WDA Newsletter 2026
Issue 7 – October

Page	
1	Wiltshire News & Events
10	Dyslexia Awareness Month
15	Research Request
16	Articles, Blogs and Comment
21	Exam Access Arrangements
23	More Events & Recordings
34	Resources & Offers
45	Dyslexia Stories
49	. . . and finally

WILTSHIRE NEWS & EVENTS



An enormous thank you to the village of Porton for making us so welcome at their latest monthly Drop-In Café.



The Wiltshire Dyslexia Association was delighted to be their chosen charity for October, especially as it is Dyslexia Awareness Month.

We were so pleased to be able to provide support for those seeking information about dyslexia and we are extremely grateful for the £70 donation we received – hugely appreciated. Thank you so much!

FREE TRAINING FOR WILTSHIRE SCHOOLS

Online - Microsoft Teams
Specialist SEN Service

Maths Difficulties And Dyscalculia (Online Live)
Day 1 of 2 - Thursday 26 November 2026, 09:30 - 12:00

Maths Difficulties And Dyscalculia (Online Live)
Day 2 of 2 - Tuesday 26 January 2027, 09:30 - 12:00



National SEND Reform – an Update on Progress in Wiltshire

Following the publication of the 2026 Schools White Paper (*Every Child Achieving and Thriving*), the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England required all local area partnerships to submit their initial Local SEND Reform Plans by 19th June 2026.

Core Requirements of the Plan

Local authorities were legally responsible for leading and bringing together education, health, and social care partners to co-produce the plan. There was a requirement that every plan must be structured around and include:

- The "Experts at Hand" Offer: Integrating specialist support teams (such as speech and language therapists) directly into mainstream schools and settings.
- System Tiers: Outlining how the local area will transition to a tiered support framework (Universal, Targeted, Targeted Plus, and Specialist).
- Digital Individual Support Plans (ISPs): Moving toward digital ISPs to support non-complex SEND needs early.

Wiltshire Council's SEND Reform Plan has been approved by the DfE.

Approval from the DfE means that Wiltshire Council can now move forward with the programme, continuing to work with families, schools and partners to develop and implement the plan over time.

Find out More

Wiltshire Council is holding an online SEND Reform webinar on Tuesday 3rd November between 6pm to 7pm for parent carers.

The session will include:

- An update on Wiltshire's SEND Reform Plan
- Information about what the reforms mean for families
- Answers to frequently asked questions
- An opportunity for parents and carers to ask questions

Parents and carers can register to attend the online session **HERE**. Families can also use this link to submit questions in advance when registering.

Wiltshire Council has committed to providing updates, answering questions and engaging with families as the reforms develop.

Nothing Changes Yet

Please remember that nothing is changing for your child right now.

The government's plan to rewrite the law is a long project; the current SEND system remains completely in place for now. Your child's current school support, legal rights, and annual

reviews remain the same during this transition phase. Educational Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are part of the current SEND system and will continue to operate as they do now while national reform plans are developed further and implemented.

The national roll-out is broken into three main phases:

The Official Timeline



Right Now (Autumn 2026):

- Local councils have submitted their plans, and the very first step, the "Experts at Hand" program is beginning to roll out locally. This means some schools will soon be starting to get quicker access to speech therapists, occupational therapists and educational psychologists.

The Prep Years (2027–2028):

- No laws change yet. The government is using this time to pump investment into staff training, build "inclusion bases" inside schools, and test out new funding systems.

The Big Switch (September 2029):

- This is when the new SEND system officially kicks in. The new rules about mainstream inclusion, the tiered system, and digital Individual Support Plans (ISPs) will become standard practice across England.

EHCP Protection (September 2030 onwards):

- The government has legally promised that no changes to existing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will happen before September 2030.

If your child is already settled in a specialist school or setting by September 2029, the government has guaranteed they will be allowed to stay there until they finish their phase of education. They will not be forced back into a mainstream school against your wishes.

Feeling Anxious about the Changes?

As parent carers ourselves and facing the same changes, we know how unsettling the National SEND Reforms may be and the anxieties the uncertainties may be causing.

The WPCC's role is to represent the collective voice of parent carers in Wiltshire, ensuring families' experiences, concerns, hopes and priorities are reflected in strategic conversations.

To help the WPCC understand more clearly what is worrying families and to ensure we can identify and present collective themes to the Local Authority, we set up a dedicated survey, we are asking everyone to use this survey wherever possible, rather than posting detailed individual concerns on our social media pages, as this will make it easier for us to collate your feedback and present back to the LA.

You can share your feedback **HERE**.

The WPCC's Next SEND Information Event is Open for Bookings!

Theme: Preparation for Adulthood: Information to Support with the Journey Ahead

Friday 13th November 2026

Civic Centre, Trowbridge

Are you a parent carer of a child or young person with SEND in Wiltshire?

Our next WPCC SEND Information Event is coming to Trowbridge, and we're doing things a little differently this time.

Our theme for this event is Preparation for Adulthood, bringing together information from a range of services to help parent carers feel more informed and better placed to support their young people as they move towards adulthood.

A day designed around what you told us - In June this year, we asked our membership to complete a short survey and tell us what information would be most useful at a future Preparation for Adulthood Information Event. Your responses have helped shape this event, and we're now busy working on a programme of workshops covering the most popular topics you told us you wanted to know more about.

There's another important change to this event - In response to feedback from some people at our recent events who said they found the Market Place overwhelming, there will be no Market Place; instead, there will be a carousel of workshops throughout the day.

You don't need to stay for the whole day if you don't want to - Come along for the sessions that interest you most, take a break when you need one; you will have the flexibility to dip in and out of the sessions that are most relevant to you.

What will the workshops cover?

Please join us for sessions covering the following topics:

- Transition to Adult Services
- Wills and Trusts
- Benefits
- Employment

See the **BOOKING FORM** for more information about each workshop.

What will the day look like?

Our anticipated timings and plan for the day are:

- 9.30am to 9.50am: Signing-in
- 9.50am: Welcome and Housekeeping
- 10.00am: Service update (see booking form for more information)
- Throughout the day: Carousel of workshops
- 2pm: Close

BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN!

As always, the WPCC Information Event IS free to attend.

Although the event is aimed primarily at parent carers, we warmly welcome young people, and professional colleagues working to support families of children and young people with SEND in Wiltshire.

As always, the WPCC will reimburse parent carers' travel costs, including paid-for parking, and childcare costs necessary for them to attend the event.

There'll also be free tea, coffee, cakes and fruit available throughout the event for everyone.

Book you place now and tell others about it! **BOOK HERE**

Whether you're thinking about your young person's transition to adult services, wondering about benefits, planning for the future and wondering about wills and trusts, or exploring possible employment support options, this event is being designed to give you access to information that can help you start to prepare for the journey ahead.

SEND Update: Biggest Ever Overhaul of Teacher Training Begins

The Department for Education has launched the most comprehensive SEND teacher training programme in a generation, backed by £200 million. This national rollout aims to ensure every teacher is better equipped to support children and young people with SEND, wherever they live.

What's new?

- Free, first-of-their-kind training materials are now available for mainstream schools and post-16 settings.
- Early years staff will receive dedicated online training to help identify and support needs from day one.
- Materials include practical, evidence-based strategies such as breaking instructions into smaller steps, pre-teaching vocabulary, using visual timetables, and adapting environments to reduce sensory overload.

Why this matters:

Families have long called for more consistent SEND support and better training for staff in schools. This new training aims to:

- Improve early identification
- Build staff confidence
- Reduce the postcode lottery
- Strengthen inclusion in every classroom

Where to find out more:

- SEND & Inclusion Training (Schools)
- SEND & Inclusion Training (Post-16)
- Inclusive Workforce Models research

Further materials will be released in early 2027 as part of the wider SEND improvement plan.

Parent Carer Groups 2026

No need to book, just turn up on the day.

Join Carers Together for an informal and friendly meeting, enjoy a coffee, chat and connect with other Parent Carers.

November 2026

Monday 2nd November - 10.30am - 12pm (Cesar's Coffee, Trowbridge)
Wednesday 4th November - 10.30am - 12pm (Cosy Club, Salisbury)
Wednesday 18th November - 10.30am - 12pm (The Bear Hotel, Devizes)

December 2026

Wednesday 2nd December - 10.30am - 12pm (Cosy Club, Salisbury)
Monday 7th December - 10.30am - 12pm (Cesar's Coffee, Trowbridge)
Wednesday 16th December - 10.30am - 12pm (The Bear Hotel, Devizes)

Addresses for each of the locations:

Cesar's Coffee
29, The Gateway,
Trowbridge
BA14 8FZ

Cosy Club
49 New Street,
Salisbury,
SP1 2PH

The Bear Hotel
2-3 The Market Place, Devizes,
SN10 1HS

Parent Carer Virtual Groups 2026

Informal and friendly online meeting. Chat and connect with other Parent Carers.

- Thursday 22nd October (7-8pm. Drop in)
- Thursday 26th November (7-8pm. Drop in)
- Thursday 17th December (7-8pm. Drop in)

Email jo.hiller-culley@carerstogetherwiltshire.org.uk for the link.



Wiltshire Inclusion Conference 2027 (Face To Face)
27 May 2027
08:30 - 16:30
Trowbridge Civic Centre
St Stephen's Place, Trowbridge

We are excited to announce Wiltshire's Inclusion Conference 2027 for school staff, especially SENCOs and Senior Leaders.

An unmissable opportunity to attend the full day Wiltshire Inclusion Conference!

The day will provide the opportunity to hear relevant updates through keynotes and seminars and keynotes on a range of topics and to network with school staff including SENCOs, Local Authority Staff and support teams from across Wiltshire. There will be a range of exhibitors, who provide support services in Wiltshire, for you to meet.

By the end of the session delegates will:

- have had an opportunity to network with a range of professionals
- have engaged in workshops to develop knowledge and skills across a range of subject areas

Lunch and all refreshments provided throughout the day.
Please ensure any dietary requirements are recorded in your Right Choice account.

The nearest car park is the multi-storey at St Stephen's Place Trowbridge.
Further details available here: Parking in Trowbridge - Wiltshire Council

Audience - All school staff including Leaders and SENCOs.
Trainer - Victoria Vince

Keynote speakers and workshops are currently being finalised, and full details will be available shortly. Once the details have been added to Right Choice, this course will open for bookings.



Family Hub Newsletter

The latest Family Hub newsletter is now available. The current edition has a focus on SEND support for children and teens.

You can read this edition of the newsletter **HERE**.

Meet the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council Team – Free Online Session for Colleagues Supporting Parent Carers of Children and Young People with SEND

The Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) welcomes opportunities to meet with professional colleagues to build relationships and partnerships, and they are always keen to be able to play a helpful role in new staff induction and training.

Staff from any service are warmly invited to join the session and meet a number of different members of the WPCC team, find out more about what the WPCC does and the roles of different members of the team, and have an opportunity to ask questions to support their learning an understanding. New staff and those who have previously met with the WPCC are very welcome to join.

The next **Meet the WPCC Team** session will take place on:

Date: Thursday 10th November 2026
Time: 10:30am to 12:00pm
Venue: Virtual/Teams

If you would like to join the next session, please email us, and the WPCC will confirm your request and send you a joining link nearer to the session.

Email: reception@wiltspcc.co.uk

Read about the approval of Wiltshire's SEND Reform Plan

Further information about SEND Reform, including frequently asked questions, is available through the Wiltshire Local Offer website:

SEND Reform - what this means for you and your child



Adult Dyslexia Services by Sarah Hickinbotham

This will be life-changing dyslexia support!

A former soldier has created a community to provide support for **#dyslexic** members of the **#ArmedForces** community.

Dyslexia in Defence CIC, founded by **Symon S.** - who is himself dyslexic - aims to raise awareness and break down unnecessary barriers faced by current, past and future Service Personnel.

I have the privilege of supporting the project as a specialist assessor - but I need your help.

Share this post with everyone you know so we can spread the word of this support far and wide! I'll be providing regular updates on the progress of the project on LinkedIn, TikTok and Facebook.

Are you a member of the Armed Forces, thinking of signing up or retired? I'd love to hear your thoughts on this idea.

https://lnkd.in/eUwEpaAu

Please click **here** to view a short video about this brilliant new project to support the Armed Forces community.

Visit the **Dyslexia in Defence CIC** website for more information: **https://lnkd.in/et87xjg4**



Over 8,000 retailers will make a donation to Wiltshire Dyslexia Association on your behalf when you do your Black Friday and Christmas shopping with them via easyfundraising.

All the big names like M&S, John Lewis & Partners, Boots and more are ready to donate, whether you're buying Black Friday deals, gifts, festive food, decorations or winter essentials - all at no extra cost to you.

Plus, sign up to support us today and we could win a big £1,000 donation prize:

https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/wiltshiredyslexia/0XRQZC/c2s/2IM2zowo/CE994/facebook/

Dyslexia Awareness Week 2026: Looking back on a week of raising awareness



From sharing personal stories to celebrating workplaces getting it right, Dyslexia Awareness Week 2026 brought people together to explore what dyslexia means in real life and how we can make work better for everyone.

It may have come to an end, but we hope the conversations it has started will continue long after the week itself.

This year's theme, Dyslexia in real life: At work, focused on the experiences of dyslexic people in the workplace, celebrating progress while recognising the barriers that still need to be addressed.

We wanted to encourage employers, colleagues and the wider public to look beyond common misconceptions and understand how dyslexia can affect working life. From recruitment and communication to management styles and workplace adjustments, the week explored how a better understanding of dyslexia can make a real difference.

Sharing real experiences of dyslexia

Hearing directly from dyslexic people was an important part of this year's campaign. Personal stories help us understand the realities of dyslexia, from the challenges people face to the strengths and different perspectives they bring to their work.

Throughout the week, we shared experiences that highlighted the impact dyslexia can have on confidence, career progression and everyday working life. These stories also showed why being understood matters, and how the right environment can help people feel more confident about their abilities.

By listening to these experiences, we can better understand what needs to change and learn from those who are finding ways to make things work.

Making workplaces more dyslexia friendly

One of the most encouraging things about this year's campaign was seeing how many workplaces are already recognising the strengths dyslexic people bring to their organisations.

We heard employees speak positively about their employers and the personal support they receive. These experiences were a welcome reminder of the difference that understanding, flexibility and the right adjustments can make. When employers take the time to understand their people, they can help create an environment where dyslexic employees feel valued and able to do their best work.

However, we know this isn't everyone's experience. Many dyslexic people still face barriers at work, whether that's during recruitment, when using workplace systems or when trying to access the adjustments they need. Some also feel unable to be open about their dyslexia for fear of being misunderstood.

There is much we can learn from the organisations getting it right. Clear communication, accessible information and managers who understand dyslexia are practical steps that can make working life better. Just as importantly, recognising both the strengths and challenges associated with dyslexia helps ensure people have the opportunity to develop and progress.

Our aim is for every dyslexic person to feel understood, valued and able to reach their potential at work.

Bringing people together to make a difference

Dyslexia Awareness Week was also an opportunity to bring together people and organisations who share our commitment to improving understanding.

We would like to say a special thank you to Theo Paphitis, our Vice Chair, Emma Dagnes OBE, Chief Executive of Alexandra Palace, Spencer Clarke Group, Speech and Language UK, Natalie Brooks of Dyslexia in Adults and all the MPs who stood with us to raise awareness of dyslexia in the workplace.

We are grateful for their involvement and for helping us bring these conversations to a wider audience. Having voices from across business, public life and the workplace stand alongside us helps reinforce why this matters and encourages more organisations to consider the part they can play.

Thank you, too, to everyone who shared their stories, took part in the campaign and helped spread the word. Your time, honesty and enthusiasm helped make the week what it was.

Keeping the conversation going

While Dyslexia Awareness Week provides an important opportunity to bring people together, improving understanding is something we need to work on throughout the year.

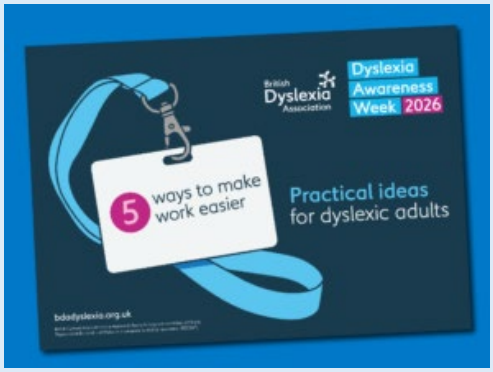
Employers can start by reviewing their recruitment processes, listening to their employees and considering where small changes could remove unnecessary barriers. Managers and colleagues can also make a difference by being open to different ways of working and creating an environment where people feel comfortable discussing what works for them. At the BDA, we will continue working with dyslexic people, employers and professionals to challenge misconceptions and encourage positive change.

Most importantly, we want to keep hearing from the people whose experiences are at the heart of this work. Their stories remind us why it matters and help us understand where further progress is needed.

Thank you to everyone who was part of Dyslexia Awareness Week 2026. Together, we can keep making dyslexia better understood at work, not just this week, but all year round.



Dyslexia does not stop when someone leaves school.
Our understanding and support should not stop there either.
>> **Read the blog** - **Dyslexia does not stop when school does**



Our **5 ways to make work easier** share simple, practical ideas for dyslexic adults, whatever your role.
>> **Read here**



Recruitment tips
Our friends at Spencer Clarke Group have put together some practical, dyslexia-friendly tips for employers.
>> **Read here**



FOR SCHOOLS

Activity pack

Assembly PowerPoint presentation



Free Webinar Recording - Reading unlocked Dyslexia and DLD (Primary)

Presentation slides:
Supporting_children_with_dyslexia_and_DLD_with_reading

Free Webinar Recording - Reading unlocked: Dyslexia and DLD Teachers and school staff Secondary

Presentation slides:
Reading_unlocked_Dyslexia_and_DLD_Teachers_and_school_staff_Secondary

See also:
Resource library for educators - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives



Webinar Recording - Dyslexia at work: practical tips to help you succeed

Presentation slides: BDA webinar



Webinar Recording - Dyslexia or dyscalculia: understanding your next steps

Presentation slides: Assessments_for_adults_All_you_need_to_know



Our quick and easy checklist is designed to help workplaces and organisations see what they're already doing well and identify areas where they could make a difference.

Take the checklist, get your workplace inclusion score and find out where to start on your dyslexia-friendly journey.

Take the checklist and get your score: **https://loom.ly/Ryvx8e0**



Is your written content easy for everyone to read?

Our Dyslexia Style Guide shares practical tips for creating clearer, more accessible written materials, from choosing fonts to structuring pages and using plain language.

These principles can benefit everyone, not just people with dyslexia.

Read the guide and make your content more accessible: **https://loom.ly/bKDnZuY**

Videos:

DAW2026 - Archbishop of Canterbury

We're grateful to have the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury in raising awareness of dyslexia and reminding us that inclusion matters wherever we are.

DAW 2026 - Emma Dagnes CEO at ALLY PALLY

Emma Dagnes OBE, Chief Executive of Alexandra Palace shares her dyslexia story, how it has shaped her career and why being open about dyslexia matters.

RESEARCH REQUEST

Can everyday handwriting help identify dyslexia sooner?

For parents and guardians of children aged 5 to 11

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Many children with dyslexia find reading and writing difficult for a long time before the reason is recognised. For some, it is several years before they are assessed and able to get the support they need.

Lexiscan is a research project investigating whether artificial intelligence can recognise patterns associated with dyslexia in children's everyday handwriting. The long-term aim is to help teachers identify sooner which children may benefit from a dyslexia assessment. The project is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and is a collaboration between the University of York and Redpen AI Ltd, a UK education technology company.

We would like to invite you to take part if your child is aged between 5 and 11 and either has a formal diagnosis of dyslexia, or is thought by you, their school or a specialist to have dyslexia but has not yet been formally assessed.

What we are asking for

We would like photographs of handwriting your child has already produced. Writing from across their time at school is especially valuable, so as well as recent work and handwritten homework, we would welcome exercise books from previous years, including any from before a diagnosis. Ordinary, everyday writing is the most useful to us, so your child does not need to write anything new or complete any tasks. Please redact your child's name and school from the work before taking photographs.

A reliable answer depends on writing from many children. If the research is successful, it could in time contribute to tools that help thousands of children have their dyslexia recognised earlier.

How it will be used

The handwriting will be used to train and test AI models as part of the research, including to help Redpen AI, the project's technology partner, develop this technology. The technology is still being researched, and we do not yet know how well it will work. Lexiscan does not provide a dyslexia assessment or diagnosis for children who take part.

How to take part

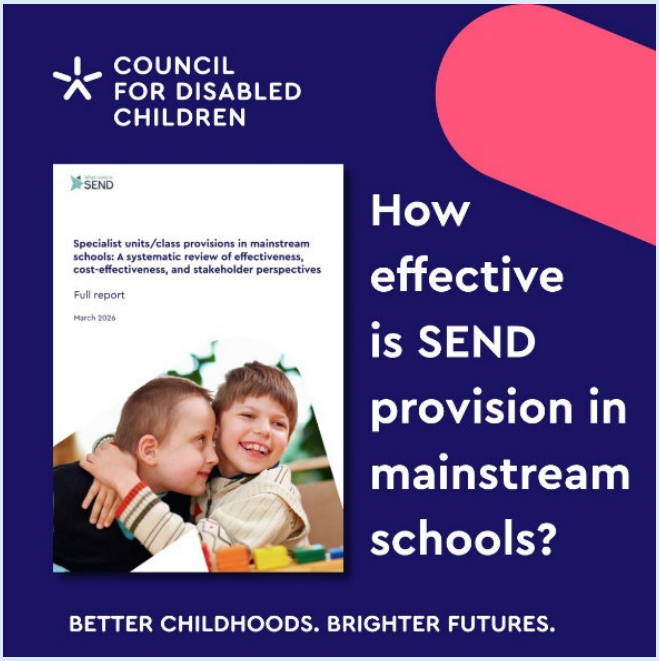
Taking part is entirely voluntary and usually takes around 10 minutes. Please visit the Lexiscan research portal at **Contribute handwriting — Redpen AI** or scan the QR code below. There you can read full information about the project, how your child's handwriting and information will be used and protected, and what giving consent involves, before you decide. If you choose to take part, the portal will also ask a few questions about your child, such as their school year and any diagnosis.

If you have any questions before deciding, please contact William Griffiths at willgriffiths@redpenai.co.uk. Thank you for considering this invitation.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Elpis Pavlidou, University of York
Mr William Griffiths, Redpen AI Ltd
On behalf of the Lexiscan research team

NEWSLETTERS, REPORTS, ARTICLES . . .



Having supported the Department for Education (DfE), alongside nasen, to produce the recently published Inclusion Bases Guidance, we welcome the recommendations for policy and practice in this report from What Works in SEND, reflecting evidence from a range of national and international perspectives.

We are particularly pleased to see the recommendations to prioritise children and young people's voices, and to focus on implementation processes, workforce capacity and the need for flexible, continuum-based models of provision, all of which are key principles running through the DfE guidance.

Read the What Works in SEND review

Youth Voice Matters is an annual conference designed and delivered by and for disabled children and young people and children and young people with special educational needs. This event brings young people together to develop their participation skills and recognise the impact they can have when using their voice to create change!

This year's conference is all about **Celebrating Joy**, and we want to know what this looks like to you! We are inviting you to get creative and show us the different ways to find, share and celebrate joy. All submitted artwork will be showcased at **Youth Voice Matters** 2027 on Thursday 18th February 2027 and uploaded to the Council for Disabled Children's website after the conference.

Find out more about the competition here



SPECIAL NEEDS JUNGLE

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ✦ DISABILITY ✦ HEALTH CONDITIONS ✦ RARE DISEASE

Parent-led information, resources and informed opinion about children and young people 0-25

Numerous new articles at:

Special Needs Jungle - News, resources & informed opinion about Special Educational Needs . .

The regional teams from Whole School SEND offering free SEND learning to school and college teaching staff

Why 'functioning' might be the missing piece in the SEND reform puzzle

The government must not ignore stark warnings about lack of mainstream SEND capacity reported by its own research

As The Guardian prints our joint campaign's open letter, it's clear people with lived experience don't want to lose SEND rights

How do you ensure pathways to education, health, and social care support, meet both diagnosis and needs?

Researching flexi-schooling: How beneficial is it for children with SEND?



Download our latest Issue here for free



September-November 2026 Issue

When reading becomes a battle

Rebekah Herbert on the hidden reality of dyslexia, diagnosis and advocacy.

For many parents, reading with their child is imagined as one of childhood's simplest joys. Bedtime stories, trips to the library, watching your child slowly become absorbed in books and imagination. Reading is often associated with comfort, escape, learning and connection. But for some families, reading becomes something different. It becomes frustration, exhaustion, avoidance and sometimes heartbreak.

Read whole article at: **When reading becomes a battle | SEN Magazine**

Further articles at **dyslexia | SEN Magazine**



Prof. Amanda Kirby MBBS MRCGP PhD FCGI FRSA
Neurodiversity 101

"Every week, I translate the latest neurodiversity research into plain language and give practical tips."

Keep Britain Working: Why neuroinclusion must be part of the solution

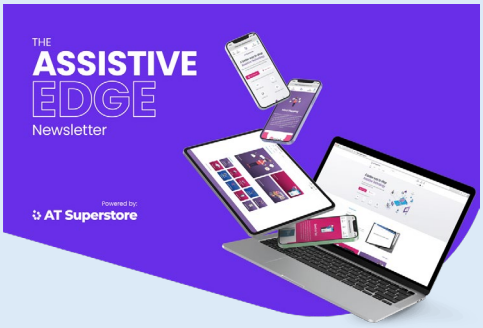
Are we searching for 'golden tickets"?

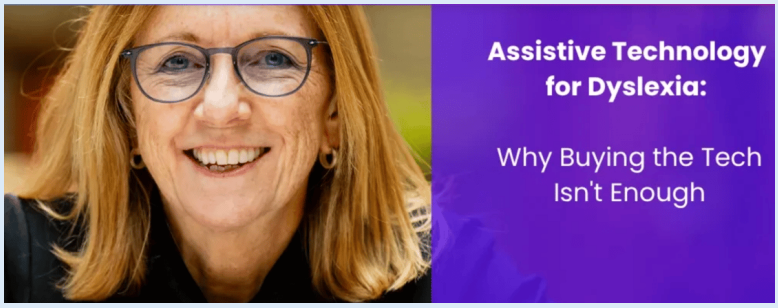
What does 'often' mean... and why we need more information to make a diagnosis

Four reports. Four perspectives. One direction of travel? | LinkedIn

The discomfort of being a novice: when encouragement doesn't feel encouraging

We need a serious conversation... NEEDS or DIAGNOSIS... who is asking??





New From Veronique

In our latest blog, Véronique Morris-Aloni, founder of Dyslexia in Focus and a specialist teacher assessor with over 25 years of experience, shares her insight into what makes assistive technology successful in schools.

From staff training and getting teacher buy-in to involving students in choosing their technology, Véronique explores why implementation matters just as much as the technology itself.

She also shares practical advice for schools looking to build a simple, inclusive assistive technology offer - including why having a designated AT lead can make such a difference.

Read the Full Blog

****

Succeed With Dyslexia

Practical Reading Tips for Dyslexia: Building Confidence and Independence

If you have **dyslexia**, you probably know that reading a book, tackling a worksheet, or even looking over a work report can occasionally feel like climbing a mountain.
It can take so much effort to figure out each word that you're left with hardly any energy to enjoy or understand what you're reading; no wonder it can feel exhausting, even when you really want to dive in.

But here's the truth: dyslexia isn't about how smart you are. It just means your brain has its own special way of working with words.

The good news? With the right tools and a few simple tricks, reading doesn't have to feel like such a struggle. Here are some ideas that can help make reading easier, and possibly even a little more enjoyable.

Read on at Practical Reading Tips for Dyslexia: Building Confidence and Independence

Why AI Is Not Replacing Dyslexic Thinkers

AI is brilliant at processing language quickly, but it can't match the lived experience, intuition and lateral thinking many dyslexic people bring to a problem. LLMs (Large Language Models) remix existing patterns. Dyslexic thinkers often break them. The future belongs to people who use AI as a tool while leading with their human strengths.

Can AI replace dyslexic thinkers?

AI large language models can only guess what comes next based on what they've already seen. Dyslexic thinkers, on the other hand, use their own experiences, spatial smarts, and intuition to solve problems, especially when there's no rulebook or data to follow. AI can help, but it can't replace real human thinking

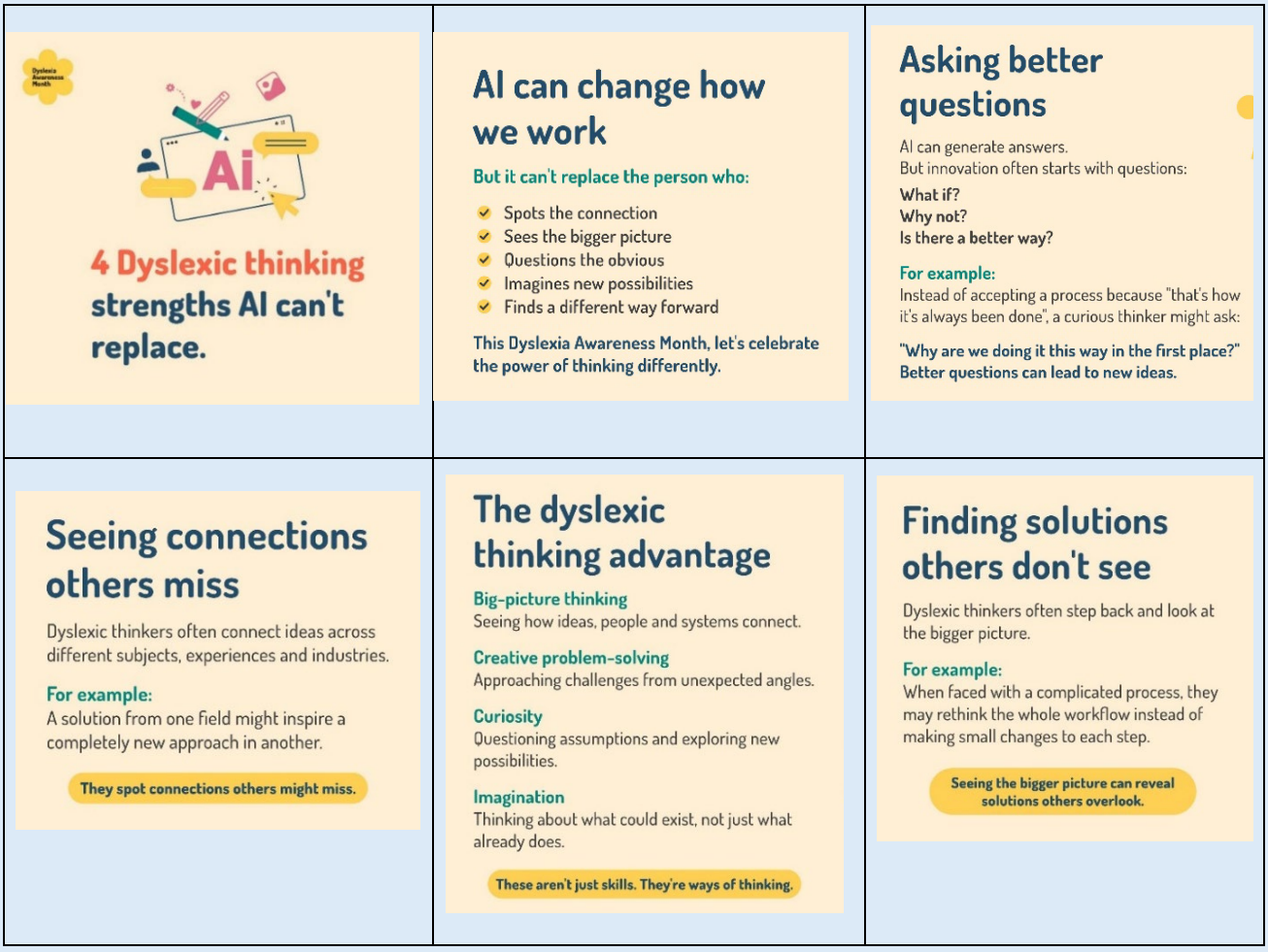
What is dyslexic thinking?

Dyslexia is a brain difference that can make reading, spelling, and working with written words tricky. But it also comes with some amazing strengths.

The MIND framework, created by Drs. Brock and Fernette Eide, highlights four big ones: understanding how things work in the real world, spotting connections between ideas, learning through stories and experience, and predicting how things might play out.

Not every dyslexic person has all of these, but you'll see these strengths pop up again and again in research and in people's real-life stories.

Read on at Why AI Is Not Replacing Dyslexic Thinkers



Guidance for parents, carers and students about access arrangements

WHAT ARE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

- Access arrangements allow students with specific needs, such as special educational needs or disabilities, to access an exam.
- They allow students to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the exam.

HOW WILL THE PROCESS START?

- Parents and carers should let the SENCo know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs. Good and open communication is important.
- Students in further education should record their additional needs on the college's enrolment form.
- The SENCo will work with teachers and the student to identify possible arrangements.
- Various access arrangements are available. For example, support for students who have difficulties with reading, writing, speed of working or concentration.
- Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. This depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs or a diagnosis alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

WHO WILL MAKE THE ASSESSMENT?

- If a student has learning difficulties, the school or college's appointed assessor must conduct the assessment to determine the need for access arrangements, such as 25% extra time.
- If an external assessor diagnoses a learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia or dyscalculia), the assessment can only be used as evidence for access arrangements if the assessor has liaised with the school or college and received the necessary access arrangements paperwork in advance of the assessment taking place.
- Specialists (for example, a medical consultant or a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. They are **not** responsible for decisions about access arrangements.
- The school or college must decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams.
- Teachers must give evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed. The school or college will record how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams.

WHAT ELSE NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- The school or college will have to apply for some arrangements.
- If a student has complex needs, a school or college can discuss their needs with the exam board.

FINALLY

Schools and colleges **must** follow the rules. They are inspected and if they are found to be breaking the rules, this will be malpractice.

If you have any questions about access arrangements, please speak to the school, college or SENCo.

Exam Access Arrangements - British Dyslexia Association

Please see this link which provides details about access arrangements for national curriculum tests as well as GCSEs and A-Levels.

Link also includes access to two webinars.

Access arrangements when a candidate changes centre – Joint Council for Qualifications

This guidance supports schools, colleges and training providers in managing access arrangements when a candidate transfers between centres. It explains when existing forms can be reused, when supporting documents must be updated, and when new evidence or forms are required to comply with JCQ regulations.

This includes:

- candidates transferring mid-course (e.g. during GCSEs, A-levels, or other Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications);
- candidates resitting qualifications at a new centre;
- candidates progressing from Level 2 to Level 3 qualifications (e.g. GCSE to A-level).

Scenario	Form 8	Form 9	Form 8RF	New form required?
Resitting GCSE English Language and/or Mathematics	Yes	Yes	No	A new form is **not** needed if the existing form is compliant.

Additional documents available at:
Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration – Joint Council for Qualifications



FREE WEBINAR RECORDING Access Arrangements 2026–2027

Caroline writes:
"I recently attended this very useful free online webinar presented by Mr Nick Lait from JCQ. You can now access the resources from the session."

JCQ Access Arrangements update 2026/27: Refresher Webinar with Nick Lait | Education Elephant

DOWNLOAD THE PRESENTATION

MORE EVENTS & RECORDINGS



While I was away, my content seemed to take on a life of its own! We hit **20K on Instagram, another 4,000 followers on Facebook, and 2 million views across platforms!**

So, to celebrate all the amazing people joining my community, I'm pushing myself out of my dyslexic comfort zone and doing something I've never done before…

My first ever FREE live online mentoring experience!

Welcome to the 5-Day Dyslexic Reset Experiment, starting 2nd November!

It's for adults with dyslexia who want to reset their dyslexic mindset, build confidence and start feeling differently about their dyslexia.

84 people have already signed up and a raring to go.

If you've been meaning to register but thought November was ages away, well, it's nearly here!

We've got just a few days left before we get started.

Five days to challenge some of those negative beliefs, start building your confidence and change the way you feel about being dyslexic.

Remember, you can't change being dyslexic, but you CAN change how you feel about it!

It's completely FREE and I'd love you to join us.

JOIN THE 5-DAY DYSLEXIC REES-SET EXPERIMENT HERE

I really hope to see you there. I can't wait to get started!



TechEdology

AT Speed Date
5th November 9.30am-1.10pm, online
A half-day online event featuring 8 different assistive technology solutions - Speechify, Study Agent, Genio, Inspiration, CareScribe, Booost Education, Spellex and FindMyFlow
Free to attend: **Click here for more information and to book your place**

AT Connect, multiple dates, November and December
24th November, Bristol
Hosted by Everway, Genio, FindMyFlow and MindView, each event is designed for professionals supporting disabled students in education and the workplace.



CENMAC's Thursday Thirty online training & information sessions run throughout the school term.

Join us at 15.30 to 16.00 (BST) on Thursday afternoons to find out how a wide range of assistive technologies are used to support learning and communication in mainstream and special educational settings.

Who should attend? Our training sessions are suitable for teachers, SENCOs, school SEND teams, TAs, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, parents and carers supporting children and young people using assistive technology to access the curriculum and/or to communicate.

Please scroll down the page to see upcoming sessions for the 2026 Autumn term and to sign up for them.

Thursday Thirty Training - CENMAC . . . including:

Supporting children and young people with our Top Ten Free Apps!
Date: 19th November 2026
Time: 15.30 to 16.
> Reserve your place

Overcoming Barriers to Reading with Assistive Technology
Date: 14th January 2027
Time: 15.30 to 16.00 (GMT)
> Reserve your place

Overcoming Barriers to Writing with Assistive Technology
Date: 21st January 2027
Time: 15.30 to 16.00 (GMT)
> Reserve your place



There are still several places available for the RISE training 'SEND in the Early Years' organised by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) on the following dates:

04/11/2026 14:00 - 16:30
25/11/2026 14:00 - 16:30

This session provides an overview of the early years policy context, legislation and what this means for disabled children and those with special educational needs. It then explores some of the key barriers to supporting early identification, ensuring access to early years education, and fostering inclusion, while highlighting effective practices currently making a positive impact.

This training is for practitioners, managers and strategic leaders from multi-agency partners working across the SEND system.

Please select only ONE date for the training on the registration form, as each training session will follow the same agenda and format.

If you have any questions, please email **RISE@ncb.org.uk**

Register for the training here



We are delighted to announce the launch of our open access online learning course that focuses on the disability duties in the Equality Act 2010.

The modular learning course aims to help you to support children, young people and their families as well as schools, settings and services, in relation to the duties. It draws on tribunal cases to consider some common problems, as well as providing a focus on behaviour and disability discrimination.

The learning content draws on the **Council for Disabled Children** booklet Disabled Children and the **Equality Act 2010: What teachers need to know and what schools need to do.**

Access the learning here

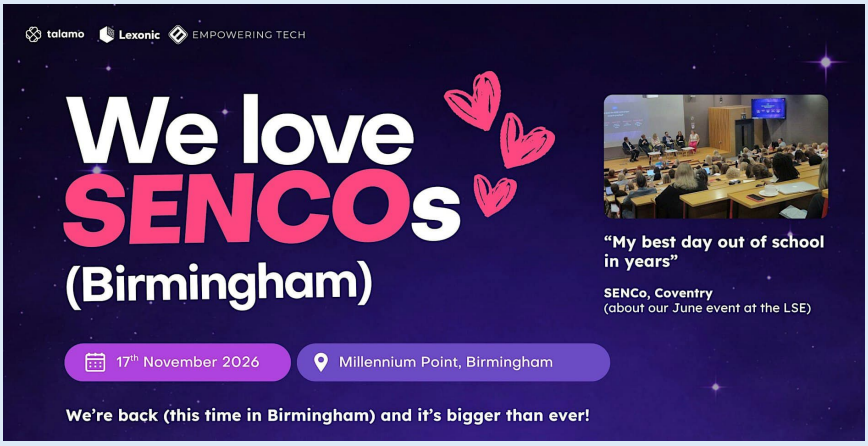
On 18 November, IPSEA's Senior Solicitor, Alex Stafford, will be speaking at the Schools and Academies Show in a session titled 'Legal rights and duties for children and young people with SEND after the White Paper'.

The conference will be taking place at the NEC in Birmingham on 18 and 19 November, and aims to bring together senior education leaders, policymakers and innovative suppliers to share practical solutions and strategic insight that help schools and trusts.

Register for your ticket today

See also IPSEA blogs:

- SEND complaints are rising — weakening children's rights is not the answer
- Don't jump the SEND law gun – the law has not changed
- SEND reforms: we need a system that's accountable and meets individual needs



We Love SENCos Birmingham 2026: Building Better SEND Support Tickets, Tuesday, November 17 • 8:30 AM - 5 PM

A one-day conference for SENCos and inclusion leaders, exploring better ways to identify need, support pupils, and lead inclusive change.

We Love SENCos is a practical, thought-provoking day for the people leading SEND and inclusion in schools.

Our first event brought together 250 SENCos and inclusion professionals at the London School of Economics. What made the day special was both the incredible speakers on stage, and the opportunity for people doing some of the most demanding jobs in education to meet, speak and share ideas that could make a difference back in school.

We are bringing that same spirit to Birmingham - with a bigger programme, more choice and more free stuff!

SEND is changing. This event will help you prepare.

The Department for Education has set out significant proposals for reforming the SEND system through *Putting Children and Young People First*. Schools are also beginning to work with the new £1.6 billion Inclusive Mainstream Fund, alongside emerging National Inclusion

Standards, inclusion strategies, Experts at Hand and a greater emphasis on identifying and meeting needs earlier in mainstream settings.

These changes could reshape how SEND support is funded, organised and delivered. But SENCos and school leaders cannot wait for every detail of reform to be settled. They are already managing increasing levels of need, stretched budgets, growing workloads and pressure from pupils, families and colleagues who need answers now.

We Love SENCos Birmingham has been designed to help bridge that gap.

What we will explore

The programme brings together practitioners, school and trust leaders, policymakers and specialists to examine the challenges facing SEND - and, most importantly, what schools can do next.

Throughout the day, we will explore:

- What the DfE's SEND reforms could mean for schools, trusts and families
- How schools can make effective use of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund
- The changing expectations around mainstream inclusion and early intervention
- More manageable ways to identify need and turn evidence into action
- How the developing Experts at Hand offer could improve access to specialist support
- Assistive technology and the practical potential of AI
- Effective intervention that does not depend on expensive programmes
- Executive functioning, SEMH, speech, language and communication
- How overlapping needs can affect identification and support
- Practical ways to reduce SENCo workload without losing professional judgement
- Building school cultures in which pupils and staff genuinely feel they belong
- SEND equality - and which children and young people are still most likely to be excluded, disengage or become NEET
- How schools can respond to reform without creating another layer of bureaucracy



Community Event

Online Peer Support Group - Adults

Tuesday 24 November 2026, Online On Zoom

Join our free online dyslexia community get-together for adults with dyslexia.

Book now



In this edition, you will find:

- External face-to-face Events
- Online Webinars
- Specialist Spotlight Sessions
- National Professional Development Groups.

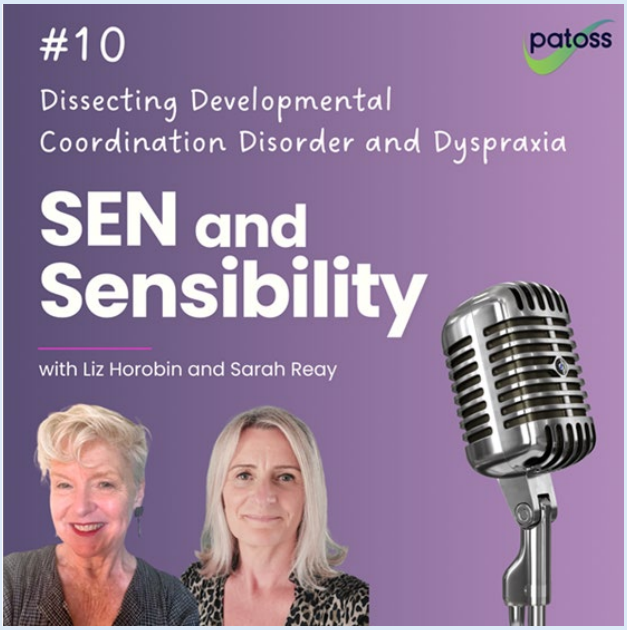


Whether you're a parent, carer or someone who works with children and young people, this session is a free opportunity to learn more, ask questions and gain a better understanding of how language difficulties can affect everyday life.

Because when we understand language, we can better understand the child.

Date: Thursday 26th November
Time: 6:30-7:30pm
Book your place: **https://events.teams.microsoft.com/.../73bfbd16-296b-4379...**

We'd love you to join us! Please share this post with anyone who might find it helpful.



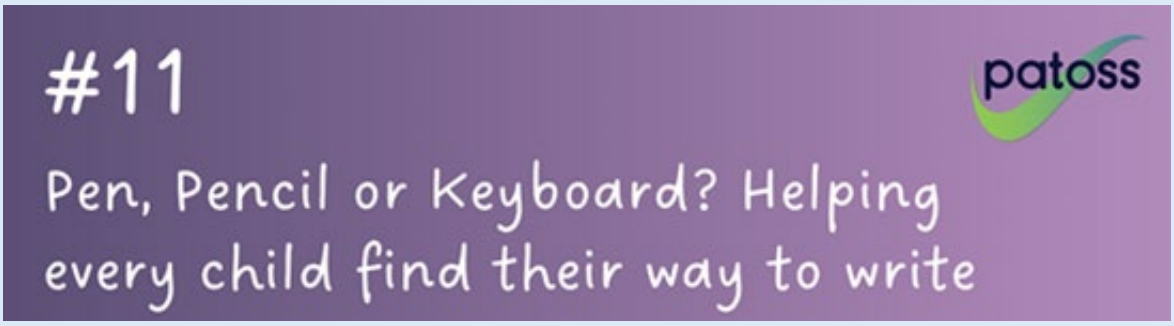
Dissecting Developmental Coordination Disorder and Dyspraxia

How does Developmental Coordination Disorder affect life from the classroom to the workplace?

Join Sarah, Liz, and three expert guests, Amanda Kirby, Anna Barnett, and Elizabeth Cordle, as they explore diagnosis, hidden everyday challenges and the impact on learning, confidence and wellbeing.

Hear practical ideas for inclusive education, workplace adjustments and person-centred support at every stage of life.

Find us on the website or on Spotify!



Pen, Pencil or Keyboard? Helping every child find their way to write

In this episode, Liz Horobin and Sarah Reay are joined by experts from the UK National Handwriting Association, Melissa Prunty, Emma Sumner, and Michelle Stone, to explore the complex relationship between handwriting, typing and effective written communication.

The discussion considers the renewed focus on handwriting in schools, how children develop fluent and legible writing, and why teaching approaches vary so widely. The panel examines handwriting readiness, printed versus joined styles, the role of practice and occupational therapy, and the importance of listening to pupils when deciding what support works best.

They also challenge the use of "pen licences", explore the emotional impact of handwriting difficulties, and ask whether typing really is a simple alternative. With practical insights for teachers, SENCos, occupational therapists and families, this episode makes the case for an inclusive, evidence-informed approach that equips every child with a flexible "literacy toolbox" for writing by hand, typing and using other forms of support.

Find us on the Patoss website, or on Spotify!



Recording at [Nessy Character Draw Along Event - YouTube]

Ever wondered how your child's favourite Nessy characters came to life? In this session, Nessy's Creative Director, Tom Plant, hosts a live, interactive draw-along! Grab your paper, pencils and pens and draw along with Tom!

IDL

Introducing our friends at the SEN in Ten Podcast



You might have spotted the SEN in Ten Nook sensory pods at our stand at the Tes SEND Show over the years. If you haven't, SEN in Ten brings together leading voices in SEND, literacy, neurodiversity and inclusive education through short, engaging podcast episodes that are just
10 minutes long!

SEN in Ten is proud to welcome Dr Sarah Moseley and Ginny Bootman as guest hosts, bringing a wealth of expertise and passion to the podcast's mission of delivering concise yet powerful content on Special Educational Needs (SEN).

You can listen on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Amazon Podcasts, as well as directly on the SEN in Ten website 👉https://lnkd.in/e5fwPVrR

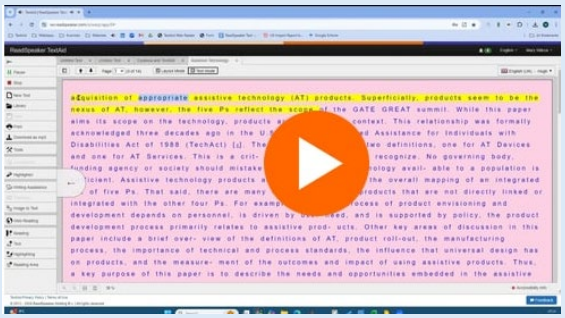
We recorded lots of brand-new episodes at the Tes SEND Show 2026, so keep an ear out for them being released soon!

Find out more about SEN in Ten 👉https://lnkd.in/eugHiXGw

TextAid by ReadSpeaker

How does TextAid support people who have dyslexia | Videos & Movies on Vimeo

We have created this special webinar recording, which means you can explore this great solution in the time and space that work for you.



Dyscalculia Network
Unlocking Numbers

If you didn't have a chance to attend the brilliant webinar with Prof. Mahesh Sharma and Dr. Steve Chinn on 14th October, then it isn't too late!

View recording at:
Why do learning problems in numeracy occur and what can be done about it - Dyscalculia Network

See also:
Video Archives - Dyscalculia Network

Why do learning problems in numeracy occur and what can be done about it?



What is optimal instruction for learning achievement?
What is absent from instruction or goes wrong when these milestones are not achieved properly?
What factors lie in the child (cognition, executive functions, learning profile, etc.) and what factors are outside the child (environmental, poor instruction and resources, poor understanding of these concepts, skills, schemas, etc,).
Prof Sharma and Dr Chinn address these issues from multiple perspectives, including effective strategies to achieve these milestones easily, effectively, and efficiently.

YouTube

Check out our new Adult Dyslexia Centre YouTube Channel for Webinars from the ANND network, including sessions on Access to Work, assessments, inspirational stories: **Adult Dyslexia Centre (ADC) - YouTube**

ADC will be adding videos designed to inform you of different aspects of dyslexia and neurodiversity.

Latest 3 videos are Understanding Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia.



Have you ever heard your child say something like...

"I'm stupid."

"I'm rubbish at maths."

"Everyone else can do it except me."

As a parent, those words can be incredibly difficult to hear.

Our instinct is often to jump straight in with reassurance. To tell them they're clever, that they're capable, that they just need to keep trying.

But sometimes, we need to understand what's sitting underneath those words first.

In the latest episode of When Learning Feels Hard, I'm exploring something I see regularly in my work with children and families.

What happens when learning difficulties begin to affect a child's confidence and the way they see themselves?

Children often notice the differences between themselves and their peers much earlier than we realise.

And over time, "this is difficult for me" can quietly become "I'm bad at this."

In this episode, I explore:

• Why repeated difficulties with reading, writing or maths can affect confidence

• How dyslexia, dyscalculia and maths anxiety can influence the way children see themselves

• Why avoidance, rushing, frustration or saying "I don't care" may be telling us something important

• How to respond when your child talks negatively about their abilities

• Why listening and understanding can be more helpful than immediately trying to fix the problem

• How to help children separate what they find difficult from who they believe they are

If your child is beginning to lose confidence in their learning, I hope this episode helps you approach those conversations with greater understanding and reassurance.

Because finding something difficult doesn't mean a child isn't capable.

And protecting their confidence doesn't mean pretending those difficulties aren't there.

🎧 **Listen on Spotify**

🎧 **Listen on YouTube**

Looking for more support? 💛

Inside our Parent Hub, you'll find practical resources, specialist guidance, Coffee & Clarity sessions and opportunities to ask questions, all designed to help you better understand your child and their learning.

You can explore the Parent Hub here!

Remember, difficulty is information.

And when a child says, "I'm just bad at it," there's often much more underneath those words.

Katie



Genio Notes vs Microsoft OneNote

Mainstream tools like Microsoft OneNote can look similar to specialist assistive technology on paper, but feature labels alone don't make a reasonable adjustment.

In this recorded session, we put Genio Notes and OneNote side by side against six standards a note-taking tool must meet in live lectures and seminars: availability, fidelity, integration, navigability, retention and operability.

Ideal for needs assessors, DSA practitioners and disability advisers, the recording shows exactly what each tool can and cannot do for the students you support. Watch at a time that suits you, then request your CPD certificate from the recording page.

Watch now ►

📖 Genio Notes: **The Evidence Base**

Read now ►

⭐ Feature Focus: **Quick Actions**

Learn more ►

RESOURCES & OFFERS



Dyslexia Awareness Month is coming to a close, and we're less than one week away from Halloween, but there's still time for you to try the IDL Literacy Screener for free!

The screener is a quick, fun, and easy-to-use online tool designed to spot potential dyslexic-type difficulties, and is included in your IDL Literacy license. Whether you're working with individuals or groups, it's the perfect way to establish pupils' literacy ability and identify any areas where extra support might be needed.

There's not long left before this offer disappears! Secure your free trial now before the end of October, and you'll have the opportunity to strengthen your literacy assessment processes and explore new tools for your school.

Start your Literacy Screener Free Trial!

Brand New Halloween Worksheets

Here at IDL, we've been hard at work creating something special for our schools to get them into the spooky spirit. Our new Halloween themed worksheets are the perfect way to help engage your pupils and assist in improving independent problem-solving skills.



Perfect for both home learning and classroom activities, these worksheets combine learning with seasonal fun. They provide teachers with valuable insight into pupil understanding and offer a visual, accessible learning experience that can be enjoyed by pupils of all abilities and learning styles.

View Our Spooky Worksheets



Danielle Deery
Dyslexia Specialist - Partnering with schools, employers and families to deliver evidence-based diagnostic and support services

Thinking about transition to secondary school?

The move to secondary school is a significant transition for every child: new building, new teachers, new routines.

For a dyslexic child, that transition often comes with additional questions worth asking early, so the right support is in place from day one.

Here are some helpful questions to raise with the school:

- What reasonable adjustments can be put in place across different subjects?
- Does my child have access to a coloured overlay, laptop, or other assistive tools, if needed?
- How is my child's dyslexia profile communicated?
- Who is my main point of contact eg SENCO, form tutor or learning support team?
- How often will progress and support be reviewed?
- Will the new school liaise with the primary school to understand your child's needs, strengths and difficulties?
- How does the school support a child's confidence and self-esteem alongside their academic needs?
- What is the process for exam access arrangements, should they be required?



Nessy for Home

Reading Doesn't Need to Be Scary!

Leave the spooky stuff to the ghosts and goblins! When it comes to learning, Nessy turns frustration into fun - helping your child conquer hurdles with confidence.

Treat your learner to a stress-free year with 20% off any yearly Nessy subscription!

For this week only, use code HALLOWEEK26 at checkout to get 20% off any yearly Nessy subscription

* Valid **ONLY** on annual subscriptions and packs. Offer ends at midnight (PT), 1st November.

CLAIM YOUR TREAT

Online Typing Course | Learn Touch Typing with AI - Kluppy

Kluppy is an online touch-typing course for children and young people aged 6 to 18, used by schools. Pupils learn step by step, starting with where to place their fingers on the keyboard, through short lessons that adapt to each child's pace and level, with levels and rewards that help keep them motivated. It runs in the browser on computers and Chromebooks, with nothing to install and no adverts.

Kluppy is not designed specifically for dyslexia, but for some pupils touch typing can make writing easier and less tiring: it reduces the physical effort of handwriting, makes editing simpler and opens the door to tools such as spellcheck and text-to-speech. Families can try the first levels free of charge, with no card required.

Two free resources may also be useful for parents and teachers:

- Touch typing for dyslexia and dyspraxia, a UK guide for parents and SENCOs. It explains when typing can help, how SEND support works in school and how to practise in short, accuracy-first sessions: https://kluppy.com/en/blog/touch-typing-dyslexia-uk/

- A free typing test for children, with no sign-up, that shows words per minute and accuracy: https://kluppy.com/en/typing-test/kids/

We have new Posters, leaflets and bookmarks about the Listening Books service, that let people know what is on offer and how people can join for the paid service, or how to get a free membership.

SINCE 1959
LISTENING BOOKS

Who are Listening Books?

- We are a UK charity providing access to a wide range of audiobooks

What we can offer:

- Thousands of fantastic audiobooks for all ages and interests, including education audiobooks and set texts for Key Stage 2-A-Level
- Access to daily newspapers and magazines from around the world in a variety of languages, you are able to zoom in on articles and most have a listen function too!
- A book group, podcast, newsletter, live author interviews and a skill for students taking their Duke of Edinburgh

Why are audiobooks great for people with dyslexia?

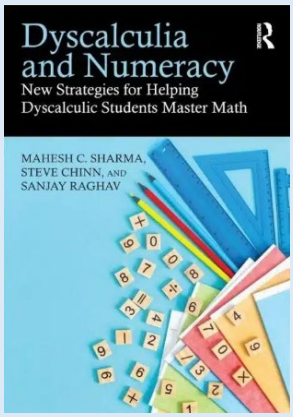
- Children can listen to the same books that their friends are reading
- They improve access to stories, non fiction, well being and educational titles
- They help build confidence and enjoyment in books
- They can support comprehension and vocabulary development
- They allows users to engage with content independently and at their own pace
- They remove the stress and frustration of trying to decode text, meaning people can enjoy the story!

If you would like some materials, please contact Louise Barling (Membership & PR Manager) at lbarling@listening-books.org.uk



Steve Chinn

posted this on Linkedin about his new book:



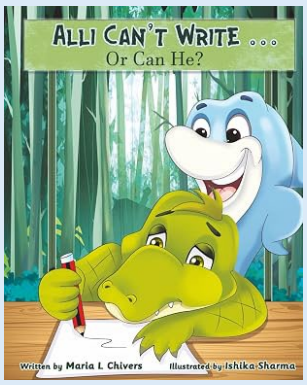
"Thank you for your responses to our new book: **'Dyscalculia and Numeracy. New Strategies for Helping Dyscalculic Students Master Math'**.

They made me reflect back on my 2021 publication, 'How to Teach Maths' which had the critical sub-title 'Understanding Learners' Needs' which toned down the arrogance factor. Thanks to my co-authors, Mahesh and Sanjay, the new book provides a much broader overview of how to address learning difficulties in maths (or 'math' in the US).

I think my 'How to' book focused more on the developmental nature of mathematics and, therefore, the importance of building on secure foundations. I am not surprised that so many students find algebra very challenging, when it seems to come out of nowhere, and makes so many new demands, such as 'dropping' the multiplication symbol for ab and a (b + c). The generalising nature (and benefit) of algebra is often overlooked. Learning is often enhanced by reflecting back, and hopefully that 'reflecting' is looking back on secure knowledge that is understood and not just memorised, (and what is the impact on learners who are asked, or told, to 'remember this, you will need it'. Mathematics offers learners the support of understanding instead of isolated recall).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mahesh Sharma for sharing his deep knowledge and understandings with us all."

Alli Can't Write: A Storybook for Children with Handwriting Difficulties including those with: Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia & ADHD (Tales from the Everglades)



Have you discovered Alli Can't Write . . . Or Can He?

A story about a young alligator who struggles with handwriting - and discovers that his difficulties have a name: dysgraphia.

The book combines a fun, illustrated story for children with practical information and ideas for parents, teachers and professionals.

What are readers saying?
"This book has been incredibly helpful for both my daughter and me… It helped her feel understood and less alone." - Parent review, 2026

If you know a child who struggles with handwriting, Alli may help them realise that they are not alone.

Introduction to Dysgraphia | Signs & Support | Dyslexia A2Z



Maria Chivers
Author & Researcher in Neurodiversity, including Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, and other learning difficulties.

Free AT review and Inclusive Mainstream Fund Support

Before you spend your **Inclusive Mainstream Fund** allocation, it's worth knowing what Assistive Technology (AT) you already have and whether it's working for your pupils.
You're not alone if it's been a while since you last reviewed your provision.

In a DfE-funded study of schools in England, **9 in 10 staff** said their school wasn't yet getting the full benefit from its AT.

That's why we're offering a **free review of your AT provision.** We have a limited number of slots, so don't miss out and request yours today.

We'll help you:

1. Review what you have, including free tools already on your devices
2. Give suggestions on the latest tech from our 200+ product range
3. Provide training for existing and new staff (if required)
4. Evidence against the DfE's 7 principles for your Inclusion Strategy Statement

Book your free 121 consultation →

No obligation - just a conversation about where your school is with it.

Lauren Jeffery



WWF UK

New!

Happy By Nature Schools Packs.

✅Classroom poster
✅Stickers
✅Pupil bookmarks
✅Teacher guide
✅Certificate signed by Steve Backshall

Engage your pupils with fun, interactive resources that celebrate achievement and inspire children to be Happy By Nature.

Sign up today and get your classroom pack!

Information for parents ENGLAND

contact For families with disabled children

Resources to help you get support for your child in school

We have a number of factsheets to help families get support for your child in school.

They include:

- Extra support in mainstream school
- Education, Health and Care needs assessments
- Education Health and Care plans

If you're looking for advice, you can submit an enquiry to our helpline team via our webform or call via telephone.

Our helpline can be very busy, so we recommend you start by browsing our website



Schools - sign up for your free toolkit for supporting children

Schools, homeschools, tutors, volunteers, and anyone supporting children as educators can sign up for free resources: **Schools - sign up for Number Confidence Week | National Numeracy**

Signing up also gives you access to an online toolkit including:

- activities for your class
- promotional resources for your school, such as posters and bunting
- hints and tips for supporting children and parents
- entry for primary schools to our prize draw to win a £150 voucher and Family Maths Scrapbooks for the whole class. See T&Cs.
- entry for secondary schools to our prize draw to win a £300 voucher to support your school with materials. See T&Cs.

Once you're signed up we will email you with a link to your toolkit.

The Timeline of Dyslexia

From misunderstanding to neurodiversity – a journey of discovery, progress and what's still to do.

Same people.
Different understanding.
Brighter possibilities.

1877 – The first descriptions



German physician Adolph Kussmaul describes people who could see normally and had intelligence, but struggled to read. He used the term "word blindness."

The first recorded descriptions of dyslexia.

1887 – The word "dyslexia" appears



German ophthalmologist Rudolf Berlin is credited with introducing the term dyslexia.

A name begins to give visibility.

1896 – A British case becomes famous



Dr W. Pringle Morgan writes about a 14-year-old boy called Percy who was intelligent but had extraordinary difficulty learning to read. This becomes one of the landmark early descriptions of developmental dyslexia.

Proof that bright people can struggle to read.

1920s–1940s – The brain becomes the focus



Researchers including Samuel Orton begin arguing that reading difficulties aren't caused by low intelligence. Dyslexia increasingly starts being viewed as a neurological / developmental difference.

A shift from 'not trying hard enough' to 'a different brain.'

1920s–1970s – Recognition grows



Researchs expands and organisations devoted to dyslexia emerge. But many children are still labelled lazy, slow, disruptive or unintelligent rather than having their difficulties understood.

More awareness, but still too much misunderstanding.

1980s–1990s – Schools start recoginsing dyslexia more widely



Assessment and specialist teaching become more established. Computers and assistive technology begin opening new possibilities. But provision varies enormously.

Support starts to grow – but it's a postcode lottery.

2000s – From "disability" towards neurodiversity



The conversation starts broadening. Instead of looking only at what people struggle with, more attention is given to different ways of thinking, strengths and the concept of neurodiversity.

A wider, more positive conversation begins.

2010s – Lived experience gets louder



Social media gives dyslexic people a platform to tell their own stories. Workplace adjustments, assistive technology and inclusion become much bigger conversations.

Dyslexic voices start to shape the story.

2020s – The conversation changes again



AI, speech-to-text, text-to-speech and other technology remove some traditional barriers. There is also growing pressure for schools and workplaces to become genuinely inclusive rather than simply expecting the individual to adapt.

More tools. More possibilities. A fairer future within reach.

2026 – The uncomfortable part



Nearly 140 years after the word "dyslexia" was introduced, people are still reporting being misunderstood at school, struggling to access assessment and support, hiding difficulties at work, and being judged by systems built heavily around reading, writing and processing information in particular ways.

We've come far – but there's still work to do.

We have spent nearly 140 years learning about dyslexia.

Maybe the next chapter should be written by the people who actually live it.

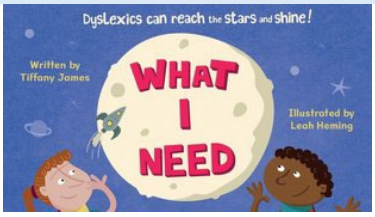
Early descriptions → Greater understanding → More voices → Better tools → A more inclusive future

Free Learning Resources - Nessy

Looking for more ways to support your learner?

Our resource library is packed with downloadable worksheets, flashcards, teaching videos, and e-books designed to make learning engaging and effective.

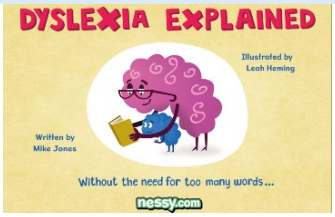
Our e-books are completely free and are a great resource for understanding dyslexia, building self-advocacy, and learning to spell:



What I Need empowers children and parents with the knowledge they need to self-advocate



Improve Your Spelling Teaches spelling step-by-step the Nessy way - with fun!



Dyslexia Explained Easy way for children, parents and educators to understand dyslexia

Expert Insights & Blog Articles

Discover expert advice, practical teaching strategies, and inspiring stories on our blog: Dyslexia, Literacy & Learning Blog | Nessy

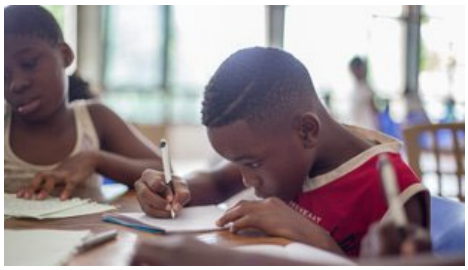
10 Ways to Celebrate Dyslexia Awareness Week in the Classroom



How to Help Dyslexic Children at Every Age - Nessy



What Is Explicit Instruction? A Guide for Teachers and Parents | Nessy



How to Teach a Dyslexic Child to Read | Expert Strategies | Nessy



Building a Foundation for Lifelong Learning: Why the Right Skills (and Tools) Matter Now - Nessy



Symbol Resources

Widgit

Wellbeing Pack
A fluttery tummy? Racing thoughts? Sometimes our bodies have a lot to say…
Developed with Educational Psychologist Dr Jerricah Holder, our Wellbeing Pack uses symbol-supported books and activities to help young people make sense of their feelings and explore ways to look after themselves, from recognising body signals and emotions to building resilience, practising mindfulness and knowing who to turn to for support.

Download Free

Mental Health Awareness
We know what to do with bumps, bruises and poorly tummies. But what about when it's our minds that need a little care? Ahead of World Mental Health Day on 10th October, our free symbol-supported poster helps open up conversations and reminds children that looking after their mental health is just as important as looking after their physical health.

Download Free

Feelings and Emotions Charts
Happy, sad, excited, frustrated...and sometimes a bit of everything at once! Feelings aren't always easy to put into words. Our Feelings and Emotions Charts give young people a visual way to express themselves. Try the Feelings Fans for quick daily check-ins or use the Feelings Chart to help them make sense of their emotions and share what's going on inside.

Download Free

The Incredible 5-Point Scale
Is it a little feeling, a BIG feeling or somewhere in between? The 'Incredible 5-Point Scale' by Kari Dunn Buron helps learners understand the intensity of their emotions, recognise how these might affect their behaviour and explore ways to manage them.

Download Free

Emotions: How Am I Feeling?
When 'How are you feeling?' is met with a shrug, sometimes a visual is all you need to get the conversation started. Our free 'Emotions: How Am I Feeling?' resource includes 10 symbol-supported emotion cards and a matching mind map, helping children identify their emotions and share how they're feeling in a way that works for them.

Download Free



Ready-made autumn-themed resources

Celebrate the beauty of **autumn** with 29 fun-filled activities. From colourful worksheets and wall displays to seasonal stories and crafts, there's plenty to enjoy this season.
Download Free

Our **Halloween Pack** has a few new treats! Packed with spooky games, stories and creative activities, it now includes communication cards, bucket symbols and lanyards to help everyone join in the trick-or-treating fun.
Download Free

Help children understand what to expect at **Halloween**, including dressing up, trick-or-treating and the excitement of the celebrations. Now updated with new communication resources to help them feel more prepared and supported.
Download Free

Get carving! This free download has 8 fun **carving templates** with Widgit Symbols and easy instructions, great for creative fun at home or school.
Download Free

Remember, remember! Our updated **Bonfire Night Pack** is bursting with activities to explore the Gunpowder Plot, firework safety and seasonal celebrations. Discover symbol-supported stories, puzzles, creative writing activities and many more.
Download Free

A symbol-supported guide to Bonfire Night, helping children understand what to expect from fireworks, sparklers and the celebrations, while encouraging them to enjoy the occasion safely.
Download Free



ADHD Support Pack

Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity

Our essential dyslexia course for parents

Hints, **E**ncouragement and **L**iaison for **P**arents or **HELP!** is **a unique dyslexia course for parents of children with the learning difficulty**. Discover ways to support your child and help them learn to learn. This is a downloadable online course, available to watch at home in your own time.

Whether your child has just had a dyslexia assessment and diagnosis or whether you just want to be able to help them at home, this practical, comprehensive course will help.

Develop your understanding of the many advantages and challenges that can face learners both at home and at school. The whole course offers a broad understanding of dyslexia, the impact of it in school, at home and on your child as well as specific areas of support. Alternatively, you may choose to concentrate on one or two areas of support at a time and purchase the relevant sessions.

The course is presented by **Helen Barrett** who is a specialist dyslexia assessor and teacher, and tutor on our professional courses.

Join us and discover a different way of learning

This dyslexia course for parents provides strategies, tips and ideas on the following – book one or more sessions:

Introduction to dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)

Working effectively with your child's school.
Talking to your child about dyslexia and keeping their self-esteem high

Understanding how your child learns best, study skills and helping with homework

Supporting your child's reading

Supporting your child's spelling

Supporting your child's writing

Supporting your child's maths

Full details available at: HELP! Dyslexia Course for Parents



Arran Smith - Neurodiversity & Dyslexia Thought Leader | Driving Understanding in Education, Business & Life | Chief Visionary | Head of Business Strategy and Development | Coach, Consultant, Speaker & NED

October 5, 2026

Here in the UK, Dyslexia Awareness Week has started. It is a week when we spend more time talking about dyslexia, challenging misconceptions and trying to improve understanding of something that is still misunderstood and, in too many places, still not properly supported.

This year's theme, **"Dyslexia in real life: At work"**, focuses on dyslexic adults and their experiences in the workplace. For me, that is an important conversation. We absolutely still need to campaign for better identification, understanding and support for dyslexic children, both here in the UK and around the world. But dyslexia doesn't finish when you leave school. You don't suddenly become non-dyslexic when you collect your exam results or walk into your first job.

As a dyslexic adult, I know that only too well. Dyslexia has created barriers throughout my life, but it has also shaped my thinking, my strengths and the different perspectives I bring to what I do. Understanding that whole experience matters.

Growing up dyslexic

When I was nine years old and my parents told me I was dyslexic, I remember being excited. I was different, and at that age there was something quite exciting about being told that. Then I began to understand what that difference meant in everyday life.

It helped explain why I found reading difficult, why communicating what was in my head could be a challenge and why remembering things such as times tables felt so difficult. It also helped me make sense of some of the experiences I was having at school, including being laughed at for not knowing something that other people seemed to find easy.

Those experiences can influence how you see yourself. When something takes you longer, or you repeatedly need help with a task that others describe as simple, it can affect your confidence. As you get older, the situations change, but the impact doesn't necessarily disappear.

Dyslexia in adult life

When I left school and entered the workplace, I had to find ways of communicating and working in environments that were rarely designed for somebody like me.

Writing something that somebody else could understand could be incredibly difficult. I knew what I wanted to say, but getting it out of my head and into a clear written message was another matter.

Today, the technology is completely different. I can sit with my phone and dictate my thoughts into AI, using it to help organise my ideas, structure my planning and turn what I am saying into communication that somebody else can read. When I think about the tools I started with and what I can now do from my phone, that change is extraordinary.

Technology hasn't taken away my dyslexia. It has helped remove some of the barriers between what I am thinking and my ability to communicate it. That is why assistive technology and AI are such important parts of my everyday life.

Why I am comfortable describing my dyslexia as a disability

I know people have different views about the word disability. Some prefer to talk about a difference, a learning difference or simply dyslexia. Personally, I am comfortable recognising that my dyslexia can be disabling. That doesn't mean I believe there is something wrong with me; it means I recognise the barriers I experience and the support I need.

For me, those barriers are often found in ordinary situations. It might be standing in a shop trying to read the words inside a birthday card before buying it for my wife. It might be spending 15 minutes decoding the instructions on a food packet, trying to work out which information comes first when there are different directions for defrosting, cooking on the hob or using the microwave.

In the workplace, it might be reading an email, filling in a form, applying for a job or writing a report. These are everyday activities, but that doesn't mean they are straightforward for everybody. When we overlook that, we can also overlook the need for accessible information, appropriate tools and practical support.

Recognising disability and recognising strengths can sit alongside each other. I don't have to ignore the difficulties to value how I think, and I don't have to ignore my strengths to explain why I need support.

The barriers and the strengths

Some of the differences that have created difficulties throughout my life are also connected to the ways I approach problems and opportunities. I see connections, develop ideas, question assumptions and look at things from different perspectives. When one route doesn't work, I will often explore another.

I am talking here about my own experience. Dyslexic people are individuals, and we won't all have the same strengths, difficulties or ways of working. That is why understanding the person matters more than making assumptions about a label.

At difficult points in my life, dyslexia has felt like a barrier and sometimes even a curse. But it has also contributed to skills, strengths and perspectives that have shaped who I am. Both things can be true, and I want us to make room for that honest conversation.

October is about more than one awareness week

There is a lot happening this month. Alongside Dyslexia Awareness Week and the wider recognition of Dyslexia Awareness Month, 5 October is International Dysgraphia Awareness Day, and October is also ADHD Awareness Month. Here in the UK, Baby Loss Awareness

Week runs from 9 to 15 October, creating space to remember babies who have died and support those affected by pregnancy and baby loss.

These awareness occasions have different purposes, but each creates an opportunity to listen, learn and recognise experiences that may otherwise remain unseen. Some of these conversations are deeply personal, and they deserve care and understanding.

For me, awareness should be a starting point. It needs to lead to better understanding, practical support and opportunities for people to feel empowered in their lives. Raising awareness matters, but what we do with that awareness matters too.

Seeing things differently

Over the last 12 months, I have spent a huge amount of time developing what has become **See Differently. A Visionary Studio.** At its centre is a simple idea: **Different perspectives. Stronger understanding.**

For me, this means taking the time to understand a person or situation, challenging assumptions, exploring what could be different and then acting on what we learn. It means recognising difficulties without allowing them to become the whole story, while also recognising strengths without pretending the barriers don't exist.

Through See Differently, I am bringing together lived experience, knowledge, technology and practical thinking to support people across business, education and life. That feels particularly relevant as we begin a week focused on the real experiences of dyslexic adults.

There is lots happening this week across the work I am involved with, including conversations, webinars, content and opportunities to get involved. I am looking forward to sharing more, hearing other people's experiences and exploring what stronger understanding could change.

Dyslexic children grow into dyslexic adults. We become employees, managers, business owners, parents, teachers, leaders and entrepreneurs. We can still experience barriers and need support, while also bringing valuable ideas, experiences and perspectives to the table.

This week, I hope we can talk about the whole experience of living with dyslexia. Stronger understanding starts when we listen to people and are prepared to see differently.





Archbishop Sarah's General Synod address on Affirming Neurodiversity in the Church

Sarah Mullally, the first woman Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking openly about her dyslexia . . … the article included the following:

"I am someone with dyslexia. In my life, I have had to face the views of those who thought that I wouldn't amount to much. I struggled at school at a time when we were given very little support, and therefore very little opportunity to help me to understand how I could overcome the challenges that dyslexia presented me.

I am still aware that words and names run off the page like water. I have to say that there are certain words that create great problems for me: Is it prostrate or prostate? I have learnt, however, and it wasn't an easy journey. I have learnt that I am made in the image of God, and that I am called as somebody who is dyslexic, not despite dyslexia, and sometimes because of dyslexia.



And I now speak more regularly about my dyslexia because I hope that by sharing my own experiences, I might offer some encouragement that we are a church of all kinds of people.

Neurodiversity is not a problem to be solved within the church, but it is a gift. It is important that neurodivergent people within our church are not only functioning but flourishing. And in order to enable that, we must prioritise our learning and our listening."

Video of **Archbishop of Canterbury** talking about her dyslexia.

Read more stories at:
Your Stories - British Dyslexia Association
Share your dyslexia story here

And finally . . .

Funny Halloween jokes for kids - National Geographic Kids

Get ready for spooky season with these Halloween jokes! Grab a frightfully delicious snack, brush up on your **Halloween history**, then get ready to startle your mates with these glorious gags…

What's a monster's favourite game?
Hide and *shriek*!

Why did the vampire go to the doctor?
She couldn't stop *coffin*!

What do birds say on Halloween?
Trick or *tweet*!

What does a ghost panda eat?
Bam-*BOO*!

What type of music do mummies like?
Wrap!

Why didn't the skeleton go to the party?
They had no body to go with!

Where do spirits post letters?
At the *ghost* office!

Why didn't the zombie go to school?
He felt rotten!

Why are vampires terrible at cricket?
Their bats fly away!

Why are ghosts bad liars?
You can see right through them!

Where do zombies go on holiday?
The Dead Sea!

Why didn't the skeleton take any chances?
They didn't have the guts!

What do owls say when they go trick or treating?
Happy *Owl*-oween!

What's a monster's favourite dessert?
Ice *scream*!

What happens to witches who break school rules?
They get ex-*spelled*!

Why didn't the scarecrow finish dinner?
It was already stuffed!

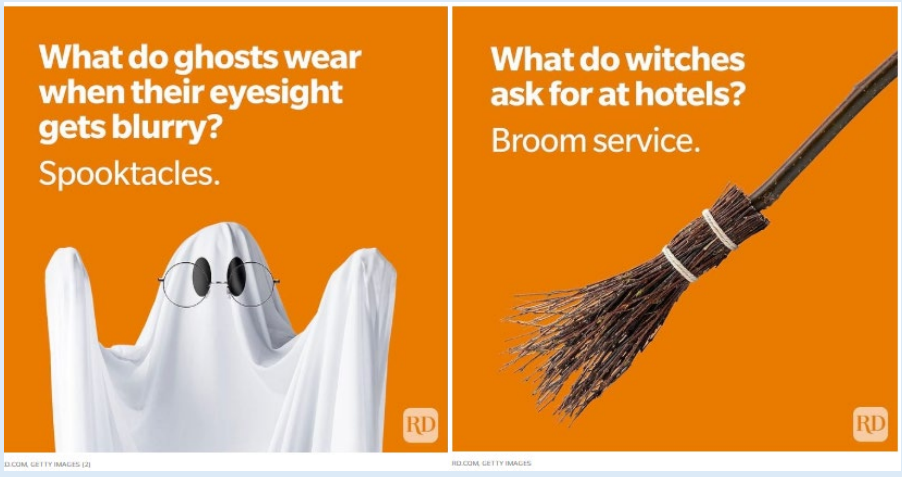
What do demons eat for breakfast?
Devilled eggs!

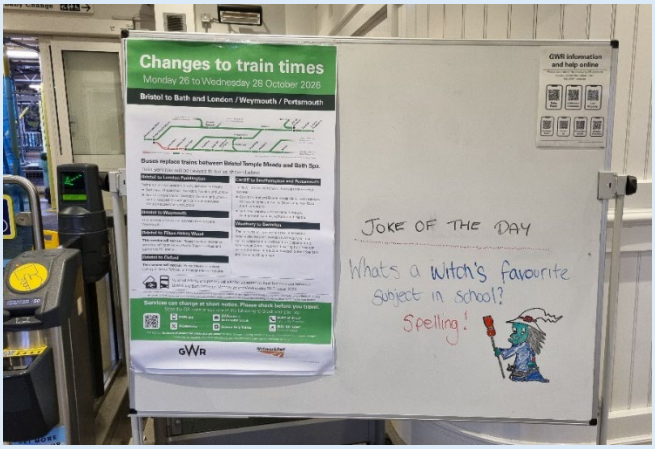
What's the spookiest piece of cutlery?
A spooooooooooon!

How do vampires keep fit?
They play *bat*-minton!

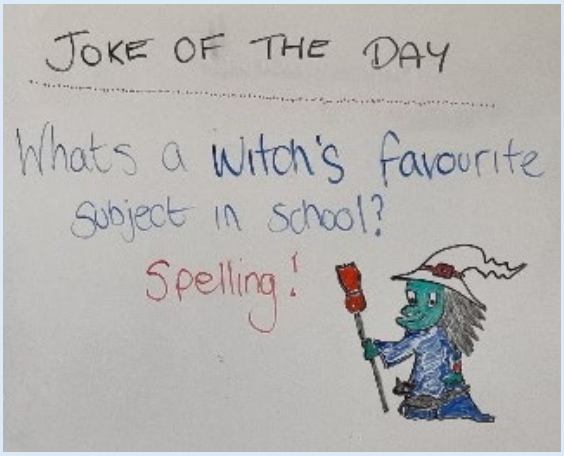
What's a ghost's favourite food?
Boo-berries!

205 Funny Halloween Jokes for Kids and Adults in 2026





Chippenham Station notice board – Joke of the Day!





Halloween on CBBC - CBBC - BBC

Caroline Fowke
Wiltshire Dyslexia Association

WDA Website: Dyslexia Support in Wiltshire - WDA

WDA Facebook:
Wiltshire Dyslexia Association

WDA Instagram:
@wiltshire_dyslexia_association

WDA Helpline:
07394 617917 wdahelpline@gmail.com

BDA Resources - British Dyslexia Association