

# Supporting Your Child with Maths Difficulties (including Dyscalculia)



LOXWOOD  
SCHOOL

## A Guide For Parents and Carers

At Loxwood Primary School, we recognise that some children find maths more challenging than others. For a small number of pupils, these difficulties may be linked to dyscalculia, a specific learning difficulty that affects how children understand and use numbers. This guide is designed to help parents understand maths difficulties, know what to look out for, and feel confident about how home and school can work together to support children effectively.

### What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty with number and mathematical understanding. It can affect children of all abilities and may occur alongside other needs such as dyslexia, ADHD or maths anxiety.

Children with dyscalculia may find it difficult to:

- understand numbers and what they represent
- recall number facts (e.g. number bonds or times tables)
- estimate, sequence or recognise patterns
- work confidently with time, money or measures



Having difficulties in maths does not automatically mean a child has dyscalculia. Many children experience challenges in maths at different points in their learning.

### What causes dyscalculia?

The exact cause of dyscalculia is not fully understood, but it is linked to differences in how the brain processes numbers. Dyscalculia:

- is not related to intelligence or effort
- can run in families
- may occur alongside other needs such as dyslexia, ADHD or maths anxiety

For some children, difficulties are noticed early; for others, they become clearer as maths becomes more complex. Understanding this helps us focus on support and strategies, rather than blame.

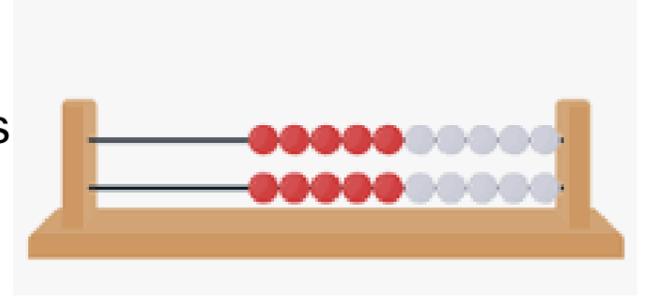
### What signs might you notice?

- struggles to count forwards or backwards
- relies on fingers for simple calculations
- confuses mathematical symbols (+ - × ÷)
- finds place value, times tables or number bonds hard
- avoids maths activities or becomes anxious
- finds telling the time or handling money tricky

## How does Loxwood Primary School Support Children?

Support always starts with high-quality classroom teaching. Where children need additional help, this may include:

- practical, hands-on resources and visual supports
- small-step teaching and repetition of key concepts
- targeted intervention groups
- adapted resources or additional scaffolding



Some children may have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). ILPs are reviewed regularly with parents, and targets are updated to reflect progress and next steps.

## What should I do if I am worried?

If you have concerns about your child's maths learning:

1. Talk to your child's class teacher – they can share what they are seeing in school.
2. Contact the SENDCO to discuss concerns and possible next steps.
3. In some cases, progress may be monitored over time or advice sought from external professionals.

Medical checks (such as vision or hearing) may be recommended before considering further assessment.

## Assessment and checklists

A formal diagnosis is not always needed for a child to receive support in school. At Loxwood Primary School, we focus on understanding a child's needs and putting appropriate support in place.

If maths difficulties are persistent over time, school may use a dyscalculia checklist to identify patterns of difficulty with number and mathematical understanding. This checklist can be completed by both school and parents, helping to build a fuller picture across home and school.

The checklist:

- highlights strengths and areas of need
- supports decisions about strategies and interventions
- helps determine whether further assessment may be helpful

Using a checklist does not provide a diagnosis. Instead, it supports our graduated approach and helps guide next steps in a collaborative way.

If you would like to discuss the dyscalculia checklist or share observations from home, please contact Miss Daisy Price (SENDCO) at [dprice@loxwoodschool.com](mailto:dprice@loxwoodschool.com), who will be happy to talk this through with you.

## How can I support my child at home?

You don't need to teach new maths at home. Small, practical activities are often most helpful.

### Use real-life maths

- counting coins and handling money
- cooking and measuring ingredients
- telling the time together
- sharing food into equal parts



### Use objects

Children with maths difficulties often struggle with abstract ideas. Using real objects (counters, toys, food) helps make maths visible and meaningful.



### Build confidence

Praise effort and progress, not speed. Avoid phrases such as "You should know this by now". Maths anxiety is very real and can affect learning. Stay calm and be patient with your child. They're not struggling on purpose.

### Keep it short and positive

Little and often works best. Avoid long sessions and pressure, which can increase anxiety.

### Be proactive and an advocate for your child

Parents play a vital role in supporting children with maths difficulties. Being proactive does not mean doing more work at home – it means working in partnership with school.

You can help by:

- Asking your child's teacher what they are currently working on in maths, so any support at home links directly to classroom learning.
- Planning small, practical activities at home to help plug gaps or reinforce key concepts, rather than introducing new topics.
- Talking to your child about what helps them when maths feels tricky and sharing this with their teacher.
- Sharing strategies that work at home (for example, using objects, drawing problems out, or breaking tasks into smaller steps) so these can be reflected in school.
- Speaking to the class teacher or SENDCo if you feel adjustments or additional support may help your child to access learning more confidently.

Children are often very aware that they are finding maths difficult. Helping them feel heard, understood and supported – both at home and at school – can make a significant difference to their confidence and progress.

## Supporting wellbeing and confidence

Children who find maths difficult may feel frustrated, embarrassed or worried. It helps to:

- talk openly and calmly about difficulties
- reassure your child that everyone learns differently
- celebrate small successes
- share strategies that work at home with school

Strong emotional wellbeing supports stronger learning.

## Parent Support Groups & Helpful Resources

You are not alone. Many parents find it helpful to connect with others or access reliable information and guidance. The following organisations and resources are well-regarded and may be useful if you would like further support.

### Local & National Parent Support

- Reaching Families – Support, training and advice for parents of children with SEND <https://www.reachingfamilies.org.uk>
- SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service) – Independent advice on SEND processes, rights and support <https://sendiass.org.uk>
- IPSEA – Information and advice on SEND law and education rights <https://www.ipsea.org.uk>

### Maths & Dyscalculia-Specific Support

- The Dyscalculia Network – Information, research and practical advice <https://www.dyscalculianetwork.com>
- British Dyslexia Association (includes dyscalculia) <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>
- Understood.org – Clear explanations and parent-friendly strategies for learning differences <https://www.understood.org>

## Working together

You know your child best, and at Loxwood Primary School we believe the most effective support happens when home and school work in partnership. Every child is different, and not all strategies or resources will suit every family – small, consistent steps are often the most helpful.

If you would like to talk about your child's maths learning, explore support options, or get guidance on what might be most appropriate for your child, please contact Miss Daisy Price (SENDCO) at [dprice@loxwoodschool.com](mailto:dprice@loxwoodschool.com).