

## **How AI Will Support Pupils with Additional Learning Needs in the Future**

The world of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) is evolving rapidly. Over recent years, media coverage of ALN has increased significantly, and teachers are now better equipped to identify pupils experiencing classroom challenges that require further investigation. Supporting pupils with ALN is one of the most fascinating and rewarding challenges in education. Why? Because we don't all learn in the same way, meaning that not all revision or learning methods work for everyone. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to revolutionise education, particularly for pupils with additional needs, in ways we could only have imagined five years ago.

### **The Transformative Potential of AI in Education**

AI has the potential to make education more inclusive and accessible, especially for pupils with ALN. At Blundell's, we pride ourselves on providing tailored one-to-one support for pupils with ALN, and AI promises to enhance this personalised approach further. Over the coming years, AI is likely to play an increasingly significant role in education.

One key way AI will support pupils with ALN is through personalised learning plans (Department for Education, 2023). Traditional classroom teaching often struggles to accommodate diverse learning styles and paces. Although in its infancy, AI-powered platforms can assess a pupil's strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, tailoring lessons and exercises accordingly. For example, pupils with dyslexia may benefit from tools that convert text into audio or highlight words for better comprehension (Speechify, 2023). While existing programmes already offer excellent support for dyslexic learners, innovations like ChatGPT have the potential to be a game-changer.

### **ChatGPT and its Role in Supporting Dyslexia**

Most readers will now be familiar with ChatGPT. For some, this innovation inspires hope and anticipation; for others, it evokes unease. While ChatGPT could be misused, such as finding answers without meaningful engagement, when used properly, it holds tremendous potential.

For pupils with dyslexia, ChatGPT offers exciting possibilities. Dyslexia, as described by Kelly and Phillips (2022), is a learning disorder that affects reading, writing, and spelling. It also impacts cognitive processes such as memory, processing speed, and coordination (Reid, 2009). AI could provide essential interventions to support these learners in an increasingly technological world.

AI-powered tools, such as ChatGPT, could reduce anxiety and boost engagement by offering individualised approaches to learning. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) notes that "AI provides another individualised approach to learning, particularly for those who find reading for information challenging. It can cut to the chase, providing explanations of concepts in layman's terms and supporting learners who need clarification or reinforcement" (BERA, 2023).

### **AI for Pupils with ADHD and Executive Functioning Difficulties**

The ADHD Centre (2022) states that ADHD can have a huge impact on a person's executive functioning. Executive function is a key role of the brain's frontal lobe. It acts as the brain's

self-management system, helping with behaviour and everyday tasks. Some important executive functions include:

- Managing time
- Staying organised
- Multitasking
- Remembering information
- Planning and prioritising
- Paying attention
- Regulating emotions

These skills are essential for understanding how your actions and words affect others, managing tasks efficiently, and avoiding mistakes in crucial moments. Executive functioning isn't just important for work and education—it also plays a big role in social interactions, helping you navigate different scenarios effectively.

AI could help individuals with executive functioning difficulties by providing tailored support in various areas. For instance, AI tools can set up reminders for appointments or homework using phones or virtual assistants, ensuring important tasks are not overlooked. Platforms like Monday.com enable users to create and prioritise to-do lists, helping them stay organised and focused. Time management apps such as TrevorAI can break tasks into smaller steps and assist with planning the day through time-blocking features, which can make managing schedules more efficient. Additionally, tools like Grammarly enhance writing productivity, while techniques like the Pomodoro method, supported by AI, improve focus through structured, timed work sessions. Over time, AI becomes smarter as it learns from user interactions, offering increasingly personalised support tailored to individual needs (The ADHD Centre, 2023). For people with ADHD, these tools make managing time, staying organised, and staying on track much easier.

## **Ethical Considerations and Responsible Use**

While the possibilities of AI are vast, ethical concerns such as data privacy and algorithmic bias must be addressed. Clear guidance is essential to ensure responsible use. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) recently reminded educators that AI-generated content, like traditional sources, must be cited to avoid plagiarism (JCQ, 2024).

## **Conclusion**

AI holds immense promise in supporting pupils with additional learning needs. By fostering personalised, accessible, and inclusive education, AI can help break down barriers and enable all pupils to thrive. As the BERA blog highlights, AI, when used correctly, could significantly benefit individuals with dyslexia by reducing anxiety, improving engagement, and offering tailored learning approaches. As technology advances, it is crucial to prioritise the diverse needs of learners, ensuring a future where education truly caters to everyone.

## References

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