April 2024

St Gregory's SEND Newsletter

Issue 5

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our fifth issue of the termly SEND newsletter, a whole year since our first ever St Gregory's SEND newsletter! We hope you will find it useful. We want to continue to work closely with the St Gregory's community to support pupils and parents on their journey throughout St Gregory's.

Our SEND newsletter is where we will celebrate the great achievements of our children, share topics of interest and also signpost some useful information and advice.

It was lovely to meet with some of our parents during this terms Parent's Evening to discuss the needs of your children. Please remember that I am available to meet with parents to discuss a range of needs and to signpost to relevant support; simply contact the office or send me a message on dojo to arrange a mutually convenient day and time.

If you have any suggestions for future content in the newsletter please get in touch.
Mrs Wright
SENCO/Deputy Head teacher

To view the SEND section on our school website please visit:

https://www.stgregorysps.co.uk/send/

Loving all, like Jesus, we flourish together

Spot light on dyscalculia:

What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with Mathematics; it is a condition that makes it hard to do Maths and tasks that involve Maths. It's not as well known or as understood as dyslexia. It occurs across all ages and abilities.

Mathematics difficulties are best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and they have many causal factors. Dyscalculia falls at one end of the spectrum and will be distinguishable from other Maths issues due to the severity of difficulties with number sense, including subitising, symbolic and non-symbolic magnitude comparison, and ordering. It can occur singly but often co-occurs with other specific learning difficulties, Mathematics anxiety and medical conditions.

About 6% of people have dyscalculia. An estimated 25% of people have Maths learning difficulties which can be caused either by other neurodiverse conditions such as dyslexia or external issues such as a traumatic learning experience related to Maths or school absence etc. 60% of individuals with dyslexia will also have difficulties with Maths.

How is dyscalculia different from other Maths learning difficulties?

Dyscalculia is at the severe end of the Maths learning difficulties; characteristics that are found with people with dyscalculia are:-

Persistent difficulties with Maths, these will have been present since the learner was young;

Learners will have difficulties with arithmetic but not necessarily other areas of Maths such as geometry and algebra;

A lack of understanding of numbers and simple number concepts, for example the relationship between multiplication and repeated addition;

Continued on page 3

Spot light on dyscalculia continued…

How is dyscalculia different from other Maths learning difficulties?

A lack of fundamental understanding of how numbers relate to each other, for example 6 can be made from 5 + 1, double 3 or 4 + 2 (the flexibility of number) as well as a visual concept of the magnitude of numbers;

Younger children have difficulties with subitising: knowing how many items there are in a set (they need to count them one by one);

Learners rely on rote learning and simple ways of working out answers like counting on their fingers;

Learners have extreme difficulties spotting patterns in numbers and making generalisations;

Learners will have difficulties remembering how to do a calculation or follow a procedure;

Learners will have difficulties with mathematical language and word problems;

Learners will have difficulties with automatic retrieval of information such as times -tables;

Learners will display high levels of Maths anxiety;

Learners will have slow processing and information retrieval;

Learners will be unable to explain what they are doing.

Not all learners will experience all of these difficulties.

Continued on page 4

Spot light on dyscalculia continued…

What to do:

If you're concerned about your child's progress in Maths, first talk to their teacher. If there's an ongoing concern, take your child to see your GP. It may be that your child has health problems that are affecting their ability to progress in Maths. For example, they may have: vision problems, such as short-sightedness or a squint (book an eye test), hearing problems as the result of a condition such as glue ear or other conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

If your child does not have any obvious underlying health problems to explain their difficulties in Maths, it may be that they're not responding very well to the teaching methods used and a different approach may be needed or some additional intervention. If difficulties continue a child can be screened for dyscalculia this will not provide a dyscalculia diagnosis—this can only be carried out be a certified assessor. If a child shows dyscalculia tendencies then adjustments can be made with the teaching methods used in class. For example establishing a sense of number that includes the use of concrete manipulatives such as Cuisenaire Rods, Diene's apparatus, dot patterns and Numicon. The child is taught to visually internalise what a number (rather than a digit) looks and feels like. The child learns to match digits or numerals with visual quantities and learns how numbers can be deconstructed to make other numbers or quantities and reconstructed. This takes away the fear of numbers and establishes a sense of what numbers mean. With these basic tools they will never fully overcome their particular Maths difficulty, but they will learn to cope in a world of numbers and money.

Continued on page 5

Spot light on dyscalculia continued…

Useful websites for further information/support related to dyscalculia:

thedyscalculia informationcentre

https://www.dyscalculia.me.uk/resources-for-parents.html

Brain Balance®

https://www.brainbalancecenters.com/blog/practical-ways-parents-can-help-child-dyscalculia

Dyscalculia Network
Unlocking Numbers

https://dyscalculianetwork.com/dyscalculia-for-parents/

A number of children have special interests and hobbies outside of school. The spotlight this term is on...

This is Theo, a Year 4 pupil. Theo has been recovering from an operation since January so he cannot do his beloved horse riding, which is his favourite hobby. He is really proud of himself after climbing up to the second floor of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. A staggering 674 steps! Well done Theo, we hope you'll be back horse riding very soon.





We would love to hear about the great things that the children get up to out of school. Please get in touch via dojo to share achievements and proud moments out of school, 'spotlights' continue in next terms newsletter!

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More exciting news…

Over the past few months an unused space in school was repurposed in order to create our very own 'Sensory Room'! We are very proud of this space and many children are making good use of this space already. Our sensory room is designed to provide calm, focus, and comfort to pupils with sensory processing difficulties, which often includes our pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

In February it was officially opened by Mr. Richard Kershaw, our school advisor, along with Theo and his parents.



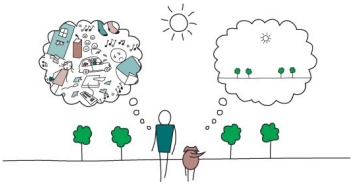




This terms top tip/s:

Mindful Parenting Tips:

Being a parent is tough! Being a parent of a child with SEND can be even tougher at times. Whilst we all want the best for our children and will do anything to support them it's important to follow the oxygen mask principle: put your own mask on first, before you help your child. The more we discover how to be mindful ourselves, the more we can turn to mindful parenting strategies and appreciate our children's capacity to be present in each moment.



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Our Senior Mental Health Lead and School Councillor, Linda, is available for drops-ins for parents Monday-Thursday from 3pm please contact the office or dojo Linda to arrange a drop in session. Linda can signpost to a range of support or simply just listen.

Children's Family and Well-being are another fantastic service, offering a range of free support, classes and groups. If you would like further information about the services they offer please get in touch or contact them directly at: cfwprestongroups@lancashire.gov.uk or call 01772 539444.

Children and Family Wellbeing Service

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Other information, support and interests...





Children and Family Wellbeing Services offer a wide range of free support, advice and services.

