

SUMMARY AND REVIEW OF A 1996 UNPUBLISHED UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION, ‘THE EXCLUSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PUPILS [DYSLEXIA]’ : IS THE CHILD EXCLUDED, A ‘CHILD IN NEED’?

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ABSTRACT

Has the digital industry and associated knowledge transfer systems been able to support the training of teachers in England and other parts of the world in being more aware of learning challenges like dyslexia? The 1996 research was able to contribute to the main question of appropriate school punishment. For instance, is the punishment of [school] exclusion appropriate or would another punishment be more appropriate? Does school exclusion (as a punishment) result in ‘creating a child in need’ or at the very least exacerbate the conditions of a ‘child in need’. The 1996 methodology was a case study project: primary data of a non-participant observation study related to a possible school-child/pupil exclusion. The child was 10 years old and statemented for specific learning needs: Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision. Today, the case study is still relevant as an example of a SEN child who was receiving inadequate SEN provision because the 1996 report included literature to enable a critical discussion. More generally, the school wasn’t a failing school. More recently, in 2021, The Centre for Social Justice for the UK (2021) clarified that dyslexia is classified as a disability and that approximately 50% of the prison population could have dyslexia prevalences

KEYWORDS

Special Education Needs and school punishment, school exclusion, dyslexia, undergraduate dissertation, researcher ethics, digital connectivity for education and learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Has the digital industry and associated **knowledge transfer systems** been able to support the training of teachers in England and other parts of the world in being more aware of learning challenges like **dyslexia**?

In 1996, it was acknowledged that school exclusions could be unjustified because children were being punished for the failures of the school and the SEN policy which were both controlled by political rationales. The 1996 dissertation report (Latham 1996 ref [1]) included educational sociological themes and topics such as education as a socialising institution; the consequences of school exclusion - lack of moral integration; inadequate schools perpetuate pupil problems; SEN policy and under-resourcing; SEN in the market place; the dilemma of SEN provision; motivation behind the government to support SEN policy; Thatcherism; SEN in dissent; the marketisation of educational provision; humanitarianism V individualism; pragmatism within the free market; winners and losers in a market philosophy; special needs in a market economy (are bad news!);

the market philosophy and cost-effectiveness; under-resourcing SEN provision. In 1996, over 100 secondary resources were included in the literature review. The aim was not to collate as many criticisms as possible relating to SEN, however, the majority of the information available at that time (in 1996) did reflect a restless controversial unease with the education system's relationship to the SEN policy.

Digital-connectivity has changed school experiences not just for the children but also for the adults (parents, governors, leaders, school employees and classroom workers). The technology used as 'educating equipment for learning' resources in the classroom has drastically changed pedagogical financial planning. School finance strategies have, historically, included the implementation and on-going maintenance costs of all learning resources as well as the school's assets. Schools were encouraged and supported to consider themselves as businesses and the IT industry has provided a foundation for this to happen. In the 1970's, for example, audio equipment for 'listening learning' activities in language classes were popular and children were encouraged to use calculators in their 'problem solving learning' activities in maths classes and cookery classes. 'Appropriate punishment' for pupils (the children/students) that disrupt lessons and/or damage school assets, has a historical history too. Often punishment was managed within the school premises and only the professionally-ethical comprising situations involved suspension from school (temporary) or exclusion from school (permanent). Punishment is part of the pedagogy. At this point, it has enabled psychologists to question whether the punishment of [school] exclusion would then result in 'creating a child in need' or at the very least exacerbate the conditions of a 'child in need' hence: is the child excluded, *a 'child in need'?* Or was the child [to be excluded] already a 'child in need'?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

Firstly, this literature review doesn't include the following:

1. the advances in the British Special Education Needs provision due to educational entrepreneurship over the last 20 years specifically for dyslexia support in the classroom such as new learning products
2. The development of Digital tools for inclusive learning (as exhibited at live events such as the 2023 dyslexia show). The literature states they create technology that makes classrooms and exams more accessible and inclusive. The education tools support learners with reading, writing and maths to help them to understand and be understood and they've already helped millions of students and we're ready to help millions more.
3. the development of neurodiversity work in relation to the disability classification
4. the opening of Dyslexia Academy Schools www.dyslexia-academy, the DyslexicU University of Thinking (2025) and professional development courses for teachers, tutors and classroom assistants
5. the development of ideas from the Money & Pensions Service (June 2021) such as the findings of the early stage workshop where child 'attachment theory' and 'financial locus of control' themes were explored: a UK 10 year strategy
6. the focus and review of financial literacy for youth, younger adults and adults in general, since the start of the COVID-19 Recovery years (re: Organisation for Economic Cooperaton and Development (OECD) 2002, Financial Literacy for the youth)
7. Dyslexia and the topics of the impact of poor sleep, poor nutrition and anxiety stressors

Prior to 1996, Warnock (1978 [2]) stated that at any given time 20% of the school population require SEN provision. This work introduced the concept of 'SEN' recording (now known as statementing) and integration. The 1981 Education Act reflected the spirit of the Warnock Report and policy development was made towards universal comprehensive education. The Act

established in law, the principle that children with SEN are to be educated, 'whenever possible' in mainstream schools. Data in 1996, however, showed that school SEN exclusions were on the increase and more recently, [3] reported that there was a rise in school exclusions as a form of punishment.

In 1996, over 100 secondary resources were researched and informed the framework for interpreting the primary data. The aim was not to collate as many criticisms as possible relating to SEN, however, the majority of the information available at that time (in 1996) did reflect a restless controversial unease with the education system's relationship to the SEN policy. The literature review findings showed that, overall, Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision had been dominated by the ideology of benevolent humanitarianism which results in the commodification of pupils, and provision that was difficult to incorporate. A 1995 report [4, 5], for instance, stated that permanent exclusions had increased between 1989 and 1994 by almost 63%. At the time, it was argued that the consequences of political reforms and interventions in the education system resulted in the exclusion of SEN pupils when they disrupted the endeavours of competitiveness in the marketplace. Schools had the option of 'suspension' or 'exclusion' as a form of punishment.

Exclusion being more permanent, was argued to be an escape route for 'clearing out' unwanted children in the market place (because the schools' funding-formulas deemed them too expensive). SEN children did not fit into the Government's ideology of cost-effectiveness and consequently, didn't fit into the market philosophy of school. SEN pupils were described as a *nuisance* to a school, and costly to the Government which generated conversations, arguments and concepts such as 'resource-worthiness', the role of education, socialisation, citizenship, equal opportunities and access to education.

These arguments were raised before, and after, the **1981 International Year of the Disabled**. The findings show that questions were raised, and continued to be raised, such as '*should teachers be trained in psychotherapy techniques for anxiety support or just dyslexia? Or should more SEN teaching assistants be employed? Does the teacher manage the classroom? (when the pupils are 'unconscious' to their personal learning barriers and their behaviour is 'rational' in that, it is simply symptomatic of their stated 'SEN' needs)*'. SEN excluded children were being left outside of the education system because the system couldn't incorporate their behaviour, whilst citizenship rights to education were removed.

Historically, charitable activities and TV programs (such as Pudsey Bear's Children in Need, Blue Peter and the more recent The One Show) focused on poverty or ill children or disabled children, initially. This approach challenged and made visible the education and health/social care services at that time. This helped challenge policies and government decisions for continuing to improve and reassess 'early years' service to ensure that age-related funding was being monitored and evaluated for all children and service users.

Teenager, secondary-school age and normal 'leaving school' age [and the lexicon linked to these age-related services such as youth; adolescent; kid; student; young adult] services including the transition to college, university or work needed to be separated from early years and birth services. The 'start of life' services for children was from birth, hence, midwifery, Home Start, Sure Start and other nurseries were all categorised as Early Years Services. This then allowed greater clarity of funding requirements and eligibility [for the baby/toddler/child and the business/service models]. Disability and Special Education Needs funding, and services, could then be more easily assessed, allocated and monitored. SEN early years provision was an additional provision and, therefore, additional funding was often required [as in the Sure Start children centre experiences]. The focus for BBC TV 'Children in Need', for

instance, was able to incorporate SEN children over time. This then helped clarify the categorising of the meaning of 'need' directly in terms of 'a child in need'. In terms of children being excluded from a school service as a form of punishment, we can now re-evaluate whether an excluded child/pupil (excluded from school) is in fact, a child in need:

school exclusion, *is the child excluded, a 'child in need'?*

What happens to 'excluded children' was a focus for some families. As in previous years, there's been research evidence that reveals that the **profile of prison inmates**, for instance, include less school qualifications, poor handwriting skills and known SEN needs [which should have been identified at the school phase of their lives]. Recent, information [5] details the statistics on prisoners who have been diagnosed as being dyslexic in their adult status. The concern that an 'excluded child' would go on to lead a criminal life and end up in prison was not just about the 'care of a child' but also about the cost of this child to the criminal justice system and then the on-going future costs of not attempting to be an independent adult. Hence, their **personal financial skills** and the balance of their 'health and well-being' status: **health versus wealth**.

The recent, 2024, Annual Statement on Prison Capacity [6] recorded that as of 2nd December 2024, the population of the adult prison [estate] was 85,688. This is approximately 135 prisoners per 100,000 of the population in England and Wales. The majority of this population was 82,193 men and 3,495 women according to this 2024 report. The report [6] includes data about prison offenders released from prison on licence:

- ✓ The Probation Service does vital work supervising offenders released from prison on licence, including prior to their release from prison, as well as supervising offenders on community orders or suspended sentence orders.
- ✓ As of 30 June 2024, 238,646 people were receiving probation supervision, of whom:
 - ✓ 62,316 had community orders
 - ✓ 45,387 had suspended sentence orders with requirements
 - ✓ 76,027 were being supported pre-release
 - ✓ 60,772 were under post-release supervision
 - ✓ Of the total population, 91% (216,818) were men and 9% (21,828) were women

In 2014 a research paper was shared on the House of Commons website page [7]. This provided transparency about a public disorder offence: The August 2011 riots. It provided anonymised data about the people involved in the riot activity including children (such as age and education status) as below:

'At midday on 28th September there were 465 10-17 year olds who had appeared before the courts. In 83% of these cases a match was made with the DfE's National Pupil Database. Young riot suspects were more likely to be from deprived areas, have SEN, have poor attendance/behaviour records and have lower educational attainment'. [7]

A charitable trust that aims to support people with literacy and numeracy skills: Shannon Trust [8], details on their 2025 website 'that over 70% of people in prison can't read or struggle to'. The trust aims to support people in the community and not just **people living in prisons**. A voluntary organisation: We and AI [9], detail on their 2025 website pages the work that they

have been providing for for 5 years to help communities understand what AI (artificial intelligence) is. The website page [9] includes details about the American prison population and that 50% of the prison population is estimated to be dyslexic (available on the website page in 2025). The Centre for Social Justice for the UK (2021) clarified that dyslexia [and other forms of neurodivergence] is classified as a disability and that approximately 50% of the prison population could have **dyslexia** prevalences. [10]

The advancement of digital connectivity has allowed the general public to understand [so **increase emotional intelligence** by facilitating the transfer of knowledge] that many dyslexic people have successful careers and life experiences. These people have gone onto support and inspire many young people to be positive and aim to be successful adults and this includes entrepreneurship and leadership. A study completed in America and published in 2020 [11, 12, 13] for instance, provided results that show the success and pathway of dyslexic students into paid employment. This Yale team had focused on **reading support** for their students, for instance, and this work was supported by funding from the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity and the Seedlings Foundation. The sample included 2 groups of Yale University graduates who had graduated at least 5 years previous at the start of the study: dyslexic readers and typical readers. The methodology included a survey, which included a 5-point Likert scale format, was designed for ‘closed-style question responses’ with additional ‘open-style questions’ for qualitative data. The report details,

‘that the survey items and scales were largely adapted from the Yale Adult Survey of the Connecticut Longitudinal Study which was designed to identify the long-term adult outcomes of childhood reading disability. Many of the items from the Self-Assessment Scale were adapted from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)’ [11]

Information about the methodology is highly useful for validity and reliability reasons and can increase confidence for a variety of professionals when attempting to gain support for future planning and implementation. The online-reporting archive [12] includes details of the research team from the Pediatric Neurology, School of Medicine at Yale University and the Great Lakes Counseling Center, Addison, Texas, USA. It’s important, however, to recognise that in England, the word ‘counseling’ would be spelt ‘counselling’ and this is important for English natives. It’s important because it signifies a ‘therapy service’ and not a political [government/local authority] health ministry or other type of politically-aimed service. In 2025, vocabulary spellings and alternative meanings such as synonyms can be efficiently searched and verified using laptops and even mobile phones. Verifying terminology, online, is a major advantage of the IT industry sector as data has been inputted over the centuries which now enables greater accuracy, precision, data confidence and time-efficiency. In turn, this supported the UK Government, 2016 theme: Making Digital Work [14] and hence, made it a successful theme.

In England, schools and colleges have had the ability to provide work experience opportunities for their pupils/students for many decades. Parents have encouraged their children to work during school holidays or weekend work, for instance. These work experiences (when available) can provide opportunities for the child (and their carers/parents) to explore the child’s ability and **readiness for work** or approach/attitude to work.

Work experience can provide real-time opportunities for children/young adults to work alongside employees in the workplace and develop their **readiness for work**. For instance, can they get to work on time, wear a uniform (or appropriate clothing), listen to instructions and complete required tasks? This can also support children in their ‘**active listening**’ skills (receptive skill) and continue to develop their lexical knowledge including their speaking skills and pronunciation

skills. Over the last 20 years, the British Dyslexia organisation: BDA [15] has also focused on numerical complications and challenges specific to the problem of **dyscalculia** and the learning and remembering of simple mathematics. The ‘*fear of maths*’ is a common characteristic of people with dyscalculia and this becomes more of a problem with **personal finance** planning in later years escalating into further **financial literacy difficulties**.

As stated in MaPS (2021) which is a UK 10 year strategy:

‘social changes also have an impact on what children are able to experience. Society is becoming more digital and cashless, which means that children are less likely to see cash being used. As transactions become increasingly contactless, it becomes harder to observe parents using debit or credit cards. And Covid-19 has led to many other changes, such as it being less likely for children to be visiting shops, and less likely to handle money, for reasons of hygiene. This is making money less tangible and potentially making it harder for them to have a sense of what money is, which they will need when they do start to make connections between economic concepts and the concept of money. This may be even more of a reason to focus on economic concepts as separate from money and currency’. [16]

This [16] publication is collaborative work based on the findings of a workshop relating to understanding the financial capabilities of children between the ages of 4 and 6 years old. The work so far includes virtual and primary qualitative data collection methods used with children and their main primary carers to explore themes such as ‘attachment theory’ and ‘financial locus of control’. This is part of a 10 year UK Strategy for planning for Financial Well-being. The report includes a page on ‘how’ SEN children can be included in the future but it doesn’t specifically mention dyslexia or dyscalculia. Another financial literacy focused event in March 2025 in Cyprus led by Milidonis [17] also didn’t specifically mention children with dyslexia during the event. Despite this the focus on ‘financial education’ is very appropriate and relevant for this article.

The development of digital tools for inclusive learning [as exhibited at dyslexia focused ‘live events’ such as the 2023 Dyslexia show in Birmingham, England] have been welcomed by many educators and parents. The 2023 Dyslexia Show marketing information included the statement below:

We create technology that makes classrooms and exams more accessible and inclusive. Our education tools support learners with reading, writing and maths. Helping them to understand and be understood. [18]

Prior to the launch of these type of dyslexia focused events, researchers have continually worked in toxic and/or unproductive environments (commercial and industrial settings, for instance) and have helped to develop resources, and outcomes, that can further assist with businesses, and organisations, that want to foster ‘a listening culture’ and more healthy work locations and experiences. Topics have ranged from understanding work stressors; burnout; goal setting theories; intrinsic and extrinsic rewards; closedown effect and process; inefficient business premises, motivating employees; organizational citizenship behaviour; career goals; employee autonomy; congruent goals; human behaviour. This research is readily available in a variety of archives and publications. Some of these publications also include meta-analysis work such as Lars Häsänen, Johnny Hellgren and Magnus Hansson’s work: *Goal setting and plant closure: When bad things turn good* [19]

This 2011 [19] study includes 74 references. The 2 references quoted in the statement below [are part of these 74 and included in the method section of the article and] relate to one of the 6 hypotheses that were tested during the project: work stress defined as ‘job induced tension’,

Job-induced tension was measured with House and Rizzo’s (1972) seven-item scale, intended to capture strain that can be ascribed to the job (e.g. ‘*I work under a great deal of tension*’ and ‘*I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job*’), and which has been used in a Swedish setting (e.g. Näswall et al, 2005). [19]

A 2023 Centre of Policy (CPS) report focused on **inadequate schools** (as well as 2 other themes: ‘looked-after children’ and children from poor backgrounds). This report [19] states that, ‘as of March 2022 there were just over 400,000 children in need’ (implying due to their disability) and about 1 in 40 schools were judged to be inadequate (primary and secondary schools). Whilst there’s not a direct reference to disabled children in the report there are approaches that appear to support all parents (and carers) such as ‘Catching Up via a Parent Premium, Parent Powers for Failing schools and Giving parents a voice on failing schools’. [20]

In England, schools were being challenged in the 1980’s and 1990’s to be more efficient as well as other publically (government) funded services (prisons, libraries, colleges and hospitals, for instance). Some **failing and/or inadequate schools** were supported with ‘business model’ strategies and encouraged to employ non-teaching managers and leaders. In 1996, the author (myself) questioned whether exclusion was unjustified because the pupil was being punished for the **failures of the school** and the SEN policy which were both controlled by political rationales. The 1996 dissertation report included educational sociological themes and topics such as education as a socialising institution; the consequences of school exclusion - lack of moral integration; **inadequate schools** perpetuate pupil problems; SEN policy and under-resourcing; SEN in the market place; the dilemma of SEN provision; motivation behind the government to support SEN policy; Thatcherism; SEN in dissent; the marketisation of educational provision; humanitarianism V individualism; pragmatism within the free market; winners and losers in a market philosophy; special needs in a market economy (are bad news!); the market philosophy and cost-effectiveness; under-resourcing SEN provision.

3. METHODOLOGY

In 1996, a case study research project was completed. This involved primary data collection of non-participant observations. Table 1, summaries the details of this case study methodology. The focus of the project was the education sector: the Exclusion of Special Educational Needs Pupils for an undergraduate final year research task, dissertation. The main question [for this 2025 summary and review] was, ‘*is the punishment of [school] exclusion appropriate or would another punishment be more appropriate*’?

3.1. What Ethical Considerations were Made in 1996?

- ✓ Permission secured to complete the project - gate-keeper permission
- ✓ Anonymity/identity protection - for the children and the teacher
- ✓ Data collection - Note taking and the safe protection of the details
- ✓ Researcher bias - to alleviate bias - prior knowledge of the child’s statemented SEN: child abuse and dyslexia

To address more recent research ethical guidelines [for the purpose of researcher ethical considerations, the theme Making Digital Work [14] plus Knowledge Transfer specific for non-fiction work], 2 other ethical areas were also considered in 1996 as part of the methodology:

- ✓ Researcher bias. To alleviate bias due to prior knowledge of the child's stated SEN: child abuse and dyslexia (an extensive literature review was planned and completed)

Table 1 : Case study: primary and secondary data collection

Primary data-
✓ observational study of classroom activities
✓ observation of classroom behaviour re: one child who was to be excluded
✓ overt & covert non-participant observational study: qualitative method
Secondary data findings -
✓ Literature review: quantitative, theories and explanations
✓ 104 sources of literature
Observational findings and discussion

- ✓ Child abuse is a general term. It can be physical, 'tough love' and/ or neglect (social & emotional abuse), for instance. As this was not the main focus of the work, it was not a major aspect of the analysis. (Financial abuse is more relevant for adults and online hate/bullying/abuse wasn't relevant in 1996 as children didn't use digital online technology in the classroom in 1996).

In 1996, the inclusion of a methodology discussion was an evaluated decision to ensure that **researcher bias** was alleviated as much as necessary (based primarily on the evidence of the **primary data** collected and its importance). The situation of the lack of school exclusion (as a **school punishment**) information redirected the case study (of one child and the classroom observations as detailed in Table 1), to an investigation of the failing SEN provision and again enabling the observational findings to be relevant.

The **secondary data** findings (as detailed in the literature review and referenced in the bibliography) were independently sought and selected to analyse and discuss SEN provision. As detailed in Table 1, 104 sources were seen as relevant to the case study. It is necessary to clarify why a case study formation was completed and provide an account of the research findings. The case study presents itself as the pivot, to which the secondary resources are explicitly applied to reveal the inequity of the **punishment of school exclusion** in this scenario.

An 'opportunistic' case study project evolved due to ethical considerations experienced and made during an observational study of classroom activities (initially, in the previous year when permissions were secured, hence, a primary data research project in 1995 was completed relating to the **primary data collection stage**). The majority of the observations were made in a non-participant format, although there was occasional interaction with the teacher. However, non-participant observation was not the initial method but the one that consequently evolved due to the circumstances of the situation which will be explained briefly.

3.2. Why was Non-Participant Observation Selected as the Method for Data Collection?

Research access was available at the school because previously, the author had conducted [voluntary] work experience there so the opportunity to conduct research in the class was available. Once the focus of **school exclusion as a punishment** was decided [and this was because one of the children in the class was to be excluded imminently,] it was difficult to participate in interaction with the teacher due to the delicate situation. For instance, the teacher's perception of **exclusion as a punishment** was not negotiable. She believed the child deserved to be excluded from the school. Interest 'against school exclusion' may have triggered hostility and damaged the relationship between myself and the teacher, consequently, a calculated decision was made based on the prior objective that it was an advantageous situation for research and, consequently, non-participant observations predominated the research.

Whilst making observations of the child's classroom behaviour (that is the child who was to be excluded from school), it became increasingly awkward to reveal my observations to the teacher because of the increased tension in the classroom concerning the **exclusion punishment** which the teacher desired. Consequently, the teacher was under the impression that another child was being observed and not the one to be excluded. Thus, the method of non-participant observation was reinforced and pursued due to the focus, had been chosen.

Other methods of data collection would have been obstructed by the time limitations, for instance, interviewing or a questionnaire method would have incorporated lengthy planning. Although, a structured interview with a questionnaire would have been useful (in terms of being measurable over different timescales) and, therefore, might be seen as more reliable and with greater validity particular with the parents/carers views and other **responsible adults** in the classroom. At the time, non-participant observation was deemed to be the most efficient method on both cost, and time, plus the most effective on results due to the ethical dilemma I found myself in. An educational psychologist, teaching assistant or a teacher, for instance, today, would have access to a variety of digital resources to enable decisions of appropriate school punishments which could aid the management of decision dilemmas especially due to parental concerns such as inadequate or failing schools and their preference for keeping the child at school despite any challenging and unacceptable disruptive behaviour.

3.3. How were the Findings Interpreted?

The case study was presented as the pivot of the research discussion - the primary source of data collected was the focal point to which secondary sources of analysis were applied and discussed.

The secondary data sources were purposely used to enhance and emphasize the case study, the objectives of the secondary data sources both qualitative and quantitative data, cannot be ignored but at the same time were not the central issue of this methodology. As detailed in Table 1, 104

sources of information/literature were sought as relevant to this case study specifically due to the main themes that emerged and the wider context of the purpose of the school exclusion procedure. It appeared at the time that, school exclusion as a punishment was a new phenomena for academics (as discussed in the literature review), and therefore,

some of the secondary sources [4,5] were quantitative methods that also incorporated evaluative research .

The subjective pivot of the case study was explored and assessed against more objective analysis (the wider societal context) to ensure that the ‘ exclusion as a punishment dilemma’ for a SEN child, was not simply viewed within the boundaries of the observed classroom. The case study findings were therefore, analysed by applying behavioural studies that related to 2 themes (the child’s stated SEN): child abuse and dyslexia.

The main research question was then able to contribute to the main question of appropriate **school punishment**. For instance, is the punishment of [school] exclusion appropriate or would another punishment be more appropriate? Does school exclusion (as a punishment) result in ‘creating a child in need’ or at the very least exacerbate the conditions of a ‘child in need’ hence: is the child excluded, a ‘child in need’? Or was the child [to be excluded] already a ‘**child in need**’?.

3.4. Are Children Still Being Excluded from School as a Punishment?

The 2019 review [3] detailed the rise in school exclusions as a form of punishment.

4. CONCLUSION

Twenty years on, more children are able to be supported during their schooling years due to that advancement of digital resources and the work of The British Dyslexia Association [15]. For instance, the BDA have continually engaged in research to develop resources that help children, and adults, access education and be more successful in their learning. Resources to support reading have been popular including audio books, audio pens, eye sight tests, hearing assessments, online learning services, and ‘readiness’ for school monitoring. The digital industry, and knowledge transfer systems, have supported the training of teachers in England in being more aware of learning challenges like dyslexia. In other areas of education, digital initiatives with ‘virtual classrooms’ and online lessons have flourished. During the COVID19 pandemic, school closures required most children to learn at home with online lessons and audio technology (books and podcasts, for instance). In 2024, BDA had an active social media service including a FaceBook service and a website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk There’s also the Made By Dyslexia charity [21] which provides lots of resources, interviews and ideas, for adults and educators. The BDA also provides information about dyslexia related events where attendees can meet product designers and understand new learning products for home-schooling as well as what are used in schools [15]. A new university in partnership with the Open University was planned to open in 2025 with a focus on dyslexia [26].

As detailed in the 2024 social media project summary report [22], in the past there has been concerns of access to services based on the geographical location of a child and their family. Whether rural, urban or even coastal locations are providing the appropriate support for children with learning needs such as dyslexia and also dyscalculia. There are now education systems that can provide digital services including a dyslexia assessment which can be accessed on a mobile smartphone or other **digital (computerised) devices**. Latham (2024) also details that more

recently, a 2019 article explained how the ‘**digital skills gap**’ was a focus for financial employees who were mentoring inner city children: ‘Bank staff help inner city kids master computer science’ [22, 23]. This 2019 focus on inner city as a location is reminiscent of widely known social deprivation factors and future **employability** concerns reported by the NESS 2006 team [24] and summarised by Latham [25]. This 2019 article doesn’t specifically mention supporting children with dyslexia or dyscalculia. The NESS team as detailed [25] applied methods that attempted to investigate the effect of individual-level poverty, the effect of community-level poverty and the interaction between the two. At this stage, there would not have been a focus on any specific learning need of the children because the children visited were just 3 years old. The developments in the world of dyslexia seem to have been substantial. For instance, there are now assessments that can be used by trained staff at the nursery age to assess a variety of criteria widely acknowledged to be relevant to children at nursery school age. Historically, charitable activities and the developed television programming focus (news, children’s programs and the main BBC Pudsey Bear ‘Children in Need’, for instance) since the 1980’s, focused on poverty or ill or disabled children, initially. This approach made visible the challenge to the education and health/social care services and in doing so planners needed to ensure that age-related funding was being monitored and evaluated for all children and service users. Despite these developments, a recent report has highlighted that a continued focus will be needed on **school exclusion as a form as punishment** due to the reported rise in school exclusions [3].

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