



WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16 2020



The actress Keira Knightley is backing a campaign for dyslexia training in schools
ISABEL INFANTES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Dyslexia can be a blessing, training drive will tell teachers

Nicola Woolcock, Education Correspondent

Thursday October 08 2020, 12.01am BST, The Times

Share



Save



Schools should promote the benefits of being dyslexic rather than simply treating the condition like a disability, a charity has suggested.

Made By Dyslexia has launched a plan to train every teacher in the world over five years to address the issue of children’s “dyslexic strengths” being missed by schools. Its campaign is backed by the actress Keira Knightley, the entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson and Maggie Aderin-Pocock, a space scientist, all of whom are dyslexic. The charity says that dyslexic children are “hardwired” with skills needed by businesses, such as creativity, curiosity and lateral thinking.

It has already provided a quarter of a million teachers with training to spot dyslexia and has developed an online teacher training programme in partnership with the independent Millfield School in Somerset.

Research suggests that many dyslexic people are talented at some forms of communication, at visualisation and reasoning.

Kate Griggs, chief executive of Made By Dyslexia, said: “The vast majority of teachers around the world have little or no understanding of dyslexic strengths. Yet dyslexic children depend on them to unleash their natural strengths.

“In an era of automation, where facts can be Googled, spelling, punctuation and grammar can be corrected at the touch of a button, it is creativity, imagination and intuition that sets us apart from the machines. And these skills come naturally to dyslexics.”

Sir Richard said: “As a dyslexic, I know that everyone living with dyslexia can also thrive with it. In fact, it has been such a positive force in my life. After dropping out of school at an early age, my dyslexia has helped me think creatively to solve problems and to keep things simple.”

Research published in 2011 by Harvard University found that many accomplished scientists had dyslexia, including Nobel prizewinners.

It said that this had prompted researchers to suggest that the “neurology of dyslexia may predispose these individuals to advantages in visually-intensive domains such as science”.

The researchers said that there was evidence of a link between dyslexia and visual processing abilities that were useful in astronomy.

Students with dyslexia outperformed classmates in making sense of blurred images and also in detecting radio signatures characteristic of black holes when the visual periphery was important.

Education

Related articles

A LIFE IN THE DAY

Comedian Rob Beckett on dyslexia and podcasting in his pants

Beckett, 34, was born in Mottingham, southeast London. He studied tourism at Canterbury Christ Church University. He started...

August 23 2020, 12.01am BST