

SEND NEWS

Issue 2 - Summer 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you to all those who reached out to let me know their thoughts about the first SEND News in which I talked about supporting children with anxiety and introduced the Zones of Regulation. If you missed it, it's available on our website. In this edition we will be learning more about ADHD and introducing the SEND Team.

This week, we are saying goodbye to our colleague Teaching Assistant Gabby Davies. Gabby has worked tirelessly to support children with a variety of needs. We wish her all the very best for her new position. We will also be saying goodbye to Teaching Assistant Tom Ross who has been an invaluable member of the team and will be sorely missed.

We are very excited to be welcoming two new Teaching Assistants to the team, Mrs Jackie White and Ms Molly Frazer.

Also, after interviewing several excellent candidates, our own Abby Hiscocks has become our new Assistant SENDCo. Abby has been a part of Team Alameda for some time now and is excited to start her new role. So, here's what our team is going to look like in September:

Mrs Esther Horner SENDCo		Miss Abby Hiscocks Assistant SENDCo	Mrs Lucienne Mann SEND Admin	Mrs Lene Demmers-Derks EHCP Coordinator	
Kelly Beevor	Jackie Wilson	Jackie White	Anna Hornibrook	Chris Carr	Michelle Harmer
Fiona Parkinson	Stephanie Clarke	Molly Frazer	Sarah Van-Houston	Ailsa French	Chloe Picard

It's a very dynamic time of change in the SEND department and we are all working on some exciting new initiatives, improving our Maths and Literacy Support for children working significantly behind ARE and running a number of new groups for social education and emotional literacy. More news to come in our Autumn addition, so watch this space.

Important!

SEND Support Meetings – Summer 2024

If your child is on the SEND register, and we have not met to plan your child's support this term, you will be receiving an invitation to make an appointment on edulink.

The meetings will be held on the w/c 8th July. I have approximately 55 families to meet with so unfortunately won't be able to offer times outside those scheduled. However, if you are unable to attend, we will send you the plan via email so that you can contribute to it, and we will meet again in the Autumn term to review.

Bookings open at 7am on Tuesday 18th June. If you are unable to book via Edulink please contact us ASAP. If you don't receive an invite but believe your child is on the SEND register, please contact us for clarification.

I look forward to meeting you then. Thank you.

Jargon Buster

Ever wondered what on Earth your SENDCo is talking about? This feature will try to decode some of the language of SEND.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

OAP – Ordinarily available provision – Quality first teaching for children with SEND whose needs can be met in the classroom.

SEND Support – For children on the SEND register. They will have termly APDR.

APDR – Assess Plan Do Review – the graduated response for children with needs that cannot be met in the classroom.

EHCP – Education Healthcare Plan – A statutory document for children who have complex needs and need a multi-team response to support them.



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ADHD – What's in a Name?

By Esther Horner (SENDCo)

The History of ADHD

For those who believe ADHD is a modern invention, it was actually first discussed in **1902** by famed British Paediatrician Sir George Frederic Still. Still described it as 'an **abnormal defect of moral control**' but he recognised the symptoms pretty well as he spoke about often intelligent children who had difficulty sustaining attention, controlling their behaviours and regulating their emotions. Fast-forward to **1932**, and German doctors Franz Kramer and Hans Pollnow described a condition called '**hyperkinetic disease**' and shortly after, in America, the first 'ADHD' medication – Benzedrine – was trialled by physician Charles Bradley. However, there was still no official recognition of ADHD at this time. In 1952 the first edition of the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) was produced but it did not recognise what we now know as ADHD until **1968** even though The Federal Drug Authority had approved the use of Ritalin in 1955. At this time, it was entered in the DSM as a 'hyperkinetic disorder'. In the third edition, released in **1980**, the APA renamed the condition **Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and created two variations: ADHD with hyperactivity and ADD without hyperactivity**. Then, in **1987**, the APA changed the name to **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**, which combined inattentiveness, impulsivity, and hyperactivity into a single type which was then updated in **1994** to describe **3 types of ADHD**: mostly inattentive; mostly hyperactive and impulsive; and combined type, and **30 years later**, this is where we are.

To Attend, or Not to Attend? That is the Question.

Attention Deficit: A Deficit in Definition.

I have always thought this 'Attention Deficit' an oversimplification of the difficulties with regulating attention that people with ADHD face. I have severe ADHD, but try to tell my family who have watched me researching the history of ADHD for two hours with a ferocious tenacity that I have a deficit in attention. It's true, at other times, I can happily skip between topics, zone out, walk off mid conversation as I've become distracted and have whole conversations that I have no memory of later...But...and it's a BIG BUT...if I am interested and I'm invested, like many people with ADHD, I get into what is known **hyperfocus**. If I get really involved with something, nothing can deter me! Family call my name, I hear nothing, I am beautifully, all consumingly hyperfocused...it's bliss...I can write dissertations, finish a book in one sitting or research the history of ADHD for hours. (Of course, the flip side is that if you do manage to interrupt that focus the ADHD rage might be triggered and that's a whole other article). I am a walking contradiction who can tell you every plot line of my favourite book but also have absolutely no idea where I put my keys (they have turned up in the freezer, garden and several times they were in the bin).

So, this is where the 'AD' definition falls short. I can't count the times I have suggested a child be assessed for ADHD and heard parents say..., 'but he can read dinosaur books for hours', or 'you should see her watch her favourite shows/play her favourite game' or a teacher -non recently thank goodness- say 'they can focus when they want to'... if I had a pound for every time I've heard those things, I'm sure I'd have well over £100 (I'd buy more plants). The point, all joking aside, is that ADHD is not just a deficit of attention, it's an extreme and pervasive difficulty in regulating attention.



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A Restless Spirit

The 'H' in ADHD

I should explain at this point that my ADHD type is combined. So, I have a full house of symptoms. Lucky me! Ask many to describe ADHD and they will think of a boy, climbing the walls, trashing the classroom, out of control. However, many people don't show any external hyperactivity at all, all the activity is within. In fact, so much is going on in some ADHD brains the external symptoms are like paralysis. On the surface they are switched off ('depressed' some might mistakenly call it) but the inside is an overstimulated mess. It's all too much.

Many people, especially but not exclusively girls, with ADHD have learnt to hide their neurodivergence under a mask. They hide their burning creativity, smile, nod and work very hard not become frustrated by the slowness of others, desperately trying not to interrupt because they have already figured out the other person's argument and want to get on with theirs. At other times, they expend huge amounts of energy just 'fitting in', looking like they are listening when they are actually lost, hiding the fact they are totally overwhelmed. However, it won't stay repressed forever and it bubbles out sooner or later either when they retreat to a safe place or when it's all just too much. This is when you get 'they are totally different at school/home', 'that's very unlike him/her' 'we never see that here'.

I should stress that the experience of every person with ADHD is different. A very wise Communication and Interaction Specialist Teacher once told me to think about all neurodivergence as a 'pic and mix' which really stuck with me. Some people with ADHD are the stereotypical 'bouncy' type and hang it out there for the world to see...but there are many others who exhaust themselves repressing it or it manifests in more subtle ways..picking their skin, doodling, fiddling with their hair, chewing their clothes, doom scrolling and other stimming behaviours...or that hyperactivity might be hidden all in their mind. Hyperactivity can manifest in sensory needs or mess or excessive tidiness, there's no 'typical' ADHD. To be honest, I don't have a problem with the word 'hyperactive'...the real issue here is the **misconception of 'hyperactivity'** ...that leads to ADHD going undiagnosed and the challenges of people with ADHD going unrecognised.

Uneasy Lies the Word 'Disorder'

Ok, now for the most controversial word, 'disorder'. Lots of people in the neurodivergent community don't like the word 'disorder' but I personally don't have a problem with it. I think the 'disorder' stands for all the overlooked challenges of living with ADHD. This is the executive dysfunction, the lack of impulse control, the difficulty regulating emotions, the rejection sensitivity dysmorphia, the broken pleasure centre - lacking in dopamine, the sensory issues etc. It might sound like a depressing list...but there is a silver lining to living on the edge of your parasympathetic nervous system...People with ADHD are often great in a crisis, they can think quickly, they are empathetic, intuitive, creative and as for thinking outside the box...there is no box. As well as that, remember our old friend hyperfocus? Combine that with a creative mind and passion and anything is possible! **Given the right support and environment people with ADHD can flourish.** I've never been hugely enamoured of the phrase 'ADHD is my superpower!' It's a nice thought and there's some truth in it and it's a great way of getting newly diagnosed children to see the positive sides of ADHD but it doesn't acknowledge the often-overwhelming challenge of living with ADHD.



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So, What is in a Name?

I arrive, at last at my point (people with ADHD do love a side quest- and brackets-), and my point is this..Words have power! We have gone from 'moral' to 'hyperkinetic' and landed on 'ADHD'. However, our knowledge of the condition has evolved beyond that name in the last 30 years and 'ADHD' does not convey the all-encompassing blessings and struggles and the multiverse of experience that makes up these neurodivergent members of society. More concerning is that it also allows preconceptions and misconceptions to live and thrive and it does not recognise the advantages of a brain that sees no box. So, in my humble opinion, it's well overdue for a rebrand.

There is this young man on the internet that has suggested we call ADHD 'DAVE'

Dopamine deficient

Attention

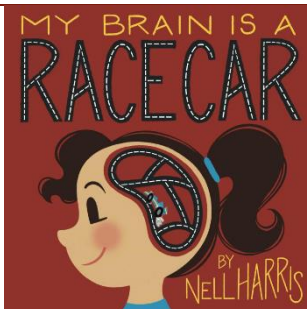
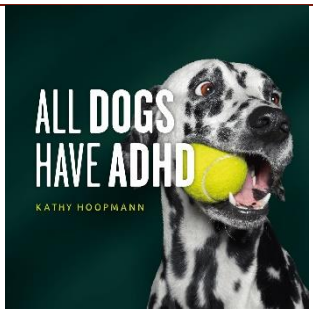
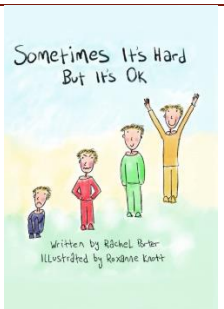
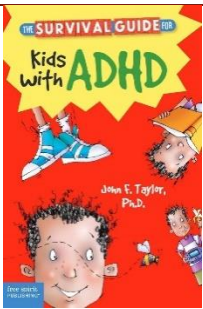
Variability

Executive Dysfunction

It's catchy and certainly a bit more accurate but perhaps we won't be seeing it in the pages of DSM anytime soon. However, I hope that those of you who are neurotypical and have stayed with me this far (Mr Horner fell asleep while I was reading him the first paragraph), have become a little less judgemental, a little more curious.. and as for my neurospicy friends, I hope you feel a little more understood and validated.

Want to learn more? Please come to our ADHD Parents information evening – details coming soon!

Book Recommendations - ADHD Non-Fiction Books

			
My Brain is a Racecar by Nell Harris. A story to help understand and small self-regulation strategies for a neurodivergent brain. An explanation of common traits in a neurodivergent brain Giving SELF regulation tools to the child to use themselves to assist with the plan and treatment around them.	All Dogs Have ADHD by Kathy Hoopman. Charming colour photographs of dogs bring to life familiar ADHD characteristics. It combines humour with understanding to reflect the difficulties and joys of raising a child with ADHD and celebrates what it means to be considered 'different'.	Sometimes it's Hard, But it's OK by Rachel Porter and Roxanne Knott A book for children who struggle with emotions and fitting in. Whether they have ADHD, Autism or general struggles, this book can help them realise its ok to have these strong feelings and that they can learn strategies to cope. With a little help, each child can learn how to deal with their emotions in a safe and helpful way, enabling them to live a rich and fulfilling life.	The Survival Guide for Kids with ADHD (Survival Guides for Kids) by John F. Taylor This Guide includes: what ADHD means - and doesn't mean; ways to make each day go better at home, at school, and with friends; how to deal with strong feelings like anger, worry, and sadness; the lowdown on medicines many kids take for ADHD; info on foods that may help you manage your ADHD; fun quizzes that will help you remember what you're learning; and much more.



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			It also includes lots of straightforward advice presented in a down-to-earth style with illustrations and quizzes to make it really kid-friendly.
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Useful websites for parents of children with SEND

For information on what is available in Bedfordshire for children and young people with SEND:
<https://localoffer.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/centralbedfordshire/directory/home.page>

Advice on young peoples' mental health:
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

ADHD Information and Support:
<https://adhduk.co.uk/>

<https://www.additudemag.com/>

Zones of Regulation Information:
www.zonesofregulation.com
www.weareteachers.com/zones-of-regulation-activities
<https://www.theottoolbox.com/?s=zones+of+regulation>

