



THE  
DE LA SALLE  
ACADEMY

A Guide to Teaching and Learning of SEND students  
Reviewed 2016

## **ADHD**

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a term used to describe children who exhibit over-active behaviour and impulsivity and who have difficulty paying attention. It is estimated that 0.5 to 1 per cent of children in the UK are affected by ADHD, and about five times more boys than girls are diagnosed with this condition. Children of all levels of ability can have ADHD. Some professionals feel that the term is becoming over-used and extended to include any child who is naughty, but research points to a substantial number of children demonstrating a range of behaviours which constitute a diagnosis of ADHD. In some more severe cases, the child may be treated with medication such as methylphenidate (Ritalin), which can have beneficial effects: but this remains a controversial issue.

The terms ADD and ADHD are medical diagnoses and describe a syndrome of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, which may include extreme impulsiveness, inattentiveness and continuous motor activity. There are two sub-groups of childhood ADD.

- ADHD – the impulsive-hyperactive type.
- ADD – without hyperactivity – the inattentive-impulsive type.

These are complex conditions. Children with ADD or ADHD may sometimes be on medication which the school may be asked to administer during the day. More boys than girls seem to be affected.

DAMP – deficits in attention, motor control and perception is a developmental disorder linked to both ADHD and dyspraxia. It is a descriptive diagnosis introduced in the 1980s by a Swedish professor (C Gillberg). DAMP tends to be a more pervasive and severe disorder than ADHD.

### **The main characteristics**

- Difficulty in following instructions and completing tasks.
- Easily distracted and forgetful and therefore find it hard to focus on one activity
- Often make mistakes because of an inability to attend to detail
- Has problems with motor coordination and often appear clumsy when moving around the classroom
- Avoids tasks that require sustained attention
- Has limited concentration and poor listening skills
- Display impulsivity in all areas of school life
- Fidgets, is restless, can't sit still.
- Interferes with other children's work.
- Can't stop talking, interrupts others.
- Has poor social interactions and difficulty making friends
- Murmur, talk or call out continuously because they are unable to internalise speech
- Frequently stand up and wander around
- Has constant fidgety movement of hands and feet
- Runs about when inappropriate.

- Blurts out answers without waiting to be asked.
- Difficulty in waiting or taking turns.
- Acts impulsively without thinking about the consequences: lashes out physically or verbally with no thought for the consequences
- Unaware of danger when running and climbing
- Has perceptual-motor problems and find writing difficult
- Has poor organisational and self-help skills, such as getting dressed or finding tools for a task
- Sometimes have difficulty producing certain speech sounds and be unable to communicate ideas easily.

Although most children will demonstrate some of these behaviours some of the time, those who have several of these problems consistently, at home and at school, are likely to have ADHD. These children often find it hard to learn; research from the USA suggests that 90 per cent of children with ADHD underachieve at school, and 20 per cent have reading difficulties.

### **How can we help?**

Some key principles are as follows:

- Arrange the room to minimise distractions.
- Keep classroom rules clear and simple - and rehearse them regularly.
- Make sure that the child is notified of any changes in routine well in advance
- Set short, achievable targets and give instant rewards when the child completes tasks.
- Make eye contact with the child when speaking to him or her. If you call out from another room child will ignore you.
- Keep instructions simple: the one sentence rule and encourage the learner to talk through a task before attempting it. Encourage the child to verbalise what needs to be done first to the teacher then silently to himself.
- Give very specific praise, catch the child being good.
- Keep calm- if you get angry the child will mirror that emotion.
- Use a 'quiet time' technique to deal with temper tantrums.
- Use time out as a benefit rather than a sanction, as a time to calm down and be away from distractions
- Practise ways of distracting the child.
- Provide clear routines.
- Give advance warning when something is about to happen, or finish.
- Give two choices, avoiding the option of the child saying no. E.g 'Do you want to put your coat on now or when we get outside?'

- Use a variety of activities in every lesson, alternating physical and sitting-down tasks.
- Present text in large, well-spaced format without a lot of clutter on the page.
- Use checklists to help him work through a task or homework activity.
- Use teacher attention and praise to reward positive behaviour: praise small achievements and set up an agreed reward system for good behaviour, rather than using too many sanctions for inappropriate behaviour
- Give the child special responsibilities so that others see him or her in a positive light and the child develops a positive self-image.
- Explain to others that it is the behaviour that is a problem, not the child as a person
- Help pupils organise their written work by using writing frames and other alternative methods of recording
- let the pupil work in an individual or paired situation rather than expecting them to work in a group
- teach social skills – don't expect the pupil simply to pick up acceptable social behaviour
- incorporate suggested motor coordination exercises into group PE activities

### **Want to know more?**

ADD/ADHD Family Support Group

ADD Information Services (ADDISS)

ADDNET UK

Hyperactive Children's Support Group

[http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/adhd/support\\_groups.shtml](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/adhd/support_groups.shtml)

### **Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)**

Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder and since the 1980s the idea of a 'spectrum of autistic disorders' has been widely acknowledged. It is now referred to as Autistic

Spectrum Condition, rather than 'disorder'.

The causes of autism are complex and it is unlikely that there is a single cause, but rather a set of triggers involving biological/medical, psychological and behavioural factors. There appears to be a strong genetic link. Psychological assessments can be helpful but they cannot be used to confirm or deny a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The diagnosis is medical and is made by recognizing patterns of behaviour from early life which indicate impairment of social interaction, communication and development of imagination. This is known as the 'triad of impairments'.

At one end of the spectrum will be a normally intelligent child with mild autism, and at the other end will be the child with profound learning difficulties and severe autism. The estimated prevalence of ASC is six in 1,000 and it affects four times as many boys as girls.

Children or young adults with ASC or autism will have a different view of the world and of what is important.

### **The main characteristics**

#### **Social interaction**

- The child will have an inability to empathize with others and will find it difficult to understand the feelings and/or behaviour of others.
- He or she may appear withdrawn and make little attempt to make friends, often being described as 'aloof'.
- Sometimes their behaviour is odd using inappropriate greetings, touching or being aggressive.
- They prefer to be solitary and have great difficulty dealing with other children invading their personal space.
- Children with ASC have difficulties understanding and interpreting social situations and may become distressed or confused.

#### **Thought and imagination**

- An impairment in thought and imagination affects every area of thinking, language and behaviour.
- In Early Years settings an impairment in play and imaginative activities is often noticeable.
- Children may become fixated by a particular toy, especially one that spins and shines.
- They may develop repetitive and/or obsessive interests and are often more interested in objects than people.
- They may display repetitive behaviour, such as turning lights on and off, opening and closing doors, or watching the same videos over and over again.
- Changes in routine can cause distress because ASC children are dependent upon routine to make sense of their environment.

#### **Communication**

- This includes a difficulty in making sense of and using both verbal and non-verbal communication such as eye contact, facial expression, gesture and body language.
- They may have difficulties with language, such as parroting what others say, repeating one phrase over and over or speaking in a monotone
- Difficulty understanding jokes, idioms or figures of speech – everything is taken literally, making it difficult for them to make friends, understand some oral instructions and follow parts of literacy lessons
- Some children never develop speech; others experience a significant language delay and when they do begin to use language it is often repetitive and/or learned phrases from things such as television cartoons or adverts.
- In contrast, some children appear to have good expressive language but still have difficulties in understanding and tend to interpret literally.

### **Additional difficulties**

In addition to the 'triad of impairments', children with ASC may experience any number of the following:

- Hand flapping, rocking or spinning, particularly when frustrated or upset.
- Have delayed speech – up to 50 per cent of autistic children have difficulty with developing spoken language
- Sensitivity to noise, smell, taste, touch or visual stimuli
- Erratic sleeping patterns
- Unusual eating habits
- Self-injury
- Aggressive behaviour
- May fly into a rage for no apparent reason, although this usually turns out to be because someone has moved something or changed a routine
- Hyperactivity
- A strange gait or posture often walking on tip-toes
- Irrational fears or phobias
- About 10 per cent have a special creative or mathematical skill such as remembering dates or making complicated mathematical calculations.

### **Strategies**

- Have a structured classroom: use labels and specific areas for specific tasks.
- Provide an individual work area - acknowledge the need for personal space.
- Do not expect eye contact and never turn their face to look at you.
- Keep verbal instructions brief and simple, checking that they are understood by repeating the instructions individually as an autistic or ASC pupil will not understand that general instructions are for them unless their name is used
- Use visual and concrete materials to support understanding of conceptual vocabulary
- Introduce only one skill at a time.

- Make good use of computers.
- Use a visual timetable and task lists.
- Make sure that the classroom has an element of continuity – not too many changes at one time
- Prepare the pupil well in advance for any changes in school routine, if possible, as this can be very distressing for them
- Consider lighting, noise, etc.
- Be positive and patient keep calm and be flexible.
- Always refer to the child by name - they may not realize 'everyone' includes them.
- Use obsessions as rewards and encourage interaction through activities they enjoy.
- Teach them to recognize behaviours, emotions, body language.
- Teach self-help skills
- Use social stories to teach social communication/interaction.
- Use games and activities to teach social conventions and interaction, such as turn-taking Explain jokes, idioms and figures of speech – what they are, what they mean and how they work, as far as can be understood, and that people often say things that may not seem logical or literal
- Ensure that the pupil understands that school and classroom rules apply to them.
- Disapprove of inappropriate behaviour, not the child.
- Be consistent in the management of behaviour
- Develop a 'buddy' system.
- Have high expectations.
- Always talk to parents.

### **Want to know more?**

#### **National Autistic Society**

[www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

#### **Centre for the study of autism**

[www.autism.org/contents.html](http://www.autism.org/contents.html)

#### **Autism Independent UK**

<http://www.autismuk.com/>

#### **PEACH**

<http://www.peach.org.uk/>

## **Dyscalculia**

Dyscalculia is a specific learning disability involving maths skills. Students can be gifted in other academic areas but be confounded by maths. It may be a difficulty with counting and calculating, understanding abstract maths concepts or working with numbers and symbols.

### **What are the causes?**

There are several possibilities that have been put forward for the causes of dyscalculia,

including problems that occur at the foetal stage so that part of the brain is not 'wired up' correctly. In addition it has been acknowledged that fear and poor instruction could also play a large part.

**The main characteristics**

It will take some observation and gathering of evidence to imply that dyscalculia is the problem rather than a single mathematical concept that has not been grasped. Difficulties may include the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor mental maths skills</li> <li>• Normal or above average verbal skills and good visual memory for the printed word</li> <li>• difficulty understanding maths concepts, rules and sequences, especially involving time and money</li> <li>• An inability to learn to count by rote</li> <li>• Difficulty reading and/or writing numbers</li> <li>• A tendency to make substitutions, transpositions, omissions and reversals when reading and writing numbers</li> <li>• Inconsistent computation results</li> <li>• Omissions</li> <li>• Reversals</li> <li>• Transpositions</li> <li>• Poor mental maths</li> <li>• An inability to grasp and remember mathematical concepts, rules and formulae</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties with money</li> <li>• Problems with sequencing: this can affect many things, including problems with team games and dance sequences</li> <li>• a poor sense of direction (such as confusing left and right, getting easily lost, losing things) and time (such as often arriving late)</li> <li>• Poor coordination when involved in activities requiring change of direction, such as aerobics, exercise and dance sessions</li> <li>• Poor memory for lay-out</li> <li>• Stress at lesson change-over times</li> <li>• Difficulties with games: they may lose track of whose turn it is .Difficulty with keeping score in games or working out strategies in chess.</li> <li>• Inability to remember names or faces</li> <li>• Difficulty with time and time management</li> </ul> |
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**How can we help?**

As with most strategies used to help those with special needs, these approaches will benefit all pupils.

- Ask a child to explain how they have come to an answer - sometimes it may seem a little bizarre but if they understand it that way and it is mathematically workable, accept this.
- Always explain a new concept step-by-step.
- Encourage the child to teach it back to check they have understood.
- Use concrete apparatus (some children may never move from this stage): these days

there is a wealth of material that can be purchased, from bright plastic pies for teaching fractions to large dice for playing games.

- Use picture and visual stimuli.
- Use multi-sensory methods
- incorporate practical activities into most lessons
- make use of ICT as an aid to learning
- Carefully teach the language and syntax of maths.
- Use number stories.
- Encourage spaces between sums on a page: make sure the work is uncluttered and clearly set out.
- If there is a problem copying numbers down accurately either from a book or the board make sure these are already in the children's book or folder.
- Make use of the computer.
- Make use of a calculator: some children may always struggle so we must encourage and teach them to use the tools that can do the job for them.
- Acknowledge the trauma that these children experience with maths.
- Allow extra time: this will be important in stressful times such as tests or examinations.
- Encourage the use of rough paper to work out calculations.
- Use wall displays with each of the four symbols in the middle and all the words used to mean that around the outside.
- For older pupils, use a credit card holder to keep reminders of formulae, tables, etc.
- Make good use of mnemonics to help remember sequences, e.g. 'Damned Silly Triangle'.
- Encourage peer support for getting round the school, changing lessons, etc.
- For older pupils, ensure someone will help with organization at exam time.
- Encourage working with a partner to explain methods of working to each other
- Allow for the need to over-learn maths concepts and rules.

### **Support agencies**

- Dyslexia Action.

## **Dysgraphia**

Dysgraphia is a processing problem causing difficulty in remembering and using the correct sequence of muscle movements in order to write. It is a neurologically based difficulty and is often related to other specific learning difficulties.

Dysgraphia is frustrating for children who have good oral language skills but are unable to transfer their ideas easily into written form.

### **Key characteristics**

Children with dysgraphia may:

- write slowly and laboriously, and have poor presentation
- have inconsistent letter formation and use a mixture of upper and lower case letters
- have difficulty with their pencil grip
- have difficulty with copying and taking notes
- use a rubber excessively
- have difficulty with directions, such as in map work, plans and diagrams.

### **Support strategies**

You may need to:

- teach the pupil keyboard skills as soon as possible and use a word processor
- allow the pupil to write seated in the position that suits them best
- allow the pupil to write in the style and form that suits them best
- allow extra time for writing activities
- use planning and writing frames
- encourage the use of visual organisation strategies, such as mind-mapping
- develop alternative methods of recording, such as diagrams, posters, charts, comic strips
- allow the use of a scribe where appropriate
- Give the pupil more opportunities to talk about their ideas, rather than writing them.

### **Support agencies**

- Dyslexia Action.

## Dyslexia and SpLD (specific learning difficulty)

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that affects the ability to read and spell. About 60 per cent of children with dyslexia also have trouble with the sounds that make up words.

It can affect an individual's ability to read quickly and efficiently and nearly always results in poor or 'bizarre' spellings. Pupils with dyslexia often have poor short-term memory and difficulty with sequencing and processing information skills which are important for effective learning in a busy classroom.

Dyslexia can also cause difficulties with basic maths (especially the order of numbers and multiplication tables), general literacy skills, word interpretation and perception, organisational skills, short-term memory, sequencing and information processing.

Children with dyslexia, however, are often very creative and able in certain areas of the curriculum, such as art, design, technology, computing, drama and lateral thinking.

Dyslexia is a complex neurological disorder and affects about 10 per cent of the population, across all levels of intellectual ability. There has been a great deal of research and numerous attempts to define dyslexia. Dyslexia is perhaps best summed up as a syndrome with a wide range of possible causes and symptoms. Although found across the whole range of cognitive ability, the idea that dyslexia presents itself as a discrepancy between expected outcomes and performance is still widely held.

It tends to affect boys more than girls and often runs in families. It is believed to have a genetic cause.

Many dyslexics may be helped through systematic hard work and appropriate interventions, especially when identified early.

### The main characteristics

#### Reading

- Many dyslexics describe a page of print as moving or swirling and experience tracking difficulties, frequently losing their place.
- Confuse some high frequency words, such as was/saw.
- Reverse letters and number digits beyond the age where this is normal
- Frequently lose the place when reading and see blurred or distorted word shapes
- Poor phonological processing leads to difficulties with blending and segmenting.
- It can be frustrating to listen to a dyslexic read as they may make frequent errors with high frequency words but seem able to cope with those that are more complicated.
- Some believe this is because they need to visualize as they read and many of the high-frequency words (the, and, when) do not lend themselves to easy visualization.
- Whilst many dyslexic children learn to read at a functional level, they remain slow and the activity requires a great deal of effort

## **Writing**

- Use bizarre spellings and have poor phonological awareness
- The written work of dyslexics is often of a poor standard compared with their oral ability.
- Their work can appear messy, with frequent crossings out and several attempts at a single word.
- They tend to confuse similar letter shapes such as b/d/p/q, m/w, n/u, and often make anagrams of words, e.g. write words with the correct letters in the wrong order tired/tried.
- Early spelling attempts can be 'bizarre' and this usually remains an area of difficulty into adult life.
- make frequent errors when copying, especially from the board

## **General difficulties**

- Have difficulty remembering a word and substitute other words instead
- Poor short-term memory
- Speed of processing
- Sequencing
- Have great difficulty organising themselves and their belongings
- Tiredness
- Uneven performance profile
- be unable to remember simple sequences, such as days of the week
- experience problems following oral instructions
- have poor sense of time and direction
- have some coordination difficulties
- have low levels of motivation and self-esteem.
- Behaviour often a result of frustration

## **Strengths**

- Research has come up with a list of attributes that many dyslexics appear to have in greater abundance than non-dyslexics:
- This includes some form of creativity, whether it is in the form of art, drama, music or architecture.
- Others excel in individual sports such as swimming and many are known for their powers of lateral thinking

## **How can we help?**

- Work from their areas of strength.
- Use a multi-sensory programme of teaching and learning.
- Ensure repetition of learning, using word and language games for enjoyment
- revise and review previously taught skills at frequent intervals

- Provide key word lists and displays.
- Encourage alternative methods of recording, such as writing frames, diagrams, labelled drawings, flow charts or comic strip stories
- Use videos, tapes and Dictaphones and encourage alternative ways of recording.
- allow the use of a scribe where appropriate, especially for copying anything important, such as homework instructions
- keep oral instructions brief and clear
- Pictorial timetables can be a great help.
- Make use of ICT voice recognition software can be a boon.
- Teach study skills from an early age the use of mind-maps has proved particularly successful.
- Encourage the use of line trackers, bookmarks and/or coloured overlays as appropriate.
- Keep board work to a minimum.
- create a positive reading environment, with opportunities to listen to stories
- teach keyboard skills and encourage use of spell-checkers
- Tackle spelling patterns
- Teach a structured, cumulative phonic programme.
- Allow sufficient time for all activities.
- Raise self-esteem and confidence with lots of praise and encouragement.
- Teach syllable count to help the learner hear how many syllables are in a word
- teach how to blend syllables
- teach onset and rime to help the pupils to discriminate between words aurally
- teach phoneme discrimination to help the pupil identify phonemes in words
- teach phoneme-blending to help with reading and spelling
- Each individual is unique and the key to success lies in teaching on the basis of individual needs and individual preferences.

#### **Support agencies**

- British Dyslexia Association
- British Dyslexics
- Dyslexia Action
- Dyslexia in Scotland

### **Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder)**

Dyspraxia is an immaturity in the way the brain processes information, resulting in messages not being properly transmitted.

Children with dyspraxia may have problems with co-ordinating their movements. Pupils often appear clumsy when moving around the classroom. They have perceptual-motor problems and find writing difficult. They may also have pronunciation difficulties, caused by problems in controlling the movements of the mouth and the tongue. Developmental dyspraxia is suspected when it is obvious that the difficulties are not due to a medical condition.

Approximately one child in 20 suffers from this condition, which affects four times as many boys as girls.

### **The main characteristics**

The signs of dyspraxia are often noticed by parents early on and include problems with:

- achieving normal milestones such as sitting up, crawling, walking.
- inability to concentrate
- picking up small objects
- language acquisition
- doing a jigsaw or sorting game or holding a pencil
- understanding spatial concepts of in/on/behind, etc.
- In addition, children may demonstrate general irritability and limited social skills.
- They may tire easily and need periods of rest.
- Older pupils may have poor posture and limited body awareness, moving awkwardly and seeming clumsy.

### **In the classroom, the child with dyspraxia will come across numerous difficulties:**

- games lessons (particularly where throwing and catching are involved), and music and movement classes.
- have difficulty in judging distances and the position of objects in space, so find ball games particularly hard  
be unable to change speed and direction without overbalancing
- appear to be uncoordinated, particularly when running, jumping, hopping or riding a bike
- following sequential instructions: find it hard to sequence information and reproduce it verbally, which affects their ability to answer questions in the classroom
- handwriting : have immature use of pencils, crayons, scissors, puzzles and simple construction toys
- have difficulty in copying shapes and pictures
- using a knife and fork
- be unsure of which hand to use and may change hands in the middle of an activity
- an inability to recognize potential danger: e.g. jumping from the top of the climbing frame, or for older pupils, using Bunsen burners and other equipment in science and technology.

- appear to be clumsy, bumping into people and objects
- have difficulty producing some speech sounds and be unable to communicate their ideas easily
- find it confusing if they are given too much verbal information at a time because they take longer to process it and are rarely able to make immediate responses
- find it difficult to adapt to a structured school routine
- have limited concentration and poor listening skills
- be easily upset and have temper tantrums, which annoys other children
- have poor social interactions and difficulty making friends
- be rough and aggressive because they have difficulty controlling their movements.

### **Support strategies**

- Provide a reasonably quiet working environment. Position the child with a direct view of the teacher and minimal distractions.
- Make sure that the child's seating allows him or her to rest both feet on the floor, with the desk or table at elbow height and, ideally, with the facility for a sloping surface to work on.

### **Writing**

- Limit the amount of handwriting expected by providing printed sheets or offering alternative means of recording, such as mind maps, bullet points or annotation of printed notes.
- Where pen and paper have to be used, try attaching the paper to the desk so that it does not have to be held still.
- Limit the amount of copying from the board; when necessary, use colours and appropriate 'chunking' to help them follow the text.
- Help pupils organise their written work by using writing frames
- Closed procedure and multiple choice questions enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding more easily.
- Try different pens and triangular pencil grips.
- Use a scribe to write down answers or notes

### **Reading**

- Pay attention to the page layout.
- Set information out in panels.
- Use symbols and pictures.
- Use a ruler or a piece of card with a window cut in it to help the reader focus on particular lines.
- Back up written information with speech.

### **Listening**

- Pupils may hear the words but not understand the meaning.
- Be patient.
- Give instructions one at a time. Break down the things you want them to learn into small units. Find out what triggers and associations help them access memory.
- organise activities to develop listening skills and attention skills, such as sound tapes
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### **Speech**

- Speech may be slow or slurred.
- Help them articulate their ideas.
- Use body language, signs, pointing to pictures or symbols where appropriate
- Use pictures, signs and symbols.

### **Memory problems**

- Build up individualised teaching resources such as personal dictionaries, cue cards and diaries.
- Give clear, simple instructions and constant reminders, both oral and written. Check the pupil's understanding (dyspraxic children may not understand sarcasm or irony).
- Teach the pupil strategies to help remember things and to be able to organize him or herself.
- Practice a range of sequencing activities, such as pictorial activity or story sequences, word and sentence sequences, days, months or number sequences
- Allow extra time for finishing work.
- encourage learners to present ideas using ICT
- Give extra supervision and encouragement to stay on task.
- Be aware that growth spurts may accentuate problems.
- In games and outdoor activities be sensitive to the child's limitations and allocate a position/activity which offers the best chance of success.
- Encourage a partner relationship with another child who can help with tricky situations.
- Praise every effort and successful achievement of new skills
- incorporate recommended motor coordination exercises into a PE programme
- organise games and activities requiring cooperation and turn-taking
- develop role-play and drama activities, including puppets
- practice tracking activities, such as mazes, dot-to-dot, tracing, letter shapes.

### **Support agencies**

- Dyscovery Centre
- Dyspraxia Foundation

## **Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)**

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties (also known as global learning difficulties) have a general developmental delay. They may once have been referred to as 'slow learners' and, for the most part, will be found in the bottom sets in school. They have difficulties with learning across all areas of the school curriculum. Those with MLD comprise the largest group of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Many of these learners have a delay of about three years and consequently need a high level of support within the mainstream classroom.

Many pupils with moderate learning difficulties will also be suffering from low levels of self-esteem and motivation. They may become resentful and refuse to attempt new work as they perceive themselves to be likely to fail before they start. It is likely that they will become over-reliant on teaching assistants to help them with tasks and they will need much encouragement and praise to persuade them to attempt new challenges which are within their capability and develop greater independence.

These pupils do not find learning easy and often experience very little success in school. Their self-esteem can plummet, especially in secondary school and this may result in unacceptable behaviour as they search for a way of avoiding failure, putting on a show of bravado and impressing their peers.

### **The main characteristics**

- have immature listening/attention skills
- have immature social skills
- rely on a teaching assistant to direct them within the class situation
- Limited communication skills
- Short attention span
- Underdeveloped co-ordination skills
- Dyspraxia ('clumsiness') have a poor auditory memory
- have a poor visual or auditory memory
- Difficulty remembering what has been taught (short-term and long-term)
- have difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills
- have difficulties with comprehension skills
- Poor understanding of basic mathematical concepts
- need a high level of support with investigation and problem-solving activities
- have poor verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills
- have difficulties with applying what they know to other situations
- Lack of logical reasoning
- Lack of understanding of what is required of them
- Difficulty acquiring sequencing skills
- Poor organisation skills

### **How can we help?**

Children with moderate learning difficulties are often very conscious that they are 'lagging behind'. Everything possible should be done to enhance their self-esteem and persuade them that they can learn, albeit with a great deal of effort.

- Find out as much about the child as possible. Use SATs scores, CATs scores, reading age and any diagnostic data, to help you ascertain strengths and weaknesses.
- Use your own observation skills to build up a profile of the child, noticing how he or she responds to different teaching styles.
- Make sure that the learning objectives are realistic for every lesson, and that the child can experience some success. Don't give the child work at NC Level 5 if you know they are working at Level 3!
- Establish what the student already knows about a topic; be prepared to go back to the point where he or she is on firm ground.
- Simplify, differentiate or abbreviate class tasks
- Ensure repetition and reinforcement within a variety of contexts
- Use careful questioning to ensure the child's participation and check his or her understanding.
- Provide alternative methods of recording, such as labelled pictures, diagrams or flow charts
- Short, daily practice of key skills like telling the time, multiplication tables and spellings is more effective than longer sessions
- Show the child what to do as well as talking about it: give concrete examples, provide a model.
- Break down any new task into small steps and build in lots of opportunities for reinforcement.
- Monitor and record progress so that each small achievement is recognised
- Organise activities to develop listening and attention skills, such as sound tapes
- Enlarging the print and shortening a passage is a simple process which can make an immediate difference to the accessibility of text. Project the text using an IWB while you read it out, perhaps several times, then let pupils practise together before having a go on their own.
- Provide writing frames of activity sheets which minimize the amount of writing required: if the child is involved in a science experiment, you want him/her to observe and record what happens, not spend 40 minutes trying to draw a Bunsen burner.
- Use differentiated texts, word banks, language masters, ICT software (and modified hardware).
- Keep tasks short and build in variety
- Allow extra time to complete a task
- Practise a range of sequencing activities, such as pictorial activity or story sequences, word/sentence sequences, days, months and number sequences
- Check understanding at every stage.
- It may be necessary to prepare individual work for the pupil or a small group.
- Be prepared to allow the child extra time to finish a task.

- Establish a routine within the lesson so that pupils know what to expect and, most importantly, what is expected of them.
- Establish a supportive relationship.
- Use appropriate praise and encouragement: catch the child being good as well as complimenting him or her for finishing work and trying hard.
- provide teaching assistant support at the beginning and end of a lesson, but encourage learners to work independently whenever possible
- provide a multi-sensory approach to learning
- provide activities to develop motor skills
- use visual and concrete materials to aid understanding
- keep language simple and familiar in guided group work
- Keep instructions short and concise
- ask children to repeat instructions in order to clarify understanding

### **Want to know more?**

Research your subject at NC Levels 1-3 via Primary NC websites. Ensure you can level work accurately and plan work to an appropriate level.

If necessary look at NC websites to find out what your subject looks like below Level 1c (P levels).

### **Support agencies**

National Pyramid Trust

## **ODD(oppositional defiant disorder)**

Oppositional defiant disorder is the term used to describe aggressive, defiant behaviors that are long lasting and beyond the range of normal behaviour. ODD can start at quite a young age (usually under nine or 10 years) and is more common in boys than in girls.

A diagnosis of oppositional defiant disorder will only be given if a child is defiant and disobedient in a provocative way over a period of time. The causes of ODD are unknown, though some studies show that it tends to run in families.

### **Key characteristics**

A pupil with oppositional defiant disorder may:

- argue constantly with and defy adults
- often appear angry and resentful
- deliberately annoy others
- have frequent, extreme tantrums
- be aggressive to other children
- blame others for things they have done themselves
- use unkind, spiteful language
- refuse to abide by any rules or sanctions
- be deliberately provocative and rude
- refuse to take responsibility for their behaviour.

### **Support strategies**

You may need to:

- liaise regularly with parents and professionals involved with the pupil
- ensure a consistent approach to the pupil's behavioral difficulties by all members of staff by developing positive behaviour management strategies
- set up small, social skills groups for pupils who have difficulty in particular areas, such as anger management or relating to other children
- arrange for family support provision either through the Family Centre or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS)
- give pupils opportunities to express their feelings through puppets or role play
- develop social interaction skills through games and paired problem-solving activities
- encourage the development of ICT skills to increase motivation
- provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their anxieties
- set short, clearly defined targets.

### **Support agencies**

- Young Minds.

## Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Speech and language impairment can vary a great deal from mild difficulties to severe problems with the understanding and use of language. A specific language impairment is diagnosed when a child has difficulty with language but is developing normally in all other areas. Many children have speech and language difficulties associated with physical, sensory, neurological and intellectual impairment. Over a million children in the UK have some kind of speech and language impairment. One in 500 of these children has an impairment that is both severe and long term. These learners will have difficulties with understanding and using language in one or more areas.

### Key characteristics

Children with a specific language impairment may have difficulties with one or more of these areas:

- **Phonology** – some children have difficulty processing speech sounds and using them correctly, while others confuse or substitute sounds.
- **Grammar** – some children have difficulty organising words into sentences, using the correct grammatical structure (they often muddle verb tenses and have difficulty with conjunctions and prepositions), or they may have difficulty pronouncing -ed, -ing, and -s endings and sound like much younger children in the way they form their sentences.
- **Word finding** – some learners have difficulty in recalling the right word when they need to use it, having to describe the word rather than naming it (for example, 'It's hot. You make tea. You put water in it' for the word 'kettle'), which may be caused by their difficulties.
- **Semantics** (the meanings of words and the way they relate to each other) may be affected by poor auditory memory skills and can have serious implications for learners in the classroom. If they cannot retain the meaning of new vocabulary, then they will have difficulty understanding new concepts and ideas, which will in turn affect their ability to express their own thoughts.
- **Attention and listening** – pupils with attention and listening difficulties have one of two problems. Either they cannot screen out what is unimportant from what they hear and so listen to everything, or they lack skill at controlling attention and therefore miss large chunks of information. Oral whole-class teaching can therefore cause great difficulty for these learners.
- **Pragmatics** (the way that language is used to convey thoughts and feelings) – some children have difficulty in understanding how to use language in different social situations and can make very inappropriate remarks.

### How can we help?

You may need to:

- use pictures, signs and symbols as teaching aids
- use visual or concrete materials to support the understanding of new conceptual vocabulary across the curriculum
- use alternative methods of recording, such as mind maps, diagrams, charts or writing frames
- encourage word association activities to develop word-finding skills
- play games to develop an understanding of categories such as vegetables, fruit or pets
- break instructions into chunks and check for understanding by asking the pupil to repeat each part
- give opportunities for revision of key concepts and vocabulary
- use games to develop listening and attention skills
- use specific ICT programmes, such as 'Writing with symbols'

- use circle time to encourage social interaction and communication skills
- use specific games and activities to develop social communication skills.

## Visual impairment

Visual impairment – having little or no sight – has been classified in a number of ways. Health and social services use the terms ‘blind’ for those with very little or no sight and ‘partially sighted’ for those with a small but useful level of vision. In education, the terms most commonly used are:

- **visually impaired** – this can be a reference to a particular eye problem or to reduced vision resulting from brain damage
- **totally blind** – having no sight at all.

A child is said to be visually impaired if their vision cannot be corrected to within normal limits by any means. Schools who have visually impaired children will need to make certain adaptations, such as adding white lines at the edges of steps, and to provide specially adapted equipment, such as magnifying screens and large print books.

### Key characteristics

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|---|--|
| <p><u>A child with visual impairment may:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• need to use a range of senses to become familiar with the school environment</li><li>• have a short attention span</li><li>• display unusual fatigue after any kind of visual task</li><li>• have poor balance.</li></ul> <p><u>A child who has problems with distance vision may:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• frown or scowl frequently and have a tendency to blink excessively or rub their eyes</li><li>• sit rigidly when reading or viewing a distant object</li><li>• turn their head to use one eye only</li><li>• lose their place when reading.</li></ul> | <p><u>A child who has problems with near vision may:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• try to avoid close work</li><li>• cover or close one eye and hold their head close to the work</li><li>• be inattentive when taking part in guided reading</li><li>• have awkward head posture generally</li><li>• stumble against classroom furniture</li><li>• have poor word spacing and be unable to write on a line.</li></ul> |
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### How can we help?

You may need to:

- allow more time for hands-on experiences, verbal explanations and completing tasks
- allow more opportunity for work with real objects
- make use of reverse-chaining – demonstrating what you want the end result to be like
- provide extra help with organisational skills
- keep the classroom tidy to avoid accidents
- put up bold and accessible wall displays
- verbalise everything that is written on the board
- make sure that the learner is sitting in the best place to see your face
- make sure that there is good lighting in the classroom, with no glare
- encourage the pupil to wear their glasses

- use colour coding to encourage them to locate or put away equipment
- provide them with their own books rather than expecting them to share
- encourage independence as much as possible.

## Visual perception

Visual perception is the ability to recognise, interpret and organise visual images.

Children who have difficulties in this area may:

- have a poor sense of direction and have difficulties judging speed and distance
- have difficulties with organisational skills
- reverse words in both reading and spelling (eg saw for was) and have difficulty with letter and number orientation
- have difficulty understanding abstract maths concepts, particularly in the areas of shape, space and measure
- have problems with comparative language (eg taller than, shorter than, longer than)
- have difficulty completing jigsaw puzzles
- have problems with copying from the board
- have problems with interpreting and organising diagrams, charts, graphs, maps and other visual methods of recording
- have difficulty with structuring and organising written work
- have strengths in logic, verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills
- enjoy using multi-sensory strategies when learning
- use audio strategies to aid recall of information and prefer to use audio methods for recording information
- prefer a phonic approach to learning to read.

### Activities to develop visual perception skills

**Feely bag** – pupils to describe a shape or object by feeling it without looking, then describe it again when they can see it.

**Magnetic patterns/pictures** – pupils to copy a pattern or picture using magnetic board and tiles/shapes.

**Guess what?** – pupils to guess identity of object when only part is visible. A picture of an object could be cut into four or more parts with only one part being given at a time until it has been identified.

**Puzzles** – a) jigsaw puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty; b) tangrams of varying degrees of difficulty.

**Draw a face** – look carefully at the position of facial features on a real person (or a photo) then reproduce them as closely as possible.

**Symmetry** – a) colour symmetrical patterns; b) colour symmetrical pictures; c) draw/ paint symmetrical patterns/pictures.

**Tessellation** – a) pupils to arrange 2D magnetic shapes; b) pupils to arrange and draw round 2D shapes to make tessellating patterns.

**Mazes** – a) follow sensory mazes using a variety of different materials; b) follow pencil and paper mazes; c) design/construct own mazes for others to follow.

**Movement** – allow directional and positional instructions in PE, gymnastics etc; can use symbols as a reminder.

**Noughts and crosses** – play as traditional game but can use a range of materials for pieces as a sensory stimulus.

**Build a model** – pupils to use pictures and diagrams as guides when building models; can use a range of construction apparatus.

**Computer-aided picture and design activities** – use graphics programs and encourage use of different feature.