

# WDA Newsletter 2026

## Issue 1 - January



Welcome to our latest WDA newsletter.

On the way . . . our new website! We're excited to be making the final arrangements and hope to launch before too long!

Meanwhile, we thought we'd trial the new look to our WDA logo above. Hope you like it!

### WILTSHIRE NEWS & EVENTS

## FREE TRAINING OFFER FROM WILTSHIRE SSENS



Right Choice

Schools . . . please check out training opportunities at [SSENS Training Courses | Right Choice - Wiltshire Council](#)

Right Choice page for online twilight sessions includes topics on:

- Sensory processing differences
- ADHD
- Dyscalculia
- Writing and spelling

There are also recorded sessions that you can watch at any time.

As well as those already available, several new recordings will be added very soon:

- WESforD: getting the best out of the resources and activities
- Scaffolding learning
- Working memory and processing
- Effects of trauma on cognition and learning: how to help

## FREE DYSLEXIA TRAINING - FACE TO FACE

The Wiltshire Dyslexia Association is again supporting schools with another FREE face-to-face dyslexia training day.

Devizes Town Hall on Thursday 21 May from 9.30am - 4pm

[Book on Right Choice](#)

Please share with Wiltshire schools!



## Dyscalculia and maths difficulties:

A two-half day course on dyscalculia and maths difficulties which covers the new dyscalculia guidance and looks at a way to assess children to find out more about their needs in maths.

For more information email [SSENSTraining@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:SSENSTraining@wiltshire.gov.uk), or book your place [on Right Choice](#)

## New assistive technology on bite size training clips:

Miles Pilling has created a series of short training videos on using assistive technology to support learners. These videos cover six key areas including:

- Planning and organisation
- Reading
- Writing
- Artificial Intelligence
- Multiplatform tools – Microsoft, Google, and Apple
- Recording and note taking

These training videos are now available to watch on: [Assistive Technology Skills Toolbox \(Pre-recorded\) | Right Choice](#)

### Information Event – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Theme: Mental Health**

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at The Civic Centre, Trowbridge**

**Event will run from 9:30am to 2:00pm**

**(Registrations from 9:30am, event starts at 10:00am)**

**Free tea, coffee and cake throughout the event**



Please see [WPCC's Pre-Event Information Booklet](#) for details about the free workshop and the service update at 10am on how Mental Health Support Teams are evolving in Wiltshire. The 'Market Place', where we anticipate over 40 services and providers across the local area will showcase their offer.

Click here to [BOOK](#).

### Understanding Wiltshire's Needs Led Approach for Children and Young People who may be Neurodivergent February Information Sessions

Families are now required to follow the Needs Led Approach if they are considering the Neurodevelopmental Pathway assessment process for their child or young person.

The Needs Led Approach is a holistic approach to support and empower families in a creative way that aims to help everyone to understand whether an assessment will meet the needs that have been identified.

To aid families' understanding of the Needs Led approach in Wiltshire, the WPCC is running information sessions for families. The next sessions in February will take place as follows:

- **Monday 2nd February - Tidworth - 11:00am to 1:00pm - Perham Suite B, Tidworth Civic Centre, Wyle Road, Tidworth, SP9 7QQ**
- **Friday 27th February - Malmesbury - 10:30am to 12:30pm - Malmesbury Primary School, Tetbury Hill, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 9JR**





**Are you autistic and/or ADHD and a parent or carer?**

**Join me, Helen Eaton, in person or online at this year's A-Fest!**

**In-person Tuesday 24th February** at Springfields Academy, Calne, Wiltshire.

This session gives an opportunity for parents and carers:

- To consider their own needs as an Autistic and / or ADHD person
- Identify their own and their children's boundaries
- Recognise where conflict and challenges might arise
- Celebrate their own skills and strengths

Book by emailing [autismsupport@springfieldsacademy.org](mailto:autismsupport@springfieldsacademy.org) for a keynote speech, four workshops and lunch!

For just my session **online at 4:00pm on Wednesday 25th February** book on Goodhub [here](#).

Could I please ask though that you only book if you are certain you will attend as places are limited.

I look forwards to seeing you there!

Helen Eaton (HKE Training)



A big thank you to our amazing supporters who raise free funds for us on #easyfundraising.

If you're not signed up yet, please join and you can raise free donations for Wiltshire Dyslexia Association every time you shop online this year. All the big names like John Lewis & Partners, Expedia, Argos, Just Eat and many more are ready to make a free donation at no extra cost to you.

**Please sign up before midnight 29th January and we could win a £500 donation:**

<https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/wiltshiredyslexia/0XRQZC/c2s/ZdU7Z020/CE955/facebook/>

## Dr Helen Ross – WDA Chair

I'm really excited to be part of the Think Differently Conference coming to Bath this February - a day designed for educators, parents and professionals who want to deepen their understanding of dyslexia, literacy and inclusive practice, and leave with ideas they can actually use.

You'll hear from an expert panel exploring:

- ✓ Planning literacy intervention that works
- ✓ Inclusive reading and engagement for every learner
- ✓ The Delphi Definition of Dyslexia - and what it means in the real classroom

This is about getting dyslexia out of the corridors and back into the classroom, building confidence, and sharing practice that makes a genuine difference for learners who think differently.

£137 Lunch included | Complimentary on-site parking

Looking forward to a brilliant day of learning, collaboration and honest conversations.

[Book your tickets here](#)

## Dyslexic Life With Jo Rees

Have you booked your place at our Bath conference yet? Check out my top three reasons why you should attend!

This conference is in partnership with [AT superstore](#) and is set to be an inspiring and resourceful day.

Discover the keynote speakers and exhibitors here:  
<https://dyslexiclifewithjorees.com/think-different-jo.../>

[Bailbrook House Hotel](#)

**Eveleigh Avenue, London Road West, Bath, Somerset, BA1 7JD**

**Thursday 26 February 2026**

**9am – 4.30pm**

**THINK DIFFERENTLY TOUR**

Jo's 3 Reasons to attend the **THINK DIFFERENTLY CONFERENCE** on Thursday Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 2026

Every dyslexic deserves to be identified understood and supported to fulfil their potential.

Power is in connection and collaboration and the day promises to provide you with support and expertise.

We need to get dyslexia out of corridors and back in the classroom and we can show you how!

**BATH - BAILBROOK HOUSE BA1 7JD**

Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 2026  
£137

**BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY!**

Dyslexic Life with Jo Rees In Partnership with AT Superstore

### [Ellen Broome](#), CEO of the British Dyslexia Association reports . . .

**On Monday 12 January, the APPG for Dyslexia met to discuss the case for a National Dyslexia Strategy.**

Speakers, including [Julia Carroll](#) and [Lynn Greenwold](#), highlighted the lived experience of dyslexic people across education and employment. Case studies shared how dyslexic learners and adults with high potential are held back by systems that over-emphasise spelling and written accuracy, rather than recognising strengths, and how simple, well-understood adjustments could unlock talent and opportunity.



I spoke about the scale of the issue. And it is significant: around 10% of the UK population is dyslexic - that's nearly 7 million people - yet the majority remain undiagnosed. Only 40% of pupils with dyslexia pass GCSE English and Maths, compared with 72% of their peers, not because of lack of ability but because assessment and support systems do not work for them.

Missed early identification, inconsistent use of assistive technology, limited alternative qualification pathways and reliance on privately funded assessments all contribute to poor attainment, narrowed life chances and over-representation of dyslexic individuals among those with low literacy, who are NEET, or within the justice system.

There was strong consensus that current provision is ad hoc and inequitable, and that a national dyslexia strategy would provide a coherent, cross-government plan to improve data, create clear pathways to diagnosis, train educators and employers, and ensure consistent support in education, employment and adult skills.

Thanks to [Juliet Campbell](#) for expert chairing, to the MPs who attended to discuss including [Adam Dance](#), Rachel Maskell, [Amanda Hack](#), [Jo Platt](#) [Lauren Sullivan MP](#), Sureena Brackenridge, Lord Addington and others.

See this link at [National Strategy for dyslexia](#) for details about the speakers.

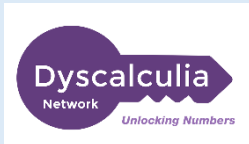
Full details within the minutes: [APPG meeting minutes – Monday 12 Jan 2026](#)

[View the presentation slides \(pdf, 895.593 KB\)](#)

### **[£200 million landmark SEND teacher training programme - GOV.UK](#)**

#### **Page summary:**

New requirement that every teacher receives training to support pupils, as government makes good on promise to deliver reforms families are crying out for.



## WE NEED YOUR HELP!



### We want all MPs to have heard of dyscalculia before Dyscalculia Day on 3rd March!

We are inviting you to help raise awareness in Parliament about dyscalculia by writing to your MP! It helps your MP represent you in Parliament, and it is relatively quick and easy!

MPs really care about issues that affect their constituents. Although we send research and policy briefings, they are more likely to pay attention if they hear from people they represent that this is an issue affecting their lives.

When you share your experience of dyscalculia or maths difficulties and how it has impacted you, your family, or your friends, you are adding your voice to our national campaign to advocate for change.

We have launched our new WRITING TO YOUR MP webpage with all the details you need, including template letters to get you started.

Let's make sure dyscalculia isn't the forgotten learning difficulty anymore!

### Write to your MP!

Tag us in social media posts sharing your letters using our special hashtags, #DontForgetDyscalculia, #DyscalculiaMatters #Dyscalculia #DyscalculiaDay #DyscalculiaAwareness

If writing a letter isn't for you, there are other ways to help including:

- Sharing your story on Social Media
- Tweeting your MP on X (Twitter)
- Sharing our and others' posts about dyscalculia
- Fundraising for Us! <https://dyscalculianetwork.com/fundraising-for-dyscalculia/>

To find out more about Dyscalculia Day Educator Conference, Parent, Adult and Workplace webinars, downloads for schools and more, see <https://dyscalculianetwork.com/dyscalculia-day-2026/>

## Neurodivergent service personnel in the armed forces - Early Day Motions - UK Parliament

### Motion text:

That this House expresses deep concern over the inconsistent support available to neurodivergent Service Personnel across the Armed Forces . . .

UK Parliament

### Early Day Motions

UK Parliament > Early Day Motions > Neurodivergent service personnel in the armed forces

## Neurodivergent service personnel in the armed forces

## Special Needs Jungle

The disability support scheme, Access to Work, run by the DWP, is the subject of an inquiry by the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee.

If you want to submit evidence, you have until the end of Monday, 23 February.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/.../the-access-to-work...>



## Patoss is delighted to introduce: The Patoss Platform - YouTube

Our goal is to create a space where researchers can share their work with a wider audience, bridging the gap between academic research and practical application. We know that while there is a wealth of innovative and inspiring research happening in universities, it can be challenging for busy professionals to access and keep up to date with these developments.

The Patoss Platform is designed to change that. This new initiative will bring you live webinars featuring leading researchers, followed by on-demand access for 12 months - making it easier for our members to stay informed about new ideas and approaches.

Each month, a different presenter will showcase their work in a one-hour interactive webinar, including live Q&A and discussion, giving you the chance to engage directly with the research.

This is just the beginning! The first webinar will be announced soon, and as the series grows, this page will become your hub for all available sessions.

Access will be **free for Patoss members**, and available to non-members for a small fee of £10 per session. Visit the webpage: [The Patoss Platform](#)

Thank you to everyone who viewed and shared our first Monthly CPD Training & Events Brochure. We're delighted to bring you the next instalment: the **February 2026 edition**, featuring new courses, expert-led sessions, and key updates to help you plan your CPD with confidence.

View and download your copy [here](#).

## NEWSLETTERS & COMMENT

### Our January newsletter!

<https://7ca50762.flowpaper.com/January2026Newsletterfinal/>

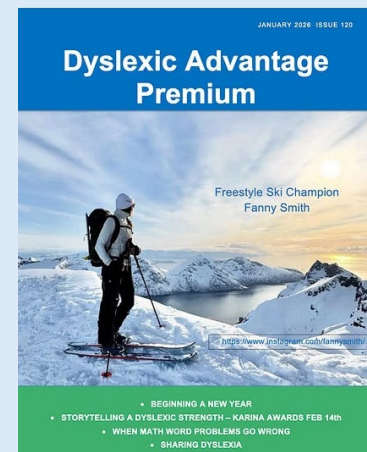
Link to November Newsletter: <https://joom.ag/onDd>

Link to December Newsletter: <https://joom.ag/sFDd>

See past issues by signing up for a free registration:

<https://www.dyslexicadvantage.org/newsletter-archives/>

Read and listen to more articles in our [DYSLEXIA LIBRARY](#)



### Annual report 2024/5 | Dyslexia Scotland

As we round off the year, we're looking back on how much our small organisation has accomplished.

What will 2026 bring, we wonder.



### Winter 2025/26 edition of Dyspraxia Magazine (Issue 19)

[Download our latest Issue here for free](#)

Inside this issue, you'll find a collection of inspiring stories, poems, award winners, interviews and insights directly from you, our community.

[View All Previous Dyspraxia Magazine Issues Here](#)

Don't miss out on these popular items in our store:



[Dyslexia Awareness Card](#)

[ADHD Awareness Card](#)

[Dyspraxia Awareness Card](#)

[Autism Awareness Card](#)



In this update, you'll find key news, upcoming events, and practical resources to keep you informed and supported as we move forward into the next stage of the academic year. Including information on our **refreshed membership** and new Learning Management System, **nasen Academy!**

**Quick Reads:**

- [nasen News](#)
- [Partner News](#)
- [Sector News](#)

A quick reminder that our refreshed membership offer will launch this month. We'll share more detail shortly, including **Plus upgrade options**.

There will be **no interruption** to your access to nasen resources and services during the transition. **No action is needed**, current members will automatically move to Core membership (free) when we launch, and we'll guide you through next steps.

You can register your interest below for an early look at **nasen Academy** or **Plus membership**.

Register your interest

**nasen Academy** is our new interactive Learning Management System (LMS) and the digital home for specialist-led SEND professional learning.

It offers high-quality, on-demand CPD to help practitioners build skills, deepen understanding and apply learning to real-world practice.

With flexible, engaging modules, practical resources and clear learning pathways, you can create a **personalised learning journey** that fits your role and goals.

Access learning anytime, anywhere.

Register your interest to find out more and see a demo.

Register your interest

The cornerstone of the USS programme is a series of **20 Online SEND CPD units** exploring some of the most commonly observed barriers to learning, regardless of age, label or area of need.

A must-do for **anyone in mainstream education**, each unit takes **less than an hour** to complete, and gives **clear guidance on adaptations**.

Explore today

## Where teaching assistants fit into the DfE's five SEND reform principles

[Hannah Harris](#) - TA Digest writer and editor

[SEND Reforms](#) [TA](#) [QE Insights - Twinkl](#)

TAs are key to all five principles, but, so far, nothing has been officially said about them. Here, we explore where they fit.



Teaching assistants' key roles have been eerily missing from the national conversations surrounding SEND reforms, which are due to be published early this year. Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson previously shared that the SEND reforms will be underpinned by five principles.

So, as the Department for Education (DfE) continues its SEND roadshow ahead of reform announcements, we examine the role of teaching assistants within these changes.

Breaking down the reforms - The five principles of SEND reform are:

- early intervention
- local provision
- fair access
- effective practice
- shared services

Read: [SEND reforms delayed until early 2026: What teaching assistants need to know](#)

### **1. Early intervention and teaching assistants**

Since taking on the role of Education Secretary, Phillipson has [said](#) on many occasions that teaching assistants will be 'crucial' to delivering interventions.

While early intervention covers many things – including support from outside professionals – it can also involve direct support from teaching assistants.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) updated its teaching assistant deployment guidance in 2025.

Crucially, it advised that teaching assistants be deployed to deliver 'well-chosen, evidence-based, structured' interventions.

Read: [EEF updates guidance for effective teaching assistant deployment](#)

Research from the DfE last September revealed that interventions delivered by teaching assistants can be as effective as those delivered by teachers.

Interestingly, the DfE found that the method of delivery (small groups or 1:1) and the implementor (teacher or teaching assistant) did not impact the interventions' outcomes.

Therefore, the department encouraged educators to use a flexible approach to delivering interventions using their 'available resources and contexts'.

Read: [Teaching assistant-led interventions just as effective as those by teachers, DfE says](#)

## 2. Local provision and teaching assistants

A key part of the local principle is ensuring that pupils can attend schools closer to their home and it therefore relies on all schools being equipped to both efficiently and effectively support SEND.

In December 2025, the DfE announced a £3 billion investment to create around 50,000 new specialist places in mainstream schools through the creation of SEND hubs and breakout spaces.

Read: [DfE's £3 billion SEND funding must invest in teaching assistant workforce, union says](#)

At the first online SEND roadshow, Schools Minister Georgia Gould said the government is 'really keen to get specialist units attached to mainstream schools that provide specialist education'.

Read: [What teaching assistants need to know from the DfE's first SEND roadshow](#)

At the second event, she announced the department's commitment to develop national guidance around SEND units – noting the national discrepancies.

Special Needs Jungle's Founder, Tania Tirraoro, warned the House of Lords last year that without guidance, such units may be left to teaching assistants to run – rather than a qualified or specialist teacher.

And her concern was validated, as the latest DfE data shows that such units are currently most commonly run by teaching assistants. It reveals that, in most examples, class teachers set the curriculum, but 'few' units are staffed with class teachers full-time.

Read: [In-school support units 'commonly managed by teaching assistants'](#)

## 3. Fair access and teaching assistants

Phillipson described fair access as all schools being 'resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs'. It's unclear if 'resourced' means staff, physical resources or both.

However, as teaching assistants are most often the main facilitators of inclusion for pupils with SEND, it's fair to assume that to meet common and predictable needs, schools need TAs. At a time when schools are being forced to cut the number of teaching assistants due to budget pressures and TAs are leaving for better-paid work in other sectors, the DfE will need to address the ongoing recruitment and retention crisis.

## 4. Effective practice and teaching assistants

The fourth principle is all about inclusive practice grounded in evidence. Aligning with this, the EEF's guidance for teaching assistant deployment outlines that they are most effective when delivering 'well-chosen, evidence-based, structured' interventions.

Read: [EEF updates guidance for effective teaching assistant deployment](#)

## 5. Shared services and teaching assistants

The shared principle relies on joined-up education and health services – something teaching assistants are already well-versed in.

TAs are often seen as the vital bridge between home, school and outside professional support – such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and others.

As this vital link, teaching assistants often attend sessions with pupils and outside professionals. They then use the targets or resources given to support pupils in school through interventions.

Gould confirmed this during the SEND roadshow event focused on shared services. She said teaching assistants will 'have a really critical role to play' in delivering what she called 'universal inclusive support'.

The Schools Minister also alluded to the fact that many pupils benefit from TA-led interventions – universal inclusive support – but some pupils need external specialist support.

Read: [TAs have 'critical role' in SEND reform, confirms DfE minister responsible for them](#)

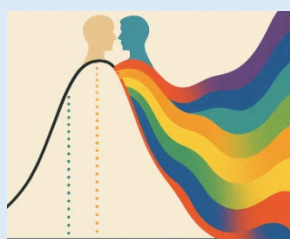
Full details of the SEND reforms are due to be published early this year. As always, TA Digest will keep you up to date with the very latest news.



## Neurodiversity 101: Divergent, typical, and normal: who decides what's 'average'?

[Prof. Amanda Kirby MBBS MRCGP PhD FCGI](#)

Read this article on LinkedIn to join the conversation: [Read on LinkedIn](#)



The term *neurodivergent* simply means a person whose brain functions differently from what is considered typical or average. But that word *average* this hides a world of assumptions that we often don't discuss at all.

When we talk about [divergence](#), we're really talking about variation. Divergence actually means 'go in different directions' but it has come to mean *departure from a course or standard*.

### But, what is standard??

Every one of us sits somewhere along a bell curve of human ability. Some of us may "positively" diverge such as excelling at sport, spelling, communication, or creativity. Others may "negatively" diverge when compared with the majority, perhaps finding reading, writing, or some coordination tasks more challenging. But even this language of *positive* and *negative* stems from the idea that there is a "right" middle point - a *norm*. This is so challenging and has been the basis of us developing educational standards for example.

Victorian classrooms enforced strict discipline with expectations for children to be quiet, stand when addressing teachers, and maintain perfect posture, with punishments if this was deviated from ranging from writing lines to caning. My mother-in-law (who was a left hander) had her hand tied behind her back and was forced to write with her right hand.

### Public shaming is not new!

Have you heard of the dunce hat. It was historically worn by school children as a form of public punishment, but it ironically originally symbolised intelligence and wisdom for scholars. It was associated with the 13th-century philosopher [John Duns Scotus](#). The term "dunce" became a derogatory reference to his followers, and over time, the pointed hat, became a symbol of foolishness and was used to shame slow-learning or disobedient pupils in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

[Keep reading on LinkedIn](#)



## Neurodiversity 101: Movement confidence or competence... impact of Developmental Coordination Disorder/Dyspraxia

Read this article on LinkedIn to join the conversation: [Read on LinkedIn](#)

I was walking out on a frosty morning this week where there was some black ice on the path and it made me realise how I had changed my movements as I was concerned that I did not land on my backside! A wider stance and slower more cautious movements.

It also made me think about people with DCD where co-ordination and balance is harder to do. DCD has been a passion and interest of mine for nearly 40 years as I have close family members with DCD now and in the past.

Poor coordination has been seen as being less capable and even the terms used are pretty derogatory! The word clumsy for example. "Clumse" is an older, dialectal word related to "clumsy," meaning benumbed (numbed with cold), idle, lazy, loutish, or a stupid person (numbskull), stemming from Scandinavian roots for being speechless or motionless. While the adjective clumsy (awkward, lacking coordination) became standard, "clumse" refers to these archaic senses of stiffness, dullness, or lack of grace, often due to cold or fear.

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), is often called dyspraxia, and is still widely misunderstood.

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) in the DSM-5 involves significantly below-expected motor skill acquisition, impacting daily activities (self-care, school, play), with symptom onset in early development, and isn't better explained by intellectual disability or another neurological condition.

It's classified as a [neurodevelopmental disorder](#), characterised by clumsiness, poor fine/gross motor skills (handwriting, sports, riding bikes), and persistent functional limitations, requiring a multidisciplinary assessment for accurate diagnosis.

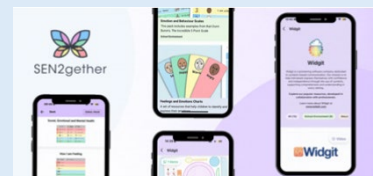
[Keep reading on LinkedIn](#)

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## Parents navigating SEN, together

Born from lived experience, SEN2gether is a mobile app and community created by parents who understand the day-to-day realities of supporting a child with additional needs.



Co-founders Nisha and Kate, later joined by Saira, developed the app by listening closely to families and responding with useful resources and tools. More recently, they integrated Widgit resources, providing families with access to symbolised materials that support children's emotional wellbeing, life skills, and understanding of the school environment.

[Read More](#)



## Feathered friends

The Big Schools' Birdwatch 2026 is underway, and there is still time to join in. From 6<sup>th</sup> January to 13<sup>th</sup> February, schools across the UK are heading outside to spot and learn about local birds as part of the [RSPB](#)'s annual celebration of birdlife. Our free Birdwatch Pack includes flashcards, bird bingo, colouring pages and crafty activities to attract feathered visitors, from cheeky pigeons to charming robins.

[Download Free](#)

## Year of the Fire Horse

Lanterns at the ready! Lunar New Year begins on 17<sup>th</sup> February, welcoming the Year of the Fire Horse. Our festive pack helps little ones explore the celebration through vibrant posters, colouring sheets, word mats and fact files for every animal of the lunar zodiac, whether it's this year's Horse, next year's Sheep, or 2028's Monkey!

[Download Free](#)

## Winter's moods

Winter is still very much in charge, with its dark evenings and chilly mornings. This feels like the perfect moment to revisit our Winter Weather Pack and help little learners make sense of the cold weather outside. From a winter weather poem to a range of fun, symbol-supported worksheets, the pack encourages us to take notice and explore the many moods of the season.

[Download Free](#)

## From Widgit, with Love

Even if winter is still giving us the cold shoulder, February brings Valentine's Day warmth into the classroom. Our Valentine's Day Pack is full of lovely symbol-supported resources, from a storybook exploring Valentine's traditions to a cupid-approved board game guaranteed to raise a few smiles. You'll also find themed writing paper for heartfelt letters, plus worksheets focused on themes around love and kindness. A great way to make learning feel just as tempting as a box of chocolates.

[Download Free](#)

Also . . . [See All Training](#) opportunities.

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## [Dyslexia In Focus | Winter 2025](#)

### #succeed with dyslexia Digest

#### [Tech tools at work: How assistive technology empowers neurodiverse teams](#)

Assistive technology is changing how teams work together. For neurodiverse employees, it creates a more inclusive experience that is more than just about getting things done.

Tools and software help people with dyslexia and other neurodivergent traits feel included, work more productively, and be more creative.

In the workplace, this helps level the playing field for teams with different learning and information-processing styles. Apps, devices, and platforms help employees read, write, focus, plan, and communicate more effectively.

Having the right assistive technology can mean the difference between an employee struggling or thriving at work.

When documents are easier to read, understand, and manage, assistive technology makes work more accessible and helps teams use their unique strengths, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Read on at [Tech tools at work](#) for the full article under the following headings:

**Tech support that builds confidence and wellbeing**

**Benefits for teams and organisations**

**Turning accessibility into a performance advantage**

**Shifting from barriers to breakthroughs**



## [Leaking poorly thought-through plans and cuts to SEND rights will only end in tiers](#)

Imagine, if you will... It's a Friday afternoon - we've all been there. As the weekend looms, you get a late-breaking message from your friendly neighbourhood SEND services sociopath. It usually contains bad news; usually weasel-worded, always too late to get an immediate answer, and always - **always** - wrecking your weekend.

It now looks like parts of central government have caught the same habit, with Whitehall "insiders" deciding the best way to test the roiling waters of SEND change is by yet more anonymous journalist briefings. Last Friday, two articles with similar SEND content came out. One was in the [Financial Times](#), the other in the [iPaper](#). We don't know the accuracy of either. But from what they've come up with, it seems like the water is circling the plughole.

[Read More](#)

## [Why the Government's "SEND conversation" fell flat with parents: It's failing to learn from voices of past experience](#)

Intro by SNJ: Last week, the Department for Education's strange "National SEND Conversation" came to a close. If you needed an accessible version of the 36-question-long survey, it was slid out days before closure, like a second-rate Indiana Jones Hat roll trope. The DfE refused to extend the "conversation", so anyone who'd been waiting for [...]

[Read More](#)

## [£200 million for SEND training announced - but will there be anyone left to train?](#)

Following on from the £3 billion capital funding extravaganza that Matt explained recently, the Department for Education has announced a much smaller sum for SEND training across the education age range: "We are announcing a new investment of £200m for this parliament for settings to upskill staff on supporting SEND pupils. There will be offers...

[Read More](#)

## [Inclusion doesn't just happen in mainstream school: being included in education and in life should be the goal](#)

Alice Reeves, parent It's clear the Government is trying to push more children, particularly neurodivergent ones, away from specialist settings to mainstream schools or units, where thousands have already been failed. The idea that units/resourced provision will be a quick panacea is optimistic in the extreme - especially in the short-term, without finding and funding the right...

[Read More](#)

## [The complex SEND needs teacher training gap in mainstream schools and how to fix it](#)

By Emma Hollis, CEO, National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT)  
While the £3 billion for more mainstream SEND places may sound encouraging, one of the flies in the ointment, as Matt pointed out yesterday, is who is going to staff them? Recent research from a teacher training charity is a case in point: it [...]

[Read More](#)

## FURTHER EVENTS

### Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity

We are delighted to bring you two new online courses this month about handwriting by The National Handwriting Association.

Handwriting is a complex task which requires the integration of cognitive skills such as idea generation, grammar and spelling with the motor skill involved in letter formation. Research on writing skills in children with dyslexia has increased in recent years. Finding out about the skills involved in handwriting, why some learners struggle, what research tells us about handwriting, and how to support learners with handwriting difficulties at home or in the classroom, is extremely valuable for both parents and education professionals.



Dr Emma Sumner is one researcher in the field who has considered handwriting and typing skills in detail. Her research will be presented alongside implications and strategies for teaching handwriting in the classroom.

**To book Part 1**, please see our website for more details\*

<https://helenarkell.org.uk/.../spotlight-identifying.../>

\*This is Session 1 of a 2-part series. This session is online.

**Do not worry if you cannot watch live on the night – still book and we will send you the recording later in the week.**

**To book Part 2**, please see our website for more details\*

<https://helenarkell.org.uk/.../spotlight-wider.../>

\*This is Session 2 of a 2-part series. This session is online.

**Do not worry if you cannot watch live on the night – still book and we will send you the recording later in the week.**



### See also . . .

#### Quick links

Check out our [courses](#)

Find out about dyslexia [assessments](#)

Find out about [specialist tuition](#)

Go to our [online shop](#)

See all our [news](#)

Follow us on social media and keep up with the latest news on dyslexia and on what we are up to at Helen Arkell.

You can follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

**By Twinkl TeachMeet**  
**Online event**  
**Tuesday 3 February**  
**10am to 11am**

We share advice and practical tips for digital safety and wellbeing to support you, as parents, with keeping your children safe online.



Join us on Tuesday 3rd February at 10am for our informative event Digital Parenting in an AI World.


Guest speaker Caroline Allams, Co-founder of Natterhub, shares her insights and expertise on how parents can keep their children safe in the digital world. With tips for how to keep your child safe online and actionable strategies to implement at home for digital safety and wellbeing, we hope you will leave this event with the understanding and confidence to navigate your child's interactions with the digital world.

Book your free ticket now to secure your place!

[Get your free tickets here](#)

**Understanding the Impact of Dyslexia on Maths Learning Webinar**


**Tuesday 3rd February 2025**  
**7 pm - 8 pm GMT**  
( seven o'clock until eight o'clock in the evening 19:00 - 20:00)



Lynn Lovell

This session explores how dyslexia can influence mathematical learning and the key distinctions between dyslexia and dyscalculia. Practical evidence-informed strategies will be shared throughout.

<https://dyscalculianetwork.com/event/>



[Dyscalculia Network](#)

Check out our first monthly webinar of the year with the wonderful Lynn Lovell! Learn all about [#dyslexia](#), [#Dyscalculia](#) and [#mathsdifficulties](#) with lots of practical suggestions for supporting at home or at school.

<https://dyscalculianetwork.com/.../understanding-the.../>



**High-Impact Strategies  
For Building An  
Inclusive Mainstream  
School**

**Join us for our free webinar.**

**[High-Impact Strategies For Building An Inclusive Mainstream School](#)**

**Wednesday 4th February**

**Time: 3:30pm - 4:30pm**

Teaching professionals, do you want to create a truly inclusive school environment? Join our free webinar with Professor Charlotte Valeur, Founder & CEO of the Institute of Neurodiversity, to discover practical, evidence-based strategies that enhance inclusion, improve outcomes, and support every learner.

In this webinar, Charlotte will share:

- ✓ High-impact strategies that embed inclusion into everyday classroom and school-wide practice.
- ✓ Practical approaches to meeting diverse needs within mainstream settings so all pupils can thrive.
- ✓ Inclusive systems and cultures that improve wellbeing, engagement and long-term outcomes.

**[Register Your Free Place](#)**

## CALLScotland

### **[Nessy Learning: Supporting Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for All Learners](#)**

**Wednesday 4th February (4:00pm - 4:30pm)**

Foundational skills are a human right. Learn how Nessy has been securing this right for learners around the globe for over 25 years.

You'll discover how Nessy's Reading & Spelling delivers structured literacy from systematic synthetic phonics through to morphology and comprehension, built directly from what works out of the Bristol Dyslexia Centre.

Now complete with a quick risk-free screener to guide next steps, not a diagnosis, so you can communicate clearly with families and plan support.

For maths, you'll explore Chris Woodin's Number Sense by Nessy: visual, explicit routines designed for learners with dyscalculia and wider maths difficulties. Together, and with other tools within the Nessy Learning suite, all learners are given the tools to keep up, not catch up.

**[Book this free webinar](#)**



## Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity

Join us for the UK premiere of The Dyslexic Advantage – a powerful new short film reshaping how we understand dyslexia on Wednesday 4th Feb 2026.

Moving beyond the narrative of struggle, this inspiring film celebrates dyslexia as a strength, driving creativity, innovation, problem solving, and discovery. Nearly 1 in 5 people think differently and this film shows why that matters.

### **Special Guest Q&A**

We're delighted to be joined by Fernette Eide, CEO of Dyslexic Advantage, Executive Producer of the film, and co-author of the renowned book The Dyslexic Advantage. Fernette will answer questions live after the screening.

### **Online event – attend from anywhere**

Can't watch live on the night? No problem. Book your place and we'll send you the recording later in the week.

### **Who is this for?**

- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Teachers and education professionals

Through science, animation, and powerful personal stories of innovators, artists, and entrepreneurs, the film also gently explores the social and emotional challenges young people can face in school and how understanding strengths can change outcomes.

👉 **Book now to secure your place:** <https://helenarkell.org.uk/.../spotlight-the-dyslexic.../>

The Dyslexic Advantage book is also available to purchase via our website: <https://helenarkell.org.uk/.../the-dyslexic-advantage.../>



## Our Ten Top Apps to support learning in SEND and mainstream schools

Thursday 5th February 2026 - 15.30 to 16.00

**About:** In this 30-minute online session find out about some of the apps our CENMAC Advisory Teachers use to support learning in the classroom. These will include Writing Wizard, Pictello, Clicker Apps and more and how they are used to support curriculum skills and engagement. We will also share some real-life examples of how pupils have made progress through the use of these apps.

**Presenters:** CENMAC Advisory Teachers Victoria Annan and Carys McCloskey

**> Reserve your spot**

## Calibre Audio: the value of audiobooks for children and young adults with SEND and their impact on education & reading for pleasure

Thursday 5th March 2026 - 15.30 to 16.00

**About:** Calibre Audio are a national charity providing an audiobook lending service, with over 21,500 books and hundreds of magazines to anyone with a print disability. Calibre memberships are complimentary for schools and for individual children and young people with SEND under 25 years.

Join us to find out more about the service offered by Calibre, who is eligible and what the education and health and wellbeing benefits of audiobooks might be for your pupils with additional needs.

**Presenter:** Helen Mee, Director of Communities and Learning, Calibre Audio

**> Reserve your spot**

## Missed a Thursday Thirty session? Recent recordings include:

- Exploring iOS for iPad accessibility
- Microsoft Accessibility – Edge and Immersive Reader
- Google Accessibility – Chromebook and Chrome

**> Access all recordings**

## Exams and Assistive Technology - CENMAC

This link above provides the following information:

**What forms of Assistive Technology are available for use in exams and student requirements.**

## Key Dates for Exam Access Arrangements:

Exam Entries and Access Arrangements 2026 Exam Series Important dates to remember for the GCSE Exams	
31 January 2026	Last date to request <b>modified papers</b> for the June 2026 exam series e.g. enlarged, digital etc.
22 February 2026 – AQA 21 February 2026 – Pearson	<b>Examination Entry Deadline</b> for the June 2026 Exam Series (All GCSEs, IGCSEs, A-Levels, AS Levels).
21 March 2026	Last date to request <b>all other access arrangements</b> .
Monday 4 May to Friday 26 June 2026	<b>GCSE Exams – Exam Period</b> – Start week commencing Monday 4 May and finish Friday 26 June 2026.
	<b>Special Consideration</b> must be applied for at the time of the assessment.

### Key Stage 3 and 4 - How do schools apply for Access Arrangements?

### Key Stage 1 and 2 - Important Changes for the academic year 2025 to 2026

Gov.UK – Optional Key stage 1 tests: access arrangements guidance

Gov.UK – 2025 Key Stage 2 assessment and reporting arrangements

\*\*\*\*\*

## Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity

Want to feel more confident supporting your child with dyslexia at home?

Join our face-to-face parent workshop with Claire Harvey, Head of Education, where we'll explore:

- Definition of dyslexia
- Characteristic areas of difficulty
- Potential impact on literacy (and numeracy) development
- Benefits of a multisensory approach to learning
- Supporting reading
- Supporting reading comprehension
- Supporting writing
- Supporting spelling
- Keeping self-esteem high



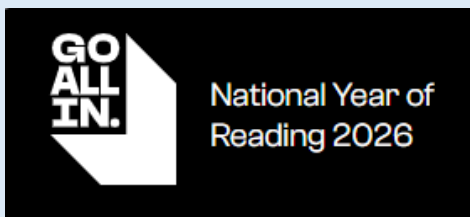
By the end of the workshop, you will:

- Understand dyslexia better
- Understand what dyslexia means for your child and how it affects more than reading and spelling
- Have practical ideas to help with memory and organisation
- Have practical strategies for supporting reading, writing and spelling
- Have learnt ways to boost your child's confidence and self-esteem

There will also be time to ask questions and meet other parents in a similar situation.

Book your place today!

<https://helenarkell.org.uk/.../how-to-help-at-home-a.../>



## It's time to Go All In for the National Year of Reading!

In 2026, the National Year of Reading is reconnecting reading with the things that already inspire us – from playlists and football matches to films, food and family time. It's reading that fits how we live, not the other way around.

Explore how you can join the movement at home, in your setting, or across your community.

Head over to [goallin.org.uk](http://goallin.org.uk) and find out more.

### Premier League and literary greats back National Year of Reading

Page summary:

The Education Secretary and the National Literacy Trust launch the National Year of Reading, urging all ages to rediscover reading for pleasure.

**World Book Day 2026**  
For primary (9+) and secondary aged students


**Free Online Learning Event**  
With special guest  
**TOM PALMER**


As a child, Tom was a reluctant reader and it was only when he was a young adult that he became immersed in the world of books and reading. This then sparked a huge passion for writing, and Tom is now a celebrated children's author who has written numerous books about sport and historical events. Tom joins us to discuss his books and love of writing and reading.

Thursday 5th March 2026  
10-11am

Register for the event [here:](https://forms.office.com/e/yz0qrPG014)

<https://forms.office.com/e/yz0qrPG014>





### Tom Palmer

I'm looking forward to working with [The Anne Frank Trust UK](http://The Anne Frank Trust UK) on World Book Day. A free event for schools with a focus on reading for pleasure and history. Good for 9+.

Sign up for free here:

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx...>

[Barrington Stoke](#)

[School Library Association \(UK\)](#)

# DYSCALCULIA DAY Parent Webinars



**2<sup>nd</sup> March**  
**7 pm (GMT)**  
*(seven o'clock in the evening/ 19:00)*  
**Busy Parents - 7 Strategies to Support Your Primary Dyscalculic Child at Home**  
Eryn Caddick

**5th March**  
**7 pm (GMT)**  
*(seven o'clock in the evening/ 19:00)*

**Numeracy in the Early Years**  
Bridget Mather-Scott



**4<sup>th</sup> March**  
**7 pm (GMT)**  
*(seven o'clock in the evening/ 19:00)*  
**Understanding Maths Learning Difficulties: Supporting Secondary Learners in the Maths Classroom**  
Ellie Tuck

**Dyscalculia Day**  
For Parents  
March 2026

**BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY**  
[dyscalculianetwork.com](https://dyscalculianetwork.com)

## Dyscalculia Network

For Dyscalculia Day 2026, as requested in last year's feedback, we have split the parent talks into three separate webinars!

Join us (or book and catch up later with the recording) for all of them, Early years, Primary and Secondary or just for one!





<https://dyscalculianetwork.com/dyscalculia-day-2026/>

## Dyscalculia Network

Dyscalculia Day 2026 Educator Conference on 6th March is jam packed with amazing talks including two talks sharing world-exclusive research into the lived experiences of people with dyscalculia.

We can't wait and we hope to see you there!

### Beyond the Numbers: Understanding Dyscalculia and SpLD in Maths ONLINE AND RECORDED EDUCATOR CONFERENCE

**Friday 6th March**

**Part 1 - 8.45 am until 12.15 pm (08:45 - 12:15 GMT)**  
**Dyscalculia in Practice: From Cognitive Understanding and Assessment to Effective Clinical Intervention**





Exploring variations in cognitive profiles of children and people with dyscalculia




Listening to and learning from the voices of lived experience of children and people with dyscalculia

**Part 2 - 1 pm until 4.30 pm (13:00 - 16:30 GMT)**  
**Dyscalculia or maths learning difficulties?**

Practical strategies for inclusive teaching for learners with SpLD in maths & Dyscalculia

Practical Tips for Using Maths Manipulatives and Games

**Dyscalculia Day** For Educators **BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY**  
[dyscalculianetwork.com](https://dyscalculianetwork.com)  
6th March 2026

## RECORDINGS

[Donna Stevenson](#)

Wow ★ Wow ★ Wow ★

Such an inspirational conversation with the amazing [Darren Clark](#)

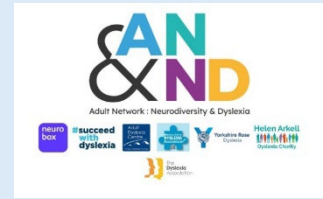
He shared so honestly and openly about his life's journey and how his commitment to giving back and making a difference is what motivates his work.

His story is one that truly resonates with [hashtag#neurodivergent](#) folks...

### [ANND My Journey with Neurodiversity with Darren Clark - Meeting Recording](#)



The ANND coalition continue to join together to make a difference for our community, we are a community of [Succeed With Dyslexia](#), [Adult Dyslexia Centre](#), [neurobox](#), [The Dyslexia Association](#), [Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity](#), Yorkshire Rose Dyslexia Association and Hampshire Dyslexia Association - Together we are stronger ❤️



## We are excited to announce the fourth podcast in our SEN and Sensibility series.

What does true inclusion look like in the workplace  
- and why is it critical for success?

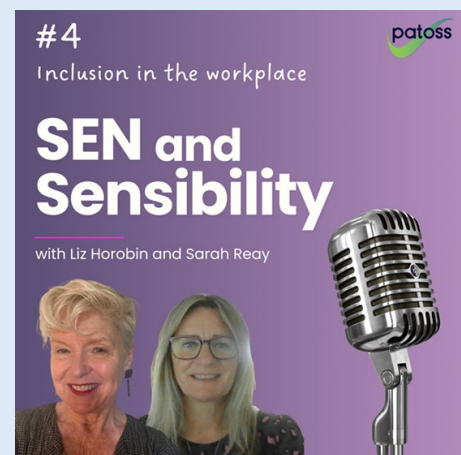
In this episode, Liz Horobin and Sarah Reay are joined by Laura Cook, Helen Curran, and Chris Collier to explore:

- ✓ How inclusion impacts employee wellbeing and business performance.
- ✓ Practical steps for inclusive recruitment and onboarding.
- ✓ Why psychological safety and belonging matter more than policies.
- ✓ The role of assistive tech and coaching in empowering neurodivergent talent.

This conversation is packed with actionable insights for leaders, HR professionals, and anyone passionate about creating workplaces where everyone thrives.

Tune in to learn how inclusion benefits individuals, teams, and organizations - and why belonging is the key to unlocking potential.

Find us on the [website](#) or on [Spotify](#)!





A huge thank you to all our wonderful guest speakers who joined us this year and to everyone who tuned in, took part in the discussions, and shared the sessions along the way. We're incredibly grateful for the time, energy, and enthusiasm that made this series so special, and for being part of such a supportive and engaged community.

If you missed any sessions or would like to revisit your favourites, the full series is now available to watch on our [YouTube playlist](#).

[Behind the Notes: The ivvi Story, featuring Founders Darius Namdaran and Jo Lee](#)

[Inside the Sensory App House With Founders David Stevens and Paul Blenkhorn](#)

[Meet the Minds Behind Neuralign UK, featuring Ingrid Poupart, Erika MacDonald, and Bob Huggins.](#)

[Darren Clark on Dyslexia & Changing the Narrative with Neurodiversity Stories.](#)

[ReadSpeaker TextAid Today: Insights & Inspiration, featuring Jay Giddens](#)

[Driving Inclusion: Insights from Hector Minto, Director of Commercial Accessibility at Microsoft](#)

[Assistive Tech In Action: Fil McIntyre on Inclusive Technology](#)

[Mo Jamil on Music, Mental Health, and Making a Difference](#)

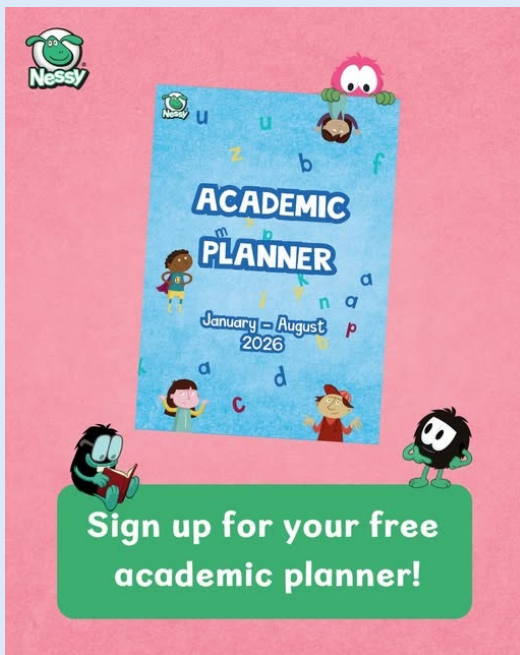
[What's New at Pro-AT Group? User-Driven Updates, featuring Jonathan Webb](#)

[Skillbridge Solutions: Unlocking Apprenticeship Potential](#)

[The Purple Pound & Beyond: In Conversation with Mike Adams](#)

[Exploring iView Learning and the Solutions Behind the Series](#)

## RESOURCES & OFFERS



### Nessy

Our free academic planner is filled with helpful pages to get you organised for the year ahead.

What's included:

- ★ 2026 academic year overview
- ★ Example lesson planning using Nessy
- ★ Weekly planner pages

Sign up below to receive your free planner straight to your inbox!

Sign up at [nessy.com](https://nessy.com) 



**TINTED EXERCISE BOOKS SALE - MIX & MATCH**

**UP TO 20% LOWER**

- ✓ A4 Books now from £1.90 each (£2.35)
- ✓ 9"x7" Books now from £1.85 each (£2.30)
- ✓ Mix and match across all page colours and rulings

[Tinted Exercise Books | Notebooks | Paper | Dyslexia-Friendly](#)



[Top Tips for University/College](#)

[Top Tips for Adults with Dyslexia](#)

[Top Tips for Employers](#)

[Workplace Information Sheet](#)

[Dyscalculia Information Sheet \(Adults\)](#)

**Manipulative numeracy charts** are visual aids, like number charts and place value charts, that students can physically interact with to learn and understand numbers and mathematical concepts. They help students connect concrete objects with abstract mathematical ideas, aiding in learning about number patterns, place value, and basic arithmetic operations.

**Key Features of Manipulative Numeracy Charts:**

**Concrete Representation:** Manipulative charts allow students to see and touch numbers and quantities, making abstract concepts like place value and regrouping more tangible.

**Hands-on Learning:** Students can manipulate the chart to visualise and solve problems, promoting active learning and deeper understanding.

**Visual Aids:** Charts provide a visual representation of numbers and their relationships, helping students develop a stronger sense of number.

**Improved Skills:** Using manipulatives can help students develop essential skills like counting, number recognition, and early math concepts.

**Supports Diverse Learners:** Manipulative charts can be particularly helpful for students with visual and auditory processing differences, as they offer a multi-sensory approach to learning.

**Examples of Manipulative Numeracy Charts:**

**Multiplication/Division Charts:** These charts can be used to visualise and practice multiplication and division facts, discover square roots and reduce high value fractions to their lowest value.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
3	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
4	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40
5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
6	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60
7	7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70
8	8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80
9	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
10	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Multiplication & Division Grids – 10 x 10 and 12 x 12

**Number Charts:** These charts visually represent numbers in a sequence, helping students learn number order, patterns, and counting.

**Fraction Charts:** These charts help students understand and manipulate the tiles to see how fractions, decimals and percentages can have the same value.

**Benefits of Using Manipulative Numeracy Charts:**

**Practice Problems:** Have students use the charts to practice counting, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and other operations.

**Explore Patterns:** Encourage students to explore number patterns and relationships on the charts.

**Create Visual Representations:** Have students use the charts to create visual representations of their work, which can help them remember the concepts.

**Connect to Real-World Situations:** Relate the concepts learned using charts to real-world scenarios, like counting money or measuring ingredients.

**Click one of the options below to buy Flexitables:**

- [UK Shop](#)
- [Export Shop](#)
- [Local Stockist](#)

## **Ransom's Free Resources**

From posters and bookmarks to worksheets and sample chapters, our books are supported by a wide range of literacy resources that are available to download or order for free.

It's our way of saying 'thank you' for supporting children through their reading journeys.

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### **Posters**

Brighten up classrooms, reading corners and libraries with our striking posters.

[View our current posters](#)

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### **Bookmarks**

Foster a reading culture at your school with our class-packs of bookmarks.

[View our current bookmarks](#)

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### **Worksheets**

Ideal as lesson-starters or take-home activities, these worksheets support reading books within some of Ransom's most popular series.

[Alpha Stars worksheets \(3 to 5\)](#)

[Goal! worksheets \(6 to 14\)](#)

[PIG worksheets \(7 to 12\)](#)

[Thunderbolts worksheets \(7 to 14\)](#)

[Boffin Boy worksheets \(8 to 14\)](#)

[Trailblazers worksheets \(8 to 14\)](#)

[Tales from the Pitch worksheets \(8 to 14\)](#)

[Starstruck worksheets \(8 to 14\)](#)

[Starchasers worksheets \(8 to 14\)](#)

[Siti's Sisters worksheets \(9 to 14\)](#)

[Dark Man worksheets \(13+\)](#)

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### **Sample Chapters**

Get a taste for our acclaimed books with sample chapters and excerpts.

[View our current sample chapters](#)

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### **Book Club Questions and Readers' Notes**

Guide meaningful thoughts and discussions with our sets of book club questions and readers' notes.

[View our current questions and readers' notes](#)

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### **Phase 1 Resources**

A range of resources to support teaching using Ransom's Phase 1 Handbook.

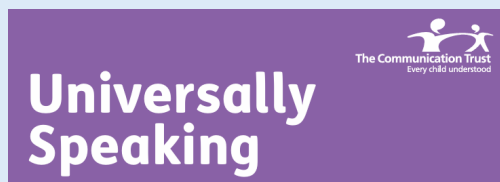
[You can order the Phase 1 Handbook here.](#)

[View the free supporting resources here or link from the QR code on your handbook.](#)

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### **Loving our free resources?**

Feel free to email your name, job title and school to [orders@ransom.co.uk](mailto:orders@ransom.co.uk). We'll add you to our mailing list so you're the first to know when new resources drop – and at the front of the queue when it comes to print copies of posters and bookmarks.



[Universally Speaking \(0-5 years\) report](#)  
[Universally Speaking \(5-11 years\) report](#)  
[Universally Speaking \(11-18 years\) report](#)

Universally Speaking is a series of 3 booklets for anyone who works with children and young people. To order further copies of the Universally Speaking booklets please go to [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/universallyspeaking](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/universallyspeaking)

### **ADHD and Dyslexia: How to Help Children Thrive in School**



Training and Professional Development

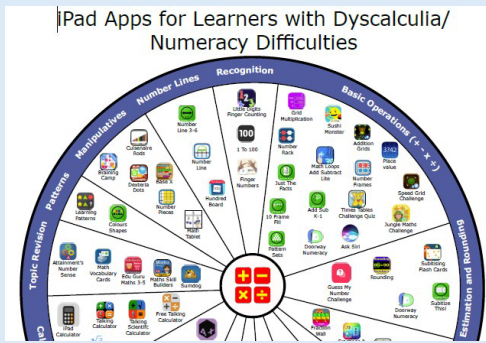
There is a short article which can be found on the Dyslexia Action website at [ADHD and Dyslexia: How to help children thrive in school](#) which briefly discusses co-occurrence of these two specific learning difficulties and strategies that can be used in school.

### **MA Inclusion – University of Birmingham**



Our MA Inclusion programme at the University of Birmingham is a flexible, research-led programme designed for professionals committed to making a difference in inclusive education. We offer five specialist pathways, combining expert teaching, cutting-edge research and practical experience to develop advanced knowledge and real-world impact. You will join a supportive professional community and gain the skills and recognition needed to progress within your inclusive career.

[\*\*Find out more\*\*](#)



# CALLScotland

## [Updated app wheel - iPad Apps for Learners with Numeracy Difficulties](#)

Our popular Wheel of Apps: "iPad Apps for Learners with Dyscalculia/Numeracy Difficulties" has been refreshed with a brand-new design and updated app selections. It's now available for download!

## [Download the free 'iPad Apps for Learners with Dyscalculia/Numeracy Difficulties' poster here](#)

With over 12,000 downloads since it was first released in 2020, we hope [this latest version will continue to be just as popular!](#)

### Online resources:

As well as apps, we have also included useful resources and websites such as;

- [Doorway Online](#)
- [GeoGebra](#)
- [Brainingcamp](#) with digital manipulatives,
- Built-in apps such as the brilliant iPad Calculator, with its AI-powered [Solve Math with Math Notes](#)
- as '[Ask Siri](#)', to help /solve maths calculations, e.g., "Siri, what's 5x5?" etc.
- [Maths templates in Word format](#), great for layout.

Don't forget the CALL Dyslexia section of the website also has a '[numeracy section](#)' dedicated to numeracy difficulties and dyscalculia.

### Why We Chose These Apps:

We carefully curated this selection of apps based on a range of key criteria. Many of the featured apps have a proven track record and are developed by well-established, trusted app developers.

In addition to this, we've received consistently positive feedback from teachers, learners, and other users, who say the apps have been extremely helpful. Most importantly, these apps are specifically designed to support learners with numeracy difficulties.

The App Wheel is divided into 15 categories and includes support for **early learning and primary as well as secondary pupils:**

- time,
- shape,
- fractions,
- estimation, and rounding,
- core operations like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division,
- patterns,
- manipulatives
- number lines and more!

## [Download the free 'iPad Apps for Learners with Dyscalculia/Numeracy Difficulties' poster here](#)



## Reading pens. What are the benefits and what are the options?

For learners who struggle to access text, reading pens can be life-changing. From reading aloud and easing fatigue to supporting confidence and independence, this post explores how different features meet different needs, and why the 'right' pen depends on the learner.

## Dyslexia-friendly typed formats | Dyslexia Scotland - Dyslexia Scotland

### **A guide to making your typed content more accessible to dyslexic readers**

Dyslexia is a language-based learning difference that mainly affects someone's ability to read and spell. Dyslexia also affects working memory and speed of processing.

It used to be considered a visual difficulty, but modern research shows that [visual stress and dyslexia](#) are separate, though they do co-occur in many people. A lot of guidance on 'dyslexia-friendly' formats is outdated, catering more for visual stress issues or other visual impairments.

This summary outlines key findings from modern research and good practice guidance for typed communications that are helpful for dyslexic readers, visual stress and general accessibility.

Read on at: [Dyslexia-friendly typed formats](#)



## Leaflets | Dyslexia Scotland

**Caution:** Regulations about how dyslexic pupils are supported within the education system in Scotland differ to the system in England. Therefore, a few guides have been removed from this list to help avoid any confusion!

### **General information**

- What is dyslexia? [Download](#)
- Indicators of dyslexia [Download](#)
- Neurodiversity [Download](#)
- What is dyscalculia? [Download](#)
- Visual issues [Download](#)
- Visual issues – FAQs [Download](#)
- Confidence [Download](#)
- Assistive technology [Download](#)
- Dyslexia-friendly typed formats [Download](#)

## Learning and studying

- Guide for students [Download](#)
- Study skills [Download](#)
- Exam guide for people with dyslexia [Download](#)
- Note taking and essay questions [Download](#)

## Information for teachers, parents, carers and families

- Explaining dyslexia to children [Download](#)
- Supporting your child with learning [Download](#)
- Support for maths [Download](#)
- Support for reading [Download](#)
- Support for spelling [Download](#)
- Transition to high school [Download](#)
- Information for teachers [Download](#)
- Guide for lecturers [Download](#)

## Online guides

- [Assessments for adults](#)
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I really hope you've enjoyed the winter break and feel well rested ready to tackle the new term!

As you settle back into the school routine, this is the perfect time to explore how IDL can support students who are struggling with Literacy and Numeracy, particularly those with dyslexia or dyscalculia.

### Why choose IDL?

Our award-winning intervention programmes are designed to meet the individual needs of each student by providing targeted, personalised support. With IDL, you can:

- ★ **Increase confidence and self esteem:** Help students overcome personal learning challenges and develop a more positive attitude towards learning.
- ★ **Improve academic performance:** Enhance reading and spelling, which ultimately develops better writing skills and helps overcome Literacy and Maths related stresses.
- ★ **Tailored instruction:** Our baseline assessment creates an individual starting point for every student, ensuring they receive the right support at the right level.

### Start your FREE, no-obligation trial today!

If you'd like to trial the IDL software, simply click the link below. I'd be happy to provide a free online demonstration to guide you through the system and answer any questions you may have. Just reply to this email or contact me at [Sarah.Hyslop@idsgroup.com](mailto:Sarah.Hyslop@idsgroup.com) or **01524 580665** to get started!

[Request a FREE Trial](#)

**IDL Literacy is a proven solution for increasing the reading and spelling ability of pupils by an average of 11 months after just 26 hours of use.**

[IDL Literacy](#)

**After a few hours using IDL Numeracy, learners will find a familiarity with the lessons, and gain the confidence they need to tackle mathematical problems.**

[IDL Numeracy](#)

**IDL Wellbeing adopts an integrated approach to support children, aged 7 -13, to understand and address unwelcome emotions as well as encourage positive ones.**

[IDL Wellbeing](#)



## [British Dyslexia Association](#)

It was a pleasure to work with SEND Edventures on this useful article "**Building confidence and self-esteem in children with dyslexia**".

Many children with dyslexia experience difficulties beyond reading and spelling. They can also face daily challenges that slowly affect their confidence, self-belief and motivation to learn. Repeated struggle in school, fear of getting things wrong and feeling different from peers can lead to frustration or low self-esteem. In this interview, the British Dyslexia Association shares practical advice on how parents can build their child's confidence, celebrate their strengths and help them feel proud of who they are.

To find out how parents can support their child's confidence, celebrate their strengths, and help them feel proud of who they are, read the full article here: [https://loom.ly/Bsq\\_ifs](https://loom.ly/Bsq_ifs) to read advice on the following questions:

Since moving to secondary school, my son has become very aware of his dyslexia. He is always comparing himself to his friends and thinks he will never be as good as they are. How can I help him stay motivated when he feels left behind?

Homework is a battle. I hear 'I can't do it' or 'what's the point'. I don't want learning to become negative. How can I build his confidence in small, realistic ways at home?

Our daughter is bright and curious but struggles with reading, spelling, working memory and processing speed. We don't want this to dampen her love of learning. How can we keep her curiosity alive while supporting her needs?

At home, our daughter is bubbly, but in social situations, she fades and avoids attention. How can we support her confidence around others, in and out of school?

Why can dyslexia have such a substantial impact on a child's confidence, even before it is fully recognised or diagnosed?

What signs should parents look out for?

What realistic and straightforward things can parents do at home to boost confidence during learning without putting pressure on their child?

Some children with dyslexia avoid complex tasks because they fear making mistakes. How can parents encourage resilience and a positive mindset?

Dyslexia is often spoken about in terms of challenges, but all children have strengths too. Why is it important to highlight these?

What are some different ways families can nurture strengths outside traditional reading and writing tasks?

How can parents help their child recognise and celebrate progress, even if it's in small, meaningful steps?

Role models can be powerful. How can families use examples of successful people with dyslexia in a way that feels meaningful and encouraging?

Some children feel embarrassed about needing extra support or using adaptations such as overlays, laptops, or audio tools. What can parents do to help their child feel confident using what they need?

Dyslexia can sometimes lead to frustration or low mood. When should parents be concerned about their child's emotional well-being and seek further support?

What do you wish more parents knew about dyslexia and confidence?

What support does the British Dyslexia Association offer to families who need guidance, practical strategies or reassurance?

Are there any new projects, training sessions or resources coming up from the BDA that families should know about?

**Answers at:** [https://loom.ly/Bsq\\_ifs](https://loom.ly/Bsq_ifs)

## **Why Assistive Technology Must Be the Next Frontier in Reading Intervention Research**



**Julia Clouter**

Global Head of Education Empowering  
Tech & DfE Expert Advisor



This article explores why the next critical step in reading intervention research must include Assistive Technology (AT).

While recent studies highlight the effectiveness of multicomponent approaches (combining phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and motivation) the absence of AT in these discussions is a glaring gap. Without integrating technology into research and practice, we risk repeating the same cycles and failing learners who need accessible solutions.

The piece argues for a future where AT is not an add-on but a core component of evidence-based interventions.



[Stephen Parsons | LinkedIn](#) wrote . . .

I was reminded of [Helen Stringer](#)'s fantastic and free phonological resources at this afternoon's [NAPLIC](#) - SLCN specialist teacher network. Really useful for every school as a way to support Early Years children's acquisition of phonics, or to dig deeper for those children who are struggling to read.

Check them out and then share with all who teach children to read.

<https://lnkd.in/eNdDGy9B>

[Newcastle Phonological Awareness  
research.ncl.ac.uk](https://research.ncl.ac.uk)



## Introducing the New NCA Portal for Primary National Curriculum Assessments

### What Primary SENCOs Need to Know

As we look ahead to the 2026 assessment cycle, there's an important update that all Primary SENCOs need to have on their radar.

The Primary Assessment Gateway (PAG) has been replaced with a brand new system: the National Curriculum Assessments Portal (NCA Portal), developed by Pearson, and aims to provide a more streamlined way to statutory assessments.

Please note The NCA Portal is explicitly for primary national curriculum assessments and it has no impact on GCSEs.

**> [Find out more about the NCA Portal](#)**

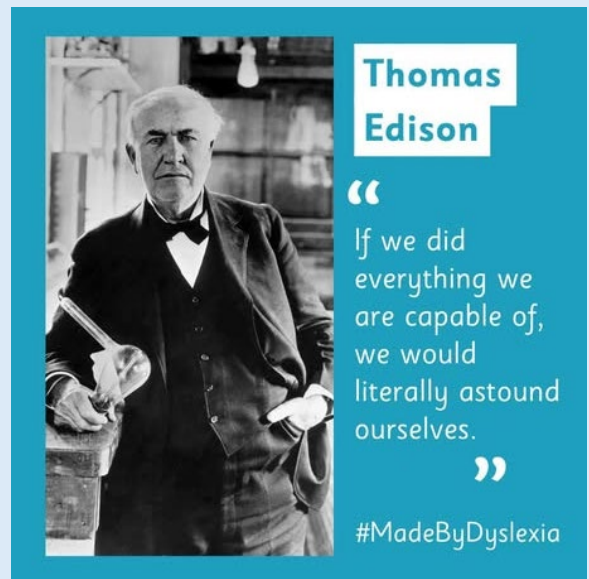
## DYSLEXIA STORIES

### Made By Dyslexia

#### **New Year, New Goals.**

We're taking inspiration from the inventor of the lightbulb, Thomas Edison, today. Some of the greatest leaps forward of mankind have come from a dyslexic mind. He used his powerful **#DyslexicThinking** skill of Imagining to create what hadn't been created yet and used his passion and determination (something dyslexics have in abundance) to not give up along the way.

**Where will your **#DyslexicThinking** take you this year?**



### Informatify

She went to 13 different schools because teachers kept saying she would never succeed. Now she designs instruments that study distant planets - and hosts one of Britain's most beloved space programs.

As a child, Maggie Aderin-Pocock was told, again and again, that she was unlikely to excel. She had dyslexia, and reading felt like trying to catch words that refused to stay still. Letters danced on the page. Sentences slipped apart before she could hold onto them. In classrooms that measured intelligence almost entirely by reading speed, teachers mistook difficulty for inability. Some quietly suggested she lower her expectations.

But while reading was hard, imagining was effortless.

At night, growing up in London, Maggie would stare out of her bedroom window and look at the sky. She imagined spacecraft sliding through darkness. She wondered what stars were made of. She dreamed about building the machines that could travel where humans could not. Space made sense to her in a way textbooks did not.

Born to Nigerian parents who had moved to Britain, Maggie carried curiosity everywhere she went. Between the ages of four and eighteen, she attended thirteen different schools as her family moved around London. She was often the only Black child in the classroom. Dyslexia went largely unsupported in that era, and many teachers assumed her struggles meant she could not handle science.

They were completely wrong.

Maggie discovered that her mind worked visually. She could rotate objects in her head, take systems apart mentally, and understand how pieces fit together. While others memorized formulas, she understood structure. While others read descriptions, she saw mechanisms.

"Dyslexia made reading harder," she later explained, "but it made spatial thinking easier."

That difference became her strength.

She studied physics, refused to quit when courses became demanding, and eventually earned a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from Imperial College London in 1994. Her doctoral research focused on engineering and space instrumentation - the precise tools that allow spacecraft and telescopes to measure light, atmosphere, and motion across vast distances.

Then she began living the dream she had once imagined from her bedroom window. For more than two decades, Maggie worked on advanced space instruments. She contributed to satellite missions studying Earth's climate and atmosphere. She helped develop optical systems for the Gemini Observatory in Chile, where telescopes scan distant stars and search for exoplanets - worlds orbiting suns far beyond our own. Her work helped scientists detect temperature, composition, and chemical signatures light-years away.

She became a specialist in making the invisible visible.

But Maggie did not stop there.

She realized that the wonder she felt as a child should not belong only to those who thrived in traditional classrooms. In 2014, she became a co-presenter of *The Sky at Night*, the world's longest-running astronomy television show, first launched in 1957. She was the first woman to regularly present the program in its long history.

Her presence changed the tone instantly. She brought warmth, energy, and visual explanation. Complex ideas felt approachable. Astronomy felt human. Children who had never seen themselves reflected in science suddenly could.

Maggie travelled across the UK visiting schools, especially in underserved communities. She brought telescopes, hands-on experiments, and a powerful message: struggling in school does not mean your brain is broken. It means it works differently.

"I want science to feel like it belongs to everyone," she has said. "Girls. Ethnic minorities. Kids who think in pictures instead of paragraphs."

In 2009, she was awarded an MBE for services to science education. She later received multiple honorary doctorates recognizing her impact on public understanding of science. She also founded educational initiatives that bring hands-on science experiences directly into classrooms that might otherwise never access them.

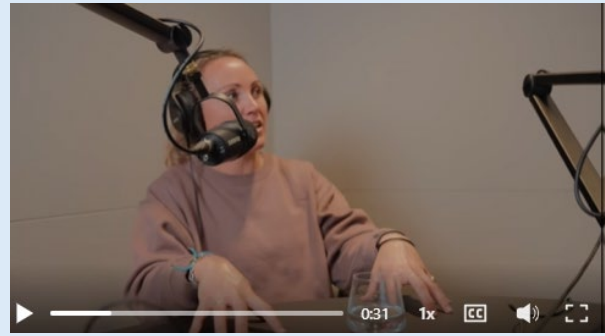
Maggie Aderin-Pocock proved that intelligence is not one shape. That learning is not one path. That the people most underestimated are often the ones who see what others miss. The child who struggled to read is now helping humanity read the universe itself - decoding the light of distant worlds and inviting millions to look up with her.

She went to thirteen schools where teachers doubted her. Now she teaches the world to look at the stars.



## British Dyslexia Association

Fia Tarrant on dyslexia, confidence, and why she calls herself "super dyslexic." Diagnosed young, she thrived at Moon Hall before facing the harsh reality of mainstream education, including being told "dyslexia isn't real."



Now a Heart FM host, scripts can still trigger panic, but she's learned the power of saying what you need early, without shame. A key theme: stop trying to excel at what drains you and focus on what you're good at and love.

Watch the full episode of Talking Dyslexia, out now: <https://bit.ly/4qwH8bO>

## MORE DYSLEXIA STORIES at [Your Stories - British Dyslexia Association](#)

### And finally . . .



## Caroline Fowke

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