

# Cognition and Learning



Quick Guide to...

## Dyspraxia (DCD) Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

*Dyspraxia is a motor learning difficulty, characterised by impairment in the ability to plan and carry out sensory and motor tasks. Pupils with dyspraxia will have a unique combination of difficulties classified into the areas of motor, social, language and perception.*

*Dyspraxia is present from birth but becomes more apparent as a pupil becomes older. It is a life-long condition but is not a progressive illness.*

### Some possible areas of difficulty in the classroom.

- Difficulty with activities which involve running, hopping, skipping, catching/kicking balls, climbing activities and team games.
- Difficulty with understanding and remembering rules, listening to instructions.
- Handwriting difficulties - both with formation of letters as well as speed. Work can appear messy.
- Difficulty keeping up in class, completing work, only able to write a few lines or sentences. Hand becomes easily tired.
- Difficulty using classroom equipment such as rulers, scissors, compasses, protractors etc.
- Slow at dressing/undressing - particularly changing for games/PE, tying shoe laces, tie, doing up buttons, putting on coats.
- Difficulty sitting still - may wonder around the classroom or move around on seat, can also be quite fidgety and may disturb others.
- Difficulty keeping to own space – equipment will often spread out from their own space.
- Poor concentration skills, not always able to focus on an activity or only manages to stay on task for a short time.
- Poor organisation skills, will often forget to take homework/books/letters home or bring back to school, generally messy, loses items, poor planning for school work. Has problems adapting to a structured school

routine.

- Falls and trips over often.
- Poor spatial awareness and knocks into objects in the classroom and bumps into people.
- Poor short term memory such as difficulty remembering or following instructions, forgets what to do for homework, difficulty copying from the board or with dictation.
- Poor stamina and gets easily tired and frustrated with themselves
- Social difficulties and can often be loners due to have problems with forming relationships and can appear isolated in a class group. Takes spoken word literally.
- Other difficulties may include maths difficulties, the pupil may report physical symptoms e.g. migraines, headaches, feeling sick and become easily distressed.

### **How do I support the pupil in the classroom?**

- Supervision and encouragement to stay on a task.
- Ensure good seating, rest both feet flat on the floor and sit with upright posture.
- Pre-prepared recording sheets to reduce the quantity of handwriting required. Write out homework for the pupil.
- Break down activities/tasks into small components. Never give the child more than 3 -4 instructions at one time.
- Give us much encouragement and positive feedback as possible.
- Allow extra time for the completion of a task.
- Be aware that during sudden growth spurts difficulties may become more apparent.
- Liaise with the medical professionals for further advice in the classroom and P.E. setting.

For more information on Dyspraxia, please visit the Dyspraxia Foundation's website at <https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Primary-dyspraxia-factsheet-updated-by-ML-Oct-2016.pdf>

**It will take a number of sessions for a pupil to become familiar with a new way of working. Review the impact of your new approach at regular intervals, and make adjustments to practice as needed.  
If you require further guidance on this Quick Guide or the Graduated Approach, please contact your Specialist Teacher.**