

## **What are Cognition and Learning difficulties?**

*The SEN Code of Practice states: 'Support for learning difficulties maybe required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation'.*

Children with cognition and learning difficulties may have: low levels of attainment across the board in all forms of assessment, difficulty in acquiring skills (notably in English and Maths) on which much other learning in school depends; difficulty in dealing with abstract ideas and generalising from experience and a range of associated difficulties, notably in speech and language (particularly for younger children) and in social and emotional development.

### **Specific Learning Difficulties**

Specific Learning Difficulties is an umbrella term which emphasises the differences that pupils display across their learning. Pupils may have a particular difficulty in learning to read, write, spell or manipulate numbers so that their performance in these areas is below their performance in other areas. Specific learning difficulties, affect one or more specific aspects of learning.

Pupils may also have difficulties with short term memory, organisational skills, visual processing and coordination. Pupils with SLD cover the whole ability range and the severity of their impairment varies widely.

Examples of specific learning difficulties are: Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia.

### **Dyslexia**

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor coordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

The British Dyslexia Association acknowledges the visual and auditory processing difficulties that some individuals with dyslexia can experience, and points out that the dyslexic reader can show a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process. Some also have strengths in other areas, such as design, problem solving, creative skills, interactive skills and oral skills.

As a working definition, The British Psychological Society emphasises the need for a staged assessment process to take place. 'Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develop very incompletely or with great difficulty'.

Pupils with dyslexia may make progress in some areas of the curriculum but have a marked and persistent difficulty in acquiring accuracy or fluency in learning to read, write and spell. Pupils may have difficulties in concentration and organisation and in remembering sequences of words. They may mispronounce common words or reverse letters and sounds in words.

For further information visit: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

### **Dyspraxia**

Dyspraxia is a common form of Developmental Coordination Disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination, in children and adults. While DCD is often regarded as an umbrella term to cover motor coordination difficulties, dyspraxia refers to those pupils who have additional problems planning, organisation and carrying out movements in the right order in everyday situations.

Dyspraxia can also affect articulation and speech, perception and thought. Although Dyspraxia may occur in isolation, it frequently coexists with other conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, language disorders and social, emotional and behavioural impairments.

For further information visit: <http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

Your child may need support with:

- Reading and spelling
- Learning new vocabulary and concepts
- Memory
- Number and calculations
- General learning

### **Dyscalculia**

Dyscalculia is a difficulty understanding maths concepts and symbols. It is characterised by an inability to understand simple number concepts and to master basic numeracy skills. There are likely to be difficulties dealing with numbers at very elementary levels; this includes learning number facts and procedures, telling the time, time keeping, understanding quantity, prices and money.

For further information visit: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/schools-colleges-and-universities/dyscalculia.html>

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