WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

The word 'dyslexia' comes from the Greek and literally means 'difficulty with words'.

**Definition:** Dyslexia is a specific learning difference which affects about 10% of the population and is characterised by difficulties with reading, writing, visual processing and short term memory. These processing difficulties can undermine the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills, as well as musical notation, and can also have an effect on verbal communication, organisation and adaptation to change.

The impact of these difficulties can be eased by inclusive teaching, strategy development and the use of assistive technology.

There are a number of related learning differences which may also have overlapping or contributory features to dyslexia, these include:

- Dysgraphia (difficulty with handwriting and expressing thoughts and ideas in writing)
- Dyspraxia (difficulties with movement, perception, language and thought)
- Dyscalculia (difficulty in conceptualising numbers, number relationships and outcomes of numerical operations)

**Difficulties and Strengths**

**Possible difficulties**

- Reading hesitantly or slowly
- Misreading information, making understanding difficult
- Difficulty with sequences, e.g. getting dates in order
- Poor organisation or time management
- Difficulty organising and expressing thoughts clearly
- Erratic spelling

**Possible strengths**

- Innovative thinkers
- Excellent trouble shooters
- Intuitive problem solving
- Creative in many different ways
- Lateral thinkers
* These will vary from individual to individual.

Adapted from the British Dyslexia Association (http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/further-information/dyslexia-research-information-.html [accessed 20 January 2012]).

**Useful Contacts**

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