

## SEN

### All children need support at some point

During children's learning journeys I expect most children will need an additional guidance at some point. This may just be some extra help in the classroom, somebody to talk to, extra support outside the normal lessons, an activity to improve self confidence or self esteem, a little extra time or even a special job or activity. Children will not always make the same progress every year and learning can peak and plateau for a wide variety of reasons. Things happening at home including changes in relationships, moving house, bereavement, the loss of a pet etc can also affect children in different ways. Please do make us aware if your child is experiencing any of these or other things that could mean they need a little TLC or extra support

Some children will need support with learning throughout their school careers. These children may receive a statement of needs and have additional support allocated to them. Others may be recorded on the school register of need either as school action or school action plus. All children in these categories will have an individualised educational plan as well as having differentiated activities in class.

Many other children will take part in a variety of additional activities when appropriate to give them a boost or to raise self confidence in a particular area. At our school we run a variety of interventions that have been described in past newsletters and help us to ensure the children have the best chance of achieving their real potential. We also employ a larger number of teaching assistants to work with children in the classrooms and to oversee established programmes that children benefit from.

When children have additional needs we work with other professionals and the parents so that we can best meet the needs of the individual. At Sir Robert Geffery's we have had experience of working with children with a wide variety of additional needs including

Dyslexia

ADHD

Dyspraxia

Autism

Aspergers Syndrome

Speech and Language difficulties

Dysclacula

Tourettes

Emotional and behavioural difficulties

Hearing impairments

If you ever have a concern about your child do come and talk about it with Miss Williams or Mrs Curtis. Parents do know their children best and we can often signpost you to the appropriate person to assess any needs or provide support if appropriate.

Each week until Christmas we will give you information about the above.

## I am concerned my child may have a hearing difficulty

**There are two types of hearing impairment or deafness:**

- Conductive deafness - a difficulty caused by problems in the outer or middle ear, which is often temporary
- Sensorineural or nerve deafness - a permanent difficulty caused by problems in the inner ear or the central nervous system.

Hearing loss can be mild, moderate, severe, profound affecting one ear or both.

## **How can I tell if my child has a hearing difficulty?**

If your child is between three and four years of age:

- Do strangers find it difficult to understand what your child is saying?
- Is your child unable to carry out two unrelated requests or tasks?

If your child is between four and five years of age, does he or she:

- Miss the ends of words, for example saying "do" instead of "dog"?
- Often use the wrong letter, for example saying "gog" instead of "dog"?

If your child is at school, his or her teacher may have noticed that your child:

- Often asks for questions to be repeated
- Watches other children for clues about instructions
- Frequently misunderstands what is being asked.

The majority of children with severe or profound hearing loss are normally identified at an early age by health professionals. Other more mild losses can come to light at a later age. If you or your child's teacher have any concerns, speak to your GP. For further information about hearing difficulties, The National Deaf Children's Society

## I am concerned my child may have a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia)

**Dyslexia literally means a difficulty with words. Dyslexia is an unexpected difficulty in one or more of these areas: reading, writing, spelling, number work. Dyslexia is often referred to as a specific learning difficulty to show that it is not an all-round learning problem and helps to describe what the specific difficulties are.**

### **Common signs:**

- Reverse the order of letters, numbers and words
- Has long-term difficulty remembering sequences, for example, the alphabet, days of the week and months of the year
- Has problems with time, both in telling the time and knowing which part of the day it is
- Finds it difficult to concentrate, remember messages and to follow instructions
- Has trouble putting names to things or people
- Is late in learning to read and spell.

*Remember - all children have to learn to do these things. If your child experiences one or two of these difficulties it does not mean your child is dyslexic.*

If you are concerned about your child speak to his/her class teacher, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or the Head Teacher. The school may undertake some preliminary tests. If they continue to have concerns they may refer your child to Special Educational Needs Specialist Service (SENS). This service provides specialist assessment, teaching and advice for pupils, from 4 -19 years with specific learning difficulties and the broader range of SEN.

For further information about dyslexia contact the [Dyslexia Institute](#).

## I am concerned my child may have Attention Deficit Disorder (with or without hyperactivity ADHD and ADD)

**Children with ADHD/ADD have real problems controlling their behaviour, in most situations at home or school. They can cause great strain within their families. The condition normally shows itself well before school age.**

Children with ADHD:

- Show impulsivity which can make them appear deliberately disobedient
- Are easily distracted (forget instructions, flit from task to task, have a low boredom threshold, have difficulty starting tasks, often leave work unfinished)
- Can be impulsive (fidgety, restless, frequently get up and down, interfere with other children, act and speak without thinking)
- Can be socially clumsy (act silly in a crowd, butt into games, lose friends)

- Are sometimes poorly disorganised (have problems structuring school work)
- Often have bad days
- Sometimes have other learning difficulties (literacy problems, poor written work)

Children with ADD (i.e. without hyperactivity) will have some similar characteristics, but be less impulsive. They will often be lost in thought, and appear unmotivated.

Children with ADD and ADHD are normally diagnosed by medical professionals. If you are concerned about your child, speak to your child's class teacher and/or your GP. They may refer on to a Paediatrician. For further information contact the Behaviour Support Service (BSS), the ADHD UK Alliance or the Hyperactive Children's Support Group.

## I am concerned my child may be Autistic or has Asperger syndrome.

**Autism is a lifelong disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Children with autism have difficulty relating to others in a meaningful way. Their ability to develop friendships is generally limited as is their capacity to understand other people's emotional expression.**

A child with autism experiences difficulties in 3 main areas:

- Social interaction (difficulty with social relationships, for example appearing aloof and indifferent to other people)
- Social communication (difficult with verbal and non-verbal communication, for example not fully understanding the meaning of common gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice)
- Imagination (difficulty in the development of interpersonal play and imagination, for example having a limited range of imaginative activities, possibly copied and pursued rigidly and repetitively).

Children with autism are usually diagnosed by health professionals before they start pre-school.

However if you are concerned speak to your GP who may refer you to a Paediatrician.

Asperger syndrome is a form of autism and shares many of the same characteristics. Children with Asperger syndrome usually have fewer problems with language and do not have the accompanying learning disabilities associated with autism. However, although children with Asperger syndrome often try hard to be sociable, many find it hard to understand non-verbal signals, including facial expressions. As with autism, asperger syndrome is diagnosed by health professionals. If you are concerned, speak to your GP who may refer you to a Paediatrician. For further information contact the National Autistic Society.

## I am concerned my child may have Dyspraxia

**Children with Dyspraxia have difficulty getting their bodies to do what they want them to do, for example:**

- Handwriting
- Fine motor movements, e.g. cutting, threading beads, building bricks and ball skills
- Poor use of pencil, pen, scissors and rulers
- Using cutlery at mealtimes (mess when eating)
- Dressing and undressing
- Problems in PE, bumping into things and knocking things over
- Organisation and planning
- Following instructions
- Expressing themselves clearly
- Remaining on task and paying attention
- Mathematical and literacy skills

Dyspraxia is normally diagnosed by medical professionals. If you are concerned about your child, speak to your child's class teacher and/or your GP. They may refer on to a Paediatrician, Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist. The therapists can provide advice on activities to help your child. For further information contact The Dyspraxia Foundation