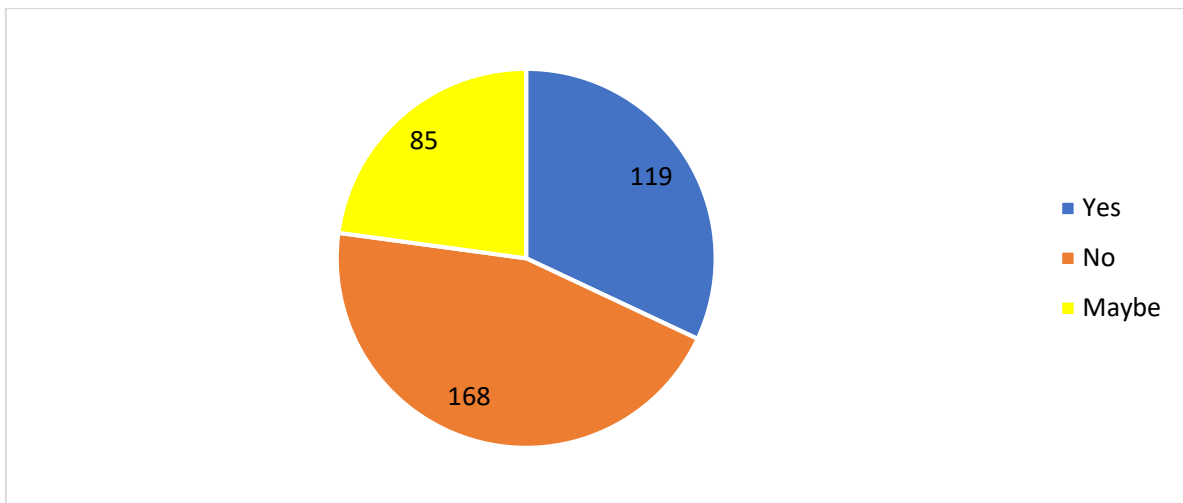
45% of staff and parents feel a diagnosis does not provide sufficient information to fully support a child with dyslexia. Of the staff that completed the questionnaire, 61% feel that diagnosis is not a role for teaching staff.

Teaching practice and knowledge

Staff: Understanding of approaches for teaching literacy skills:

- 59% of staff had some understanding of structured teaching in line with the Instructional Hierarchy (learning stages of acquisition, fluency, generalisation, adaption).
- 55% of staff have a good understanding of daily structured teaching of one skill at a time.
- 49% of staff have a good understanding of distributed practice (daily opportunities to practice targeted skills).
- 48% of staff have a good understanding of teaching the most useful and transferrable skills.
- 47% of staff have a good understanding of teaching skills in different contexts to increase generalisation.
- 50% of staff have a good understanding of using direct instruction to explicitly teach targeted skills.

- 48% of staff have some understanding of assessing and teaching for both fluency and accuracy.
- 46% of staff have a good understanding of learning is interleaved (new learning is explicitly mixed with old learning to aid understanding minimise forgetting).

Staff reported high confidence in delivering a phonics programme, with 67% being either very confident or confident. 40% of staff are confident in supporting students with dyslexia and 64% are confident in supporting students with literacy difficulties. 51% of staff are confident in using standardised assessments for literacy and 48% are confident in using the literacy section of the Continuum of Learning and Inclusion (COLI).

Assessment

Staff: How do you assess children and young people with literacy difficulties?

- ■ Teacher assessment
- ■ Phonic check
- ■ Standardised assessment (e.g. Reading/Spelling)
- ■ PM benchmark
- ■ Highlight concerns to SENCo to assess
- ■ Don't assess
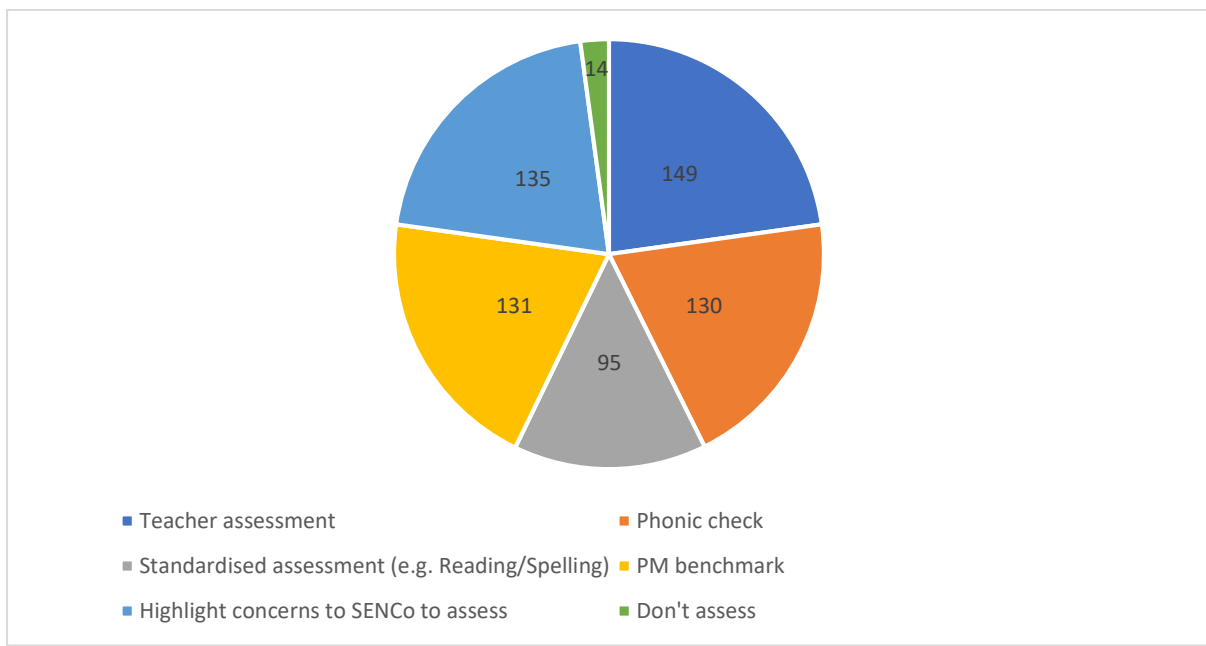
Teacher based assessment is used by 80% of staff, although, 34% of staff feel this does not provide the detail required to understand a pupil's literacy profile.

Differentiation and adjustments

A large majority of the parents found the journey to gain support and recognition for their child either very difficult (59%) or difficult (20%).

Generally, parents were not satisfied with the support their child has received, with 36% being not satisfied at all, and 31% being somewhat satisfied.

54% of parents reported their child did not use any assistive technology, with an additional 18% not answering this question. 52% of staff reported they are not confident in using assistive technology, with an additional 39% not answering this question.

Interventions and learning support

Just under half of the parents (46%) had accessed private tuition to support their child with literacy.

67% of staff feel that a structured and tailored phonics approach is essential for supporting literacy difficulties/dyslexia.

Parents and teachers highlighted the following areas when they were asked to describe a dyslexia friendly classroom:

- Visual resources and materials
- Multi-sensory learning
- Technology
- Extra time and explanation on tasks
- Support, understanding and patients from teachers and students
- Staff that are knowledgeable, caring, empathic and well trained
- No comparisons to more capable children
- Inclusive of everyone
- Not being asked to complete tasks that a child could find extremely difficult or could cause embarrassment e.g., reading out loud
- Giving instructions one at a time
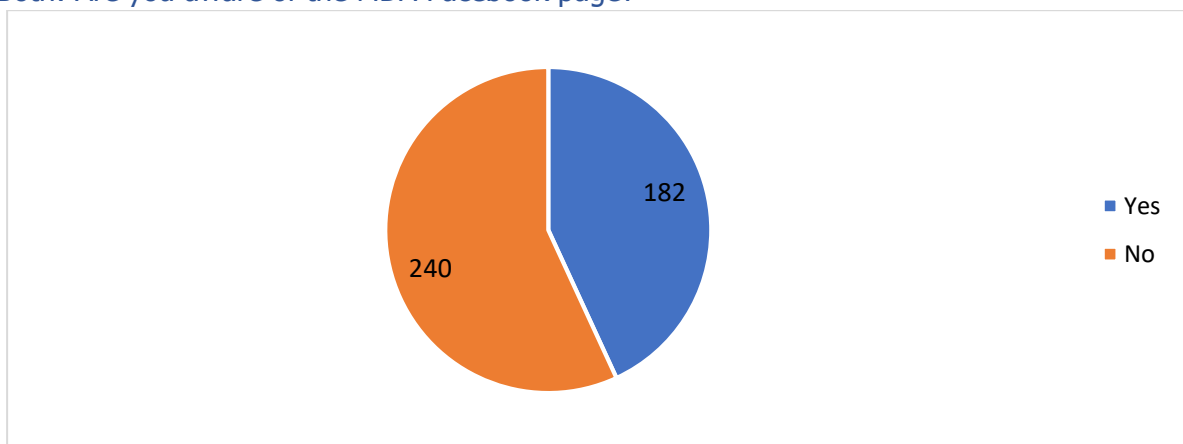
Manx Dyslexia Association (MDA)

63% of staff and parents were aware of the MDA and 42% had knowledge of the MDA Facebook page. 26% had used the website, 16% had contacted the MDA and 15% had attended a workshop run by the MDA.

Both: Are you aware of the Manx Dyslexia Association (MDA)?
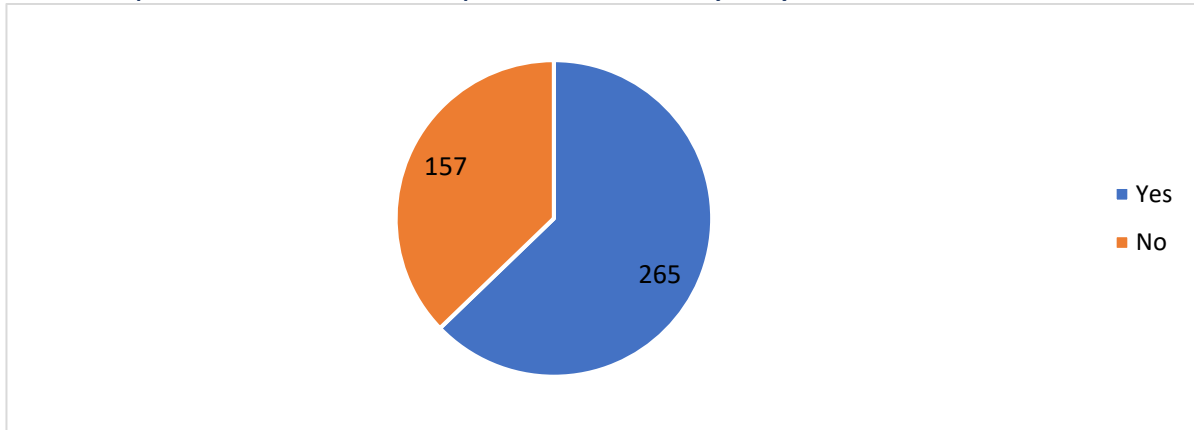
Both: Are you aware of the MDA Facebook page?

Both: Have you ever used their website?
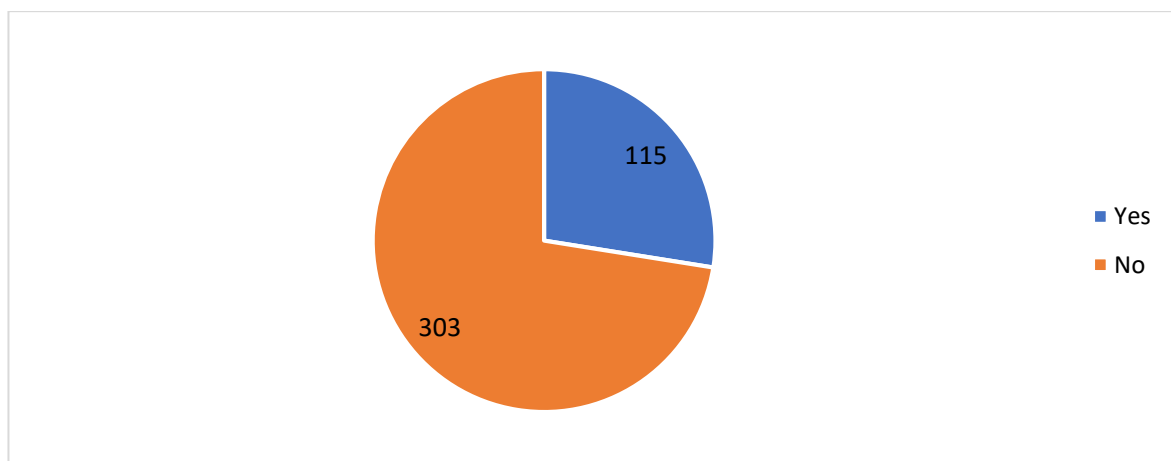
Both: Have you ever contacted the MDA?

Pie chart:
- Yes: 71
- No: 347
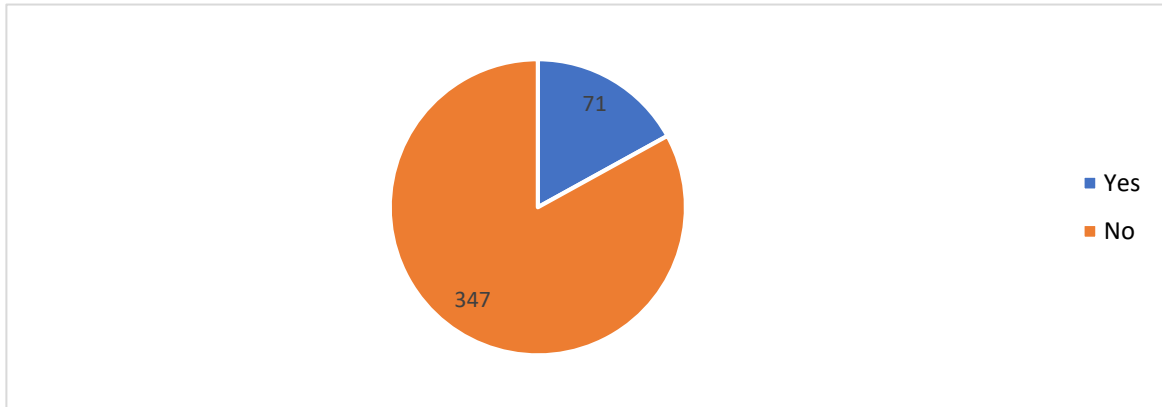
Both: Have you attended any of the MDA workshops?

Pie chart:
- Yes: 66
- No: 355
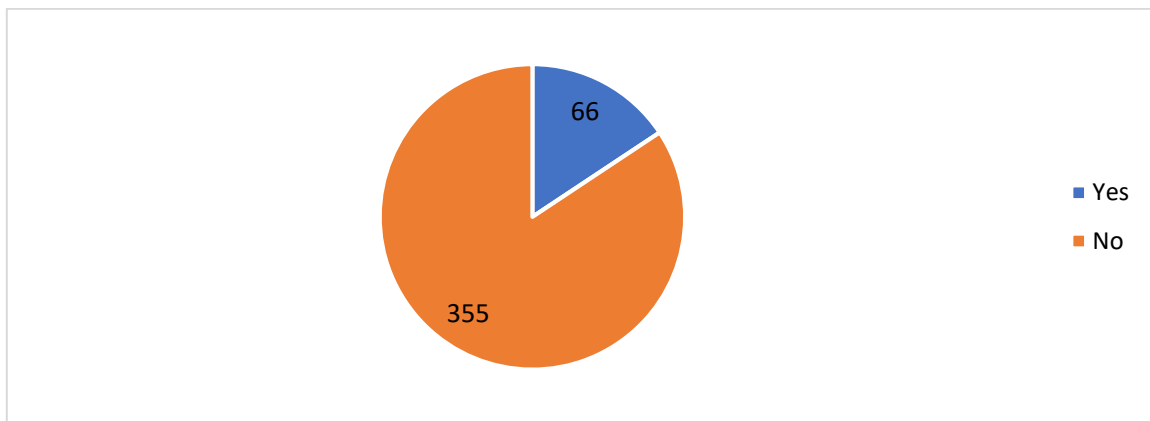
Both: In what ways could the MDA support school's/help parents and children:

Bar chart:
- Training, Awareness, Guidance and Advice for staff: 61
- Assessment / diagnosis: 25
- Advice, support and guidance for parents: 26
- Information, advice and support for the child: 25
- Resources / advice on which resources and interventions should be used: 32
- Unknown: 30
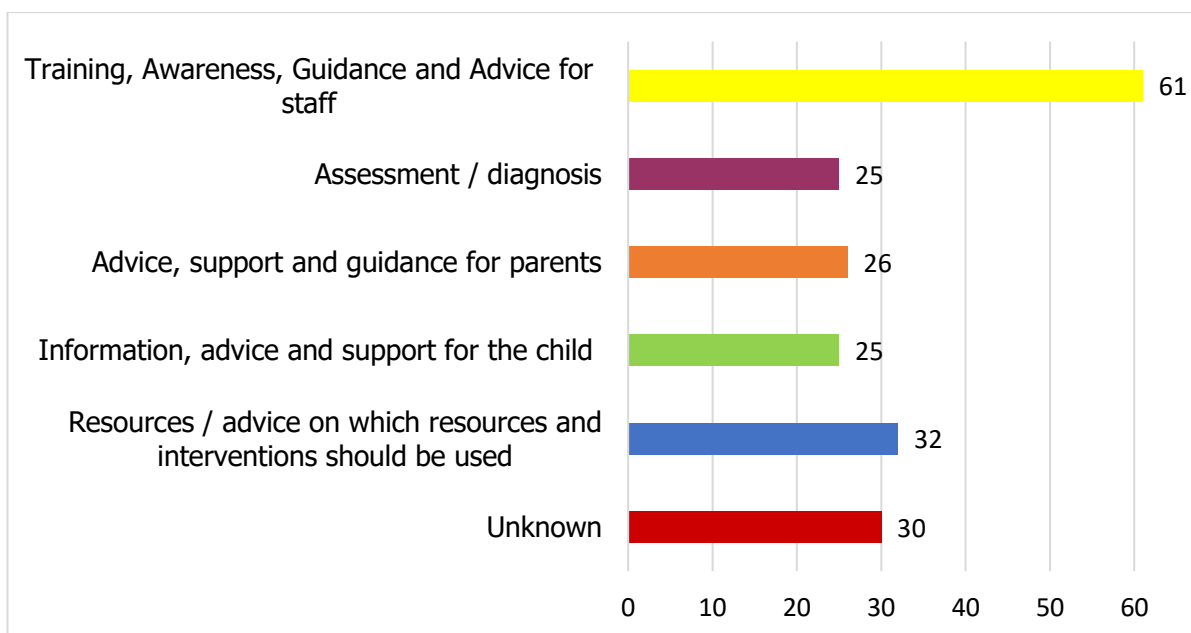
Appendix

Staff: If you are a SENCO what assessments do you use?

Option	Total	Percent
Phonological Assessment Battery	21	14.29
Infant Language Link	27	18.37%
Junior Language Link	15	10.20%
GL Assessment Dyslexia Screener	5	3.40%
Nessy Dyslexia Screener	9	6.12%
New Group Reading Test (NGRT)	3	2.04%
New Group Spelling Test (NGST)	1	0.68%
PM Benchmark (decoding)	26	17.69%
PM Benchmark (listening comprehension)	18	12.24%
Digit Span	6	4.08%
Lucid Exact	5	3.40%
Lucid Lass	4	2.72%
Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT V)	5	3.40%

Staff: What reading scheme does your school use?

Option	Total	Percent
Oxford Owl	122	66.30%
Literacy World	53	28.80%
Project X	92	50.00%
Reading Planet	19	10.33%
Collins Big Cat Phonics	82	44.57%
Dandelion Readers	22	11.96%
Talisman Series	8	4.35%
Other	31	16.85%

Both: What targeted interventions does your school/child use?

Option	Total			Percent		
	Staff	Parent	Combined	Staff	Parent	Combined
Toe by Toe	46	12	58	25.00%	4.94%	14.97%
Yes, we can read	41	3	44	22.28%	1.23%	11.76%
Alpha to Omega	12	0	12	6.52%	0.00%	3.13%
Precision Teaching	124	5	129	67.39%	2.06%	48.51%
Paired Reading (Topping's approach)	38	6	44	20.65%	2.47%	34.93%
Cam Bugs app	16	1	17	8.70%	0.41%	4.56%
School bespoke catch-up	14	4	18	7.61%	1.65%	4.63%
BBC phonics play	36	9	45	19.57%	3.70%	11.64%

|						
Units of sound	2	1	3	1.09%	0.41%	0.75%
Intensive universal programme (e.g., Letter and Sounds)	53	4	57	28.80%	1.65%	15.23%
Acceleread	2	0	2	1.09%	0.00%	0.55%
Read Write Inc	12	6	18	6.52%	2.47%	4.50%
Nessy	70	34	104	38.04%	13.99%	26.02%
5 Minutes Box	36	1	37	19.57%	0.41%	9.99%
Reading Eggs	24	17	41	13.04%	7.00%	10.02%

Both: What accommodations might you provide for a CYP with literacy difficulties/dyslexia/ does your child use?

Option	Total			Percent		
	Staff	Parent	Combined	Staff	Parent	Combined
Highlighting key points	140	14	154	76.09%	5.76%	40.93%
Breaking tasks into smaller steps	172	39	211	93.48%	16.05%	54.77%
Visual displays	160	32	192	86.96%	13.17%	50.10%
Not being expected to copy large amounts from the board	152	35	187	82.61%	14.40%	48.51%
Not being asked to read out loud	139	29	168	75.54%	11.93%	43.74%
Support with writing	163	47	210	88.59%	19.34%	53.97%
Use of laptop	153	58	211	83.15%	23.87%	53.51%
Use of iPad	138	51	189	75.00%	20.99%	48.00%
Mind mapping	138	18	156	75.00%	7.41%	41.21%

Both: What assistive technology do you use in your classroom/does your child use?

Option	Total			Percent		
	Staff	Parent	Combined	Staff	Parent	Combined
Text to speech	66	29		35.87%	11.93%	
Speech to text	85	39		46.20%	16.05%	
Reading Pen	12	14		6.52%	5.76%	
Mind Mapping applications	49	11		26.63%	4.53%	

Parent: How would you describe your journey to obtain recognition and support for your child?

1 Very difficult: 139
2: 48
3: 34
4: 7
5 Not difficult at all: 7
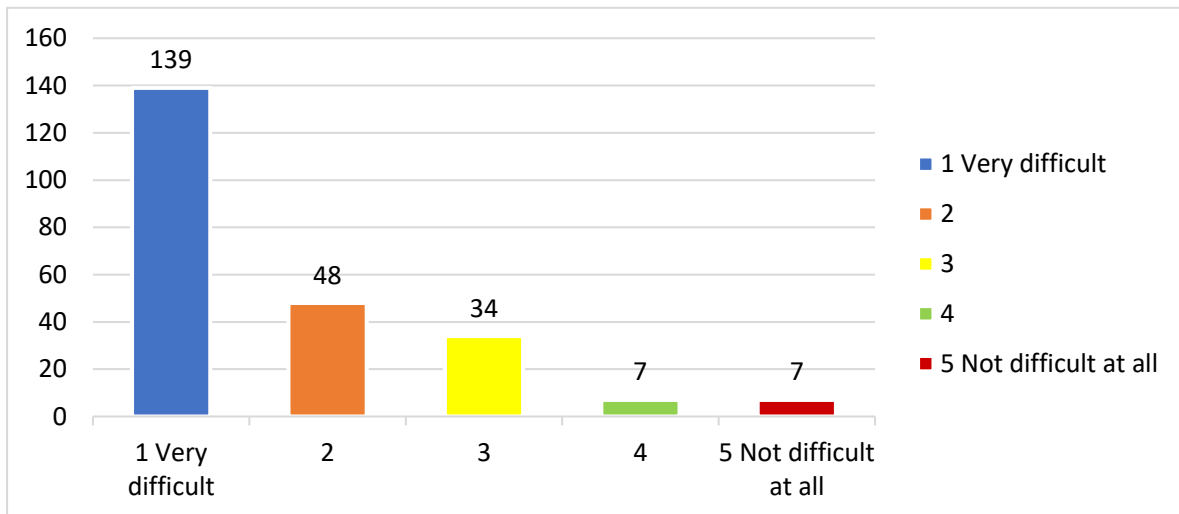
Parent: Describe your overall satisfaction with the support your child has received in school

1 Not at all satisfied: 85
2: 73
3: 49
4: 20
5 Extremely satisfied: 8
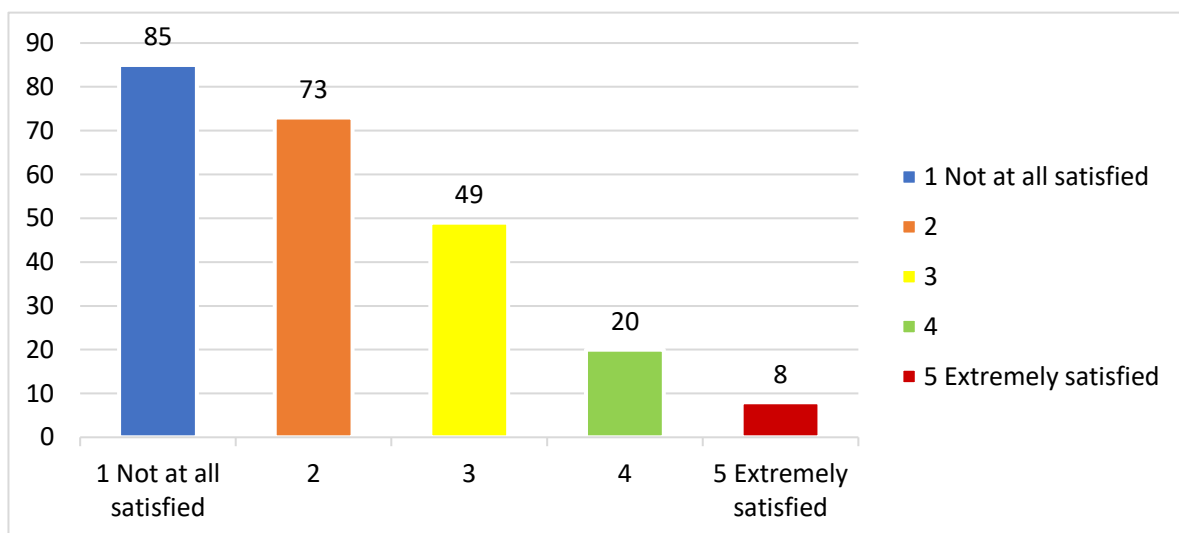
The majority of parents report they have experienced a difficult journey in getting their child or young person's needs identified.

Parents report very low levels of satisfaction with the support their child or young person has received in school.