

Spotlight on Neurodiversity

My weekly Inclusion Assemblies are back and this term we are learning about neurodiversity—a concept that acknowledges that human brains can work in different ways. As always, we are celebrating our differences and the positives these bring. We are exploring the many types of brain difference, some famous people whose differences were key to their success and lots of new vocabulary along the way! To start with, we learned that 'neuro' refers to the brain and 'diversity' to difference. Read on to find out more, as we share our learning with you! *Miss Govan*

A story about brains and phones

The analogy in the 'story about brains and phones' from 'More Than One Neurotype' has been shared in both staff training and assemblies as it offers a powerful analogy for why a different approach may be needed for some people.



The story likens the different 'types of brains' to different brands of smartphone, acknowledging that one is not necessarily better than the another—they are just different.

If you tried to get a Samsung phone to use an iPhone app, it would not work properly. This isn't because the phone is broken—you are asking it to do something in a way it wasn't designed for. Often we ask people with neurodivergent brains to do things in a neurotypical way and they struggle. In the same way, they are being asked to do something in a way their brain wasn't designed for.

You would not throw away the Samsung phone, you would change your approach and use an app designed for it. In the same way, those with neurodivergent brains shouldn't be punished or disadvantaged, we should change our approach and make accommodations.



We have acknowledged that the world is often designed for neurotypical brains only and that we need to embrace difference so everyone feels they belong and can be successful.

Staff and children have been learning new vocabulary around neurodiversity:

Neurotypical

Brains that work in the same way as the majority of others.

Neurodivergent

Brains that work in a different way to the majority. This includes those with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia and more...

NEURODIVERGENT v NEURODIVERSE

<p>Each of these people is NEURODIVERGENT (There are lots of ways to be neurodivergent)</p>	<p>This person is NEUROTYPICAL</p>
<p>These people are NEURODIVERGENT but the group itself is NOT NEURODIVERSE</p>	<p>This is a NEURODIVERSE GROUP</p>
<p>This person is MULTIPLY NEURODIVERGENT They are NOT NEURODIVERSE</p>	<p>Only a group can be NEURODIVERSE</p> <p>An individual can not.</p>

Staff Training

Throughout the term, 'bitesize' weekly resources around aspects of neurodiversity are being shared with all staff. This has included updating staff on preferred terminology from neurodivergent communities. Additionally, our October INSET Day will provide an opportunity for staff to refresh their knowledge of ADHD with training from the local organisation ADHD Embrace. Our experienced Inclusion Team and staff from the SRP (Haring) are also always available to advise staff and develop practice.

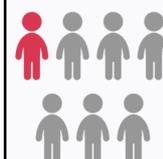
A Visual Guide to NeuroDiversity language & Inclusion

developed from a design by @scrippapertiger

<p>A diverse group of shapes. But ☺ is the most common. ☺ are typical</p>	<p>are all divergent from the most common shape ☺ They are divergent</p>	<p>Here is a family of △. They are All divergent from the majority, who are ☺, but they are not diverse. Within their family group they are all the same.</p>	<p>☺ is divergent from the average ☺ but they can't be diverse, as there is just one shape (not a group).</p>
<p>This family is diverse, with two divergent members in a society where ☺ is most common. The ☺ is typical but part of a diverse family.</p>	<p>Typically society is designed for the majority ☺ of people The majority are generally unaware of the challenges others face (as they don't experience them)</p>	<p>"Trying to fit in" For divergent people this can mean they face huge unrecognized challenges that can cause severe levels of mental and physical damage. Just trying to fit into society can mean masking our real selves.</p>	<p>All people need to be included in designing society, for society to work for ALL people!</p> <p>There should be "Nothing About Us, Without Us". #NAUWU @cyberpagan</p>

Did you know?

The rainbow infinity symbol represents neurodiversity.



It is estimated that in an average group of seven people, six will be neurotypical and one will be neurodivergent.

King Athelstan is a neurodiverse community in terms of our children, staff and families.



Pupil Voice

One of our pupils who has ADHD made a PowerPoint presentation all about it to help explain how he feels to his class. It was so clear that, with his permission, we shared it with staff too! He has allowed me to share a little with you too. He says: "If you have ADHD your brain goes fast! Your brain works differently if you have ADHD." He also identified the following strengths:

ADHD STRENGTHS!

- ADHD can make you great at football because you have a lot of ENERGY!
- ADHD can mean you are CREATIVE! I like to make and build things.
- ADHD can help you FOCUS! Even though it can be difficult to focus with ADHD, if there is something I really care about, I can think about it for hours!
- ADHD can make you RESILIENT! Because sometimes I find things difficult, I have learnt to work hard to achieve my dreams!



Children also made this poster to display in their classrooms explaining ADHD:

ADHD

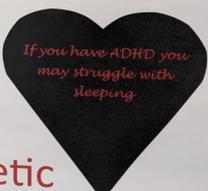
Kind





Creative

Logical

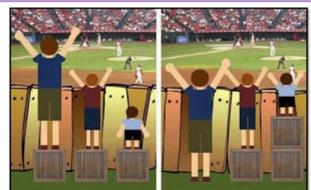


Energetic

Several children have kindly provided positive feedback following our assemblies together. I am delighted some children have also felt more able to name and share their neurotype with their friends. One child shared that they view their dyslexia as a 'superpower'. We are so proud of how inclusive and accepting the children are of their own and others' needs and differences.

Fair isn't always equal

This poster has made its way into our school behaviour policy, has formed part of staff training and is regularly featured in assemblies, most recently in the current 'neurodiversity' series. Children sometimes query why a child may seem to have accommodations, resources or provision that is different to their peers. We are developing a culture whereby it is accepted that each person needs different things in order to be successful. Sometimes this provision is subtle, and sometimes more apparent, but it is there to support that person's needs. We hope that by educating children about the various differences experienced throughout society that they will be increasingly aware and accepting of these within the school community and beyond.



FAIR ISN'T everybody getting the same thing.....

FAIR IS everybody getting what they need in order to be **SUCCESSFUL**.

Videos

In our assemblies we are learning about a range of different neurotypes through videos explaining what these may feel like. Check out the links below if your children would like to re-watch, or if you would like to learn more yourselves! More to follow after half term...

Autism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbwRrVw-CRo>

ADHD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeamHE6Kank>

Dyslexia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11r7CFIK2sc>

Famous Faces

Within Inclusion Assemblies we are also learning about some famous people who are neurodivergent. As October is Black History Month, we have focussed on black icons:

Benjamin Zephaniah

Benjamin is a dyslexic performance poet. He experienced racism as a child and his needs were misunderstood. He got into trouble at school and with the police but ultimately turned things around to become one of the country's most successful poets, despite not learning to read and write until adulthood (when he discovered he was dyslexic).



Simone Biles

Simone is an Olympic gymnast who has ADHD. She spent a short period in foster care before being adopted and raised by her grandparents. Simone was determined and pushed herself hard—training for 32 hours per week! This earned her a place in Team USA at the 2016 Olympics in Rio. Sadly, her medical records were stolen and it was claimed she should not compete due to the medication she was taking. Simone shared publicly that this was medication to help her manage her ADHD and was allowed to compete, going on to win 4 medals in Rio. As well as being acknowledged as the best and most decorated female gymnast in history, she is also an advocate for children in foster care. She set up a scholarship fund to support the education of children in foster care and believes everyone, no matter their background, deserves the opportunity to learn.



Stephen Wiltshire

Stephen is an autistic artist. Our Nurture and Inclusion Room is named after him. He draws detailed cityscapes and is able to do this accurately after having only observed them briefly. He began drawing at age 5 and sold his first work to the UK Prime Minister at age 8! His motto is 'Do the best you can and never stop'.



After half term we will look at Farah Nanji, a dyspraxic DJ and racing driver.

Want to find out more? You might want to check out these books with your child:

- **Just Like Me** by Louise Gooding (40 neurologically and physically diverse people who broke stereotypes)
- **Wired Differently** by Joe Wells (30 neurodivergent people you should know)