

What is Dyslexia?

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Dyslexia is thought to affect between 10 to 15% of the population. Translated into a classroom situation, this suggests at least 3 children in every typical classroom of 30. It is not unusual to be Dyslexic, but research suggests that 80% of young people with Dyslexia leave school without having had a formal identification of their Dyslexic profile. Without an assessment we are less likely to be able to fully appreciate a learner's strengths and challenges. Once we do really take a look at what is happening for them, we are in a far better position to be able to work with a child or young person's strengths to help support and overcome areas of difficulty.

There are many common misconceptions around Dyslexia. The word itself has negative connotations: 'Dys' = 'difficulty with', 'lexia' = words and language. We can forgive the general public for considering Dyslexia to relate only to literacy, but it is much broader than this once we begin to look beyond the surface level, and some of those broader elements bring strengths and talents which we need to find and exploit to help our children and young people reach their potential.

Dyslexia is a learning difference

Children and young people with Dyslexia often learn differently. It has been found that Dyslexia commonly leads to significant strengths which lend themselves to success in certain areas. When we look at successful people with Dyslexia, we can often identify how they have been able to exploit their natural talents.

Dyslexia commonly brings strong oral communication skills, as well the ability to make connections between information to problem solve. It often brings strong visual spatial skills, being able to see how things interlink and fit together, and sometimes the ability to see in 3D. You can see how this is an asset in some areas of work, such as design, engineering and art.

People with Dyslexia will often have strong lateral thinking, problem solving skills and the ability to 'think outside of the box'. We need innovative thinkers to move society forwards. We need people who think differently, who provide a different perspective, who can approach situations from a different angle. This is how we develop.

It is important to appreciate that people are unique individuals who do not always fit neatly into a specific box, and people with Dyslexia are the same as everyone else in this respect. However, if we know where to look for strengths, we can identify and use those strengths to support progress and help children find their own way to work to those strengths. You will often see children with Dyslexia enjoying more visual and practical based subjects at school which allow them to see, feel and do, such as science, design technology, art, drama, sport.

About Witherslack Group

We are committed to sharing advice and support to parents, carers and professionals. Our webinars and online resources provide expert knowledge and practical support. If you would like to find out more information you can email webinars@witherslackgroup.co.uk or visit www.witherslackgroup.co.uk.



About Sally-Anne Morrison

Sally-Ann Morrison is an Independent Dyslexia Consultant with over 20 years' experience working in the field.