



A SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCE

Dyslexia

"Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching."

– British Psychological Society, Division of Educational and Child Psychology (1999), *Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment*

i In plain terms: a specific learning difference mainly affecting accurate, fluent word reading and spelling – often unexpected, and seen across the full range of ability.

How it can present

- Slow, effortful or hesitant reading; reading aloud is tiring
- Persistent spelling difficulties; writing that doesn't reflect spoken ideas
- Phonological awareness – hearing and working with sounds in words
- Holding and sequencing information in working memory; slower processing speed
- Quickly recalling the names of letters, numbers or words

What helps – supportive approaches

- ✓ Structured, systematic, multi-sensory phonics teaching
- ✓ Assistive technology – text-to-speech, speech-to-text and audiobooks
- ✓ Extra time, reduced copying and shared or printed notes
- ✓ Low-pressure reading aloud; pre-teaching key vocabulary
- ✓ Building on visual, creative and verbal strengths; an Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycle

UK CONTEXT

~10%

Around 10% of people are dyslexic, with about 4% affected more severely. (The Rose Review estimates 4–8% of children.)

British Dyslexia Association

Strengths often seen

- ✦ Big-picture, joined-up reasoning and pattern-spotting
- ✦ Strong visual-spatial and 3D thinking
- ✦ Creativity and 'outside-the-box' problem-solving
- ✦ Storytelling and verbal reasoning
- ✦ Practical, hands-on design and problem-solving

Finding assessment & support in the UK

- 1 Dyslexia is identified through educational assessment – a GP does not diagnose it
- 2 Start with the school SENCo and SEN Support (a graduated approach)
- 3 A full assessment is carried out by a specialist teacher-assessor (with an APC) or an Educational Psychologist
- 4 The British Dyslexia Association offers guidance and a helpline
- 5 Request an EHC needs assessment / EHCP where needs exceed school support

Please note – this sheet provides general information only. It is not a diagnostic tool and is not a substitute for individual assessment or professional advice. Every person is unique; if you have concerns about yourself or a child, please speak with a suitably qualified professional.

Sources & further information: British Psychological Society (1999) · British Dyslexia Association · NHS · Rose Review (2009)