

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS, EXPERIENCES
AND ASPIRATIONS OF MAINSTREAM SECONDARY PUPILS WITH
DYSLEXIA, THEIR PARENTS AND EDUCATIONAL
PROFESSIONALS IN A LONDON BOROUGH AND SINGAPORE**

Zheng Chengde Derek

**Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent
Psychology**

University College London, Institute of Education

ABSTRACT

Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that can have a long-term impact on the academic attainment and psychosocial development of pupils. The present study involved foregrounding the pupil voice regarding their views, experiences and aspirations as learners with dyslexia. This is in line with the current interest in legislature, educational research and the Educational Psychology (EP) profession to listen to the views of pupils as the evidence base suggests that the insights gained from ascertaining pupils' views can help adults working with them to develop a better understanding of their needs and promote better outcomes for them.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from two different legislative and social-cultural contexts, that is, a London borough and Singapore. The interviews covered the pupils' perceptions of dyslexia, and their experiences and aspirations. The views of their parents and of educational professionals working with secondary pupils with dyslexia were also included to provide a holistic perspective. Analysis of the qualitative data was conducted using thematic analysis.

The key findings from the study showed that most pupils had high aspirations, were aware of their strengths and difficulties as learners, gained confidence and made friends from their involvement in clubs and activities and valued the support of their family and friends. The study also found that pupils from the London borough and Singapore had differing perceptions about their strengths as learners and the impact of dyslexia on their aspirations. There was a consensus amongst parents and educational professionals regarding the importance of supporting pupils' self-esteem and confidence as learners, and the need to guide their post-secondary aspirations.

The implications for EP practice and recommendations for future research are considered.

STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Zheng Chengde Derek, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Word count: 34,968

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore the views and experiences of secondary pupils with dyslexia as it is a common learning difficulty that affects reading, writing and spelling (Reid, 2016). The operationalisation of dyslexia used in this study will be discussed in the next chapter as dyslexia occurs on a continuum and researchers continue to debate over an appropriate definition for it (Siegel, 2006). The prevalence rate for dyslexia is estimated at 10% of any given population and affects 5-17% of school-aged pupils (Dyslexia International, 2014; National Health Service [NHS], 2015; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2003).

Studies have shown that children diagnosed with dyslexia during the early school years continue to experience a gap in their literacy abilities in comparison to peers without dyslexia as their literacy difficulties persist into adolescence (Shaywitz et al., 1999; Snowling, Bishop, & Stothard, 2000). Dyslexia can also have a negative effect on the psychosocial development of adolescents with dyslexia as some research has suggested that they have lower self-esteem and perceive themselves to be less competent academically, in comparison to peers without dyslexia (Battistutta, Commissaire, & Steffgen, 2018; Humphrey, 2002; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002). This is likely to impact the educational experience and attainment of adolescents with dyslexia during their secondary education, which is described as a major developmental phase spanning from 10 to 19 years, marked by significant cognitive, physiological and psychosocial changes and challenges (Kar, Choudhury, & Singh, 2015; Kieling, 2017).

Secondary education is considered to be critical for adolescents' learning and development, emotional well-being and future aspirations (UNICEF, 2011). However, secondary education can also be a challenging period for some adolescents. A few

studies have reported the difficulties experienced by typically developing adolescents in secondary schools, such as reduced motivation in their academic learning and difficulties with peer relationships (Brown & Klute, 2006; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Eccles and Roeser (2006) suggested that one possible reason for these difficulties could be due to a poor 'person-environment fit' (p.138) between adolescents and their school environment. These difficulties appear to be more pronounced for adolescents with dyslexia as several studies have shown that they are more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes such as anxiety and self-esteem issues (Novita, 2016), poor academic self-concept (McArthur et al., 2016), bullying by peers (Mishna, 2003) and dropping out of school (Morrison & Cosden, 1997). There is a need for more research to understand the difficulties experienced by adolescents with dyslexia to provide better support for them, as there is evidence to indicate that dyslexia is common amongst secondary pupils in England and Singapore (Department for Education [DfE], 2017; Jin et al., 2013). In addition, some studies have suggested that dyslexia can have a negative impact across the lifespan into adulthood (Goldberg et al., 2003; McNulty, 2003; Snowling, 2014).

The next chapter will provide the contextualisation for this study and discuss the growing interest in educational research, legislature and the Educational Psychology (EP) profession in empowering children and young people (CYP) by listening to their views (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). While there have been a few papers that sought the views of secondary pupils with dyslexia, a review of key articles from the literature detailed in the following chapter identified gaps in the empirical base. The current study aimed to extend the evidence base and make a useful contribution to EPs' knowledge and practice by using a qualitative approach to gain insights into the perceptions, experiences and aspirations of mainstream

secondary pupils with dyslexia from two different legislative and social-cultural contexts, that is, from a London borough and Singapore. The views of parents and educational professionals working with this group of pupils were also included to provide a holistic perspective and a summary table contrasting the organisation of secondary level education in both contexts is listed below.

Table 1 - Secondary Education in a London Borough and Singapore

	A London Borough	Singapore
Typical age at entry	11 years old	13 years old
Years of secondary education	5 years (Year 7 to 11)	4 – *5 (Secondary 1 to 5) (Pupils streamed into Express or Normal course based on their National Examination results taken at the end of primary school - Primary School Leaving Examination)
Qualification upon graduation	GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education)	GCE 'O' Levels (General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level for Express course) or *GCE 'N' Levels (for Normal course) *Pupils who perform well in their GCE 'N' Levels are eligible to have a 5 th year of secondary education leading to the GCE 'O' Levels

Note: Adapted from

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06798/SN06798.pdf> and

<https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/secondary>. Copyright 2018 by Roberts, N. and

Ministry of Education, Singapore.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter Overview

In this chapter, the researcher will first discuss the definitions of dyslexia and cover the theoretical concept underpinning the research before providing the contextualisation for the study. Next, the systematic literature search conducted to review the empirical base will be detailed and the key articles identified will be reviewed. Finally, the aims and research questions of the study will be stated.

2.2. Definitions of Dyslexia

There appears to be a growing consensus amongst researchers that dyslexia is likely due to be a neurodevelopmental condition with a probable genetic aetiology (Hahn, Foxe, & Molholm, 2014; Nash et al., 2013; Zhong et al., 2013). While it is recognised that a key characteristic of dyslexia is that it affects a person's phonological skills - phonological awareness, phonological memory and decoding (Gooch, Snowling, & Hulme, 2011), a universally accepted definition for dyslexia remains elusive as there are differing views on the emphasis of the neurological factors, educational implications and symptoms presented in individuals with dyslexia (Reid, 2016). This is compounded by the wide range of difficulties commonly associated with dyslexia, such as slow handwriting speed, difficulties with written work and executive functioning difficulties, such as poor planning, attention and organisation (Snowling, 2013).

Given the lack of consensus regarding the conceptualisation of dyslexia, Elliott and Grigorenko (2014) queried the usefulness of having dyslexia as a diagnostic classification. The authors noted that evidence has been unable to clearly delineate how the genetics, cognitive difficulties or neurological underpinnings associated with dyslexia differ from those of poor readers, and that evidence-based

interventions recommended for poor readers and individuals with dyslexia are largely similar. However, Nicholson (2016) contended that dyslexia is best understood by distinguishing between the neurological differences and the associated behavioural presentations (i.e., phonological delay, reading disability, motor-coordination issues, slow processing speed, etc.) while Ramus (2014) argued that the use of diagnostic criteria and classifications should be seen as a systematic undertaking to understand the commonality among difficulties – “sets of symptoms and underlying traits that tend to go together” (p. 3374).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher classified dyslexia as a special educational need (SEN) as it is widely accepted to be a persistent learning difficulty that makes learning difficult for CYP (DfE, 2015b). The researcher used the working definition of dyslexia outlined in the Rose Report (Rose, 2009) as it has influenced both the Dyslexia Policy at the Local Authority of the London borough (X Educational Psychology Service, 2014) and the Professional Practice Guidelines for the Psycho-educational Assessment and Placement of Students with Special Educational Needs in Singapore (Ministry of Education – Singapore [MOE], 2011) where the research was conducted.

The Rose Report (Rose, 2009) is an influential paper that was commissioned by the UK government and represented a joint effort among academics, voluntary and professional organisations to review best practices around the identification and support for CYP with dyslexia (Reid, 2016). From their review, Rose (2009) outlined the following working definition and characteristics of 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 co-ordination, 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

In both the London borough and Singapore where this research was conducted, dyslexia and its characteristics appear to be mainly perceived as a learning difficulty that has a negative impact on the academic attainment of pupils with dyslexia, hindering them from achieving their academic potential (MOE, 2011; Rose, 2009). Hence, the strategies and approaches espoused by the MOE and the National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN) both appear to have a key focus on creating a more conducive and 'dyslexia-friendly' learning environment at home and in school, as well as supporting pupils' confidence and self-esteem, to enable pupils with dyslexia to mitigate the impact that dyslexia have on their academic and social emotional well-being (NASEN, 2015; Schoolbag, 2016).

2.3. Theoretical Concept Underpinning Research

The researcher drew upon some of the key concepts from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST) to serve as the theoretical basis underpinning this research (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005). The BEST is a useful framework to

conceptualise this research as it aptly describes the interconnected, nested dimensions of contexts and systems interacting with the CYP. The CYP is placed at the centre of the BEST, with each nested structure (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro systems) represented as concentric, interconnected spheres of influence around the child.

Microsystem – Family, school and peer groups (immediate setting)

Mesosystem – Interaction between two microsystems, e.g., parents and school

Exosystem – Extended family, parents' workplace (exerts indirect influences on the child)

Macrosystem – Legislature and wider societal, cultural values

The micro- and mesosystem have more direct influence with the CYP due to their proximity to the CYP while the exo- and macrosystem are located further away from the CYP and have more indirect effects. The dimension of "time" was subsequently added to account for life events or experiences across a person's development and referred to as the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

This paper will be informed by some of the key principles of the BEST (i.e., person-environment interaction/ influence, the microsystem, mesosystem and macrosystem) that align with the focus of this study. One of the strengths of using the BEST as the underlying conceptual framework is that it is a good fit with the primary aim of the study to elicit the views and experiences of secondary pupils with dyslexia. The pupils' views are prioritised in this study in relation to the interaction with their home and school environment, which the researcher will supplement with inputs gathered from their parents and educational professionals. The next section of

this paper will describe the scope of the research before outlining the ecological details relevant to this study.

2.4. Research Context

Pupil Voice: Legislature, Literature and EP Practice

United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Over the past few decades, there has been a global paradigm shift regarding the importance of pupils' perspective and this has been largely attributed to the UNCRC (United Nations [UN], 1989) (Noyes, 2005). The UNCRC (UN, 1989) was ratified by many countries including the UK and Singapore and it empowered CYP by declaring a list of 'rights' for all individuals below 18 years old, with Article 28 and 29 of the UNCRC stating that children should have access to high-quality education that nurtures their abilities, and Article 12 stating that CYP have the right to express their views and for adults to listen to their opinions.

Pupil Voice

The increased focus on pupils' perspectives globally has often been attributed to Article 12 of the UNCRC (UN, 1989), as it advocated and supported pupils with the right to express their views and be listened to by adults (Jones, 2017). Lundy (2007) also suggested that Article 12 of the UNCRC contributed to the concept of the 'pupil voice'.

The pupil voice is described as listening and consulting pupils on decision-making processes and schools in England are strongly encouraged to adhere to the UNCRC (DfE, 2014d). The DfE (DfE, 2014d) stated that by consulting pupils about their views, it can help to raise pupil achievement and attainment outcomes by helping them to be more confident, motivated and engaged with their learning. While the concept of the pupil voice is less prevalent in Singapore, the city-state has

continued to make good progress in adhering to Article 12 of the UNCRC by proactively encouraging youths to participate in consultations, forums and panel discussion to share their perspectives on issues that matter to them (Ministry for Social and Family Development, 2017).

The literature has consistently advocated the need to ascertain the views of CYP, especially CYP with SEN (e.g., Blackman, 2011; O'Connor et al., 2011; Soar, Gersch, & Lawrence, 2006), as it can help pupils with SEN develop their metacognitive abilities (i.e., reflection, planning and monitoring) and understand their strengths and difficulties as learners (Roller, 1998). In the UK, it is also a statutory requirement to fully involve CYP with SEN to ascertain their views, preferences and aspirations (Gov.uk, 2015a). Flutter (2007) described the pupil voice as a “powerful tool” (p.344) as it enables teachers to engage pupils more effectively in their learning by being attuned to their views and preferences (Whitty & Wisby, 2007). Arnot et al. (2004) similarly emphasised the importance of consulting low-attainment and/ or disengaged pupils to better understand their learning and/ or school difficulties to promote better outcomes for them.

Within the EP profession, there is also a growing body of published work by EPs eliciting the pupil voice (e.g., Gersch & Noble, 1991; Gersch, Holgate, & Sigston, 1993; Greig, Hobbs, & Roffey, 2014; Norwich, Kelly, & Educational Psychologists in Training, 2006). However, Gersch, Lipscomb and Potton (2017) reiterated the need for more research to access the pupil voice as the literature is still slight and limited in its breadth and depth, given the diverse range of CYP with SEN. While recording the pupil voice may not be a unique contribution by EPs (Ashton & Roberts, 2006), Ingram (2013) suggested that it is an important function for EPs as it enables pupils to share their insights and their contribution may be

valuable to deepening the understanding of a problem situation or aid in the problem-solving process. While EPs are uniquely positioned as a bridge between the home and school context and can work closely with the adults supporting the CYP (Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010), there is a need to directly access the views and experiences of adolescents with SEN to promote better outcomes for them as Darling (2007) suggested that adolescents are more likely to conceal information and less likely to share information with their parents. The following sections will detail the research context of the London borough and Singapore where the research was conducted.

London Borough

The London borough where the research was conducted is one of 14 Local Authorities (LAs) which make up Inner London and has a diverse and high-density population.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance Relevant to CYP with Dyslexia

There are a few key pieces of legislature and statutory guidance pertaining to CYP with SEN in England and as such, this is relevant to CYP with dyslexia. One is The Children and Families Act 2014 which states that LAs are responsible for a CYP identified as having or suspected to have SEN, up to the age of 25 years old. The LAs also have a legal responsibility to assess the CYP's educational, health and care needs if necessary and draft an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan to indicate the provision needed and how to best meet the needs. LAs also have a legal responsibility to ensure that CYP with SEN and their families are consulted during decision-making processes and to review their EHC provisions regularly (Gov.uk, 2014).

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (SEND Code of Practice) is another important document as it provides statutory guidance for LAs and organisations working with CYP with SEN and disability (Gov.uk, 2015a). The SEND Code of Practice reiterates the importance of meaningfully engaging CYP with SEN and their families at individual and strategic levels during decision-making processes, especially in terms of enabling CYP to achieve better outcomes and higher aspirations.

Lastly, The Equality Act 2010 aims to prevent discrimination and has a specific section (Part 6) to address discrimination in education. Part 6 states that schools have to adhere to statutory requirements to provide reasonable adjustments to support the needs of their pupils and to ensure that their admission processes, educational provisions and practices do not discriminate or victimise a pupil (Gov.uk, 2010).

Secondary Education System

All LA maintained schools in England have a statutory responsibility to deliver the National Curriculum: Secondary Key Stage 3 for pupils aged 11-14 years and Key Stage 4 for pupils aged 14 – 16 years (DfE, 2014a). This is a continuation of the National Curriculum: Primary that covered Key Stage 1 and 2 (DfE, 2014b).

School SEN Support

The DfE recognises that pupils with SEN and disabilities may require additional learning support and recommends adhering to the Code of Practice on educational provisions and approaches to best meet the needs of CYPs with SEN (DfE, 2015b). All LA-maintained mainstreams schools are also directed to designate a qualified teacher of the school as a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) (DfE, 2014c). The key role of the SENCO is to advise and work

collaboratively with colleagues, parents and external professionals regarding educational provisions and support for pupils with SEN (Gov.uk, 2015a).

Singapore

Singapore is a city-state located in South-East Asia, with Chinese forming the majority of the ethnic group at 74.3%, followed by Malays at 13.4% and lastly Indians at 9% (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2017). While Singapore and the London borough both have a high density and diverse population, it was not feasible to segment a 'borough' in Singapore and attempt a like-for-like comparison due to Singapore's unique position as a modestly sized city-state.

Legislation relevant to CYP with dyslexia

While there is no legislature or statutory guidance relevant to CYP with dyslexia, the government has continued to make progress towards building a more inclusive society for people with disabilities since ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2013 (UN, 2016). In terms of government-led initiatives relevant to pupils with SEN, The 3rd Enabling Masterplan 2017-2021 with a key focus on 'caring nation, inclusive society' has seen the government reiterating the need to integrate pupils with SEN and continue with efforts to build up SEN provisions in mainstream schools (Fam, 2016).

Secondary Education System

The education system in Singapore is widely considered to be successful, demonstrated by its consistently high performance in global education rankings for Maths, Reading and Science, measured from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an international educational benchmark conducted every three years by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD) for 15-year-olds from more than 70 countries (Coughlan, 2016; Davie, 2016).

The entry age for mainstream secondary education, where students typically enter Secondary (Sec) 1 is 13 years old, with lessons delivered in English and classes having an average size of 35 pupils (MOE, 2016). Students are placed into the express or normal (academic/ technical) stream based on their national examination results taken at the end of their 6-year primary school education, which determines if they can take the GCE O-Level in 4 or 5 years (MOE, 2016).

School SEN Support

Targeted support for students with dyslexia in mainstream schools is nascent, with intervention for pupil with dyslexia in the form of school-based dyslexia remediation (SDR) piloted in 2012 and rolled out state-wide in 2016 (Ho, 2015). However, the SDR has a limited reach as it is a two-year intervention programme meant for students in Primary 3 and 4 (aged 9 to 10 years), who are identified following a systemic cohort screening at the end of Primary 2 (Schoolbag, 2014).

While there is no relevant legislature pertaining to the mandatory provision of resources and support for students with SEN in mainstream schools, the MOE has introduced two SEN-related initiatives since 2004 to support students with mild SEN such as dyslexia, ADHD and Autism (MOE, 2017a). The Allied Educator (Learning and Behavioural Support) [AED(LBS)] fulfils a specialist SEN role similar to that of the SENCO in the UK while Teachers Trained in Special Needs (TSNs) have a certificate-level training in SEN (MOE, 2017b). According to recent statistical data, all 141 primary schools and 92 out of 119 secondary schools have at least one AED (LBS) while 10% and 20% of all teachers in primary schools and secondary schools respectively are designated as TSN (MOE, 2016a).

2.5. Systematic Literature Search

A systematic literature search was conducted to review the empirical base pertaining to secondary pupils with dyslexia in three key areas: pupil voice, inclusive education and school experience. This was to enable the researcher to develop a better understanding of the empirical base around the views and experiences of adolescents with dyslexia in secondary education and to identify gaps in the literature. The literature search was restricted to studies conducted in the UK and Singapore to ensure contextual relevance to this research.

The researcher conducted a systematic literature search during December 2017 to January 2018 on the following databases (ERIC - EBSCO, Web of Science, British Education Index and Psych Info). This was restricted to peer reviewed journal articles published in English from January 1998 to January 2018. A total of 783 articles were found from the systematic literature search and after reading the title and abstract of the shortlisted articles to remove papers that did not meet the inclusion criteria (see Appendix 8), three articles were shortlisted to be reviewed in the next section. Due to the small number of articles that met the inclusion criteria, the researcher conducted another search on the British Library EThOS and will also review two doctoral level thesis that met the inclusion criteria of the systematic literature search.

2.5.1. Review of Key Articles

Article 1: Burden and Burdett (2005)

The authors interviewed 50 adolescent boys aged between 11 and 16 years old using a combination of interviews, Likert-style questionnaire relating to emotions and the Myself-As-Learner-Scale to explore pupils' attitudes towards learning and their perceptions about dyslexia.

Burden and Burdett (2005) found that although majority pupils expressed positive views about their learning, slightly more than a quarter of the participants (28%) appeared to have low academic expectations of themselves as they indicated that they would not be as good in their academic attainment in comparison to peers without dyslexia. Most of the pupils also viewed their dyslexia negatively, as 30% of the pupils hoped that their dyslexia would go away while 34% of pupils wished that they did not have dyslexia. However, one encouraging finding was that almost 94% the pupils felt that they could achieve their aspirations just as their peers without dyslexia if they put in a lot of effort in their learning. The authors described this as a positive finding as it suggested that pupils were optimistic about their ability to excel in examinations if they worked hard.

However, a caveat for the findings was that the study was conducted in a small, single-sex school of less than 100 pupils led by a team of highly-trained educators in small classes specifically meant to educate pupils with SEN. Therefore, the findings gathered from this alternative secondary setting may have limited transferability to mainstream secondary schools and this was acknowledged by the authors.

Article 2: Glazzard (2010)

This study investigated the self-esteem of nine mainstream secondary pupils aged 14-15 years old with dyslexia from two secondary schools in North England using semi-structured interviews. Glazzard (2010) found that the majority of the pupils compared themselves with peers without dyslexia and attributed a range of negative self-perceptions such as feeling 'stupid, disappointed or isolated' (p. 64) to themselves.

There were mixed responses from the pupils regarding the support received from teachers. While some pupils felt that their teachers had hurt their self-esteem by using harsh comments, criticising them in class and complaining to their parents about their poorer academic performance, some pupils described their teachers as encouraging and mostly supportive of their learning needs. There were also mixed views about the influence of peers as half of the pupils reported that they did not experience any verbal or physical bullying while some pupils shared that they were teased by peers due to their spelling difficulties and having to attend additional SEN classes. All of the pupils in the study reported positively about the support and understanding received from their parents.

One of the strengths of the study is that it provided some insights into the support and difficulties experienced by a small group of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia by exploring the influence of peers, teachers and their parents on their school experience. However, the relatively small sample size of nine pupils limited generalisability of the findings and the lack of perspectives from parents and teachers also limited the depth of the findings.

Article 3: Ang (2014)

Ang (2014) adopted a two-phase mixed methods approach using four questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions of classroom environment and student engagement in English lessons. The study involved 160 secondary school pupils with dyslexia and 75 teachers from 13 secondary schools in Singapore for her doctoral thesis. For phase 1 of the research, the quantitative data gathered from pupils and teachers was analysed using path analysis to explore the relationships between classroom factors, engagement and literacy progress. The author found that emotional engagement had a statistically

significant and large effect size on behavioural engagement ($\beta = .74$, $p < 0.001$) and behavioural engagement had a statistically significant and medium effect size on literacy progress ($\beta = .26$, $p < 0.001$). The findings from phase 1 was used in the next phase of the study to explore the identified factors using a qualitative approach.

In phase 2 of the study, Ang (2014) used a semi-structured interview protocol with 16 purposively sampled pupils (i.e., highly engaged/ disengaged) to explore the facilitative factors contributing to engagement and achievement in literacy. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis and three main themes – contributions from the classroom (i.e., teacher attributes, teaching and learning), contributions from the student (Impact of dyslexia, motivation, past experience and personal attributes) and contributions from the home (tuition, exposure to English language at home and support from family) emerged from the data set. Taken together, the study provided a good overview around the pupil, home and school factors contributing to student engagement and attainment in literacy.

One key finding was that all pupils described dyslexia as impacting their academic attainment and it appeared that most pupils (11 out of 16) had a poor understanding around the difficulties associated with their dyslexia as some pupils described themselves as 'slow, retarded, dumb or lazy to study' (p.153). Ang (2014) hypothesised that pupils with dyslexia who have a poor understanding of their difficulties might be negatively impacted in their engagement and confidence as learners.

One of the limitations from the study was that the pupil participants were not homogenous as 19 of the 160 participants had an additional SEN diagnosis (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism or Dyspraxia) and this might have a confounding effect on the findings, especially for the qualitative data. There was also

limited information around the broader educational experience from pupils as the author had a specific focus on the classroom environment and pupil engagement regarding their literacy only.

Article 4: Kelly (2015)

In his doctoral thesis, Kelly (2015) conducted semi-structured interviews with nine secondary pupils with dyslexia from a few secondary schools in an inner-London LA to explore their school transition experience. By using thematic analysis, Kelly (2015) was able to identify and classify emerging themes from his participants.

One of the key difficulties experienced by pupils was regarding disclosure of their dyslexia to teachers as they had limited understanding of the difficulties associated with their dyslexia and this in turn affected their ability to help teachers understand their learning style. Consequently, some pupils found it difficult to request help from their teachers when their teachers did not know about their dyslexia or when they had a poor relationship with the teacher. A few pupils shared that they enjoyed their school experience more in secondary school as they began to experience success in their learning, especially for practical and experiential lessons. Kelly (2015) emphasised the importance of helping pupils with dyslexia to develop a better awareness of their strengths as learners as they can then gain confidence to engage with their learning more meaningfully. Another key finding from the study was the importance of support from family and peers as pupils stated that the support from their peers and family enabled them to cope with the academic demands of secondary education.

One key limitation is that the participants were only recruited from schools within one LA, hence Kelly (2015) cautioned that the findings should be interpreted within the practice and context of that LA only. The study was also focused on the

transitional experience of the pupils and the author explained that the research was conducted during the first term of the academic year, which meant that the three Year 7 pupils and six Year 8 pupils included in the study likely had limited experience of secondary education. The inclusion of pupils with dyslexia from the older year groups might have enabled a richer description of their secondary school experience, although this appeared to be beyond the scope of the study by Kelly (2015).

Article 5: McCormack-Colbert, Jones and Ware (2017)

The authors used a case study design to interview and gain a better understanding about the views and experiences of three Welsh and three French secondary school pupils regarding their school support. One particular strength of the study is the use of interviews with adults working with this group of pupils by including two Head Teachers, one conseiller principal d'éducation (CPE), two Additional Educational Needs Coordinators, six parents, six teachers, one specialist dyslexia teacher and one speech therapist. The cross-cultural study provided useful insights into how dyslexia was perceived and the support received by secondary pupils with dyslexia in school between two different legislative and social-cultural contexts.

The authors found that there was more school support for Welsh pupils with dyslexia as all of the Welsh learners received additional school support and had a modified timetable whereas there was only one French pupil who received support sessions with the speech therapist. There were similar themes elicited from both Welsh and French participants as all of the pupils suggested that they would like more differentiated teaching approaches in their mainstream, regular lessons. Most parents from both data sets were also unsatisfied with the school support provided to

their child. Some parents highlighted the lack of understanding and support by some teachers regarding their child's dyslexia and felt that the school needed to engage them more regularly regarding their child's learning. While the educational professionals acknowledged the need to share information and work more closely with parents to discuss support plans for learners with dyslexia, it appeared that the excessive school workload is hindering most professionals from being able to engage parents regularly.

Due to the paucity of cross-cultural research pertaining to dyslexia in the literature, the paper was useful in providing a better understanding of how dyslexia is supported in the UK and France. The inclusion of parents, teachers and educational professionals also helped to illuminate the challenges for home-school partnerships to support the learning needs of pupils with dyslexia. However, the findings need to be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size and the research was also limited in its research focus as participants were mainly queried about the conceptualisation of dyslexia and school SEN support for pupils with dyslexia.

2.5.2. Summary of Key Articles

There were only a small number of studies that explored the views and experiences of secondary pupils with dyslexia in the UK and Singapore. Most of the previous research recruited pupils in the first two years of secondary education and had a specific research focus (i.e., transition/ school support or pupil engagement in literacy). This has resulted in limited insights around the wider educational experiences and views of secondary pupils with dyslexia, especially from pupils in the later secondary year groups.

With the exception of the research by Burden and Burdett (2005) as the study was conducted with secondary pupils with dyslexia from an alternative provision,

there was a general consensus from the other papers that secondary pupils with dyslexia experienced more difficulties in their academic attainment and perceived their dyslexia negatively. Three studies (e.g., Ang, 2014; Kelly, 2015; McCormack-Colbert et al., 2017) also highlighted the importance of social support (peers and family) and teachers in helping pupils to adjust to the demands of secondary education and attain better outcomes. However, most of the papers had limited generalisability due to the modest sample sizes and there is a need for more research to extend the empirical base around the views and experiences of secondary pupils with dyslexia.

2.6. Present Study

This study aimed to contribute to the empirical base by consulting secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore using a qualitative approach that will be detailed in the next chapter. One of the main foci of the research was to explore pupils' perceptions regarding their strengths and difficulties as learners and the support received from the home and school environment, as the literature is relatively limited. By eliciting the views from secondary pupils with dyslexia from two different legislative and social-cultural contexts, it is hoped that this research will be able to extend the literature by deepening the understanding around the facilitators and barriers around the educational experiences of adolescents with dyslexia in these two contexts.

The views of parents and educational professionals working with secondary pupils with dyslexia will be included to provide a more holistic perspective as some of the studies reviewed in the previous section highlighted the importance of home and school support. This study will also look to address the gaps in the empirical base by including secondary pupils from older year groups as they are likely to be able to

provide deeper insights given their longer immersion in the secondary education.

Lastly, this paper will also enquire about pupils' aspirations as there is a dearth of research around the aspirations of adolescents with dyslexia.

2.7. Research Questions (RQs)

1. RQ 1: What are the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore in relation to their strengths and difficulties as a learner?
2. RQ 2: What are the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore in relation to their intervention or support received from school and/ or home?
3. RQ 3: What are the academic and career aspirations of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by presenting the research paradigm and epistemological position of the researcher. Next, the research design and procedures for data collection and data analysis will be elaborated. Thirdly, issues around the validity of the study will be discussed before discussing about the researcher's reflexivity and concludes with details of the ethical considerations.

3.2. Research Paradigm

Paradigms are a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). It is useful to articulate the research paradigm and the underpinning philosophical orientation of the researcher as it helps to provide clarity and explain how the research was shaped (Creswell, 2013). Mertens (2015) categorised the four major research paradigms as postpositivism, social constructivist/ constructivism, transformative and pragmatic. The social constructivism paradigm was chosen as the foundation for this research as it is a good fit with the exploratory nature of this study to understand the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and educational professionals who work with this group of pupils in a London borough and Singapore.

Social constructivism takes the stance that knowledge is co-constructed through social processes and interactions between people, typically involving the use of language (Burr, 2003). It is a commonly used typology in qualitative research which sees the researcher collaborating with research participants and using research procedures such as interviews and/ or observations to co-construct a shared understanding of the participants' lived experience and worldview (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Schwandt, 2007). In social constructivism research, there is no

objective truth or reality as every person's perspective (including that of the researcher) is inherently informed by his or her underlying beliefs and values (Burr, 2003). Hence, the primary role of the researcher is to understand the intersubjective worldview and "multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge" (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 25) co-developed with research participants.

3.3. Epistemological Stance

Epistemology considers how knowledge is conceptualised and the relationship between the researcher and the research participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Creswell (2013) summarised the epistemological beliefs in social constructivism as an interactive social process between the researcher and the research participant, with the knowledge that the interpretation of the findings by the researcher is influenced by his or her background, personal experiences, beliefs and values. The data set gathered from face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher with the research participants in this study will be presented in the next chapter while the researcher's reflexivity and positionality will be detailed in a subsequent section later in this chapter.

3.4. Research Design

A case study was used as the research design for this study. Case studies are characterised as an empirical inquiry with the researcher as the primary tool for data gathering and interpretation by using an inductive (bottom-up) approach in the "search for meaning and understanding" (Merriam, 2009, p. 37) to produce a detailed description and analysis of the operationalised "case". This investigative approach was selected as it aligns closely with the aim of this exploratory study to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of mainstream secondary

pupils with dyslexia, their parents and educational professionals in a London borough and Singapore.

While there has been an increasing trend of case studies being used in qualitative research (Thomas, 2011), some authors have highlighted a lack of clarity and consistency by researchers who use this approach (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014; Thomas, 2011). In carrying out this case study, the researcher used the five components of research design as laid out by Yin (2014), described by Robson and McCartan (2016) as one of the leading advocates in this field. The key components of research designs stated by Yin (2014) are 1). Formulation of the research questions following a review of the literature, 2). Defining the focus of the study, 3). Detailing the 'case' to be examined in the study, 4). Stating the analysis method to examine the data set.

As the focus and research questions of the study have been covered in the previous chapters, the researcher will detail the 'case' and analysis method used to examine the data set. For the definition of the "case" in this study, the researcher selected a group of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia. Similarly, parents and educational professionals who participated in this study were also grouped in their respective categories as the other two units of analysis to compliment the data gathered from the two group of pupils. As this exploratory study was conducted in two different contexts (i.e., a London borough and Singapore), a multiple-case study design was used (see Figure 1). In comparison to a single-case design, a multiple-case study is generally regarded as more compelling as it involves gathering more data and lends itself to being regarded as more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). The researcher used thematic analysis for this study as it a widely used method in qualitative research that enables "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns

(themes) within data... minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

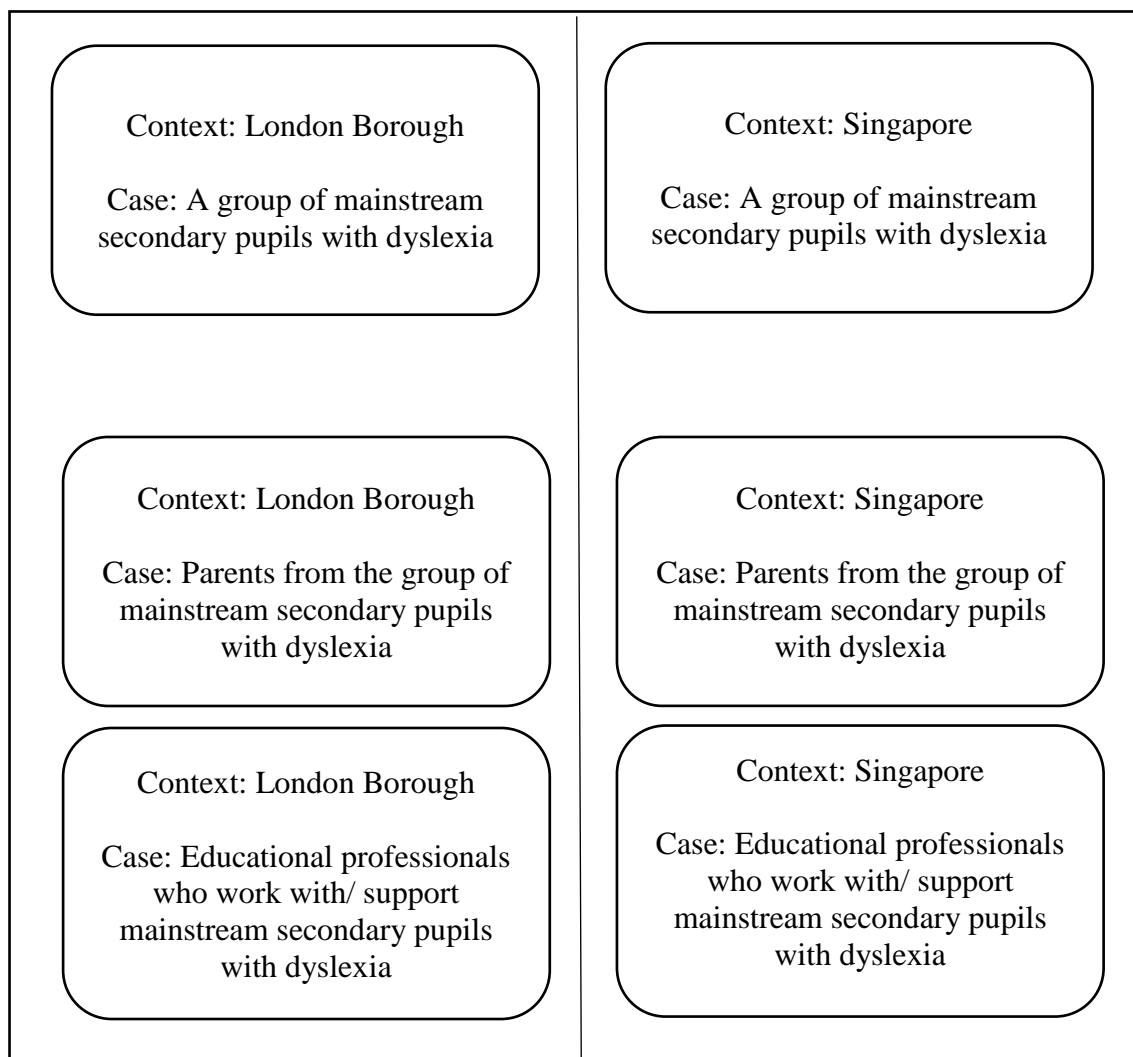


Figure 1. Multiple Case Study Design

3.5. Sampling Strategy and Approach

Starke (2006) presented three different sampling strategies for case study (i.e., intrinsic, instrumental and collective/multiple case study) and suggested that researchers should also consider factors such as the aims of the case study, logistical considerations and ease of access to potential research participants when deciding on a suitable case study sampling strategy. The researcher used the multiple case study strategy postulated by Starke (2006) as it met the purpose of the

study to develop a deeper understanding of the “cases” (i.e., mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and educational professionals) across two different contexts in a London borough and Singapore.

A purposive sampling approach was selected to enable the researcher to select informed participants who could contribute meaningfully and share rich information to meet the aims of this research (Mertens, 2015). Robson and McCartan (2016) explained that purposive sampling as a commonly used sampling approach in qualitative research as it allows researchers to meet the aims or needs in a study, especially when “statistical generalisation from sample to population” (p.281) is not a main consideration of the study.

3.5.1. Inclusion Criteria

The researcher used a set of inclusion criteria to ensure that potential pupil participants would meet the aims and needs of this study. The set of criteria listed below was agreed upon after supervision with research supervisors to ensure that the lived experiences, and perceptions of pupils were closely associated with dyslexia while limiting influences from other special educational needs (SEN), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) concerns, English as an additional language (EAL) and/ or primary to secondary school transition factors.

- Dyslexia diagnosis as indicated from school records or reported by parent
- English as a first language
- No other SEN, physical, neurological, sensory or mental health difficulties
- Preferably Year 8 and above/ Secondary 2 and above

There were no specific inclusion criteria for parents and educational professionals as this study prioritised the perceptions and experiences of pupils. Parents were given an option to be interviewed in the research consent form, while

educational professionals who worked directly with this group of pupils in their educational setting were also asked if they wished to participate in this study. The main purpose for including parents and educational professionals in this study was to provide a more holistic perspective and supplement the findings gathered from pupils.

3.5.2. Participant Recruitment - London Borough

In the London borough, two mainstream LA maintained secondary schools were identified during individual supervision with the researcher's placement supervisor. Through subsequent individual discussion with the SENCOs from these two secondary schools, it was determined that both schools were keen to participate in this research as they would like to better understand and support their pupils with dyslexia.

After receiving written consent from the head teachers of both secondary schools, the SENCOs from the two secondary schools assisted to shortlist potential pupil participants based on the research inclusion criteria. Following subsequent discussion with each SENCO, the list of potential participants was finalised.

3.5.3. Participant Recruitment - Singapore

In Singapore, the researcher approached several government-maintained mainstream secondary schools in addition to three major ethnic self-help charity groups, two ministries (Education, Social and Family Development), a dyslexia intervention centre and accessed online platforms used by parents of CYP with dyslexia. A few parents from the online platforms and the dyslexia intervention centre responded to indicate their interest to participate in the research, while the other organisations signposted the researcher to the dyslexia intervention centre.

The researcher then collaborated with a member of staff from the dyslexia intervention centre after receiving approval from the organisation's research panel and liaised separately with parents from online platforms to finalise the participant list. The dyslexia intervention centre organised two parent drop-in sessions to invite potential pupil and parent participants to be involved in the research but there were no respondents on either occasion. However, the dyslexia intervention centre was able to identify three educational professionals to participate in the study.

3.5.4. Data Collection

Interviewing is a widely used research method as it is a research tool which provides a flexible approach to data collection and is not restricted to a particular theoretical and epistemological position (Breakwell, 2012). The researcher used face-to-face semi-structured interviews as it was a suitable strategy for an exploratory study. The approach was chosen as fully structured interviews may limit insights from interviewees and hinder them from sharing additional, unplanned and/or unforeseen discussion points during the interview, while unstructured interviews may possibly result in interviewees not responding to the research questions (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

The researcher prepared three separate sets of interview schedules for pupils, parents and educational professionals that covered similar discussion points. The interview schedule was piloted with six individuals (one participant for each category in the London borough and in Singapore). Following feedback from pilot participants and discussion with research supervisors, minor amendments were made and the final interview schedules used in the main data collection phase can be seen in Appendix 6. A list of participants recruited to the study in the two settings is provided in Table 2.

Table 2 - Participant List

London-Borough-Pupils						
S/No.	Identifier	Year-Group	Gender	Ethnicity	School	First Language
1.	UK-Pupil-01	10	Female	White-British	School-A	English
2.	UK-Pupil-02	10	Female	White-British	School-A	English
3.	UK-Pupil-03	9	Male	White-British	School-A	English
4.	UK-Pupil-04	9	Male	White-British	School-A	English
5.	UK-Pupil-05	8	Male	White-British	School-A	English
6.	UK-Pupil-06	8	Male	White-British	School-A	English
7.	UK-Pupil-07	8	Male	White-British-Other	School-B	English
8.	UK-Pupil-08	9	Male	White-British	School-B	English
9.	UK-Pupil-09	8	Female	White-British	School-B	English
London-Borough-Parents-and-Educational-Professionals						
S/No.	Identifier	Gender	Role		First Language	
1.	UK-Parent-01	Female	Mother-of-UK-Pupil-01-School-A		English	
2.	UK-Parent-02	Female	Mother-of-UK-Pupil-02-School-A		English	
3.	UK-Parent-03	Female	Mother-of-UK-Pupil-03-School-A		English	
4.	UK-Parent-04	Female	Mother-of-UK-Pupil-07-School-B		Spanish	
5.	UK-Parent-05	Male	Father-of-UK-Pupil-08-School-B		English	
6.	UK-Parent-06	Female	Mother-of-UK-Pupil-09-School-B		English	
7.	UK-Staff-01	Female	SEN-Teacher-School A		English	
8.	UK-Staff-02	Male	SENCO-School A		English	
9.	UK-Staff-03	Female	School-EP-School-A		English	
10.	UK-Staff-04	Female	Deputy-SENCO-School-B		English	

Singapore-Pupils						
S/No.	Identifier	Year-Group	Gender	Ethnicity	School	First Language
1.	SG-Pupil-01	SG-Sec-5	Male	Chinese	School-C	English
2.	SG-Pupil-02	SG-Sec-1	Female	Chinese	School-D	English
3.	SG-Pupil-03	SG-Sec-3	Male	Chinese	School-E	English
Singapore-Parents-and-Educational-Professionals						
S/No.	Identifier	Gender	Role	First Language		
1.	SG-Parent-01	Female	Mother-of-SG-Pupil-02-School-D	English		
2.	SG-Parent-02	Female	Mother-of-SG-Pupil-03-School-E	Mandarin Chinese		
3.	SG-Staff-01	Female	Assistant-Director/-Psychologist-Dyslexia-intervention-centre	English		
4.	SG-Staff-02	Female	Educational-Advisor-Dyslexia-intervention-centre	English		
5.	SG-Staff-03	Female	Specialist-Psychologist-Dyslexia-intervention-centre	English		

3.5.5. Research Procedures - London Borough

For participants in the London borough, the researcher sent the research information sheet and consent form electronically to the SENCOs from both secondary schools upon receiving written permission from the head teachers to work with their school (please see appendix 2). The SENCOs from both secondary schools assisted to arrange interview slots with pupils, parents and colleagues upon receiving the completed consent forms. All interviews with the participants were conducted in their respective schools during term time in June and July 2017.

3.5.6. Research Procedures - Singapore

For participants in Singapore, the researcher sent the research information sheet and consent form electronically to a member of staff from the dyslexia intervention centre and to parents from the online platforms after they have indicated

their interest to participate in this study. The staff from the dyslexia intervention centre assisted to arrange interview slots with three educational professionals from their organisation at their head office in September 2017 while the researcher liaised directly with parents. All interviews with parents and pupils were conducted during the Singapore school term holiday period in November 2017 at a high visibility and quiet area of a shopping mall. One parent interview was conducted in Mandarin as that was the parent's preferred language and was subsequently translated into English by the researcher.

3.6. Data Analysis

The researcher used a thematic analysis approach as it is a flexible technique that can be used across various research paradigms, especially when research participants are involved in the data collection process as collaborators as it can help to highlight unexpected insights and categorise convergent and divergent views from research participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analysis of the data set was conducted by the researcher with the use of a qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) and the researcher followed the six phases of thematic analysis first detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and further expanded by Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015). The six phases of thematic analysis are 1). Familiarisation: data analysis is facilitated by in-depth knowledge of, and engagement, with the data set, 2). Coding: a systematic process of identifying and labelling relevant features of the data in relation to the research question, 3). 'Searching' for themes: the researcher clusters together codes to create a plausible mapping of key patterns in the data, 4). Reviewing themes: the researcher pauses the process of theme generation to check whether the candidate themes exhibit a good 'fit' with the coded data and with the entire data set, and each has a clear,

distinct 'essence' – or central organising concept, 5). Defining and naming themes: writing theme definitions (effectively a brief summary of each theme) and selecting a theme name ensure the conceptual clarity of each theme and 6). Writing the report: the researcher weaves together their analytic narrative and vivid, compelling data extracts.

3.7. Demonstrating Validity in Qualitative Research

While statistical generalisability from a sample to a wider population is a key characteristic associated with quantitative research, qualitative researchers differ somewhat as they aim to demonstrate the usefulness and flexibility of their research through 'theoretical' or 'vertical' findings that can be generalisable to other contexts sharing similar attributes (Johnson, 1997, p. 200).

Yardley (2015) discussed a set of core principles (e.g., sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, coherence and transparency and impact and importance) to enhance the validity of qualitative study. However, Barbour (2001) cautioned against using technical fixes (e.g., purposive sampling, ground theory, multiple coding and respondent validation) as means to enhance rigour in qualitative research without due diligence to understanding how it complements the research design and data analysis. Through discussion with research supervisors and personal reflection, these following approaches were used to enhance validity in this study.

Gaining Multiple Perspectives

The researcher sought to gain multiple perspectives for this study rather than viewing it solely from a singular perspective (Flick, 1992). While this study prioritised pupils' views and experiences, the researcher also interviewed parents and educational professionals working with this group of pupils to gain insights that pupils may not be aware of. By gaining multiple perspectives, the researcher was able to

gain a richer description and supplement the findings collected from the pupils (Yardley, 2015).

Checking of Researcher's Coding

Shenton (2004) discussed the usefulness of peer analysis and regular sessions with research supervisors as possible ways to improve the trustworthiness of qualitative studies. The researcher adopted this approach and was able to proactively engage research supervisors and colleagues on the doctoral programmes on a regular basis to discuss the researcher's coding and thematic maps. This was done through supervision with research supervisors and colleagues on the doctoral programme during university mandated peer supervision research sessions. These two platforms provided opportunities for the researcher to make necessary refinements to the coding and thematic maps to improve the clarity and credibility of the data analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.8. Positionality and Reflexivity of Research

Yardley (2015) suggested that it is important for qualitative researchers to be transparent and describe how the data and interpretation process was influenced by the researcher as it is assumed the researcher will influence the study in qualitative research. The researcher is a Chinese Singaporean who was educated in Singapore and completed his Master's degree in the UK before embarking on this doctoral programme, which enabled the researcher to be immersed in a different social, cultural and legislative context. The researcher's work experience as a trainee EP on placement at a LA borough and learning points from university lecture sessions led to the researcher developing an interest in accessing the pupil voice, as it is a less talked about concept in the researcher's home country.

The researcher views the EP role as one that tries to make a meaningful contribution to promote better outcomes for pupils with SEN, as they are the core group of CYP that EPs work with in their practice. Through informal discussion with peers on the programme, EP colleagues and supervisors from work placement, it appears that EPs frequently work with pupils with dyslexia, primarily to assess pupils for dyslexia, but often had little involvement after the assessment/ diagnosis. This was a contributing factor that influenced the researcher to conduct this study and to use it as a platform to access the pupil voice and develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions and aspirations of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from two different social, cultural and legislative contexts in the London borough and Singapore to explore if there is a possible opportunity for EPs to be involved to support this group of pupils to attain better outcomes.

During the interviews with research participants, the researcher explicitly explained his primary role as a doctoral student conducting a piece of research and his secondary role as a trainee EP on placement with the LA (in a London borough and with the Ministry of Education) as part of the doctoral programme. Even though the researcher had explicitly informed participants that their identities will be anonymised and kept confidential unless there are concerns about their personal safety or the safety of others, the researcher is aware that research participants may be influenced in their responses by factors such as social desirability, personal experiences and worldview.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research was granted by the university ethics board in January 2017 (see appendix 1). The relevant ethics guidelines as laid out in the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2009) and

the Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014) were closely adhered to during the research, with key ethical considerations elaborated below.

Respect for the Autonomy and Dignity of Persons

To ensure that participants were fully informed of the requirements for this study, the researcher prepared three different sets of research information sheets and consent forms for pupils, parents and educational professionals that were then sent electronically either through the SENCO for this research (participants from London borough) or to the executive and parents (participants from Singapore) so that they could access the document at their convenience prior to the interview with the researcher (see appendix 3, 4 and 5). The researcher also briefly discussed the information sheet and read aloud the consent/assent form with each participant prior to the start of the interview.

The research information sheet explained the aims of the research, data collection method, confidentiality and anonymity conditions regarding the data and potential disclosures, as well as the time commitment and extent of contribution expected from participants. Participants were also informed that they could choose to decline any questions during the interview and may also withdraw their consent at any time during the research and have their data destroyed and removed from the data set with no consequences.

Maximising Benefit and Minimising Harm

Over the course of the research, the researcher was diligent in ensuring that potential risks to the psychological well-being, mental health, personal values or dignity of participants were carefully considered. As the main aim of the research was for participants to share their lived experiences, views and aspirations around dyslexia, there was a possibility that participants, especially pupils and parents, may

experience anxiety, discomfort and/ or embarrassment as it may be an emotive discussion topic for them. Participants were informed in writing, in the research information sheet, and verbally prior to the start of the interview, that they could choose not to answer any question(s) or end the interview if they wished to at any point in time with no consequence. Participants experiencing distress would also be accompanied by the researcher to see an appropriate member of school staff or signposted to a counselling service if needed. The six participants (one pupil, parent and educational professional from the London borough and Singapore) who participated in the pilot interviews did not exhibit any anxiety or express any concerns regarding the interview questions when they were asked for their comments at the end of the interview by the researcher. This was similarly observed in the main data collection phase.

For participants from the London borough, all the interviews were conducted in a relatively quiet, highly visible room during regular schooling hours within the school premises. The researcher worked closely with the school's SENCO/ deputy SENCO to ensure that pupils scheduled for research interviews did not miss any core lessons in school. The researcher was also flexible to meet parents and educational professionals at their preferred time-slots for the research interviews.

For participants in Singapore, the researcher arranged to meet the participants at their preferred time-slots and venue to minimise possible inconvenience. Interviews with the educational professionals were conducted in a relatively quiet, highly visible room during regular working hours at the dyslexia intervention centre's head office. Pupils were chaperoned by their parents for the interviews that were conducted during the end-of-year school holiday period at a relatively quiet public area. Parent and pupil interviews were conducted individually

and the pupil/ parent waiting for their turn was asked to wait a short distance away to ensure participant confidentiality.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All personal data collected for the research were stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (Gov.uk, 1998). Participants were given a unique alpha-numerical code by the researcher to correspond with their audio recording to ensure the anonymity of participants. The master sheet containing the link between the alpha-numerical code and participant's identity was kept separately from other data in a locked cabinet by the researcher. Access to the participant's personal information was also kept secure in a separate locked cabinet and restricted only to the researcher, with anonymised data accessed by the researcher's two research supervisors.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Chapter Overview

The researcher will present the qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with research participants from the London borough and Singapore before providing a summary of the key findings at the end of the chapter.

4.2. Analysis of Qualitative Data

The data sets from the participants in the London borough and Singapore were analysed separately and will be outlined sequentially in this chapter. As the pupil voice is prioritised in this study, the researcher will first present the qualitative data analysis from pupils before covering the findings from parents and educational professionals.

The researcher used thematic analysis detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse the data set. First, the interviewed were transcribed by the researcher and checked for errors before being read several times for the researcher to be familiar with the data set. Next, all of the transcripts were uploaded onto NVivo for the coding process. After the transcripts were coded using NVivo (see Appendix 7 for sample), they were printed out and the researcher began to manually organise similar codes into clusters. Following an iterative process of refining the codes, themes and sub-themes began to emerge. The researcher continued to refine the codes, themes and sub-themes by referring back to the transcripts as necessary before eventually conceptualising the thematic tables for the study.

In this chapter, common descriptors of frequency described by Opperman et al. (2014) was used by the researcher to report the frequency count. The terms *majority* or *most* are used in this chapter to represent more than half of the participants while *few* or *some* would indicate less than half of the participants. Each

quotation cited from research participants is annotated with a unique participant code and the participant's corresponding transcript line number.

4.3. Main Themes for Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - London Borough

Table 3 provides a summary of the main-themes and sub-themes obtained from the interviews with nine mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough.

Table 3 - Thematic Table for Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - London Borough

Main-Themes	Sub-Themes
School-experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven-teacher-awareness-and-competency-regarding-dyslexia • Gaining-confidence-from-clubs-and-activities • Experienced-bullying • Limited-involvement-with-SEN-decision-making-processes
Learning-difficulties-and-school-support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range-of-difficulties-affecting-learning • SEN-support-in-school • Difficulties-with-learning-Modern-Foreign-Language-(MFL)
Family-and-peer-support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive-family-support • Positive-peer-relationships
Post-secondary-school-aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic-and/-or-career-aspirations • Impact-of-dyslexia-on-academic-and/-or-career-aspirations

School-Experience*Uneven-teacher-awareness-and-competency-regarding-pupils'-dyslexia*

Only one pupil stated that all his teachers knew that he has dyslexia while a few pupils shared some of their teachers knew about their dyslexia.

My Maths teacher kind of give me support anyway. I don't know if she knows I have dyslexia or not.

(UK08, 28)

There were some, a lot of the teachers I think have caught on.

(UK04, 277)

Some of the pupils commented that their teachers did not seem to understand how to support their dyslexia. One pupil stated that he would often get into trouble and be sent out of class because of the lack of understanding and support from his teachers.

I don't feel like they always understand but in parents' evening, when they talked to my mum and me, they try to understand why, so they really do try but sometimes they still don't quite understand.

(UK01, 301-303)

A lot of teachers don't understand... I've got my dyslexia as well and when I don't get the hang of something, the teachers don't understand sometimes and that's when I get into trouble.

(UK04, 260-262)

They would say attempt to do it by yourself and I say I can't do it and say get back trying and I've got short temper so... sent out of class for detention.

(UK04, 264-266)

One pupil suggested that teachers might benefit from more training to better understand and support their pupils' learning difficulties with dyslexia.

I'm not sure what they teach teachers... maybe if they like kind of teach them about kids who would struggle in class and how they can probably help.

(UK01, 316-318)

Gaining-confidence-from-clubs-and-activities

The majority of the pupils responded positively about their involvement with clubs and activities. A few pupils shared how they had gained confidence from their participation in their clubs or activities while some pupils stated that they have made new friends from their involvement with clubs or activities.

I'm in a chapel choir and orchestra. I really enjoy musical theatre and I have recently joined like an opera... I'm more confident than I was... it makes me happy... you have like friends there as well and the teachers are really nice.

(UK01, 187-204)

I have been doing dance... I have made really good friends there, which is good. It's good to just get out of the house I guess and socialise.

(UK 02, 264-267)

Cricket was the only thing, the only source of happiness for me... it brings a lot of happiness to you, especially when you are doing well.

(UK03, 305-306)

I do boxing outside of school... it helps me meet new people and it gives me like in a way to escape school and get a break from it a little and do something I like.

(UK04, 290-291)

I do scouts, which I found really fun... building up my confidence and meeting new friends and I learn new things like knot tying.

(UK09, 111-117)

Experienced-bullying

Two pupils recalled their past experiences of being bullied in the first year of secondary school, however these incidents of bullying seemed to have stopped subsequently.

I was bullied a little bit in Year 7 but as I got older, it's just about fitting in.

(UK04, 306-307)

It stopped now but like they would ask you how to spell things and all of this... if they were be rude to me and I would say something back, they will say can you spell the word.

(UK03, 228-230)

One possible reason that pupils with dyslexia might experience bullying is because they might be perceived differently by their peers due to their poor academic attainment.

The system, the smartest-lowest, they say ah, you are the lowest, where I'm actually the middle.

You know, people say that people with dyslexia are automatically stupid.

(UK03, 423-425)

Limited-involvement-with-SEN-decision-making-processes

While a few pupils attended parents' evening, parent-teacher meetings or had progress monitoring reports sent home, there was limited evidence of pupils being consulted in decision-making processes regarding their learning and SEN support.

I don't get, things are heard at meetings and thing, I kind of feel good when these meetings, they can understand me better and how I am struggling.

(UK01, 154-158)

I have meetings with my form tutor and he will go through like where my progress is and what targets I need to do... I will just go through with my Form Tutor or my parents at home.

(UK02, 221-225)

We get maybe like one teacher call my mum or dad and they'll have to come and I'll have to listen to them.

(UK07, 125-130)

One pupil expressed an interest to be involved in 3-way meetings with his teachers and parents to discuss support for the subject he experiences difficulties with.

Yeah... I would as I really feel like it helps, like me improve the subject that I'm not good at.

(UK06, 132-137)

Two pupils suggested that there need to be more meetings beyond parents' evening and explained how they would use 3-way meetings to discuss their learning progress and support needed to improve their academic results.

I would like to have, like a one-on-one session with my teacher and then my mum and so we can discuss things... maybe a couple of times a term, because usually I have parents' evening at the start, but it isn't very good, because you don't feedback on the whole year and stuff.

(UK09, 89-101)

Basically, I'm in Year 11 and would need more formal meetings. I don't know, I'm not really happy with my progress.

(UK02, 231-232)

The lack of pupil consultation was evident with a pupil who discussed at length about his unhappiness with the school. He felt that the school staff did not reach out to understand the reason for his poor school attendance and difficulties in school.

I won't come back here or to any school because school is... they don't understand me, my family, they're not understanding my behaviour, they're not understanding your views as a person... what I see is that they care about is the rating of the school.

(UK04, 451-454)

Learning-Difficulties-and-School-Support

Range-of-difficulties-affecting-learning

The majority of the pupils shared a range of difficulties impacting their learning, which affects their note-taking, revision, homework and test performance. Most of the pupils also reported difficulties with remembering lesson content, reading, spelling and writing. A few of the pupils elaborated their difficulties with remembering the lesson content.

When I leave the classroom, the information I have learnt also leaves. So when I go and do the homework, I no longer understand how I did it before.

(UK01, 34-35)

The amount of stuff we have to remember and there is just so much emphasis on remembering certain things... when you can't remember barely any of them, you kind of fail in the tests.

(UK08, 41-43)

I find Maths really easy, but when it comes to tests, I sort of like forget everything.

(UK09, 20)

One pupil stated that her main difficulty is with maintaining her attention and focus in class.

Weakness is just listening, I can't listen to, I don't know why, it's my fault sometimes, sometimes I just, I don't know.

(UK02, 89-91)

One pupil expressed concerns with the revised GCSE as it has increased the difficulty of one of the core subjects – Mathematics.

It's all being changed now, the GCSE... with Maths, things like equations, I just can't get my head around it, it's just really difficult.

(UK02, 39-41)

One pupil described spelling as his main difficulty which has caused him to perform poorly in tests and explained how his difficulties with spelling also affect his ability to cope with the lesson pace as he struggles with copying and note-taking, which subsequently affects his revision.

There's a lot to do with my spelling, I wrote Australia, but it was spelt 'O' and my teacher thought it was something different and I didn't get any marks for that question.

(UK03, 34-36)

I think we should need more time to copy out something. Cause, say I will copy out something, the teacher might switch it to the next slide and I haven't finished it.

(UK03, 53-56)

Some pupils felt that writing is one of their main difficulties, especially for longer pieces of written tasks as they tend to get distracted and lose focus.

My writing is difficult because I can't I find it hard to write for long period of time because I lose focus, I get distracted that's when I start to get into trouble.

(UK04, 67-69)

I find English and History very challenging, because of the writing and reading. I don't like because I get lost in the lines when I read and I lose track.

(UK07, 11-13)

One pupil felt that his difficulty is seen as a weakness as peers are able to spell better and write neater than him. He also stated how his peers might laugh at him for asking the teacher to help with his spelling.

It's harder cause everyone else got like nice handwriting, good at spelling and I've got not good handwriting and I can't even spell properly. I think it is seen as a weakness.

(UK04, 132-134)

Yah, I lose my focus, I find it hard to keep writing and once I can't spell a word, I want to give up... I won't put my hand up cause it feels like, if you put your hand and ask how to spell something, everyone is going to laugh at you.

(UK04, 73-76)

SEN-support-in-school

The majority of the pupils received SEN support in school. Pupils shared a range of conventional SEN support such as having in-class teaching assistant (TA) support, drop-in sessions at the SEN department, withdrawal from regular lessons for SEN sessions to more innovative SEN approaches such as using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support the learning process. Some pupils reported favourably about the SEN support that they receive in school.

I think boosters [English/ Maths] work for me, SEN [drop-in sessions at SEN department] as well. Yeah, just a mixture of them both.

(UK02, 191-192)

We have a reading session and it was me and a couple of dyslexic people and you would read and this SEN will help you. Also SEN, you can do any homework there.

(UK03, 87-90)

I get one to one with my English teacher which helps me a lot.

(UK07, 69)

However, two pupils felt that the effectiveness of the SEN lessons gradually became less useful after a period of time.

The help that I get from the SEN teacher... I don't think it's as useful because I've been doing that for two years now and I think I've got the hang of it... there's not a lot that she could help me improve on.

(UK04, 229-238)

I haven't got any this year because I don't really need them... It kind of stopped by itself but also I kind of, got to a certain level where I didn't need it.

(UK08, 66-70)

For the pupil who received in-class TA support, she commented that she found in-class TA support very useful for her, although she observed that she has been receiving more limited TA support over the years.

I did have one [TA] in Maths apparently for, in Year 8 and Year 9, which helped me a lot when I had it... Year 10, there has been a TA but they have been coming in and out.

(UK01, 496-498)

This pupil also commented positively about the use of ICT with her learning, as she receives a school-issued iPad to help her with her learning, such as for note-taking and remembering lesson content.

The school has given me an iPad to use and I can use it whenever I like... if I find the writing too much, I can type instead or I can take quick notes... it's like my second memory.

(UK01, 47-51)

One pupil commented positively on the use of ICT for progress monitoring and shared that he has gone up in his reading age with the school-based SEN support.

I've gone up in years of reading... we do a thing called the accelerated reading... four times a year.

(UK05, 171-176)

Difficulties-with-learning-Modern-Foreign-Language-(MFL)

All of the pupils stated that they did not receive any additional support in school for this subject. The majority of the pupils experienced significant difficulty with their MFL and chose to drop it by Year 8 or 9.

Yeah, it [German] was the same kind of thing. It was like English which I already struggle with but a lot harder.

(UK01, 443-444)

I did [French] but I couldn't cause it was too hard and I couldn't balance that as well as having dyslexia... it was just really difficult.

(UK02, 459-460)

I did struggle a lot with it [Spanish]... I didn't even know any Spanish, even though I've done it for two years.

(UK04, 527-528)

One pupil suggested that pupils with dyslexia should not learn another language as it can make learning much more complicated than it should be as he felt learning French was twice as hard compared to learning English.

I did [French] but I dropped it... I think you shouldn't, it makes your life way too complicated with another language if you got dyslexia.

(UK03, 359-360)

Some pupils suggested that they would rather use the time for MFL to improve on their core subjects, such as English.

If someone has dyslexia and they really don't want to learn language, I think that they should have the option to drop it and focus on the subjects that they need to improve on... cause I know I would have wanted to do that, but I didn't get to.

(UK02, 509-513)

I would rather work on my English than on my French.

(UK05, 505)

There were also a small number of pupils who felt that they could cope with MFL and would be taking it for their GCSE.

Well I do find it [French] a bit difficult, but it is not that challenging.

(UK09, 201-204)

Only one pupil mentioned that he receives support for his MFL at home as the language is also spoken at home by his Mother and he receives support in his subject from her.

I find it kind of difficult, but easier in a way because around my house, that language is spoken.

(UK07, 253-254)

Family-and-Peer-Support*Supportive-family*

Some pupils shared that they have parents and siblings who are understanding and supportive of them. A few pupils also mentioned that they have family members with dyslexia, which may be a possible reason for the increased level of support and understanding around the pupils' difficulties with dyslexia.

Some of my cousin have dyslexia as well... so sometimes we talk about it... my mum is very understanding... I have two younger brothers, the one closest to my age, I feel he understands it completely and he helps me if he can.

(UK01, 415-421)

My mum and dad are very dyslexic too... they understand. If I struggle with reading or writing sometimes, they usually help.

(UK03, 353-354)

Older sister, she is really cool about it... she is very understanding, supportive.

(UK02, 439-440)

A few of the pupils' parents help with their child's learning at home. One pupil described how her parent would help with her spelling and reading at home, while another pupil explained that he would only be able to receive help from his mother is she is not busy with household chores.

Sometimes she asks me to spell things and something I read out loud and things like that.

(UK09, 192-193)

If I don't get the hang of it, I've got no teachers around and if my mum, like if she's not busy, if she's busy I can't really ask her to help.

(UK04, 323-324)

Positive-peer-relationships

The majority of the pupils described their friends as understanding and supportive. A few of the pupils shared how their friends helped them by studying together with them or helping them through difficult times.

My best friend is very supportive, so she sometimes even asked if we could stay behind in school and do some extra work.

(UK01, 247-248)

My friends they're very helpful because when I'm going through hard times, they help me and they understand how I feel and what I'm doing.

(UK07, 155-156)

A couple of my friends also have dyslexia and yeah, but we're very close because in a way we've all been through the same things.

(UK09, 122-123)

One pupil highlighted the difficulties that pupils with dyslexia may experience as it can be difficult forming and maintaining friendships with peers who are less understanding of their difficulties with dyslexia.

They will even laugh at what I said or they will be like I have no idea what you just said... I feel like they do try to understand and also if they still don't, I guess we just kind of move on.

(UK01, 256-264)

Post-Secondary-School-Aspirations

Academic-and/-or-career-aspirations

The majority of the pupils were able to share their academic or career aspirations after completing their secondary education. Most of the pupils stated that

they would like to continue with their education in Sixth form, college or university, with one pupil stating that she would like to work as an air hostess in the future.

I would hope that I would get into a good uni [university].

(UK03, 276)

I would like to come to the Sixth form.

(UK04, 380)

Sixth form or college wherever I want to go.... to learn about the human body for sports.

(UK05, 315-316)

I would like to be an air hostess, so I look around that area.

(UK02, 110-111)

Some of the pupils were undecided about their aspirations at the moment as they were considering several options.

At the moment I am kind of in like three different things. I even want to work with animals... I want to come here to do English... maybe become a writer or I want to do something like film and animation.

(UK01, 270-273)

I don't really know. I want to join the army or I might want to go to history in some way, military history.

(UK08, 132-134)

I don't really know. It's like, I don't really want to like think ahead cause like, anything could change.

(UK06, 214-215)

Impact-of-dyslexia-on-academic-and/-or-career-aspirations

Pupils expressed mixed views as to whether their dyslexia would be an obstacle to their post-secondary school aspirations. For the pupils who wanted to go to a Sixth form or college, they were unsure about the support needed to help them be successful. One pupil stated that he would look for a job if his grades were not good enough to enter Sixth form.

Probably when I start, a better understanding of it because I have no clue.

(UK03, 276-279)

I don't think I could get in [Sixth form] cause of my grades won't be up to scratch... I'll go straight to work

(UK04, 381-385)

For pupils who felt that dyslexia would not be a barrier to their aspirations, one pupil mentioned successful individuals with dyslexia that his parents had told him about, while another pupil felt that he has confidence that he will succeed from the support he receives from the people around him.

No. Cause my parents told me that like there's lot of famous people who have dyslexia and they've done it.

(UK05, 324-325)

Yes, the support that everybody gives me and it feels like I have the confidence to carry on even though I have dyslexia.

(UK07, 196-197)

While some pupils acknowledged that their dyslexia would likely hinder their aspirations, one pupil stated that she would ask for help to fulfil her aspirations of being a writer.

I hope it doesn't and I won't let it but if it does... with book writing, I probably want maybe, definitely someone to help me make my writing better and be able to write in a way that other people will understand.

(UK01, 292-295)

4.4. Main Themes for Parents of Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - London Borough

Table 4 provides a summary of the main-themes and sub-themes obtained from the interviews with the six parents of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from the London borough.

Table 4 - Thematic Table for Parents of Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - London Borough

Main-Themes	Sub-Themes
Family-support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive-family-members • Building-child's-confidence • Financial-implications-on-family-to-support-child's-dyslexia
School-SEN-support-and-communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven-teacher-awareness-and-understanding-about-child's-dyslexia • Uneven-school-SEN-support • More-parent-school-communication-and-reviews-needed • Difficult-for-child-to-drop-Modern-Foreign-Language-(MFL)
Academic-or-career-aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting-child's-post-secondary-aspirations • Impact-of-dyslexia-on-child's-aspirations

Family-Support***Supportive-family-members***

Most of the parents discussed how they are understanding of their child's difficulties with dyslexia and how they would support their child's learning at home. One parent commented that it can be quite challenging to support their child's learning as her child gets frustrated sometimes.

She's my eldest and we are very proud of her... her younger siblings, her two brothers... they don't tease, they just get on with it.

(UK10, 111-115)

I tend to help as much as I can and so does my husband. I don't go to work anymore so I'm there to help her. She gets quite frustrated if she doesn't understand... we get a lot of tears.

(UK15, 155-158)

A few parents stated that as secondary-aged pupils, their children may not be keen for their parents to help them with their school work and that it can sometimes cause friction between the parent-child bond.

I'm sitting there ready and waiting to help my child, and it's like she doesn't want it cause she knows it's going to take a bit long if I'm helping her... sometimes she lets me help and sometimes she won't.

(UK11, 290-298)

It can cause friction at home, only because I insist that he has to do his homework... sometimes I wished that it would be easier.

(UK13, 169-174)

Building-child's-confidence

A few of the parents stated that their child's difficulties with dyslexia have impacted their child's confidence due to their poor academic attainment.

If you have gone through your entire childhood sitting in a classroom, thinking this is really difficult and then getting your work back and it's all marked wrong.

(UK11, 199-200)

My child, it [dyslexia] does that to my child, loses confidence because he's dyslexic, I feel.

(UK12, 165-166)

Some of the parents emphasised the importance of building their child's confidence and self-esteem, since their children have experienced limited success in their academic work.

You have to work on the self-esteem and build up their confidence.

(UK13, 280-281)

She was never going to be someone who love reading and she was never going to be very good at Maths.... what I want her is to be confident... she sings, she dances... all the other gifts that she has.

(UK11, 129-132)

Some parents stated that they encouraged their child to participate in their preferred non-academic clubs or activities so that their child can be happy and experience success outside of academic work.

We do everything to just make sure that she is okay... she can remain confident in the person she is... we have always tried to look for things outside the academic... goes on every school trip... plays a lot with the orchestra and travels with the choir.

(UK10, 98-102)

I think that success [at cricket] as compared to school makes him feel that he's achieving something.

(UK12, 436-437)

She likes music and she likes some sports so we sort of try and encourage the things she likes to do.

(UK15, 292-293)

Financial implications on family to support child's dyslexia

A few parents detailed the financial cost, time and commitment involved to support their child's learning to ensure that they can be as successful as possible in their learning.

We pay for his tutor every week... it's 35 pounds an hour... time, you know, it's a commitment that we are prepared to do... financially, it is a bit of a knock.

(UK13, 349-357)

We are willing to pay for anything I suppose, if it makes it come to trying to help him through the process of school and GCSE and stuff like that... We have been organising a Maths teacher and anything that we might think need to be hired.

(UK12, 314-318)

School-SEN-Support-and-Communication

Uneven-teacher-awareness-and-understanding-about-child's-dyslexia

All of the parents discussed their experience with uneven teacher awareness and support for their child's dyslexia. Most of the parents had to speak with their child's teachers to help them understand that their child's learning difficulties are associated with his/ her dyslexia.

We had had a lot of difficulties with a variety of teachers over the years... that didn't understand her dyslexia... I had a teacher here who continued to give her detentions daily because her spelling in German wasn't correct.

(UK10, 185-188)

We have to keep reminding teachers... they are quite good at the school here but there are occasions in general just to make sure that everyone is aware of it [child's dyslexia] ... some of them don't. That doesn't make any difference to them but you always have to.

(UK12, 98-103)

Some of her teachers weren't aware she has dyslexia, so she would go into a new class with a new teacher who weren't aware and they would just expect her to work the same as the other kids and of course, she can't.... I have to tell them again.

(UK15, 260-264)

Some of the parents shared that while some teachers have been very supportive of their child's learning needs, there have also been some teachers who have not been able to make reasonable accommodations for their child's dyslexia.

With some of the teachers here... haven't been able to accommodate... I'm just asking for an understanding that she has a different learning style. Some of the teachers have been fantastic, her Maths and Science teachers.

(UK10, 195-198)

I think she should be doing something called functional Maths. I am having some difficulty with that because the Maths teacher calls it Baby Maths. He said, you don't want to do Baby Maths in this very patronising way... I challenged the Maths teacher about that and I said stop calling it that.

(UK11, 271-280)

Yeah, don't think they are all, they are not all, fully supportive of it [child's dyslexia].

(UK12, 528)

A few parents suggested there is limited communication in secondary schools between teachers, which may be a possible reason for the lapse in information sharing about their child's dyslexia.

I think communication is lacking, I think understanding of what a dyslexic person's needs are, are lacking. And to understand it, you don't need to be a specialist... it's just, very basic what they need, and it's still not communicated.

(UK13, 521-526)

I understand that [communication breakdown] happens quite a lot in secondary school cause it's so vast and they can't think about every child so that seems to be a problem.

(UK15, 266-268)

Uneven-school-SEN-support

Some parents expressed some dissatisfaction with the SEN support that their child is receiving in school, as the SEN support was described to be either inconsistent or not fully addressing their child's learning needs.

While it's been consistent, there have been some areas that have let us down.

(UK10, 156-157)

I have been a bit disappointed at times if I am honest. But the most important thing is she's happy here.

(UK11, 109-110)

I actually think she needs more support than what she actually does get. She gets support for Maths but I actually think she needs support for English.

(UK15, 97-99)

A few parents added that they had to advocate and prompt the school for their child to receive SEN support.

It's a bit lacking... I think parents like me are just expected to push... We just expect to be the one to drive everything.

(UK11, 712-713)

The SEN department has been, I mean, has been, very good, I had to kick them into gear a little bit, to begin with.

(UK13, 70-71)

Some of the parents acknowledged that the school is very good at identifying and supporting pupils with dyslexia, although one parent felt that the teaching assistant (TA) is not sufficiently trained to provide SEN support for her child.

For our experience here... we have the wonderful deputy SENCO who is on board and so knowledgeable about how to deal with children with dyslexia.

(UK13, 47-49)

I think the school is very good at recognising problems and very good at encourage children to go and talk to them about issues.

(UK15, 116-118)

She's [teaching assistant – TA] very helpful and my child is here 7.30am everyday and she receives support but the TA isn't trained to support my child.

(UK10, 226-228)

A few parents were also unaware of the type of SEN support provided by the school for their child as they did not seem to be kept updated by their child or the school.

I believe he is part of the SEN department, he comes to the SEN department quite often. The head of SEN knows all of them and I think he can go to him anytime... I don't know how often he has done that.

(UK12, 200-205)

I'm not aware that she gets any support in class other than from her teacher. I'm not sure if there are teaching assistants in her class to be honest.

(UK15, 181-183)

More-parent-school-communication-and-reviews-needed

One parent reported that she had significant difficulty arranging to meet with the SENCO to discuss her child's learning support and progress, while a few parents felt that they needed more regular meetings with the school to discuss their child's learning progress.

We talked about all these things... let's have a meeting, and it has never happened and I emailed the SENCO again and it still never happened.

(UK11, 336-339)

It's useful to have parents' evening but I do think there needs to be a bit more tailoring towards the child to be honest and their specific learning needs... definitely once a term... maybe more if needed.

(UK15, 254-258)

One possible barrier for the limited school-parent communication could be that parents perceive secondary schools to be more a formal educational setting where their involvement is limited and they have to rely on the school to provide the necessary support for their child.

Secondary schools, it's generally much more formal so obviously you don't see parents in the school typically... you feel sort of more removed, so you sort of rely on the school to do more.

(UK14, 138-142)

Some of the parents stated that they would like to have a more regular and structured meetings to periodically review their child's learning progress.

Yeah, a quick 20-minutes meeting, that's all it would take... something more formalised to make us all feel that... she's going somewhere.

(UK11, 719-720)

I think once a term would be good, that's once every four months or something like that, or maybe even every six months.

(UK12, 281-283)

I think it should be a monthly or bi-monthly catch up.... Has to be systematic catch-up and not just a bunch of platitudes about how you are feeling.

(UK14, 470-474)

Difficult-for-child-to-drop-Modern-Foreign-Language-(MFL)

A few parents discussed their child's difficulties with MFL and how they felt that it was not a meaningful use of their child's time.

The school was very hesitant to let her drop the subject... she did German... all of Year 7, all of Year 8... it wasn't a great use of time.

(UK10, 483-485)

I mean it was ridiculous, trying to learn French when she can't you know, it was painful, it was ridiculous... most schools made them do it till Year 9, so at least she got off in year 8.

(UK11, 639-646)

That was two years he had that [French]. Yeah, so if it wasn't going anywhere, then I think it was like wasted on that time.

(UK12, 570-571)

One parent suggested that while pupils with dyslexia may be proficient with learning additional languages, there should be an option for them to drop MFL after one or two school terms and utilise the time more meaningfully for English lessons.

I mean some dyslexic kids... there are all kinds of people who just have a flair for languages. Expose them to it, but maybe after a term or two, maybe then you can say, let's not bother, don't make them go through this painful experience.

(UK11, 667-670)

Definitely it was a waste of time. She should just have more English lessons... more practice at reading would have been better.

(UK11, 658-660)

Academic-or-Career-Aspirations

Supporting-child's-post-secondary-school-aspirations

Some of the parents discussed their role as providing guidance and facilitating their child's aspirations. A few of the parents added that their child's aspirations was largely dependent on their grades and preferences.

It's entirely up to her really, whatever she wants to study... I won't want to push her into something that she didn't want to do. So, we are sort of led by her but try and steer her as well.

(UK15, 305-313)

She wants to do BTEC [Business and Technology Education Council] in travel and tourism... that's the subject she loves... she loves hairdressing... she needs to get Maths and English... these are going to be barriers for her... she's got to work towards getting that.

(UK11, 441-446)

He told me he wants to do his Sixth form here. I think it's great. But otherwise, I don't know, I am going to have to start thinking about it really... I suppose I have to think about it once he looks at his grades I think.

(UK12, 468-474)

A few parents felt that their child would do better in apprenticeship as it is viewed as being less academically demanding amongst the various post-secondary options.

He's a good mixer, he talks well to other people so I was maybe looking more towards the apprenticeship type of route, where he can actually learn.

(UK12, 494-496)

I see my child in an apprenticeship... only because it is more of a practical thing.

(UK13, 409-410)

Impact-of-dyslexia-on-child's-aspirations

Some parents discussed the impact of dyslexia on their child's aspirations and felt that it was likely to affect their ability to work towards their preferred post-secondary choice such as Sixth form or university.

At the moment, it looks very much like my child can't stay here... she won't have the results for Sixth form, which is sad because she's very happy here.

(UK10, 394-395)

He knows his limitations I think... university is probably going to be too much, too far for him.

(UK12, 484-486)

She struggles, I think she feels, obviously that affects her confidence and I think she feels that she can't achieve the same as what others achieve.

(UK15, 328-330)

A few parents discussed how the education system is geared towards examinations and does not consider the different learning styles of pupils, such as pupils with dyslexia.

I think it has been an obstacle because our education system seems to be that you have to fit into these boxes... even though you might get some support... I think our system is setup for people that don't have learning needs.

(UK15, 333-340)

Every child is unique and they all have very different ways of learning and some are better at it than others but I think the education system should be more holistic and appreciate the whole child.

(UK10, 519-522)

4.5. Main Themes for Educational Professionals Working with Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - London Borough

Table 5 provides a summary of the main-themes and sub-themes obtained from the interviews with the four educational professionals (SENCO, Deputy SENCO, SEN Teacher and EP) working with mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia in the London borough setting.

Table 5 - Thematic Table for Educational Professionals Working with Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - London Borough

Main-Themes	Sub-themes
Supporting-pupils'-difficulties-with-dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use-of-Information-and-Communications-Technology-(ICT) • Building-pupils'-confidence-and-self-esteem • School-parent-engagement
School's-SEN-support-constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited-support-for-pupils-with-difficulties-in-Modern-Foreign-Language-(MFL) • Limited-SEN-staff-capacity-and-resource
Pupils'-post-secondary-school-aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting-pupils-to-achieve-their academic-and/or-career-aspirations

Supporting-Pupils'-Difficulties-with-Dyslexia***Use-of-Information-and-Communications-Technology-(ICT)***

The majority of the educational professionals described ICT being increasingly used as SEN support for pupils with dyslexia. The educational professionals detailed some of the ways that ICT is being used in the screening, progress monitoring and intervention support for pupils with dyslexia.

The accelerated reader [software], so basically, we kind of measure them when they are reading and quizzing... every 12 weeks.

(UK16, 208-211)

Some of the pupils on the Star Reading programme, you can see very quickly, as a participant in that, whether you are making progress or not and from that progress comes confidence and if they feel safe, if they feel confident, then the learning will hopefully follow.

(UK17, 235-240)

We use 'Lexia', we also use 'Unit of Sounds' and we have used 'Word Shark', the secondary school version. We find that 'Unit of Sounds' and 'Lexia' are very good for the students to use because they can use it on their own.

(UK19, 138-140)

One SENCO described his school as being more ICT-efficient and friendly. He stated that pupils with dyslexia are able to access the curriculum more easily through online lesson resources. The SENCO also shared that pupils from the older year group have benefitted from using the school-issued iPads to support their learning in school.

The teachers are all encouraged to post their lesson resources online... We are becoming more and more IT efficient and friendly... it is about accessing the curriculum.

(UK17, 215-219)

Some students, especially the older students... who are quite keen on working independently, we found that using something like an iPad... It's portable memory so they can go into a classroom, take screenshots of stuff that is on the whiteboard, if they are in science lesson, they can film experiments, go back and refer to it after school.

(UK17, 210-215)

Building-pupils'-confidence-and-self-esteem

Most of the educational professionals emphasised the importance of building the confidence and self-esteem of pupils with dyslexia and not to let their dyslexia become an obstacle for them.

Highlight that aspect around low self-esteem and the fact that lots of children define themselves if they can read or write and make those comparisons between peers.

(UK18, 176-178)

I think their confidence, understanding the people that they can go to speak to about what is going on... I think for them it is about helping them to get organised and them feeling confident and not feeling that they need to let their dyslexia hold them back.

(UK19, 146-150)

However, one SENCO explained that it can be difficult to identify and work with this group of pupils as they are generally adept at concealing their difficulties and avoiding interactions with others.

In general, as a group, they are very good at, first of all, at hiding their difficulties... you find that lots of them have spent six or seven years in school, developing ways of hiding their issues and that's all about their participation in class, where they sit themselves in class, how much they would talk to the teacher.

(UK17, 181-185)

The SENCO observed that some pupils may present with off-task or disruptive behaviours to avoid engaging with learning. Hence, he suggested that staff would need to be aware that this group of pupils needs to be supported in their confidence and self-esteem to help them engage with their learning more meaningfully.

Some of them it comes through in their behaviour, so they are very good at getting themselves removed from the class, so they don't have to engage in their work.... one of the things that you have to be very mindful of is that they all need their self-esteem and confidence raising.

(UK17, 185-189)

The SENCO emphasised the importance of creating a nurturing learning environment to support pupils with dyslexia while the SEN teacher suggested that a whole-school approach is needed to enable pupils to be more understanding and supportive towards their peers with dyslexia.

I try and create an atmosphere for them that is non-critical, non-judgmental, always encouraging them to take part... lots of praises and encouragement so that they feel safe and I think that is so important, especially for children with dyslexia.

(UK17, 189-193)

The school could do something or explaining what is dyslexia... so that the students are supportive and don't label them, it's kind of a different, nothing better or worst.

(UK16, 291-294)

School-parent-engagement

While the school does not provide formal training sessions such as parent seminars or workshops, the SENCO stated that the school would offer parents advice and guidance during annual review meetings or parents' evening.

What we would do is speak with parents, usually when it's at the review or at the parents' evening and offer them advice and guidance, and how best to work with their child and that happens quite a lot.

(UK17, 333-336)

In addition to annual review meetings or parents' evening, the SENCO stated that additional parent-school meetings may be arranged if needed. However, the Deputy SENCO explained that it can be difficult to arrange for additional parent-school meetings due to time constraints.

If a need arises, if a need is identified, and we are seeing an issue, that is when we will ask parents to come in and engage with them.

(UK17, 134-135)

I think it can be difficult, but I think you have to make the time, so I think it is really important that the teachers are informed and know the students that they have in the classroom and understand their needs, so we make sure that happens.

(UK19, 258-260)

The school EP suggested that the EPs can play a role to help both the school and parent develop a joint understanding of the child's difficulties if needed, and to also manage expectations if there are differing views between the school and parents.

We can suggest and we can recommend and we can mediate and have discussions with parents and help parents bring the school into account for what they have been doing with the child and young person. We can advise and support schools if they are not entirely sure what they are doing... it's about creating a shared understanding of what the expectations are.

(UK18, 241-249)

School's-SEN-Support-Constraints

Limited-support-for-pupils-with-difficulties-in-Modern-Foreign-Language-(MFL)

It is common practice in mainstream secondary schools for Year 7 and 8 pupils to learn a MFL and both the SENCO and deputy SENCO stated that it is about equality of opportunity that pupils with dyslexia take MFL.

That's about the equality of opportunity in that we ask every student to study at least one foreign language in Year 7 and 8 and they can choose at the end of Year 8 to take it as an option in Key Stage 4, which starts in Year 9.

(UK17, 356-358)

If we didn't offer it to dyslexic students because we thought nobody with dyslexia could access it, that wouldn't be good, because actually maybe you're a dyslexic person who is fantastic at languages.

(UK19, 243-245)

However, the SENCO acknowledged that pupils with dyslexia are likely to experience more difficulty with MFL than their peers with dyslexia.

I have sort of become more practical and pragmatic and I can see that in practice, lots of children struggle in Modern Foreign Language.

(UK17, 362-363)

The deputy SENCO appeared to agree with the views from the SENCO that pupils with dyslexia can find MFL very challenging but mentioned that she would not prioritise support for pupils in this area.

Modern Foreign Language doesn't tend to be somewhere we put support in... I understand that learning a language when you are dyslexic can sometimes feel very impossible for a dyslexic pupil... I would not see that as being the most important thing to put support in.

(UK19, 237-240)

Although it is still relatively uncommon, the SENCO stated that the school has disappplied pupils from taking MFL after discussion with their parents to enable these pupils to use the time more productively for literacy support.

A small group of four or five pupils who we will then disapply from Modern Foreign Language... in discussion with parents... use that time a bit more productively with literacy.

(UK17, 370-373)

Limited-SEN-staff-capacity-and-resource

Both the SENCO and deputy SENCO stated that they find it difficult to provide as much support as they would have to pupils due to time or staff constraints. The deputy SENCO also explained that SEN support may be prioritised for pupils with more severe SEN than dyslexia.

I think one of the biggest constraints for me is time, finding the time to do the work as thoroughly as I would like... we have lots of children in this school with SEN... I'm sure this is always true, there is never enough people to do the work.

(UK19, 416-420)

This year we have a member of staff off sick, she was our dyslexia support. So that meant it was very hard to give as much support as we usually like to give, so I think it can be a staffing issue, to be able to give as much as we would like to and sometimes we have so many other students with more severe needs and also that can be quite difficult.

(UK19, 250-254)

The SEN teacher commented that more funding to purchase dyslexia software would help to streamline the existing school SEN support process to screen pupils for dyslexia.

I don't know in terms of funding... if there is any funding or any help for kind of supporting dyslexia as a whole, it would be a lot better.

(UK16, 101-102)

The school EP suggested that EPs can help to support schools to address concerns around the limited SEN staff and resource by providing training to address professional development gaps for school staff and advise on whole-school dyslexia policies and processes.

I'm a great believer in capacity building so a policy for the whole school impacts more than me just working individually with a child... more systematic approaches... looking at whole school policies, looking at whole classroom, looking at environment and things like that, and get staff skilled up in terms of their understanding and demystify what dyslexia is.

(UK, 275-281)

Pupils'-Post-Secondary-School-Aspirations

Supporting-pupils-to-achieve-their-academic-and/-or-career-aspirations

The SENCO and deputy SENCO discussed about the academic and career aspirations of pupils with dyslexia that they have worked with.

They aspire to go university, they aspire to go onto further education, definitely.

(UK19, 185-186)

A lot of the time, they want to work in area like, IT [information Technology], things like video game design and media, lots of creative stuff... some students who want to sort of work in sports or to look for apprenticeship and things like constructions, those are always popular routes.

(UK17, 301-304)

Both the SENCO and deputy SENCO emphasised the importance of listening to the pupils' views when supporting them to work towards their aspirations.

We would talk about what sort of things they would like to do and what subjects they would need for that. So, we definitely talk about those things.

(UK19, 189-190)

By the time they get into Year 10 or 11, it's very much down to what they want to do and it is the child's voice that becomes increasingly important in the process, because you don't want to force them down the road that they don't want to do but at the same time, they need to be properly informed about what issues there are.

(UK17, 287-291)

One SEN teacher commented that pupils with dyslexia need to have a positive attitude to work towards their aspirations while the SENCO stated the importance for pupils to be more informed about different vocational or apprenticeship pathways, which are increasingly accessible and popular for pupils with dyslexia.

It could be because of the dyslexia sometimes... I would say it's more like a, kind of, issues, emotional... I think it's more of the attitude and working on their attitude and awareness.

(UK16, 550-558)

You need to think very carefully about the courses that they follow, so you might be looking more at a vocational route and with the world of apprenticeships and other sorts of training becoming much more accessible and available and popular, there's all of different options for those learners.

(UK17, 283-287)

4.6. Main Themes for Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - Singapore

Table 6 provides a summary of the main-themes and sub-themes obtained from the interviews with the three mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from Singapore.

Table 6 - Thematic Table for Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - Singapore

Main-Themes	Sub-themes
School-experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive-teachers • Benefits-from-participating-in-non-academic-clubs/-activities
Learning-difficulties-and-support-received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range-of-difficulties-affecting-learning • In-school-dyslexia-support • Out-of-school-dyslexia-intervention
Family-and-peer-support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive-family-members • Support-from-close-friends
Post-secondary-school-aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic-and-career-aspirations • Impact-of-dyslexia-on-academic and/or-career-aspirations

School-Experience

Supportive-teachers

All pupils reported favourably about the support received from their teachers. They explained that teachers would patiently guide pupils to understand lesson content, makes notes for the class and have pupils attend remedial lessons.

An example like Common Test 1, you fail, the teacher actually stay back with us and teach us all.

(SG01, 15-17)

She gives us notes, like summarised notes, so we can just go through it beforehand and it's easier to understand also.

(SG02, 37-38)

They [teachers] just slowly teach me.

(SG03, 25)

Benefits-from-participating-in-non-academic-clubs/-activities

Two pupils commented positively about their participation with the school-based Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) and shared that they have made more friends from their involvement with their CCA.

There's a bond there, so it's more fun, every day is like you are looking out for it, going [rugby] training and having fun.

(SG01, 237-238)

It [Art Club] is interesting and making friends

(SG03, 212)

One pupil similarly shared positive feedback about her participation in the school's robotics club. She explained that being in the robotics club enabled her to make many friends and has helped to boost her confidence as well.

You get to learn a lot of other stuff and the teachers are also very nice and friendly and you have lots of friends to help you also and work together with you... like seeing how well you do in something that you enjoy helps you like, boost your confidence.

(SG02, 241-250)

However, the pupil stated that the robotics club's teacher can be quite direct in his critique of the pupils' work and appeared to have expectations of the pupils in the robotics club to do well in competitions.

The teacher is fun sometimes but he also judges the students... he's quite straightforward, blunt... he will blame you if you don't win something, like a medal.

(SG02, 273-280)

Learning-Difficulties-and-Support-Received

Range-of-difficulties-affecting-learning

One pupil stated that he has difficulty with writing tasks while another pupil described his difficulties with memorising information and learning language.

More of language and memorising... Cause memory stuff is like short while then I forget already.

(SG01, 33-35)

Even though one pupil explained that she is better able to remember lesson content through the use of strategies such as visual imagery, she felt that she still needs help with understanding the lesson content.

I feel like now I can remember more but remembering stuff isn't exactly part of learning because you have to understand it also.

(SG02, 51-52)

Two pupils also shared about their difficulty with maintaining their attention and focus during lessons.

Maybe like sometimes they teaching then I will be like totally not listening, thinking of my stuff also.

(SG01, 59-60)

Sometimes I have difficulty concentrating in class... for example English or Maths, it's just too boring, I will just think about something else.

(SG02, 83-84)

One pupil seemed to perceive herself as less capable than her peers due to dyslexia affecting her literacy abilities.

Cause I'm dyslexic then like other people are so called normal and I have something else more than people, it affects how I read and everything.

(SG02, 61-62)

In-school-dyslexia-support

All pupils did not receive any SEN intervention in school but received in-school dyslexia support in other ways. For example, all of the pupils stated that they receive access arrangement (extra time) for their tests in secondary school and found it to be useful.

I have extra time in school during exams and I think the extra time really helped me to read the questions more carefully and pay more attention, so I don't make careless mistakes... I can read the questions more, then it helps me understand the question.

(SG01, 111-114)

Another way that pupils with dyslexia are supported in secondary school is with Mother Tongue Language Exemption (MTLE). For pupils with MTLE, they are able to have a reduced academic load and that allows them to have more time and capacity to focus on their core subjects. Two pupils have been exempted from taking Mother Tongue Language (MTL) since primary school while another pupil took foundation Mother Tongue in primary school and subsequently Chinese Language B

(CLB) in secondary school. All of the pupils discussed about their difficulties with MTL.

I speak Chinese, but problem is I don't know how to read and write Chinese.

(SG01, 448-449)

It was extremely difficult for me and the moment I write it down, I will just forget about it. Like really cannot remember, even writing my name was a difficulty.

(SG02, 459-460)

Actually, I don't really like Mother Tongue [Chinese]... you'll have to do a lot of thing just to write one word.

(SG03, 537-539)

One pupil explained that he continued to take CLB in secondary school as his parents did not want him to drop this subject, even though he has difficulty with MTL.

I can choose to drop but my parents didn't want to. So just say take. Anyway, there is no lost taking it, so just take.

(SG01, 435-436)

He commented positively about his experience with CLB in secondary school as the differentiated curriculum was more manageable for him.

CLB basically is like your compo [composition] is on the computer, so it's usually like Hanyu Pinyin, so it's easier to do... there's less written [work].

(SG01, 77-79)

Compre [comprehension], they are usually in passage and they write but ours is MCQs [multiple choice questions], which is why it's easier.

(SG01, 94-96)

It appears to be uncommon for pupils to be consulted and asked for their views regarding their learning and support needed in school. Only one pupil responded positively about the possibility of participating in parent-teacher meetings to share her views about her learning progress as she felt that it would be a positive experience.

I think it's quite enjoyable [to participate in 3-way meetings with her parent and teacher].

(SG02, 195-199)

Out-of-school-dyslexia-intervention

It is common practice for school EPs to recommend pupils with dyslexia in government-maintained mainstream schools to receive out-of-school intervention and support from an external dyslexia intervention centre. Two pupils who have been attending classes at the external dyslexia intervention centre since primary school remarked positively about the support received at the centre.

One of the good strategy is actually they teach us by breaking down, learning like certain stuff differently, not like schools, it's like everything throw to you, whereby this is break down, this is better.

(SG01, 193-195)

Cause now we are starting to also do comprehension, so I'll say 10 [pupil rated support at centre as 10 out of 10], cause it's also writing.

(SG03, 297-298)

Family-and-Peer-Support

Supportive-family-members

Two pupils shared that their family members are supportive and understanding of their difficulties with dyslexia.

Yah, it's not really a big issue, but for me not, but maybe other people yes.

(SG03, 519-522)

She [elder sister] doesn't treat me differently and she just loves me for who I am... Dad also same thing. And whenever I do well, he rewards me.

(SG02, 418-42)

One pupil was unsure if her extended family knows that she has dyslexia but she suggested that her extended family members would not view her differently because of her dyslexia.

I don't think they know about it and even if they know about it, I don't think they really care like, they don't see me as a different person and they encourage me.

(SG02, 422-425)

Support-from-close-friends

While one pupil shared that he has few peers in school, the other two pupils elaborated about their positive peer relationships. Both of these pupils discussed how they would study together with their close friends and help one another with school work.

Closer friends... we sometimes go out to study... like learning with each other also helps, also cause this will improve like what you don't know and what they know and we will share it around.

(SG01, 105-109)

Those that I really really trust and hang out often then I will tell them [about my dyslexia].

They don't discriminate me also, they encourage me... we work together and go for study sessions to help each other.

(SG02, 256-259)

One pupil recalled her past experience as a victim of bullying in primary school. She suggested that having more friends and being more assertive may have been a protective feature against experiencing bullying in secondary school.

When I was in primary school, I used to be bullied and like they will call me stupid and names like that.

(SG02, 387-388)

Now, of course I will stand up for myself and tell them or tell the teacher... having more friends helped also.

(SG02, 531-535)

Post-Secondary-School-Aspirations

Academic-and-career-aspirations

All of the pupils discussed about their post-secondary school academic and career aspirations. One pupil became interested in sports science after attending a talk by a representative from the polytechnic at his secondary school. He is aware of the entry requirement for his preferred course and has applied for early admission to enter the sports science programme.

I plan to go like poly [polytechnic] for sports science... cause that time secondary school... they voted for certain schools and course, one of the course was sports science, so they came in and they talked about it. So, I actually got like interested in it.

(SG01, 299-302)

When asked about his career aspiration, he stated that he would like to be a PE (Physical Education) teacher as he felt that he would enjoy and be able to cope with the demands of the profession.

Maybe I will plan to work as a PE teacher or something like that. To actually have fun and what you like, so it's like more chill, even though it's a bit stress but you will at least have fun at what you are doing.

(SG01, 341-343)

One pupil stated that he would he would like to enrol for engineering-related courses after secondary school as he felt that those courses would have less emphasis on language.

Was planning to go engineering, because it doesn't use a lot of English.

(SG03, 330)

One pupil remained undecided about her academic pathway after secondary school as her mother wanted her to go to polytechnic while she would like to go to a junior college (JC).

I don't really know about that yet cause my parents want me to go to poly but my [elder] sister wants to go to JC, so when she goes to JC then I will see how she copes. If she can cope, then I will go do it.

(SG02, 300-302)

This pupil shared that she would like to be a medical doctor as she viewed it as a very inspiring occupation.

You get to help a lot of people and save people's lives. I feel like that's a big deal and it's very inspiring.

(SG02, 325-326)

Impact-of-dyslexia-on-academic-and/-or-career-aspirations

Two pupils appeared to be relatively optimistic that their dyslexia would not be a significant obstacle to their academic and/ or career aspirations while one pupil felt that he will need more time than his peers when it comes to learning.

Is okay... it doesn't like hit you like damn hard, it's just maybe a minor hit, then you will understand. Like maybe you are slower than other people, but you actually learn also at the same time.

(SG01, 331-333)

I think I feel like it will help because like being dyslexic... like my mum said, she said, dyslexics are more prone to using a picture memory, so I think it will help me to understand concepts as well to achieve my goals.

(SG02, 337-339)

Not so sure, but I think it's just time... because there is not a lot of time sometimes.

(SG03, 405-407)

One pupil also appeared to be concerned about his prospective employers querying about his annotated academic transcripts and anticipated that it might be a issue when he applies for a job in the future.

They will write down there say I have, need to have extra time and all these stuff, that's why, that maybe a problem in the long term.

(SG03, 430-432)

He suggested that a prospective employer might be inclined to hire an employee without dyslexia, especially if given a choice between a job applicant with dyslexia and another comparable job applicant without dyslexia.

If they have two different one, then later one has a special thing [dyslexia] or something and that one don't have, you get what I mean?

(SG03, 453-454)

4.7. Main Themes for Parents of Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - Singapore

Table 7 provides a summary of the main-themes and sub-themes obtained from the interviews with two parents of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from Singapore.

Table 7 - Thematic Table for Parents of Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - Singapore

Main-Themes	Sub-themes
Family-support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping-child-to-access-dyslexia - intervention • Parent's-view-on-dyslexia • Financial-implications-on-family
School-SEN-support-and-communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited-school-based-SEN-support • Limited-parent-teacher-communication
Academic-or-career-aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting-child's-post-secondary - aspirations • Concerns-around-further/-higher-education-SEN-support-for-child • Impact-of-dyslexia-on-child's-aspirations

Family-Support

Helping-child-to-access-dyslexia-intervention

One parent shared that she continues to support her child's difficulties with dyslexia by engaging a home tutor for her child. She also enrolls her child for weekly small-group classes at a dyslexia intervention centre. She commented that the

additional support has helped her child to make good progress in his academic learning.

He [my child] improved a lot. Firstly, it could be that I hired a home tutor, which helped him a lot.

(SG05, 88-89)

The other parent took a different approach to support her child's difficulties with dyslexia as her child received support and intervention for her dyslexia prior to entering primary school and during the first few years of primary school as the child was diagnosis at an early age. The child also received support from her mother and a home tutor for the first few years of primary school before all the support was stopped as the parent was pleased with the progress of her dyslexia remediation.

That's it. I didn't have to deal with the dyslexia... typical and she is, it's like, if not for the diagnosis, she wouldn't have been any different from other people.

(SG04, 537-541)

Parent's-view-on-dyslexia

Both parents reported positively about their child receiving a dyslexia diagnosis as it helped to frame their child's learning difficulties. One parent explained that she was able to look for appropriate support for her child with the formal dyslexia diagnosis.

It tells me what the problem is. I always want to know, I don't want to live in the unknown so to me, it's positive.

(SG04, 283-284)

I was worried that there may be some issues with his brain development or that he has some unknown illness... so the diagnosis gave me a peace of mind as it helped me to identify his learning difficulties and I can for look intervention and classes for him to attend, to help him.
(SG05, 306-310)

One parent suggested that parents of children with dyslexia are likely to have differing views about their child's dyslexia, with some parents seeing it as a form of labelling.

It's very individually driven. Some see it as labelling. In fact, some parents asked me for opinion on whether or not should let the child know, should let the school know.
(SG04, 310-312)

This parent suggested that parents of children with dyslexia should raise their awareness about dyslexia to make more informed decisions for their child.

Firstly, if you know what dyslexia is, it is not a crippling disease or illness and when you understand what it is... It's only when you live in fear and that you don't know what it is and that you have your own idea of what it may be, that I think may take you to certain actions to doing certain things.
(SG04, 312-316)

A possible reason for the uncertainty and fear experienced by parents of children with dyslexia could be parental guilt, as highlighted by one parent.

Maybe when we gave birth to him [my child], I was 30 and his dad was 47, so I thought that it could be due to the age when he was conceived but it is not possible isn't it?
(SG05, 249-251)

Financial-implications-on-family

Both parents discussed the financial costs for the assessment and intervention support associated with their child's dyslexia. For one parent, she estimated that she had spent SGD\$10,000 [£5,400] for her child's dyslexia assessment and intervention.

I did keep a record of how much I spent... even with the intervention, even with the assessments, I didn't spend more than SGD\$10,000 [£5,400] which is really, the best investment that I have ever made.

(SG04, 545-547)

While one parent was able to limit the financial cost associated with her child's dyslexia assessment and intervention as she had stopped all support by the time her child entered secondary school, another parent estimated the monthly payment associated with her child's ongoing dyslexia intervention (weekly individual home tutor and weekly small-group classes at a dyslexia intervention centre) to be approximately SGD\$650 [£350] monthly. While this parent acknowledged that her child's dyslexia intervention fees is having a strain on the family's finances, she stated that ongoing intervention is needed to support her child's learning.

From Primary 3 till now, I have spent a lot of money and time. But he needs to, this is useful for him, we don't have a choice, we need to support him as it will help with his future.

(SG05, 51-53)

While both parents have been able to support the assessment and intervention costs associated with their child's dyslexia, the financial costs associated with getting an assessment and/ or supporting a child's SEN such as dyslexia can be prohibitive for some families in Singapore. This was evident from

one parent's sharing of her personal experience with another parent of a child with suspected SEN.

I chatted with her [parent of a child with suspected SEN] in private and suggested for her to look for a specialist to get her child assessed and this was what she replied, "Not everyone can do what you do, it is rather costly".

(SG05, 776-779)

School-SEN-Support-and-Parent-School-Communication

Limited-school-based-SEN-support

Both parents reported that their child received Mother Tongue Language Exemption (MTLE) since primary school and has access arrangements (extra time) for their tests. However, one parent commented that there is still limited SEN support in schools for pupils with dyslexia in mainstream schools.

These dyslexic kids, they are still going to mainstream school... our allied educator is limited resources... I think it's one allied educator to so many levels of students... I don't know how they will select who should get the attention of these allied educations.

(SG04, 839-845)

This parent stated that although pupils with dyslexia form a relatively large proportion of the SEN pupils in mainstream schools, this group of pupils may not be prioritised for SEN support in schools even though they may have difficulties with their academic work as they do not typically present with disruptive or off-task behaviour in class.

This is definitely a neglected and overlooked community that is rather big but yet receiving not much attention because they are not behaviourally outlandish... you don't see them acting out in class.. it is only when they sit down and start to study that you will actually see what they struggle with... so that's why people don't really pay much attention.

(SG04, 846-852)

This parent also highlighted possible capacity constraints as parents have to wait for an extended period of time for the school EP to work with their child.

Capacity yes, in school, definitely you have to wait quite long [to see the school EP].

(SG04, 893)

Limited-parent-school-communication

While one parent reported favourably about her child's school teachers and stated that all the school teachers knew about her child's dyslexia, she observed that there has been fewer formal or informal parent-teacher communication, besides the annual parent-teacher meeting.

Nowadays, when the child did not submit their homework, the parent won't know about it... in the past it is different. Now, the teachers don't really seem to have much interaction with the parents... I don't know if it is because it is harder to educate children nowadays or could it be that parents are more difficult to interact with nowadays?

(SG05, 445-452)

Academic-or-Career-Aspirations

Supporting-child's-post-secondary-aspirations

Both parents seemed to have a good understanding of their child's career aspiration. While one parent appeared to be optimistic about her child's aspiration of being an engineer, another parent seemed to take a more pragmatic approach when discussing about her child's career aspiration of being a doctor.

I think he [my child] seems pretty confident when he talks about it. He says he wants to be an engineer, so I hope he achieves his goal.

(SG05, 652-652)

I think at the moment, she is talking about doctor, but I don't think that my kids are at that level.

(SG04, 703-704)

One parent felt that she needs to guide her child to select subjects that will enable her to have a broader range of academic and career options in the future. While the parent saw herself in a facilitative role in terms of guiding her child's aspirations, she stated that she would intervene if she felt that her child is at-risk of failing.

I make sure that you [my child] choose the right subjects so that you can more options later and not be narrow... so later on, she will probably discover for herself what she wants.

(SG04, 694-708)

Things that I feel that is going to setup for failure, and I can see that it will set her up for failure, I will stop her. But otherwise, I will basically give them [my daughters] guidance type. So, at this juncture, I don't know how they will turn out.... they may have their own thoughts.

(SG04, 744-747)

For another parent, she felt that her child's career aspiration should be practical and would want her child to learn culinary arts instead of pursuing his other interest in Arts. She felt that there might be more limited career options in Arts, especially in Singapore.

I was thinking in Singapore, if you study Art, what can you do in the future? I really want to send him to learn culinary arts.

(SG05, 602-603)

He always says that he likes to eat, so if he likes to eat, then learning culinary arts will be good... It [career aspiration] should be practical. Even if you don't become a top chef, you can start your own business and have a small food stall.

(SG05, 617-625)

Concerns-around-further/ higher-education-SEN-support-for-child

One parent was concerned about the awareness and support of the teachers around dyslexia in her child's further/ higher education setting in the future.

I'm not sure if the teachers there would be accepting if I were to produce a letter to them to explain that my child is dyslexic. Will they be understanding and supportive like his secondary school teachers?

(SG05, 639-641)

Both parents also had differing views on whether their child's dyslexia will hinder their academic or career aspirations. While one parent did not express any significant concerns about her child's ability to cope in further/ higher education, the other parent expressed concerns about her child's ability to adapt in further/ higher education settings where teacher support might be more limited and class sizes are significantly larger.

ITE or Polytechnic, they will have a lot of students unlike now in secondary school where there is only 30 plus students in a class... in ITE or polytechnic, when they go into a lecture, it will be 100 or more students, the teacher cannot possibly give you individualised support because you are dyslexic.

(SG05, 643-646)

Impact-of-dyslexia-on-child's-aspirations

While one parent was uncertain about the impact of dyslexia on her child's aspirations, another parent stated that her child's dyslexia would not be an obstacle as her child had been received early intervention for her dyslexia and has been successfully remediated.

She won't be prevented from excelling because of dyslexia... I am speaking as someone who has been corrected... if you haven't been corrected, you would still be struggling with your academics.

(SG04, 767-771)

4.8. Main Themes for Educational Professionals Working with Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - Singapore

Table 8 provides a summary of the main themes and sub-themes obtained from the interviews with the three educational professionals (Assistant Director/ Psychologist, Educational Advisor and Specialist Psychologist) working with mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia in Singapore.

Table 8 - Thematic Table for Educational Professionals Working with Mainstream Secondary Pupils with Dyslexia - Singapore

Main-Themes	Sub-themes
Supporting-pupils'-difficulties-with-dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building-pupils'-confidence-and-self-esteem • Incorporating-pupils'-interest-during-learning • Helping-pupils-to-understand-their-dyslexia
School-SEN-support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited-school-SEN-support-for-pupils-with-dyslexia
Wider-societal-views-about-dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased-awareness-about-dyslexia • Stigma-associated-with-dyslexia

Supporting-Pupils'-Difficulties-with-Dyslexia

Building-pupils'-confidence-and-self-esteem

The specialist psychologist commented that the mainstream school curriculum in Singapore is very academically-based. This is likely to affect the learning of pupils

with dyslexia and might possibly have an effect on pupils' confidence and self-esteem if they do not perform as well as their peers without dyslexia.

Unfortunately, in Singapore, we are very academic-based. There's a lot of focus on all the reading, writing, so a lot of the children with dyslexia, they might not do as well, I would think, in Singapore.

(SG08, 149-151)

The educational advisor highlighted the importance of building pupils' confidence as she observed that secondary pupils need more support from adults working with them to build up their confidence and self-esteem. She emphasised the need for adults to make learning a positive experience for pupils with dyslexia to boost their confidence and self-esteem.

I just want their self-esteem to, I want to give them more confidence... they lack a lot of confidence, especially secondary school students.

(SG07, 815-817)

That is why the classes here is very motivating. You know, we give them the confidence, we boost their self-esteem and I feel that is really important towards learning and create a positive experience for them.

(SG07, 264-267)

Incorporating-pupils'-interest-during-learning

The educational advisor shared that she incorporates her pupils' interests when delivering small-group lessons at the dyslexia intervention centre. She explained that tapping on pupils' interests during lessons has a positive effect on the attention, focus and responsiveness of pupils in her lessons.

When you tap on your students' interests and you plan the lesson according to their interest, they actually concentrate more. Their attentiveness increase, they concentrate in your lesson. When you ask questions, they answer.

(SG07, 426-428)

The educational advisor also discussed the use of ICT in her lessons and added that secondary pupils enjoy the use of ICT in lessons.

ICT, yes. My students love iPads because, because what I do with iPads, for my secondary school students, I will do brainstorming, mind-map.

(SG07, 475-476)

Helping-pupils-to-understand-their-dyslexia

The educational advisor observed that secondary pupils are likely to have a better understanding of the difficulties associated with their dyslexia as compared to primary-aged pupils with dyslexia. One of the benefits of secondary pupils developing a better understanding of the strengths and areas of difficulties associated with their dyslexia is that it allows them to be more effective in their learning, especially for tests.

There are students that are really smart enough to tell the teacher that, this is the place, this is the area that I always lose marks in.

(SG07, 254-256)

The assistant director shared that the staff would typically involve secondary-aged pupils when they feedback the intake assessment results [at the dyslexia intervention centre] to help pupils better understand their learning difficulties associated with their dyslexia.

When we encounter older children like say in secondary school... we would feedback to them and let them know because they then have, they are more in control of their own learning so in those cases we may share with them.

(SG06, 256-259)

However, the assistant director added that some pupils may not wish to attend these feedback meetings and they would then work with the parents.

We would usually invite them to come but sometimes there are children who don't want... because parents are our main referral client, so we will pass it by them to let them know.

(SG06, 262-267)

School-SEN-Support

Limited-school-SEN-support-for-pupils-with-dyslexia

The specialist psychologist stated that not every secondary school has an allied educator, which may limit the in-school SEN support available for pupils with dyslexia.

In secondary school, so far from what I know, there isn't an AED, allied educator in every school, so some of them do miss out on opportunities to progress when they are in secondary school.

(SG08, 256-258)

The assistant director also highlighted another difficulty for schools to provide appropriate SEN support in schools as secondary pupils are streamed into different academic tracks/ curriculum.

I think with regards to secondary school students, the difficulty also is that there are different tracks, so there's NA (Normal Academic), NT (Normal Technical), Express and Vocational.

So sometimes, they don't get access to the right kind of help.

(SG06, 707-709)

The assistant director suggested that secondary school teachers might benefit from staff training to better support pupils with dyslexia in schools, as the allied educator is a limited SEN resource in secondary schools.

I think it is a good initiative for teachers and AED [Allied Educator] to learn and identify these learning difficulties at a younger age. But I also hope that going forward that the secondary teachers can also be equipped with the same skills.

(SG06, 712-715)

Wider-Societal-Views-about-Dyslexia

Increased-awareness-about-dyslexia

The assistant director stated that there is increased awareness and acceptance around dyslexia amongst teachers and parents.

I think most teachers and parents understand dyslexia and I think we have come a very long way since maybe 10 years ago when dyslexia is still not quite accepted or not quite known.

(SSG06, 518-520)

The assistant director explained that one of the common concerns for parents of pupils with dyslexia in the past was that their child would be unfairly penalised in examinations. However, there are fewer concerns from parents with the increased understanding about dyslexia and how it affects their child's learning.

I do think that some parents they initially may have concerns with how it might affect the examination, whether they will be penalised or unfairly treated. That used to be more of a concern compared to now... it is really a case of increased awareness, increased understanding of dyslexia.

(SG06, 524-527)

However, the assistant director observed that parents from lower income or educational background may have a more limited understanding of their child's dyslexia and the importance of family involvement to support their child's learning.

I think sometimes we also face issues with families from lower SES [socio-economic status], lower income or lower educational background because then they don't see that importance [to be involved in child's learning].

(SG06, 551-553)

Stigma-associated-with-dyslexia

The views from the educational advisor differed from the assistant director as the educational advisor described some parents who seemed to avoid involvement from school EPs.

Some of them [parents], they don't find, they do not go for the MOE [Ministry of Education] psychology, so they, we do have private [psychologists in private practice] also... without the subsidies... their psychological report is from hospitals, private hospitals, not really from MOE or our organisation.

(SG07, 674-679)

The educational advisor suggested that a possible reason for parents avoiding involvement from the school EP could be due to the stigma attached to their child as he/ she progresses through the education system and eventually to the workplace.

They are worried that this stigma [dyslexia] might be attached to their kid, maybe when the kids go poly [polytechnic], go JC [junior college]... when you enter your workplace... They don't want this stigma to be attached.

(SG07, 695-699)

The educational advisor observed that some parents would not apply for a psychological report or share their child's dyslexia with the school even though they attend classes at the centre. She suggested that some parents may be concerned about their child being identified as a pupil with SEN in school if the psychological report is shared with the school.

Attending class [at the dyslexia intervention centre] is another thing but applying and getting a psychologically report and formally showing to the school... will put my kid under the category of special needs, which will affect my kid in the long run.

(SG07, 663-666)

4.9. Summary of Key Findings

London Borough Participants - Pupils

One of the main findings from pupils was that in addition to their difficulties with literacy skills (i.e., reading, writing and/ or spelling), some pupils also experienced difficulties with Mathematics, MFL, remembering lesson content and maintaining their attention and focus during lessons. The majority of the pupils benefitted from in-school SEN support such as drop-in sessions at the SEN department, in-class TA support or withdrawal from regular lessons to attend small-group SEN sessions with the SEN teacher. While most of the pupils responded positively about the SEN support, two pupils felt that the effectiveness of the small-group SEN lessons seemed to have diminished after a period of time. There were two pupils who commented positively about the use of ICT for their SEN support. One pupil stated that he can track improvements in his reading age using the dyslexia software while another pupil shared that being issued a school iPad has helped her become a more effective learner as she is able to type her notes and remember lesson content better.

There were some pupils who shared that not all of their teachers seem to be aware that they have dyslexia. A few pupils explained that even for the teachers who knew that they have dyslexia, some teachers found it difficult to support their learning. One pupil suggested that teachers might benefit from more training and should speak with pupils to better understand them. While there was some evidence of pupils being consulted about their views during parents' evening, two pupils suggested the need for more regular 3-way meetings with their parents and teachers to discuss their progress and support needed throughout the academic year.

Most pupils shared that involvement in clubs and activities has helped them to gain confidence and make new friends. The majority of the pupils also valued the understanding and support received from their family and friends. While two pupils recounted incidences of being bullied in school, this seemed to have only occurred during the first year of secondary school. When asked about their post-secondary school aspirations, most pupils shared that they would like to continue their education in Sixth form or college while a few pupils remained undecided. There were a range of responses from the pupils regarding the impact of dyslexia hindering their post-secondary aspirations as some pupils remained positive about reaching their aspirations while a few pupils felt that dyslexia is an obstacle to their aspirations.

London Borough Participants – Parents and Educational Professionals

Most of the parents shared that they are understanding of their child's difficulties and try to support their child's learning either by helping with their academic work or by engaging home tutor(s) for their child. Two parents commented on the financial cost, time and commitment needed to support their child's learning due to their dyslexia. There were similar concerns expressed by majority of the

parents about the difficulties experienced by their child in school (e.g., uneven teacher awareness about child's dyslexia, limited teacher understanding in supporting child's dyslexia and child's difficulties with MFL). A few parents felt that it was not meaningful for their child to have to learn two years of MFL, given their significant difficulty with the subject. One parent suggested that the MFL lesson would have been better utilised for additional English support. However, two educational professionals felt that it was about equality of opportunity that all pupils learn MFL, although one educational professional acknowledged the need to be more pragmatic in the future as he observed that pupils with dyslexia experience significant difficulties with MFL. He added that he might consider disapplying MFL for pupils with significant difficulties in the subject after discussing with their parents and use the time more meaningfully on literacy support.

While most educational professionals discussed the increasing use of ICT in the identification, progress monitoring and intervention support for pupils with dyslexia, a few of the parents expressed some dissatisfaction with the school's limited or inconsistent SEN support for their child. Two parents explained that they had to advocate for their child to receive SEN support in school. Most of the parents also stated that they would have liked more regular and systematic review meetings with the school to monitor their child's learning progress. Even though a few of the educational professionals agreed that it would be useful to meet with parents on a regular basis, they explained that it would be difficult to arrange such meetings in addition to parents' evening, given the competing demands on their time.

One of the common themes highlighted by most of the parents and educational professionals was the need to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem due to their persistent difficulties with learning. The majority of the parents and

educational professionals saw themselves in a facilitative role to support the post-secondary aspirations of these pupils and emphasised the importance of listening to the views and preferences of the pupils. Even though some of the parents had high aspirations for their child to enter sixth form and university after secondary education, they seemed to acknowledge that it would be unlikely due to their child's poor academic standing. Two parents stated that the apprenticeship pathway might be more compatible for their child's learning profile as it emphasises more on applied learning while one educational professional similarly suggested that the vocational or apprenticeship route might be more suitable for pupils with dyslexia.

Singapore Participants - Pupils

All of the pupils stated that they experienced difficulties with their literacy skills and MTL. Two of the pupils have been exempted from MTL since primary school while one pupil took a differentiated MTL subject (Chinese Language B) in secondary school. MTL exemption appeared to be one of the approaches that schools use to support pupils with dyslexia as it helps pupils to reduce their academic load and enables them to focus on their core subjects. This is in addition to the access arrangement (extra time) for tests that all three pupils have been receiving since primary school. In Singapore, it is standard work practice for school EPs to recommend pupils diagnosed with dyslexia to receive specialist support from an external dyslexia intervention centre. Two pupils who have been attending the weekly small-group sessions since primary school commented positively about the sessions at the dyslexia intervention centre. In addition to their literacy and MTL difficulties, a few pupils also shared that they experience difficulties with memorising lesson content and maintaining their attention and focus during lessons. One pupil

also described how she perceived herself to be less capable academically than her peers without dyslexia.

Most of the pupils valued the positive support and understanding from their family and close friends and all three pupils reported positively about the support received from their teachers and detailed how they benefited from additional learning support by their teachers (e.g., remedial lessons, summarised notes). Two pupils also described how they have made more friends from involvement in their school CCA and one pupil shared that doing well in her club has helped to boost her confidence.

All of the pupils wished to continue with their education after completing secondary school. One pupil stated that he is planning to enter sports science in polytechnic to work towards his career goal of being a PE teacher while another pupil indicated that he is interested to take up engineering-related courses in the future as that will have less emphasis on literacy skills. While one pupil appeared to be undecided about her educational pathway after secondary school, she shared that she aspired to be a medical doctor. Most of the pupils were optimistic that their dyslexia would not be an obstacle to their post-secondary aspirations although one pupil expressed some concerns over his employability in the future as his academic transcripts would be annotated to indicate that he has extra time for examinations.

Singapore Participants – Parents and Educational Professionals

Both parents viewed their child's dyslexia positively as it helped to frame their child's difficulties and enabled them to access dyslexia remediation to support their child's learning. One parent shared that the ongoing financial commitment needed for her child's home tutor and classes at the dyslexia intervention centre was having a strain on the family's finances.

One parent stated that she hoped to have more regular updates from the school about her child's learning as there is limited communication with her child's teachers. Another parent expressed some dissatisfaction with the limited school-based SEN support for pupils with dyslexia and this was reiterated by two educational professionals. One educational professional suggested that the ability streaming of secondary pupils into different curriculum tracks may make it more challenging for schools to provide appropriate SEN support for pupils with dyslexia while another educational professional shared that some secondary schools may not have an allied educator to support pupils with SEN and this limits pupils with dyslexia from accessing in-school SEN support.

Both parents were largely supportive of their child's post-secondary aspirations, although they seemed to adopt a pragmatic approach by suggesting that their child should be flexible and have a broader range of post-secondary academic and career aspirations. While one parent expressed some concerns about the awareness and support for her child in his further/ higher education setting and was uncertain if dyslexia would impede her child's learning, another parent was optimistic that her child's dyslexia would not be an obstacle to her aspiration as she had received adequate remediation for her dyslexia.

The key finding gathered from some of the educational professionals was the need to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem as one educational professional observed that secondary pupils often lacked confidence as learners. The educational professional also emphasised the need to listen to pupils' views and shared how she has been successful in working with her pupils by using ICT (e.g., using iPads to do mind-mapping) and incorporating pupils' interest to increase their attention and engagement during lessons. One educational professional stated that she would

typically involve secondary pupils during feedback sessions to help them better understand their learning profile. There was a difference in perspectives between two educational professionals as one educational professional felt that there is a greater awareness and acceptance of dyslexia over the years whereas another educational professional suggested some parents still viewed dyslexia as a stigma.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter will draw upon findings from both the research participants and the literature to discuss the research questions posed for this study. As the research was conducted with participants from two different contexts (a London borough and Singapore), the findings will be presented separately before being compared. Following which, the researcher will detail the strengths and limitations of this research, before suggesting directions for future research and concluding with the implications of the findings for EP practice.

5.2. Discussion of Findings

5.2.1. Research Question 1

What are the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore in relation to their strengths and difficulties as a learner?

5.2.1.1. London Borough Participants - Pupils

Most of the pupils were able to state their strengths as learners, with five pupils stating that they are fast learners and/ or good at remembering information. Two pupils shared that they are creative while the remaining pupils did not seem to be aware of their strengths as learners. The findings provide some evidence that secondary pupils with dyslexia have some awareness about their strengths as learners.

Kaufman (2018) argued that pupils with dyslexia have been demonstrated to display cognitive strengths in visual, creative and/ or reasoning skills, which were identified by a few participants as their strengths as learners. However, research findings have been inconclusive regarding pupils with dyslexia possessing higher

abilities in visuo-spatial and/ or creative areas, likely due to the wide variation in research methodology, sample size and severity of dyslexia experienced by participants (Alves & Nakano, 2014; Attree, Turner, & Cowell, 2009; Martinelli & Schembri, 2015; Martinelli & Fenech, 2017). Nonetheless, given that pupils with dyslexia are often viewed negatively by others in the school environment, Alves and Nakano (2014) suggested that pupils with dyslexia should be encouraged to identify and consolidate their identified strengths as this can have a positive effect on their confidence and self-esteem as learners.

In terms of the learning difficulties experienced by the pupils, all of the pupils shared at least one difficulty in either reading, spelling and/ or writing. Five pupils added that they also experienced difficulties with remembering information. The range of difficulties shared by the pupils were covered by Snowling (2013) and reiterated the need for adults working with this group of pupils to adopt a pupil-centred approach to better support their learning. Three pupils also shared that they found Mathematics quite challenging and provides support to some studies (e.g., De Clercq-Quaegebeur et al., 2018; Simmons & Singleton, 2009) that have observed a high frequency of pupils with dyslexia experiencing difficulties in Mathematics. Although more research is needed to better understand this association, Willcutt et al. (2013) suggested it was due to shared neurological difficulties in cognitive functioning skills such as working memory, processing speed and verbal comprehension, pupils with dyslexia may also experience varying levels of difficulties with their arithmetic skills.

While there is a dearth of literature about the difficulties of secondary pupils with dyslexia learning an additional language, more than half of the participants discussed their difficulties with MFL. They reported that they had limited support with

MFL before being allowed to drop the subject when they selected their subjects for GCSE. MFL is part of the National Curriculum and although some professionals have suggested that it may be beneficial for pupils with dyslexia to have the opportunity to learn an additional language (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.), findings from this study suggest that schools need to consider implementing more support for pupils with dyslexia in their MFL lessons to improve their learning experience, as suggested by Thomson (2007).

There were five pupils who highlighted the lack of awareness and understanding by their teachers about their dyslexia and this provides support to some studies which have suggested that teachers working with pupils with dyslexia have limited understanding around teaching approaches to support pupils with dyslexia (Washburn, Joshi, & Binks-Cantrell, 2011; Worthy et al., 2016). From their work with adolescents with dyslexia, Long, MacBlain and MacBlain (2007) suggested that teachers should be more empathetic about the learning difficulties experienced by pupils with dyslexia and aim to better support their learning as it can contribute to positive outcomes in their academic attainment and emotional well-being.

5.2.1.2. London Borough Participants - Parents and Educational Professionals

Most of the parents were able to list at least one of their child's strengths as a learner. There were a few common responses as parents described their child as hardworking, possessing good verbal skills and excelling with applied learning. With regards to their child's difficulties, most parents discussed their child's difficulty with reading, spelling and/ or writing and some parents mentioned about their child's difficulties with Mathematics and MFL.

One of the biggest concerns highlighted by most parents as hindering their child's learning at school was the lack of awareness and understanding amongst

teachers about their child's dyslexia. Gwernan-Jones and Burden (2010) suggested that teachers' approach towards supporting the learning needs of pupils with dyslexia may be shaped by their attitudes and beliefs about dyslexia, and the findings provide some evidence that some teachers may need more guidance to better understand and support the learning needs of pupils with dyslexia. A few parents detailed their experience about how they had to engage with their child's teachers on several occasions to help them understand that their child's difficulties with learning were associated with his/her dyslexia and supported the findings of Worthy et al. (2016) about the unevenness of teachers' competency in understanding and supporting the learning of pupils with dyslexia.

The group of educational professionals did not provide much information about the strengths of pupils with dyslexia, perhaps due to the wide variation of pupils who they have worked with. There was one educational professional who stated that she found pupils with dyslexia to be generally hardworking. In terms of pupils' difficulties as learners, most of the educational professionals stated the need to support pupils' confidence and self-esteem as they observed that this group of pupils have lower confidence and self-esteem in their abilities as learners in comparison to pupils without dyslexia. The finding is consistent with the work from several studies that described pupils with dyslexia as having lower self-esteem and academic self-concept than their peers without dyslexia (Glazzard, 2010; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002). One educational professional suggested that pupils with dyslexia need to access a differentiated curriculum where they are encouraged and supported to build up their confidence and self-esteem as learners.

5.2.1.3. Singapore Participants - Pupils

There were a range of responses as each pupil identified his/ her strengths as a learner differently. One pupil stated that he does well in some subjects such as Maths, Science and Computer Applications while another pupil explained that he learns better in subjects that he enjoys. The remaining pupil shared that she is good at memorising information for subjects such as Science. All of the pupils also described their strengths in non-academic areas from their involvement in school-based Co-Curricular activities (CCAs). Most of the pupils stated that they enjoy their CCA and their involvement in these clubs/ activities has helped them to make more friends, with one pupil stating that experiencing success in her club has helped to boost her confidence.

The findings provide some evidence that participation in non-academic activities/ clubs for secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia is positive as it provides a platform for pupils with different learning abilities to come together and interact with one another as they develop their interests and abilities as part of their holistic development as learners (MOE, 2018c). The responses from the participants about the benefits gained from their CCA extend the findings from Feldman and Matjasko (2005), as the authors only examined the benefits of school-based extra-curricular activities for typically developing adolescents. From their review of the literature, Feldman and Matjasko (2005) suggested that adolescents participating in school-based extra-curricular activities are likely to experience positive benefits such as improved well-being and self-esteem, especially for adolescents who experience success in their school-based extra-curricular activity. This might prove to be beneficial for adolescents with dyslexia, especially if the benefits gained from involvement in school-based extra-curricular activity can be transferred back to their

classroom learning. Lipscomb (2007) lends weight to the hypothesis of the benefits gained from involvement with school-based extra-curricular activity having a positive effect on classroom learning as the author stated that pupils participating in extra-curricular activities in secondary school may experience a positive influence on their academic attainment, although more research is needed to understand this association.

The difficulties related by the pupils were predominantly with their writing or language-based tasks in English or Humanities. All three pupils also reported significant difficulties with their Mother Tongue (MT) subject, with two pupils receiving exemption from MT since primary school while the remaining pupil takes a differentiated MT (Chinese Language B) subject. Two pupils also added that they have difficulties maintaining their concentration during lessons. The findings suggest that besides supporting pupils' difficulties with their literacy skills, adults working with secondary pupils with dyslexia also need to be aware of strategies to support pupils' attention and focus in class.

While all three pupils did not state any significant difficulties with their teachers or peer relationships, they had differing views regarding their difficulties with dyslexia. Two pupils acknowledged that they experience ongoing difficulty with their academic work and would need a longer time to learn new subjects but did not seem to perceive themselves to be less capable than their peers without dyslexia. This contrasted with the view from one pupil as she expressed some concerns about how others would judge her as a learner with dyslexia as she felt that she had to perform at the same level or even better than her peers academically to avoid being viewed negatively by others. The findings seem to fall largely in-line and extend the work by Tam and Hawkins (2012), as the authors found that most primary-aged

Singapore pupils with dyslexia did not view themselves as less academically competent when compared to their peers without dyslexia. From their study, Tam and Hawkins (2012) also stated a few possible protective features against negative academic self-concepts for pupils with dyslexia, such as receiving specialist dyslexia intervention, participation in sports/ activities and peer support.

5.2.1.4. Singapore Participants - Parents and Educational Professionals

One parent stated that her child's strengths as a learner to be hardworking, conscientious and driven while another parent was unable describe her child's strengths as a learner although she shared that her child is very polite and obedient. With regards to their child's difficulties as a learner, both parents shared that their children experience difficulties with their MT (Chinese) and received exemption from the subject since primary school. One parent also stated that her child has difficulty with her spelling while another parent shared that her child has very little confidence with his written work. Only one parent expressed concerns with her child's peer relationships as she observed that her child has few friends at school.

While educational professionals did not provide any insights on the strengths of pupils with dyslexia, there was a consensus amongst the educational professionals regarding the difficulties experienced by this group of pupils, as they highlighted the need for pupils with dyslexia to be supported in their confidence and self-esteem. Most educational professionals observed that adolescents with dyslexia often present as learners with low motivation, low confidence and self-esteem. One educational professional suggested that this could be due to the emphasis in the local education system on reading and writing, which may result in most pupils with dyslexia not doing as well academically in comparison to their peers without dyslexia. This might possibly contribute to the incidence of teasing or bullying

experienced by pupils with dyslexia due to their poor academic performance, that some educational professionals also mentioned, and was highlighted by the evidence base (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2017; Singer, 2005).

<p>Key findings</p> <p>Research Question 1: What are the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore in relation to their strengths and difficulties as a learner?</p> <p><u>Pupils</u></p> <p>Strengths: Most pupils from the London borough described their strengths more broadly (e.g., fast learner, creative) whereas Singaporean pupils mapped their strengths onto subjects that they excel (e.g., Maths, Science)</p> <p>Difficulties: Most pupils from both the London borough and Singapore shared that they experienced difficulties with learning an additional language (UK – Modern Foreign Language/ SG – Mother Tongue) in addition to their literacy difficulties</p> <p><u>Parents and Educational Professionals</u></p> <p>Parents' responses generally mirrored similar areas of strengths and difficulties reported by the pupils</p> <p>Most educational professionals from the London borough and Singapore emphasised the importance of supporting the confidence and self-esteem of pupils with dyslexia to promote better learning and emotional well-being outcomes for this group of pupils</p>
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Figure 2. Key Findings from Research Question 1

5.2.2. Research Question 2

What are the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore in relation to their intervention or support received from school and/ or home?

5.2.2.1. London Borough Participants - Pupils

Most of the pupils received some form of SEN support in school. This ranged from more conventional school-based SEN support such as in-class TA support, extra lessons before school, small-group SEN sessions during lesson time to more innovative approaches such as use of ICT to assess and monitor the progress of pupils' learning and issuing iPads to help pupils with their learning.

While Evans and Lunt (2002) reported that pupils who were excluded from their regular classes to attend withdrawal sessions experienced marginalisation and

segregation from their peers, this was not reported by pupils interviewed in this study, perhaps due to the smaller participant sample size of this study. However, pupils differed in their views regarding the benefits of small-group withdrawal sessions as two pupils felt that the sessions were not very useful after some time. Anderson (2009) recommended that small-group SEN sessions conducted during lesson time should be individualised to address the learning profile and needs of pupils with dyslexia so that pupils continue to experience success and enjoy their learning during these sessions and it can also minimise instances of pupil feeling marginalised by being excluded from their regular classes.

For pupils who found the small-group withdrawal sessions useful, they cited the use of a software that enabled them to track and monitor their progress regularly. This also seemed to have the effect of facilitating pupils to take ownership of their learning. Another pupil who has been issued a school iPad to help with her learning also reported favourably about the use of ICT to support her learning. The pupil was able to use the iPad to type and take quicker notes, receive class worksheets and use it as a 'second memory' to help with her organisation. The findings suggest that secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia are receptive towards the use of ICT as a means of progress monitoring and enhancing their learning. This also aligns with recent studies that have been advocating the use of ICT to improve the literacy skills of pupils with dyslexia (Rello et al., 2014; Zikl et al., 2015).

While most of the pupils were satisfied with the SEN support in school, a few pupils in the older year group stated that they would like to have more opportunities to meet with their teachers and parents to discuss about their progress and support needed so they can be better prepared for their GCSE. While it may be challenging for schools to implement a whole-school policy to consult pupils' views on teaching

and consultation as suggested by Morgan (2011), the findings suggest that schools can engage pupils with dyslexia and their parents to provide more regular meetings as it appears that secondary-aged pupils are keen to have more opportunities to discuss about their learning needs with key adults (Morgan, 2009).

Most of the pupils also commented positively about the support and understanding from their family members and friends in school. While a small number of pupils experienced teasing by peers during their transition year to secondary school (Year 7), the incidents were reported to have stopped by the following academic year. Claassen and Lessing (2015) suggested that support from peers and family is crucial for the socio-emotional development for adolescents with dyslexia as they are more likely to experience negative perceptions from teachers and peers. The feedback from a few pupils about some teachers and peers being less understanding of their dyslexia extends the findings by Glazzard (2010) that reported mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia being subjected to unfair comparison by their teachers and teasing by peers. This reiterates the importance for secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia to have a strong family and social support as a study by Carawan, Nalavany and Jenkins (2016) suggested that the protective features of family support can have a long-term positive effect on the emotional well-being of adolescents with dyslexia.

5.2.2.2. London Borough Participants - Parents and Educational Professionals

Most parents shared that they are supportive and understanding of their child's difficulties with dyslexia and some parents continue to help their child with their homework. While most parents were aware that their child was receiving SEN support in school, such as having TA support for some classes or attending classes

at the SEN department, they had very little information about the type or frequency of their child's SEN support received in school.

While a few parents were generally satisfied with the SEN support for their child, most parents wanted to have more regular and structured meetings with the school so that they can review their child's learning and SEN support periodically. While Campbell (2011) stated that it can be more difficult to engage parents of secondary school pupils as secondary schools are typically much larger with more subject teachers and staff involved, findings from this study appear to contradict the work by Campbell (2011) by providing some evidence that parents of secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia being keen to work jointly with the school to support their child's learning. Hornby and Witte (2010) highlighted the lack of a school policy on parental involvement and the ad-hoc nature of parental involvement that schools should look to improve on as parental involvement have been demonstrated to contribute to positive academic and emotional well-being outcomes for pupils.

The inputs from educational professionals suggested that most of them are receptive to the suggestion of having more regular parent-school meetings to discuss and review the learning needs of pupils with dyslexia. A few educational professionals shared that they communicate with parents regularly through phone calls and arrange ad-hoc meetings if needed, which seemed to reflect the ad-hoc nature of parental involvement by schools stated by Hornby and Witte (2010). While educational professionals would like to have more regular parent-school meetings to review the progress of pupils with dyslexia, they explained that it can be challenging to do so as they have to manage competing demands on their time to support the diverse range of pupils with SEN in the school. One educational professional shared that she works closely with the school's EP to explore the possibility of implementing

a more streamlined and structured approach towards the assessment, intervention and support of pupils with dyslexia in the school. This is an encouraging development as it adheres to the recommendation by Norwich, Griffiths and Burden (2005) for schools to commit more resources on the policy and practice on dyslexia-friendly schools and parent-school partnership to promote better attainment outcomes for pupils with dyslexia.

5.2.2.3. Singapore Participants - Pupils

In terms of SEN support at the school level, all of the pupils reported that they receive access accommodation (extra time) for their examinations. In addition, two pupils have been granted Mother Tongue Language Exemption (MTLE) since primary school and this has reduced their academic load to enable them to focus on their core subjects. The remaining pupil did not receive MTLE as his parents wanted him to continue having a Mother Tongue Language (MTL) subject. Hence, he took Chinese Language B in secondary school, which focuses more on practical communication knowledge and places less academic and time demands for pupils who have displayed significantly difficulty in their MTL (MOE, 2018b).

Although some of the pupils received additional learning support from their teachers such as notes and remedial lessons, this seemed to be applicable for all pupils and is not meant only for pupils with SEN/ dyslexia. One possible reason for the limited SEN support in schools could be due to the local educational practice of having pupils with dyslexia receive out-of-school dyslexia support at the dyslexia intervention centre. Two pupils who have been attending the weekly small-group dyslexia classes at the dyslexia intervention centre since they were diagnosed in primary school commented positively about the dyslexia-friendly, differentiated teaching approach at the dyslexia intervention centre. One pupil also receives

weekly individual tuition from a home tutor in addition to classes at the dyslexia intervention centre. One of the benefits of attending out-of-school dyslexia specialist intervention support is that it reduces the risk of pupils being marginalised and segregated due to frequent out-of-class SEN support for their dyslexia (Anderson, 2009; Casserly, 2011). By having pupils attend out-of-school dyslexia specialist intervention, these pupils benefit by being able to participate fully in the classroom learning and school experience, albeit at the cost of having to commute to the dyslexia specialist centre and having to pay additional fees to attend additional classes after-school.

Most of the pupils commented positively about how their parents and siblings have been understanding about their learning difficulties. In terms of peer support, two pupils also stated that they would study together with a small group of friends and that this has been helpful for their learning. One pupil explained that she would only share her dyslexia diagnosis with her close friends as she has concerns that she might be viewed negatively by less understanding peers. This suggests that dyslexia continue to be stigmatised and could be one of the reasons that pupils with dyslexia not being keen to disclose their dyslexia, as this places them at risk of being unnecessarily or unfairly scrutinised by others (Riddick, 2000). All of the pupils appeared to have positive peer relationships in school as they did not report any teasing by their peers. However, one pupil recalled that she was a victim of bullying in primary school and suggested that being more assertive and having more friends can be possible protective factors against bullying. The range of strategies used by the pupil lends weight to the study that suggested positive peer relationships and peer support can be an effective strategy to minimise school bullying (Cowie, 2011).

5.2.2.4. Singapore Participants - Parents and Educational Professionals

While one parent was pleased with her child's progress in school, she stated that she would have preferred to have more regular communication with her child's teachers to better support her child's learning. This is consistent from the findings from the Lamb enquiry (Lamb, 2009), which suggested that parents of pupils with SEN value communication with the school about their child's learning. Another parent expressed concerns with the limited in-school SEN support and queried about the prioritisation of school-based support for pupils with dyslexia. She suggested that even though pupils with dyslexia may be one of the largest proportion of pupils with SEN in schools, they may not be prioritised for SEN support as most pupils do not present with disruptive behaviours and may not receive the attention and support in school.

The concerns expressed by one of the parents was reiterated by the educational professionals as one educational professional commented that some pupils with dyslexia may miss out on school-based support as not all secondary schools have allied educators to provide in-school SEN support. In addition, another educational professional also suggested that the ability-based streaming of the pupils into the various curriculum tracks makes it more challenging for secondary schools to provide the appropriate level of SEN support for their pupils. She suggested that it would be a good initiative for more teachers to receive additional training so that they can better support the learning needs of secondary pupils with dyslexia in school.

Key findings

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore in relation to their intervention or support received from school and/ or home?

Pupils

The majority of pupils from the London borough and Singapore valued the support and understanding from their peers and parents (e.g., close friends who helped with their learning/ homework, parents engaged home tutors)

There were mixed responses regarding the in-school SEN support from pupils in the London borough while most of the Singaporean pupils commented positively about their out-of-school dyslexia intervention classes

Parents and Educational Professionals

The majority of parents from the London borough and Singapore supported their child's learning by helping them with their homework or engaging home tutor(s) and almost of the parents would like more regular communication/ structured progress tracking/ review meetings with the school

A few educational professionals from the London borough acknowledged that more regular home-school communication would be beneficial but cited time and resource constraints as barriers

Figure 3. Key Findings from Research Question 2

5.2.3. Research Question 3

What are the academic and career aspirations of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore?

5.2.3.1. London Borough Participants - Pupils

Most of the pupils indicated that they would like to continue with their education in sixth form or college after completing secondary education while a few of the pupils remained undecided. The findings suggested that most secondary pupils with dyslexia have high academic aspirations and findings from this study contrasted with the work conducted by Rimkute et al. (2014) as the authors suggested that adolescents with dyslexia displayed lower academic expectations and aspirations. The findings provide some support to the hypothesis by Rimkute and colleagues (2014) as the authors hypothesised that there might be cross-cultural differences in the academic aspirations of adolescents with dyslexia, as it is influenced by contextual variables such as differences in educational and socio-cultural factors. Most of the participants did not seem to have given considered their

career aspirations although there were three pupils who were able to state their career aspirations as being a writer, an air hostess and joining the army.

While the findings were encouraging as it suggested that most pupils with dyslexia continue to have high expectations of themselves and did not see dyslexia as an obstacle to their aspirations, most pupils had limited awareness of the support that they need to achieve their post-secondary academic aspirations. Diakogiorgi and Tsiligirian (2016) emphasised the importance of secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia having ongoing support from school staff and their parents as they work towards their academic and career aspirations as they are more likely to experience more difficulties and require more support than their peers without dyslexia.

5.2.3.2. London Borough Participants - Parents and Educational Professionals

Most parents were supportive of their child's post-secondary aspirations, although they seemed to have moderated their expectations regarding their child achieving their post-secondary aspirations, likely due to their child's difficulties with dyslexia. The findings provide some evidence to suggest that parents of adolescents with dyslexia may have lower aspirations of their child, unlike parents of typically developing adolescents as the study by Archer, DeWitt and Wong (2014) found that those parents had high expectations of their children being successful in their academic work and future careers.

A few parents seemed to convey a sense of regret that their child would be unlikely to enter sixth form or university due to their poor academic standing and some parents stated that they would be able to plan for their child's post-secondary pathway after looking at their child's grades at the end of secondary education. A few parents also felt that their child would be more suitable for the apprenticeship route

as there is more emphasis on applied learning and is more compatible with their child's learning style.

While a few parents and educational professionals acknowledged that some pupils with dyslexia may aspire to enter sixth form and university in the future, the responses from some parents and educational professionals suggested that pupils with dyslexia may be more suitable for post-secondary pathways that are less academically demanding (e.g., apprenticeship or college).

5.2.3.3. Singapore Participants - Pupils

All of the pupils stated that they would be continuing with their education after secondary school. The academic aspirations of the pupils appeared to be closely associated with their current academic stream based on the results of their primary school national examination results. The pupil in the top-tier express stream aspired to enter a Junior College (JC) pre-university route or polytechnic diploma route while the pupil in the mid-tier normal (academic) stream stated that he would like to enter polytechnic. The remaining pupil who is in the third-tier normal (technical) stream remained undecided about his post-secondary preference but felt that his academic standing would likely see him enter the Institute of Technical Education vocational college route. While banding the pupils into the express, normal (academic) and normal (technical) streams according to their results obtained from the PSLE facilitates secondary schools to provide the appropriate curriculum and resources for the pupils according to their academic abilities (MOE, 2018a), Manson et al. (2016) suggested that ability-based streaming practices might have downsides. From their study, Manson et al. (2016) suggested that the self-esteem and academic aspirations of pupils in the lower-ability streams might be affected due to social comparison as school staff and peers in higher-ability streams might perceive pupils

in the lower-ability streams to be less capable and have lower expectations of them, although this was not found in this study.

There were also notable differences in the career aspirations reported by the pupils. The pupil in the express stream aspired to be a medical doctor while the pupil in the normal (academic) stream wanted to become a Physical Education (PE) teacher. The pupil in the normal (technical) stream stated that he would like to explore engineering-related vocations in the future. Two pupils felt that their dyslexia would not be an obstacle to their academic or career aspirations as they just needed more time to learn while the pupil from the normal (technical) stream expressed some concerns over his employability in the future. He explained that his academic transcript would be annotated to indicate that he received extra time for his national examinations and this may cause him to be perceived differently by his prospective employers, especially if compared alongside another comparable employee without dyslexia. This suggested that some pupils with dyslexia may still view their condition as a stigma and have concerns over their future employability or how they may be perceived differently by others (Poon et al., 2013).

5.2.3.4. Singapore Participants - Parents and Educational Professionals

As none of the educational professionals were involved in supporting the post-secondary aspirations for pupils they worked with, only the inputs from both parents were considered for this section. Both parents were supportive of their child's academic and career aspirations and hoped that their child would achieve their hopes and dreams. The findings aligned with the study by Liu, McMahon and Watson (2015) about Asian parents having an influence on the career aspirations of their child. However, it would seem that parents in this study differed from Asian parents of typically developing adolescents as they did not express any intentions for

their children to take on prestigious and high-paying careers (Hou & Leung, 2011). Instead, both parents adopted a more pragmatic stance in shaping the academic and career aspirations of their child, perhaps in view of their child's difficulties with dyslexia.

For their child's academic aspirations, both parents suggested that their child might be better suited in one of the polytechnics after completing their secondary education, as the polytechnics focuses more on applied learning instead of the more examination-focused JC route. There were some differences between the two parents' approach to their child's career aspirations. One parent stated that she would provide guidance to her child's academic subject selection in secondary school to ensure that she has more flexible career options in the future, while the other parent emphasised the importance for her child to be learning and trained in a skill-based profession that is closely related to his various interest, such as culinary arts. Taken together, this seemed to suggest that Asian parents of children with SEN such as dyslexia might have moderated their academic and career aspirations of their child as the findings were dissimilar to previous studies (e.g., Hou & Leung, 2011; Liang, Okamoto & Brenner, 2010; Liu et al., 2015) which described Asian parents as having high educational and career expectations for their child.

<p>Key findings Research Question 3: What are the academic and career aspirations of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia from a London borough and Singapore?</p> <p><u>Pupils</u> Most pupils from the London borough and Singapore wanted to continue their education in 6th form/ college/ polytechnic/ university and some pupils aspired to be a writer/ air hostess/ PE teacher/ doctor in the future</p> <p>Some pupils from the London borough felt that their dyslexia would be an obstacle to their aspirations whereas all of the Singaporean pupils felt that their dyslexia would have minimal impact on their aspirations</p> <p><u>Parents and Educational Professionals</u> The majority of parents from the London borough described themselves as having a facilitative and supportive role to guide their child's post-secondary aspirations while the Singaporean parents felt that they may need to steer their child's post-secondary aspirations</p> <p>A few educational professionals from the London borough suggested the need to understand the learning profile of secondary pupils with dyslexia to carefully plan post-secondary pathways for them</p>
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Figure 4. Key Findings from Research Question 3

5.2.4. Summary of Key Findings

5.2.4.1. Research Question 1 - Pupils

Most of the pupils were able to identify their strengths as learners. However, most of the pupils from Singapore mapped their strengths as learners onto the subjects that they excel or enjoy (e.g., Maths, Science) whereas all the pupils from the London borough described their cognitive strengths more broadly (e.g., fast learner, creative). The researcher postulates that this difference could be due to the perceptions of Singaporean pupils associating their strengths as learners to academic excellence, as the Singapore education system is recognised globally for its strong education system and their pupils have high aspirations and work towards attaining excellent results (MOE, 2018d).

With regard to the difficulties experienced by the pupils, there was consensus amongst most of the pupils from the two data sets that learning an additional language (a London borough – Modern Foreign Language [MFL]/ Singapore – Mother Tongue[MT]) was particularly challenging. All of the pupils from the London

borough who struggled with MFL discussed their negative experiences and the lack of school support during the period that they had to take MFL. There were also a few pupils from the London borough who would have liked to drop MFL in Year 7 to focus on their core subjects but were not given that option from the school to do so. This contrasted with the experiences of the Singaporean pupils, as two pupils had been exempted from MT since primary school due to their persistent difficulties with MT due to dyslexia while another pupil reported positively about his experience with the differentiated MT subject (Chinese Language - B) in secondary school.

The Singapore education system recognises that some pupils may have exceptional difficulties with their MT and adopted a mass differentiation strategy by having five MT curriculum tracks to ensure that pupils can learn MT to the highest level possible (MOE, 2018b). This is likely to be a contributing factor to the positive feedback from the pupil taking Chinese Language B and may be a useful approach for schools in the London borough to consider, so that pupils with dyslexia can have a more positive and meaningful experience with MFL.

5.2.4.2. Research Question 1 - Parents and Educational Professionals

The responses from both sets of parents generally mirrored the feedback given by their child regarding their area of strengths and difficulties as learners. One key observation from the responses from the educational professionals was that most of the educational professionals from both the London borough and Singapore emphasised the importance of supporting the confidence and self-esteem of pupils with dyslexia. This provides some evidence that the academic and psychosocial difficulties associated with dyslexia are relatively pervasive within the educational context even across different countries and suggests that they should be one of the key foci for adults working with this group of adolescents.

5.2.4.3. Research Question 2 - Pupils

Most of the pupils from both contexts valued the support and understanding from their friends and parents. However, there was one key difference between SEN support for pupils as the pupils from the London borough received in-school SEN support whereas the responses from most of the Singaporean pupils seemed to indicate that they receive SEN support from an out-of-school dyslexia intervention centre.

The researcher postulates that the difference in educational SEN practices between the two contexts could be due to the limited number of specialist SEN staff and resources allocated for schools in Singapore (MOE, 2017a). This meant that schools in Singapore have to refer pupils with dyslexia for specialist support at the dyslexia intervention centre. Despite the apparent limitations of in-school dyslexia support for pupils in Singapore, it has to be highlighted that all of the Singaporean pupils gave positive responses about their teachers and the learning support received from their teachers (e.g., remedial lessons, summarised notes), although this appeared to be provided for all pupils with poorer academic attainment and is not a dyslexia-specific/ SEN in-school support. This seemed to suggest that a key factor to consider in the education of adolescents with dyslexia is to ensure that educators support pupils' learning by teaching in a dyslexia-friendly manner (e.g., providing differentiated support) to benefit the learning for all pupils, with or without dyslexia (British Dyslexia Association, 2012). This is important as some pupils from the London borough shared that some of their teachers found it hard to understand and/ or support their learning needs, even though their schools have in-school SEN support and practices.

5.2.4.4. Research Question 2 - Parents and Educational Professionals

All of the parents from both contexts stated that they understand and try their best to support their child's learning, such as helping with their homework, hiring home tutors or sending them to attend specialist dyslexia classes. There were differing concerns expressed by both Singaporean parents as one parent discussed about the limited SEN support in school, which was also highlighted by one of the educational professionals in Singapore. As for the other Singaporean parent, she would have liked to have had more regular home-school communication so that she could ensure that her child kept up with his learning diligently (e.g., remind her child to complete homework).

Both of these concerns raised by the Singaporean parents were reiterated by most of the parents from the London borough as they wanted to have more regular and structured meetings with the school to closely review their child's learning progress and supports needed. A few parents from the London borough also stated that they had to advocate and prompt the school for their child to receive SEN support. While some of the educational professionals acknowledged parents' concerns about their child's learning and wanted to have more regular meetings, they cited time and capacity constraints as barriers to having regular parent-school meetings. However, a few of the educational professionals emphasised that they advise parents during parents' evening and try to arrange for ad-hoc meetings if needed.

5.2.4.5. Research Question 3 - Pupils

Most of the pupils from both contexts had high academic and career aspirations, as they aspired to enter junior college/ polytechnic (Singapore pupils) or sixth form/ college and university (the London borough pupils). However, a few

pupils from the London borough remained undecided about their academic and/ or career plans after completing secondary school. There were some pupils from the London borough who felt that their dyslexia would be an obstacle to their aspirations whereas all of the Singaporean pupils indicated that they felt that their dyslexia would have minimal impact on their aspirations.

The difference in responses from the two sets of participants could be due to factors such as the severity of the pupil's dyslexia, their level of family, school and SEN support and their responsiveness to the SEN support/ remediation as these variables could all have varying levels of influence on pupils' perceptions about their dyslexia and its impact on their post-secondary aspirations. However, the responses from most of the pupils were encouraging as it suggested that most adolescents with dyslexia were optimistic about their future after completing secondary education and continued to have high aspirations.

5.2.4.6. Research Question 3 - Parents and Educational Professionals

Whiston and Keller (2004) suggested that the family has a critical role in shaping the occupational aspirations of adolescents. The findings from the study provide some evidence to the study by Whiston and Keller (2004) as most of the parents from both data sets took a keen interest in supporting their child's post-secondary aspirations and were able to share about their child's preferred post-secondary academic and/ or career choices.

However, while most of the parents and educational professionals from the London borough described themselves as having a facilitative and supportive role to guide pupils' post-secondary aspirations, both Singaporean parents stated that they might need to be more involved in steering their child's post-secondary aspirations to ensure that they are successful. This difference could be attributed to social-cultural

factors as a few studies have found that Chinese-Asian parents are more involved in guiding the occupational aspirations of their children, viewing it as a key parental responsibility (Leung et al., 2011; Young et al., 2003).

In terms of inputs from the educational professionals, only the educational professionals from the London borough were able to provide insights as the educational professionals from Singapore were not involved in supporting the post-secondary aspirations of their pupils. A few of the educational professionals from the London borough suggested the need to carefully plan the post-secondary pathways for pupils with dyslexia to match their learning profile (e.g., less academic demanding and more emphasis on applied learning) to ensure that they can be successful. This was reiterated by most parents from both data sets. On the whole, it seemed that even though both sets of adults (parents and educational professionals) valued the aspirations of adolescents with dyslexia, they espoused a sense of pragmatism and seemed to acknowledge that this group of pupils will need support to carefully plan their post-secondary options due to their learning difficulties.

5.3. Strength and Limitations of Study

Strengths of Study

One of the strengths of the study is its contribution to the literature by gaining insights into the views and experiences of secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia from two diverse contexts as research participants were invited from two different legislative and socio-cultural countries. The aims of this study fit neatly with the emerging interest and current educational research trend of listening to the views of pupils and the findings from this study are useful in providing a better understanding regarding the facilitators and barriers in the home and school environment for secondary pupils with dyslexia (Adderley, 2015; Tangen, 2008). This knowledge can

be helpful for parents, teachers and educational professionals working with adolescents with dyslexia to be more informed about their strengths and difficulties and be better placed to provide the support needed to enhance pupils' educational journeys and learning outcomes. This is important as pupils with SEN are known to be at higher risk of experiencing marginalisation or poor academic outcomes than typically developing peers (Messiou, 2012; Scanlon & Mellard, 2002).

A unique contribution of the study to the literature is the use of interviews with secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia to illuminate their aspirations. While an earlier study by Diakogiorgi & Tsiligirian (2016) involved parents and career counsellors rating the occupational competencies of children with dyslexia using questionnaires, this paper is believed to be one of the few studies that has explored the aspirations of adolescents with dyslexia, their parents and educational professionals through a qualitative approach to deepen the knowledge base. The data gained from this research suggests that most secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia have high academic aspirations and wish to pursue higher/ further education after completing their secondary education. The responses from most of the parents and educational professionals who participated in this study also showed that they value and support the aspirations of adolescents with dyslexia to attain the best possible academic and career outcomes. The support from parents and the school is important as several studies (e.g., Carter-Wall & Whitefield, 2012; Gorad, Beng, & Davies, 2012; Khattab, 2015; Majoribanks, 2002) have demonstrated family support and a positive school environment to be important factors in facilitating adolescents to attain their aspirations. While there is a paucity of research regarding the aspirations of adolescents with dyslexia, it is postulated that the influence of family and the school might be more important for secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia to attain their

aspirations, given the range of difficulties in academic work and peer or teacher relationships experienced by adolescents with dyslexia, in comparison to their typically developing peers.

Limitations of Study

One of the limitations of the study is the relatively modest sample size of 27 participants that included only 12 pupils (9 from the London borough and 3 from Singapore). There were also a small number of parents and educational professionals who participated in this study (6 parents and 4 educational professionals from the London borough and 2 parents and 3 educational professionals from Singapore).

While the focus of qualitative studies is to gather rich data from a small group of participants who can inform the aims of the research rather than having an emphasis on recruiting a large, representative sample to generalise findings to the wider population (Marshall, 1996), the findings have to be interpreted carefully due to the small sample size. However, it is believed that the findings can still be used meaningfully given that the researcher had adequately described the relevant contextual factors in this research (Ponterotto, 2006).

One of the key challenges in conducting this research was the difficulty involved with recruiting a larger number of research participants as it can be a practical challenge in real-world research to access sufficient participants in view of the limited resource and timeline for the study. The majority of the organisations, schools and parents who were invited by the researcher declined to participate in the research, likely due to differing priorities or competing demands on their time and resources.

Another limitation of the study is the lack of diverse voices as the majority of the pupils and parents who participated in the research were from the ethnic majority groups in the London borough (White British) and Singapore (Chinese). While this study has extended the knowledge base around the views and experiences of secondary pupils with dyslexia, the findings need to be interpreted with caution due to the lack of input from ethnic minority groups. There is a need for future studies to access the voices of ethnic minority pupils with dyslexia and understand their views and educational experiences as it might differ from ethnic majority groups. Gaining insights from ethnic minority pupils with dyslexia will enable parents, school staff and professionals working with this group of pupils to better understand their needs and support them to achieve better outcomes as several studies (e.g., Kingdom & Cassen, 2007; Tackey, Barnes, & Khambhaita, 2011) have demonstrated that various factors such as ethnic minority status, having SEN and eligibility for free school meals can negatively impacting pupils' educational attainment.

5.4. Future Directions

While findings from the study have contributed to a better understanding of the perceptions and experiences of secondary pupils, their parents and educational professional working with them, there is a need for further research to extend our understanding in this area. Firstly, there is a need to access the voices of ethnic minority groups in future studies as this group of research participants continues to be under-represented in the literature. From their systematic review of the barriers and facilitators to research participation by ethnic minority groups, George, Duran and Norris (2014) suggested stigma as one of the main barriers for the lack of research participation by ethnic minority groups and recommended that researchers

access these harder-to-reach participants at community resources and services commonly used by ethnic minority groups.

Future studies might also wish to employ longitudinal studies to provide more compelling evidence regarding the facilitators and barriers influencing the educational experiences and aspirations post-secondary education for adolescents with dyslexia as the current evidence base in this area is limited to the study of typically development adolescents (Gorad et al., 2012). As longitudinal studies involve the use of quantitative and/ or qualitative measures repeated over a period of time, it enables researchers to track the educational trajectories of participants and have more confidence regarding the influence of factors on their academic attainment and educational outcomes (Caruana et al., 2015). Given the strength of longitudinal research, findings from such studies may provide more impetus for changes at a school or systematic level and benefit a wider group of individuals with dyslexia. However, one of the biggest challenges associated with longitudinal studies is the attrition rate as participants may drop out of the study due to various reasons over the research period which may limit generalisability of the findings and there is also the issue of needing a substantial amount of time and resources to carry out longitudinal studies (Gustavson et al., 2012).

5.5. Implications for EP Practice

Findings from this study have provided some evidence that pupils feel valued that they are being consulted about their views and school experiences, similar to responses of secondary pupils with dyslexia who participated in an earlier study by Morgan (2009). The insights gained from the research participants has also been useful to identify possible areas for adults working with secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia to promote better outcomes for secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia.

One of the most immediate implications for EP practice is the need for EPs to ensure that the pupil voice is elicited where possible and presented within a holistic psychological conceptualisation of the CYP as the importance of listening to the views of CYP has been documented in the relevant legislature, literature and EP profession (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). However, the changing landscape of the EP profession with the increasing trend towards a 'traded' psychological service model might also present ethical dilemmas for EPs if there were to be differing views on the value of the pupil voice between EPs and clients who commission their services (Lee & Woods, 2017).

Another possible area that EPs can be involved in is to promote more instances of collaborative home-school partnership as several studies (e.g., Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Fan & Chen, 2001; Kim & Hill, 2015) have demonstrated that parental involvement and support can contribute positively to pupils' academic attainment, motivation, aptitude towards learning and result in fewer incidents of disruptive classroom behaviours. The responses from most parents in the study aligns closely with the findings from Epstein (2008) in demonstrating that parents of secondary-aged pupils want to receive more regular communication and structured guidance from the school regarding their child's progress so that they can support their child to successfully negotiate through secondary education and plan for their post-secondary pathways. While some educational professionals agreed that more regular progress meetings would be useful for pupils with dyslexia, they cited time constraints as a barrier to arranging regular meetings on top of annual parents' meetings and/or review meetings.

This provides an opportunity for EPs to use their knowledge of psychological frameworks such as solution-focused approaches to provide structure to parent-

school meetings so that such discussion can have a core focus for stakeholders, including pupils, on generating solutions and for follow-up meetings to review progress of targets agreed during previous meetings (Harker, 2001). While this does not directly address the concerns expressed by staff regarding time constraints to meet parents more regularly, it does present a possible solution to streamline organisational resources required for such parent-school meetings. This approach would be useful for schools who prioritise parent-school collaboration and/ or can allocate 'protected time' for school staff to meet regularly with parents.

5.6. Reflection

One of the biggest challenges in conducting this study was around participant recruitment as the researcher was only able to recruit a modest number of participants from the London borough and Singapore. This difficulty appeared to be particularly evident with the Singapore context, as only three Singaporean pupils participated in the research. The researcher hypothesised that a possible reason for this phenomenon might be due to the perceived stigma experienced by CYP with SEN (Cooney et al., 2006), which may have been a possible factor that resulted in a small number of pupils in this study. In addition, parents of secondary-aged pupils with dyslexia in Singapore may also have been less receptive than the parents of adolescents with dyslexia from the London borough to grant consent for their child to participate in this study, as Uba and Nwoga (2016) stated that contextual features such as sociocultural factors and parental experience of perceived stigma regarding their child's SEN are likely to influence the decisions that they undertake on behalf of their child.

The researcher opined that a possible approach to mitigate the difficulty around modest participant numbers for similar studies in the future might be for

researchers to position their work from a holistic or strength-based approach (Wilding & Griffey, 2015). It is likely that by having future studies with a key focus on exploring the talents, strengths and abilities of CYPs with dyslexia (e.g., Arts, Sports, etc.), these studies may be more successful at recruiting more pupils and/ or parents of CYPs with dyslexia may also be more receptive towards their child participating in these studies.

5.7. Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding around the perceptions, experiences and aspirations of secondary pupils with dyslexia while the inclusion of their parents and educational professionals working with adolescents with dyslexia has helped to provide a holistic perspective. The key findings from the study showed that most pupils had high aspirations, were aware of their strengths and difficulties as learners, gained confidence and made friends from their involvement in clubs and activities and valued the support of their family and friends. The study also found that the pupils from the London borough and Singapore had differing views about their strengths as learners and the impact of dyslexia on their aspirations. There was a consensus amongst parents and educational professionals regarding the importance of supporting pupils' self-esteem and confidence as learners, and the need to guide their post-secondary aspirations. It is hoped that the findings can also contribute to EP knowledge and provide insights to enable adults working with adolescents with dyslexia to better support them and enable them to achieve better outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Ethics Approval

On 30 Jan 2017, at 3:18 PM, Campbell, Leon
<leon.campbell@ucl.ac.uk> wrote:

Dear Derek,

I am pleased to inform you that your research project '**A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents/carers and education professionals in a London Borough and Singapore**', for the year 2 research project on the Doctorate in Professional Educational, child and Adolescent Psychology, has been given ethical approval. If you have any further queries in this regard, please contact your supervisor.

Please note that if your proposed study and methodology changes markedly from what you have outlined in your ethics review application, you may need to complete and submit a new or revised application. Should this possibility arise, please discuss with your supervisor in the first instance before you proceed with a new/revised application.

Your ethical approval form has been logged and will be uploaded to the UCL IOE database.

Good luck with your data collection.

Best wishes,

Leon

Leon Campbell
Interim Programme Administrator
Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent
Psychology
Psychology & Human Development
UCL Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way London WC1H 0AL
Telephone: 020 7612 6591 (internal: 06591)
E-mail: leon.campbell@ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 2 - School Research Information Sheet and Head Teacher Consent Form

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A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore

Research Information Sheet for [School/ Head Teacher]

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Derek Zheng and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist and a full-time doctoral student on the Doctor in Educational Psychology (Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology) at the University College London, Institute of Education.

I am inviting BTG to take part in my research project, 'A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London Borough and Singapore'. I am supervised by Dr Karen Majors and Professor Jackie Masterson for this research.

I very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try and answer any questions you might have about the research, but please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why am I doing this research?

Currently, there is limited research that explores the experiences and perceptions of adolescents with dyslexia. I am interested to conduct this study to find out how mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia perceive and experience their special educational needs (SEN) and also explore the views of their parents and education professionals who support/ work with them.

This study has three main objectives:

1. Gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and educational professionals who support them.
2. Develop an understanding of how dyslexia is identified, assessed and supported across cultural/ geographical settings (In a London borough and Singapore).
3. Learn best practices, understand challenges and suggest possible solutions to better support mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia.

Why has my organisation been invited to take part?

Your school has been invited as it is a mainstream secondary school with pupils with dyslexia and specialist staff working with/ supporting pupils with dyslexia.

**What will happen if my organisation participates in this research?**

You will be granting permission for me to work with these participants from your school.

- Eight pupils with dyslexia
- Three parents from the eight pupils
- Two school staff (e.g., SENCO, dyslexia specialist teacher)

Each participant will be interviewed individually. The 30-minute interview will be conducted in school and will be recorded (audio only).

***Inclusion criteria for pupils**

- English as first language
- Dyslexia identified by school as primary SEN
- No other physical, neurological, sensory or mental health difficulties
- Preferably Year 8 and above

Will anyone know the names of the participants involved?

All information that is collected for this research will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential. My research supervisors and I will be the only people who will have access to the raw data.

The names of participants will only be requested and required for their consent form. Their consent form will be coded with a unique alphanumerical code to correspond with their audio recording and interview schedule document. The use of the unique alphanumerical code breaks the link between the participant and their data.

All hard copies of data will be kept by Derek in a private locked cabinet while soft copies of data will be managed in accordance to the Data Protection Act (1998) and be password protected, encrypted and used on a private computer by Derek only.

The anonymity and confidentiality of participants will be maintained as far as possible. Exceptions would be made in cases where the participant reveal that he/ she are being harmed in any way, which Derek will have to report to an appropriate authority. This is done with the participant's knowledge and it will be agreed with you whom to tell. Other exception could be if the participant stated that he/ she have or intend to harm someone.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

There are no anticipated disadvantages for taking part in this research. Participants can choose not to answer any questions that he/ she is uncomfortable with and can also stop the interview at any point.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The findings of this research will be submitted in a thesis to meet the requirements of the Doctor in Educational Psychology (Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology) at the University College London, Institute of Education. The final report could be published in a

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scientific journal or shared at future conferences. All data will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you choose to allow your school take part. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There will be no financial reimbursements or incentives for participating in this study.

Criminal Records Check

Derek has undergone the Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check on 13 October 2015.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

If you are happy to participate, please complete the consent form on page 4 and return to the school SENDCO/ SENCO as soon as possible.

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can email me at chengde.zheng.15@ucl.ac.uk.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee on 30 January 2017.

UCL Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
+44 (0)20 7612 6000 | enquiries@ioe.ac.uk | www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe

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A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore

[School Consent Form – Head Teacher]

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form and return to the school SENDCO/ SENCO as soon as possible.

1. I have read and understood the research information sheet.
2. I am happy for eight secondary pupils with dyslexia, three parents and two staff to be interviewed by Derek Zheng.
3. I understand that each participant will be interviewed for around 30 minutes.
4. I understand that the interviews will be conducted in school and audio recorded.
5. I understand that the research will be anonymised and that all information will be kept confidential unless there is a concern about the safety of the participant.
6. I understand that Derek Zheng will send an electronic version of the research report (executive summary) to the school upon completion of the study.
7. I can contact Derek Zheng at chengde.zheng.15@ucl.ac.uk.

Full Name: _____

Designation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Stamp: _____

Thank you

UCL Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
+44 (0)20 7612 5000 | enquiries@ie.ucl.ac.uk | www.ucl.ac.uk/ie

Appendix 3 - Parent Research Information Sheet and Consent Form

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A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore

Research Information Sheet for [PARENT]

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Derek Zheng and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist and a full-time doctoral student on the Doctor in Educational Psychology (Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology) at the University College London, Institute of Education.

I would like to invite you and your child to take part in my research project, 'A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London Borough and Singapore'. I am supervised by Dr Karen Majors and Professor Jackie Masterson for this research.

You and your child's support would be very insightful and valuable for the research. I have prepared this information sheet to address some of the questions you might have about the project. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Please explain the research to your child and discuss whether he/ she would like to participate in this study.

Why are we doing this research?

Currently, there is limited research that explores the experiences and perceptions of adolescents with dyslexia. I am interested to conduct this study to find out how mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia perceive and experience their special educational needs as a learner/ adolescent and also explore the views of their parents and education professionals who support/ work with them.

This study has three main objectives:

1. Gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals who support them.
2. Develop an understanding of how dyslexia is identified, assessed and supported across cultural/ geographical settings (In a London borough and Singapore).
3. Learn best practices, understand challenges and suggest possible solutions to better support mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia.

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Why am I being invited to take part?

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your experience in supporting and parenting a mainstream secondary pupil with dyslexia.

Your child has been chosen to participate in this research as he/ she is attending a mainstream secondary school and is a learner/ adolescent with dyslexia.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

You will be invited to take part in an interview. I will ask you questions in relation to your experience and views in supporting and parenting your child. The interview should last around 30 minutes and will be recorded (audio only).

Your child will be invited to take part in an interview. I will ask your child questions in relation to his/ her experience as a learner/ adolescent with dyslexia in a mainstream secondary school. The interview should last around 30 minutes and will be recorded (audio only).

The interviews will be conducted individually and may be scheduled on separate days.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

All information that is collected for this research will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential. My research supervisors and I will be the only people who will have access to the raw data.

Your name (and your child's name) will only be reflected on your consent/ assent form. The consent form will be coded with a unique alphanumerical code to correspond with your audio recording and interview schedule document. The use of the unique alphanumerical code breaks the link between the participant and his/ her and data.

All hard copies of data will be kept by Derek in a private locked cabinet while soft copies of data will be managed in accordance to the Data Protection Act (1998) and be password protected, encrypted and used on a private computer by Derek only.

Your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible. Exceptions will be made in cases where the participant reveal that he/ she is being harmed in any way, which Derek will have to report to an appropriate authority. This is done with the participant's knowledge and it will be agreed with the participant whom to tell. Other exception could be if the participant stated that he/ she has or intend to harm someone.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

There are no anticipated disadvantages for taking part in this research. You can choose not to answer any questions during the interview that you are uncomfortable with and entitled to stop at any point during the interview.

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What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of this research will be submitted in a thesis to meet the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology) at the University College London, Institute of Education. The final report could be published in a scientific journal or shared at future conferences. All data will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you choose to take part. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience.

The cut-off date for withdrawal of your consent and/ or consent for your child is 01 December 2017.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There will be no financial reimbursements or incentives for participating in this study. However, upon completion of the study, you will receive an executive summary of the research report.

Criminal Records Check

Derek has undergone the Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check on 13 October 2015.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form on Page 4 and return to the school SENDCO/ SENCO as soon as possible.

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can email me at chengde.zheng.15@ucl.ac.uk.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee on 30 January 2017.

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A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore

[PARENT]

If you are happy for your child/ and yourself to participate in this study, please complete this consent form and **return to the school SENDCO/ SENCO as soon as possible.**

1. I have read and understood the research information sheet.
2. I am happy for my child to talk to Derek Zheng and tell him about his/ her experiences and perceptions as a learner with dyslexia.
3. I understand that my child's interview will be recorded using an audio device.
4. I understand that all information will be kept confidential unless there is a concern about the safety of my child and/ or another student/ staff.
5. I understand that any details that could be used to identify my child will be taken out from the research.
6. I understand that I can also participate in the study and that my interview will be audio recorded. All information that can be used to identify me will be taken out of the research and will be kept confidential unless there is a concern about my safety.
7. I understand that Derek Zheng will give an electronic version of the research report (executive summary) to me if I ask for it.
8. I can contact Derek Zheng at chengde.zheng.15@ucl.ac.uk

Please put a 'X' on either Option A (parent and child interview) or Option B (child interview only)

Option A

Yes, **both myself and my child** are happy to be interviewed for this study.

*Interview will be conducted individually and may on separate days.

Option B

Yes, **I am happy for my child** to be interviewed for this study.


Full Name (Parent): _____

Name of Child: _____ Year Group: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 4 - Pupil Research Information Sheet and Consent Form

<p>Institute of Education</p> 
<p>A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore</p> <p>Research Information Sheet for [PUPIL]</p> <p>1. What is this research about? It is to know more about the experience and views of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia.</p> <p>2. Why have I been chosen? You have been invited to take part in this study as I would like to learn more about your experience and views as a learner/ adolescent with dyslexia in a mainstream secondary school.</p> <p>3. Do I have to take part? It is not compulsory for you to take part in this research. You can choose whether to participate in the research.</p> <p>Please tick the 'Yes' or 'No' box below to indicate your interest in the research.</p> <p>If you decide to take part, you are still free to change your mind and withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason. The cut-off date for withdrawal of your assent (permission) to participate in this study is 01 December 2017.</p> <p>4. What will happen to me if I take part? You will be asked a few questions about your learning at school, relationships with your family and friends and academic/ career aspirations.</p> <p>The things you shared with me will not be told to your teachers or parents unless I think that you are in danger and the law says that I have to tell a school staff about it.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read this Research Information Sheet.</p> <p>Derek Zheng</p> <hr/> <p>I, _____ (write your name), wish to take part in this research about the experience and views of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><small>UCL Institute of Education 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL +44 (0)20 7612 6000 enquiries@iee.ucl.ac.uk www.ucl.ac.uk/iee</small></p>

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A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore

Pupil Assent Form (to be completed before starting interview with pupil)

Please complete this sheet if you wish to take part in my research.

If you wish to participate in my research, please read this form carefully and sign it at the bottom. We can work through it together.

The cut-off date for withdrawal of your assent to participate in this study is 01 December 2017.

1. I have read the research information sheet and I understand what I have to do.

Yes

No

2. I am happy to talk to Derek Zheng in an interview and share with him about my perceptions and experiences as an adolescent learner with dyslexia.

Yes

No

3. I understand that I will be recorded for the interview (audio/ sound only).

Yes

No

4. I understand that Derek Zheng will not tell anybody about the things I say unless he is worried about my safety or the safety of another pupil/ staff.

Yes

No

5. I understand that my name will be changed so people do not know the things I said.

Yes

No

Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Year Group: _____

Appendix 5 - Educational Professional Research Information Sheet and Consent Form

Institute of Education



A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore

Research Information Sheet for [EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONAL]

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Derek Zheng and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist and a full-time doctoral student on the Doctor in Educational Psychology (Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology) at the University College London, Institute of Education.

I would like you to take part in my research project, 'A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London Borough and Singapore'. I am supervised by Dr Karen Majors and Professor Jackie Masterson for this research.

Your support would be very insightful and valuable for the research. I have prepared this information sheet to address some of the questions you might have about the project. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why are we doing this research?

Currently, there is limited research that explores the experiences and perceptions of adolescents with dyslexia. I am interested to conduct this study to find out how mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia perceive and experience their special educational needs as a learner/ adolescent and also explore the views of their parents and education professionals who support/ work with them.

This study has three main objectives:

1. Gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and educational professionals who support them.
2. Develop an understanding of how dyslexia is identified, assessed and supported across cultural/ geographical settings (In a London borough and Singapore).
3. Learn best practices, understand challenges and suggest possible solutions to better support mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia.

Why am I being invited to take part?

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your experience in supporting and/ or working with a mainstream secondary pupil with dyslexia.

**What will happen if I choose to take part?**

You will be invited to take part in an interview. I will ask you questions in relation to your experience in supporting and/ or working with dyslexic secondary pupils. The interview should last around 30 minutes and will be recorded (audio only).

Will anyone know I have been involved?

All information that is collected for this research will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential. My research supervisors and I will be the only people who will have access to the raw data.

Your name will only be reflected on your consent/ assent form. Your consent form will be coded with a unique alphanumerical code to correspond with your audio recording and interview schedule document. The use of the unique alphanumerical code breaks the link between you and your data.

All hard copies of data will be kept by Derek in a private locked cabinet while soft copies of data will be managed in accordance to the Data Protection Act (1998) and be password protected, encrypted and used on a private computer by Derek only.

Your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible. Exceptions would be made in cases where you reveal that you are being harmed in any way, which Derek will have to report to an appropriate authority. This is done with your knowledge and it will be agreed with you whom to tell. Other exception could be if you stated that you have or intend to harm someone.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

There are no anticipated disadvantages for taking part in this research. You can choose not to answer any questions during the interview that you are uncomfortable with and entitled to stop at any point during the interview.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of this research will be submitted in a thesis to meet the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology) at the University College London, Institute of Education. The final report could be published in a scientific journal or shared at future conferences. All data will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you choose to take part. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience.

The cut-off date for withdrawal of your consent is 01 December 2017.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There will be no financial reimbursements or incentives for participating in this study. However, upon completion of the study, you will receive an executive summary of the research report.

Institute of Education



Criminal Records Check

Derek has undergone the Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check on 13 October 2015.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form on Page 4 and return to the school SENDCO/ SENCO as soon as possible.

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can email me at chengde.zheng.15@ucl.ac.uk.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee on 30 January 2017.

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A cross cultural study exploring the perceptions and experiences of mainstream secondary pupils with dyslexia, their parents and education professionals in a London borough and Singapore

[EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONAL]

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form and **return to the school SENDCO/ SENCO as soon as possible.**

1. I have read and understood the research information sheet.
2. I am happy to talk to Derek Zheng and tell him my experience in supporting and working with a pupil with dyslexia.
3. I understand that I will be recorded using an audio device.
4. I understand that all information will be kept confidential unless there is a concern about my safety and/ or the safety of other students/ staff members.
5. I understand that any details that could be used to identify me will be taken out from the research.
6. I understand that Derek Zheng will give an electronic version of the research report (executive summary) to me if I ask for it.
7. I can contact Derek Zheng at chengde.zheng.15@ucl.ac.uk.

Full Name: _____

Designation: _____

Years in Current Designation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you

Appendix 6 - Interview Schedule

Themes	Pupil	Parent	Educational Professional
Unique to participant's role	<p>Can you tell me about your favorites lesson in school? What do you like about it?</p> <p>How is this teacher's method/ approach/ style different from other teachers?</p> <p>What subject(s) do you find difficult in school? What did you do to make learning these subject(s) easier for you?</p> <p>How can adults working with you help to make your learning easier?</p>	<p>When did you first have concerns over your child's literacy learning and development?</p> <p>Did the school provide you with assistance or guidance through the identification and diagnosis process? Can you share more about it?</p> <p>Looking back, did you feel supported through the process of getting your child diagnosed with dyslexia?</p> <p>What are some of the benefits or drawbacks of your child having a dyslexia diagnosis?</p> <p>Are there opportunities for you to attend parent workshops or training on helping your child with dyslexia?</p> <p>Are there other children in the family and do they have dyslexia? To your knowledge, are there any family members who have dyslexia?</p>	<p>Can you share your role and responsibilities in your capacity as X?</p> <p>Can you tell me more about the dyslexia definition that you use in your role as a X?</p> <p>Can you describe some of the tests that you use in your role? What is the threshold or guidance you use to diagnose/ identify/ screen a pupil as having dyslexia?</p> <p>Are you involved in exam access arrangements for pupils with dyslexia? If so, can you give a brief description of the work process from how the pupil is referred, assessed and next steps following the assessment?</p> <p>For the pupils that you have been involved in exam arrangements, are they conducted in line with the guidance from JCQ Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ) – UK/ Ministry of Education (MOE) – Singapore?</p> <p>Will the pupils be able to have the same access arrangements for their GCSE/ GCE 'O' Levels as well or is another assessment required?</p> <p>Are pupils with dyslexia likely to receive an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?</p> <p>Do you have opportunities to meet and discuss approaches/ track progress of your pupils with teachers?</p>

			<p>Do you work with any other agencies or professionals in your role? If yes, could you give an example of a recent collaboration?</p> <p>Do you continue to receive professional training and development opportunities? If yes, how often and who funds these courses? Do you get to share the training with your colleagues?</p>
Strengths and difficulties of pupils with dyslexia	<p>What are some of your strengths and difficulties as a learner?</p> <p>What are some of the things you would say you are good at?</p> <p>What are some of the things you find difficult at school?</p>	<p>What are some of your child's strengths and difficulties as a learner?</p> <p>Does dyslexia affect other areas of your child's life or family life?</p>	<p>How well do pupils that you've worked with understand their dyslexia diagnosis? Do they understand their strengths and difficulties as a learner?</p> <p>Does dyslexia affect other areas of the pupil's life or his/ her family life?</p>
Level/ Type of support received	<p>What are some of the extra help/ support/ intervention you receive in school? e.g., printed notes, movement breaks, exam access arrangements?</p> <p>Outside of school, e.g., Parents help with homework or Tuition?</p> <p>Which supports do you find more useful? Less useful? What support do you want more of?</p> <p>Do you get to talk to your teacher/ school staff/ parents about your progress in school? E.g., annual review meeting or parent-school meeting/ conference? How often do you think these meetings should be? Do you want to be part of these meetings?</p>	<p>What are some of the support your child receives in school? E.g. Exam access arrangements?</p> <p>How do you support your child's learning at home?</p> <p>Does your child receive any other support, e.g., tuition?</p> <p>Which interventions/ approaches do you find most effective for your child?</p> <p>Do you get regular communication/ meetings with the school about your child's learning? How often do you think these meetings should be?</p> <p>Are there any significant challenges or financial impact on the family in supporting your child's learning?</p>	<p>Could you share some of your approaches/ intervention in your work with pupils with dyslexia?</p> <p>Do you provide in-class support or out-of-class intervention?</p> <p>How long is a session and how frequent is it? Individual or group (typical group size)?</p> <p>Any difficulties with out-of-class sessions for pupils as they have to miss certain lessons or catch up on the missed lessons when they rejoin the class later on or the next day?</p> <p>Do pupils express any preferences to you about the additional help/ support/ intervention?</p> <p>Any use of information and technology communications (ICT) software/ iPads/ computers?</p>

			<p>What benefits have you seen pupils takeaway from these intervention? (can be both academic and non-academic gains)</p> <p>How are baseline and intervention progress tracked and measured? How is this information shared with other teachers, parents and/ or pupils?</p> <p>How often do you have communication with parents of pupils that you are involved with? Are there regular opportunities for students to share their views on their intervention and progress?</p> <p>Which intervention approach do you feel works best for mainstream dyslexic pupils?</p> <p>Do you have flexibility in terms of the intervention you provide or is it directed by the school?</p>
<p>Participating in Clubs/ Activities</p> <p>(Benefits to confidence/ peer relationships?)</p>	<p>What are some of the clubs/ activities you participate in school or outside of school? Do you enjoy it? Why? Do you think it has any other benefits?</p>	<p>Does your child participate in any clubs/ activities/ sports? What do you think your child enjoys most about it? Do you think it brings other benefits?</p>	<p>Do you know pupils whom you work with if they participate in any clubs/ activities/ sports? What do you think pupils enjoys most about it? Do you think it brings other benefits?</p>
<p>Peer Relationships</p>	<p>Can you tell me more about your friends in school?</p> <p>Can you tell me more about your friends outside of school?</p> <p>What are some of the activities/ games/ sports that you do with your friends?</p> <p>How well do your friends understand dyslexia? Are they supportive and understanding?</p>	<p>How would you describe your child's peer relationships? Are they supportive and understanding of how your child learns?</p>	<p>How would you describe the peer relationships of pupils with dyslexia whom you have work with? Are their friends understanding and supportive?</p>

Academic Aspirations	<p>Where and what would you like to study after graduating from secondary school?</p> <p>What difficulties do you think you might face?</p> <p>What support do you think you will need to achieve your academic aspirations?</p> <p>Do you see dyslexia as an obstacle to achieving your academic aspirations?</p>	<p>Where and what would your child like to study after graduating from secondary school?</p> <p>What are your own academic aspirations for your child?</p> <p>Do you think your child will need ongoing support in school, beyond secondary school?</p> <p>What support do you think you will need to achieve his/ her academic aspirations?</p> <p>Do you see dyslexia hindering his/ her academic aspirations?</p>	<p>Do pupils with dyslexia whom you work with share their academic aspirations with you?</p> <p>Could you share a few recent examples?</p> <p>What support do you think they need to achieve their academic aspirations, beyond secondary school?</p> <p>Do you see dyslexia hindering their academic aspirations?</p>
Career Aspirations	<p>Are there any jobs that you would like to do in the future?</p> <p>What difficulties do you think you might face?</p> <p>What support do you think you will need to achieve your career aspirations?</p> <p>Do you see dyslexia as an obstacle to achieving your career aspirations?</p>	<p>What are some of the jobs that your child would like to do in the future?</p> <p>What are your own career aspirations for your child?</p> <p>What support do you think you will need to achieve his/ her career aspirations?</p> <p>Do you see dyslexia hindering his/ her career aspirations?</p>	<p>Do pupils with dyslexia whom you work with share their career aspirations with you?</p> <p>Could you share a few recent examples?</p> <p>What support do you think they need?</p> <p>Do you see dyslexia hindering their academic aspirations?</p>
Understanding of the dyslexia label	<p>When were you first aware that you have dyslexia?</p> <p>How would you describe dyslexia?</p> <p>Can you explain how it affects your learning or other areas of your life?</p> <p>What are some of your strengths that help you manage dyslexia and reduce its impact on your learning or other areas of your life?</p> <p>What do you think are the benefits or issues of having a dyslexia diagnosis?</p>	<p>How does your child perceive/ understand his/ her dyslexia?</p> <p>What are some of the difficulties your child experience as a learner or other areas of his/ her life?</p> <p>What do you think are the benefits or issues of having a dyslexia diagnosis?</p> <p>How does the family support your child's dyslexia and reduce its impact on his/ her learning or other areas of his/ her life?</p>	<p>What is the level of understanding by pupils regarding their dyslexia diagnosis and their strengths and difficulties as a learner?</p> <p>What do you think are the benefits or issues of having a dyslexia diagnosis?</p> <p>How do families of pupils with dyslexia support their child's dyslexia and reduce its impact on his/ her learning or other areas of his/ her life?</p>

	Do you think your siblings/ parents/ friends/ teachers understand the difficulties you experience in your learning? How have they supported you?	Do you think you child's siblings/ teachers understand the difficulties your child experience in his/ her learning or other areas of his/ her life? how have they supported your child?	
Learning an additional language	<p>Do you learn an additional language/ foreign language in school?</p> <p>If yes, what language is it and will you be taking that for your GCSE/ GCE O Levels?</p> <p>Which is easier? English or this additional language/ foreign language? Why?</p> <p>Do you need extra help/ support/ intervention when learning this additional language/ foreign language?</p> <p>Do you speak, read or write in another language (besides English) at home or with friends?</p> <p>Which language(s) are you more comfortable in speaking/ reading/ writing?</p>	<p>Does your child learn an additional language in school?</p> <p>If yes, what language and will your child be taking that for his/ her GCSE/ GCE O Levels?</p> <p>How is learning this additional language easier or more difficult than learning English?</p> <p>Does your child require extra help/ support/ intervention when learning this additional language? Can you share more about it?</p> <p>Do you speak, read or write another language (besides English) with your child?</p>	<p>Are pupils with dyslexia encouraged to take an additional language in school? E.g., for their GCSE/ GCE O Levels or is it explicitly discouraged?</p> <p>For pupils with dyslexia who take an additional language in school, do they experience similar difficulties in reading/ writing/ spelling?</p> <p>If yes, do they receive additional support for that?</p>
Ending Question	Do you have any other things you wish to share about your thoughts or feelings about dyslexia? Perhaps areas of improvement to better support pupils with dyslexia?	Do you have any other things you wish to share about your thoughts or feelings about dyslexia or your experience in supporting your child in school and at home? Perhaps areas of improvement to better support pupils with dyslexia?	Is there anything else that you would like to share about working with pupils with dyslexia or your views about dyslexia? Perhaps areas of improvement to better support pupils with dyslexia?

Appendix 7 - Example Transcript with Coding

Line	Transcript	Codes
1	D: All right, so the first question, could you share with me about	
2	your favourite lesson in school?	
3	UK02: Yeah, so, I'll say my favourite lesson in school is	Favourite lesson – Travel
4	probably <u>Travel and Tourism</u> .	and Tourism
5	D: Travel and Tourism, okay.	
6	UK02: Yah.	
7	D: And what do you like about it?	
8	UK02: Er, I like, I just like <u>researching about the world, making</u>	Reasons for liking Travel
9	<u>holiday packs for people. Yah, it's really good, it's fun, it's</u>	and Tourism
10	<u>interesting.</u>	
11	D: Okay, so any other subjects that you like or you enjoy in	
12	school?	
13	UK02: Yah, I like PE (Physical Education) too. So basically, the	Likes PE (Physical
14	subjects that I like are the ones that aren't core subjects so just	Education)
15	the more interesting ones, yah.	
16	D: Okay and does the teaching style help as well? I mean the	
17	non-core subjects are they a bit more fun to learn?	
18	UK02: Erm, yeah, I think, they, definitely. The, well, PE and	PE and Travel and
19	Travel and Tourism is definitely more fun to learn than English	Tourism more fun than
20	and Science, but yah.	English and Science
21	D: Okay. So how about the teaching methods? Are the	
22	teachers different in how they teach the subject, how they	
23	share the content?	
24	UK02: Erm, No. Well, hmmm, a bit. I mean like with <u>Travel and</u>	Different teaching
25	<u>Tourism, it's mainly like computer-based work so I guess the</u>	approaches for different
26	<u>teacher will just let us do what we need to do with our</u>	lessons
27	<u>coursework. So then again, with English, it's more of the class</u>	
28	<u>conversation, writing, so yah, I guess that could be different.</u>	
29	D: So what subjects do you find difficult in school?	
30	UK02: Er, well, Maths definitely. Maths, Maths, English,	
31	basically the core subjects. Religious Education (RE) is fine.	
32	RE is good. Science, definitely Physics, cause that is a mixture	
33	of Maths. So, <u>Physics definitely, Maths and English. Yah.</u>	Physics, Maths and
34	D: Okay. So what about these subjects that you find difficult,	English more difficult
35	the core subjects?	subjects
36	UK02: Why?	
37	D: Hmm-mmh, what about them that you find particularly	
38	difficult to learn or follow through in class?	
39	UK02: It's just like, with the new, erm, you know, it's <u>all being</u>	Revised GCSE,
40	<u>changed now, the GCSE, it's just, it's really hard, so, I guess</u>	especially Maths is more
41	<u>with Maths, it's like, things like equations, I just can't, I can't get</u>	difficult
42	my head around it, it's just really difficult.	
43	D: Okay.	
44	UK02: Erm, but with English, I would say English is better than	
45	Maths at the moment. Erm, <u>English is obviously you know, just</u>	Difficulties with English
46	<u>spelling, erm, remembering stuff like adjectives, which I'm</u>	(Spelling, remembering
47	really bad at remembering all of that, but yea, it's just very,	adjectives)
48	quite difficult.	
49	D: Okay. When you say quite difficult, is it the way that the	
50	questions are structured or the way the points are awarded for	
51	certain questions or?	
52	UK02: Yeah, I would say <u>the way that the questions are</u>	Difficulties understanding
53	<u>structured sometimes.</u>	questions sometimes
54	D: Hmmm, so even understanding what they are asking, is	
55	already, a difficult thing?	
56	UK02: Yah.	

<p>57 D: Okay. 58 UK02: Sometimes. 59 D: And how do you think adults or teachers helping you could 60 support you to learn better? 61 UK02: Just <u>if they explained it more than once</u>, that's all I really 62 ask for, I, just so, I just don't want to sit there and not knowing 63 what to do, so I would always really ask them to explain it 64 again, which they do, so that's good. 65 D: Okay. Do they understand about your difficulties in learning 66 or? 67 UK02: Do they? My teachers? 68 D: Yup 69 UK02: Well, <u>if they know, yah, they understand and they work</u> 70 <u>around it, especially my PE teacher</u> actually. She does a really 71 good job of like when it comes to homework, she will make, err 72 like err an extra pack for me. 73 D: Okay 74 UK02: And a few other people in the class that have difficulties 75 and she will simplify it basically, which is very good. 76 D: So it's breaking tasks down and making it easy for you. 77 UK02: Yea, so <u>breaking it down is good and makes it more</u> 78 <u>much more easier</u> for us. 79 D: How about English and Maths and these are the core 80 subjects that you would benefit from, do you get those packs or 81 do you get? 82 UK02: No, I don't get those packs. I just <u>ask them to explain it</u> 83 <u>more than once so that I could go back to them break or lunch</u> 84 <u>if I don't understand a certain topic, which I do sometimes</u>. 85 D: What do you say are some of your strengths as a learner? 86 UK02: Erm, my <u>strengths as a learner would be...</u> I'm good at 87 <u>remembering certain things</u>, so, if I, if I have been listening in 88 class that time, I'll remember, er, if it comes up again, so I 89 guess remembering is good. <u>Weakness is just listening, I can't</u> 90 <u>listen to, I don't know why, it's my fault sometimes, sometimes I</u> 91 <u>just, I don't know</u>, sometimes I choose not to listen to be 92 honest. 93 D: So when you say remembering, do you mean remembering 94 from like written text cause? 95 UK02: <u>Reading text I can remember from, like, key points</u>, I 96 can remember. Erm, yah. 97 D: So verbal instructions are, is a bit more difficult? 98 UK02: Yah, definitely yah. 99 D: Okay, so that's your difficulty in terms of classroom like 100 following verbal instructions. 101 UK02: Yup. 102 D: Especially if they're like 2 or 3 step instructions. 103 UK02: Very, yah 104 D: Okay. So what are some of the things you would say that 105 you are good at, besides academic work? 106 UK02: Something I'm good at, erm. 107 D: Running? 108 UK02: Well, yea, running, I'm good at dance. <u>I do dance twice</u> 109 <u>a week. Err I like cooking</u>. Err I'm very into the, I'm very into the 110 <u>Travel and Tourism side, so, I would like to be an air hostess</u>, 111 so I look around that area. 112 D: Hmm-mhhh 113 UK02: Hmm Yea, I would say probably dance though is the 114 best thing for me. 115 D: What are some of the things that you find difficult at school?</p>		<p>Adults can help with learning by explaining more than once</p> <p>Teacher support for pupils dependent on teachers knowing about pupil's dyslexia</p> <p>Breaking down tasks makes learning easier</p> <p>Will ask teachers to explain more than during break/lunch once if needed</p> <p>Strengths as a learner - good at remembering certain things</p> <p>Difficulty with listening (attention and focus)</p> <p>Able to remember key points from reading text</p> <p>Good at dance, likes cooking</p> <p>Career aspiration – Air Hostess</p>
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Appendix 8 - Systematic Literature Search Terms and Inclusion/ Exclusion**Criteria**

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Participants	Study includes participants aged between 11 years to 17 years with dyslexia diagnosis (Year 7 to 11 for UK secondary pupils/ Secondary 1 to 5 for Singapore secondary pupils)	Study includes participants aged below 11 years and above 17 years or if the age of pupils could not be determined from the study or pupils without dyslexia diagnosis
Research design	Study includes data that elicited views and/ or experiences from secondary pupils Study produces its own empirical findings	Study did not include data that elicited the views and/ or experiences from secondary pupils Study does not produce its own empirical findings
Year of publication	Published between January 1998 to January 2018	Not published between January 1998 to January 2018
Type of publication	Published in English only Published in a peer-reviewed journal or doctoral-level thesis	Not published in English Not published in a peer-reviewed journal or doctoral level thesis
Search Terms	<u><i>Key concept – Dyslexia and pupil views</i></u> dyslexi* OR SpLD* OR “specific learning difficult*” AND pupil* OR child* OR young people* OR young person* OR adolescent* OR student* OR teen* AND voice* OR view* OR perspective* <u><i>Key concept – Dyslexia and school experience</i></u> dyslexi* OR SpLD* OR “specific learning difficult*” AND pupil* OR child* OR young people* Or young person* OR adolescent* OR student* OR teen* AND school experience* <u><i>Key concept – Dyslexia and inclusion/ inclusive education</i></u> dyslexi* OR SpLD* OR “specific learning difficult*” AND “inclusive education” OR inclusion	NA