

In my first SEND and wellbeing newsletter of 2024, I hope to give you some further insight about areas of SEND along with details about the resources and support that is available both in and out of school. For the Spring Term I will be in school on Wednesdays and Thursdays and I am always happy to meet with you during these times to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. I will also be running SEND My Plan review meetings on Thursday 1st February from 1pm-6pm so please do book in for an appointment if you haven't yet done so. If you wish to contact me at any other time, please feel free to do so, either by emailing me - adodd@gretton.gloucs.sch.uk or calling school.

Mrs Alison Dodd, SENDCo

Developmental Co-ordination disorder



Developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a condition affecting physical co-ordination. It is a surprisingly common condition affecting movement and coordination in both children and adults. DCD is a hidden condition which is still poorly understood. DCD affects all areas of life, making it difficult for people to carry out activities that others take for granted. Signs of dyspraxia/DCD are present from a young age but may not be recognised until a child starts school – or even later in adulthood.

Signs of DCD/Dyspraxia

Each person's experience of dyspraxia/DCD is different. There are, however, some common signs of dyspraxia/DCD:

- Difficulty running, hopping, skipping and climbing. Movements appear awkward and effortful
- Struggles to master activities such as riding a bike and swimming
- Positions self awkwardly on a chair, may fall off, struggles to sit still
- Tires quickly, often poorly at the end of term
- They may be late to establish hand dominance (after 7 yrs old)
- Frequently drops and spills things
- Difficulty getting dressed – struggles with buttons, pulling on socks/tights, orientating clothes and tying laces
- Handwriting is slow and poorly presented
- Dislikes drawing and colouring
- Has difficulty using both hands together, for example using scissors and cutlery
- Difficulty following instructions, especially if movement is involved
- Easily distracted, often leaving tasks unfinished
- Frequently loses PE kit, clothes and equipment
- Struggles to form and/or maintain relationships with peers because interests and skills are different
- Tendency to become easily distressed and emotional
- Sleeping difficulties, including wakefulness at night and nightmares
- Growing awareness of difficulties, affecting confidence and self-esteem
- May report physical symptoms such as headaches and nausea

How is DCD identified?

If you're concerned about your child's development, talk to a GP or the SENDCo at school. The usual process is to refer your child to an occupational therapist or paediatrician who can assess them and try to identify any developmental problems.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Creative	Hand-eye coordination
Strategic thinkers	Spatial awareness
Empathetic	Organisation
Problem solving	Time management
Verbal skills	

How to support a child with DCD at home and at school

- Extra processing time and time to complete any activities, especially those which may be physical in nature.
- Visual supports such as word mats, sentence starters and writing frames.
- Use of recording devices to aid working memory – such as talking tins/pens and assisted software
- Do not provide too many verbal or visual instructions at once.
- Place simple written instructions on the pupil's desk.
- Provide time for fine and gross motor skills practise
- Position the student away from distractions in the classroom.
- Celebrate students strengths

Further information about DCD/Dyspraxia, can be found [here](#)

Spotlight on

Fizzy programme

The FIZZY Programme is recommended by occupational therapy for schools to use to assist in the development of fine and gross motor skills for those children who find this challenging. It is a graded and measurable activity programme which is split into three stages Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced. It works on three specific areas balance, ball skills and body awareness. This is done by working on a child's postural control, strength and co-ordination.

The programme aims to help the children to:

- become motivated
- develop their gross and fine motor skills
- be more confident
- increase their self-esteem
- enjoy movement and PE



The children who are selected for the intervention usually participate for 2-3 sessions per week and it is usually run in a small group. The activities are all very practical and aim to develop the child's skills week by week.

My Happy Mind Conversation Cards



My Happy Mind have produced packs of conversation cards which parents and carers are able to purchase. They have a range of questions which aim to spark conversations within the family. I have left a pack in reception so please do pop in to have a look at them. They are £15.20 per pack and if you would like to purchase a pack to use at home, please make a payment on Parent mail by 8th February.



Children's Mental Health Week



Week commencing 5th February 2024 is Children's Mental Health week. The theme this year is 'My Voice Matters.' We have some really exciting things planned during the week. I have organised for a mindfulness and yoga coach, kindly funded by FOGS, to come in to work with each class during the week, along with circus skills workshops, cricket coaches, plus music and art sessions. It's set to be a fantastic week! Further details about the plans for week will follow. **Place2Be** offer a wide range of resources for parents to support children's mental health, please find further details [here](#)

Useful links

Please see below for agencies and details of further support available to families.

- SEND Information report - <https://www.gretton.gloucs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SEND-Information-report-Sept-2023-1.pdf>
- SENDiass provide information, advice and support on matters relating to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The service is offered to parents and carers of children and young people aged between 0 and 25 years old. <https://sendiassglos.org.uk/>
- Early Help - https://www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glofamiliedirectory/family.page?familychannel=1_1
- Gloucestershire families directory - The Service offers a wide range of information to support families, children and young people from 0 – 19 years of age (25 for young people with additional needs) They can also provide information on family support, tax credits, benefits, funding and much, much more. <https://www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glofamiliedirectory/home.page>
- Gloucestershire support for families with SEND - [Glofamiliedirectory | Support for Families with SEND - Gloucestershire's Local Offer for Parent & Carers](#)