# Jamie Oliver demands urgent overhaul of UK dyslexia support in schools



Jamie Oliver's recent documentary, *Jamie’s Dyslexia Revolution*, shines a spotlight on the significant challenges faced by children with dyslexia in the UK educational system. With his own experiences as a backdrop, Oliver advocates for fundamental changes to better support an estimated ten million dyslexic individuals in the country. He argues that the current educational framework is not only inadequate but effectively excludes a quarter of students due to its failure to recognise and accommodate neurodiversity.

With a personal narrative that resonates deeply, Oliver reflects on his own struggles as a disengaged pupil who barely left school with two GCSEs. He credits his success in cooking with helping to rebuild his self-esteem, underscoring the importance of finding a passion in the face of academic adversity. "If I didn’t have cooking, who knows where I’d have ended up," he shares, highlighting the necessity for children to have outlets for their talents.

Data substantiating Oliver’s concerns reveals a stark reality. Research indicates that at least 80% of children with dyslexia leave school undiagnosed, with many being funnelled into special educational needs frameworks without adequate support or understanding. This lack of recognition results in children being sanctioned more severely; they are three times as likely to be suspended and significantly more likely to be absent from school. According to a report by the British Dyslexia Association, dyslexic individuals constitute up to 55% of the prison population, a statistic that starkly illustrates the long-term repercussions of unmet educational needs.

The documentary articulates a call for systemic reform, arguing that it is imperative to overhaul the educational experience for children with dyslexia. The current model of education, maintaining its status-quo, fails to serve a significant proportion of its students. Oliver asserts that a more inclusive approach not only benefits those with dyslexia but improves the overall educational environment for all pupils. "Embracing diverse ways of thinking will be a game-changer for our kids with dyslexia," he contends.

Moreover, the need for early diagnosis is paramount. Oliver suggests national screening initiatives within the first two years of schooling to identify dyslexia indicators promptly. The urgency for this reform is compounded by results from a parliamentary debate, which highlighted similar findings, indicating that between 10% to 15% of the UK population is affected by dyslexia, yet many remain undiagnosed during formative years. In practical terms, this means that proactive measures could prevent future struggles not only in academics but also in workplace settings.

Teacher training emerges as another crucial element of Oliver's advocacy. Currently, a distressing report from the Made By Dyslexia charity found that only one in ten teachers possess a substantial understanding of dyslexia, which directly hinders their capacity to support affected students. "Let’s equip them with the skills and knowledge they’re passionately asking for," Oliver insists, calling for mandatory, updated training focused on dyslexia and neurodiversity. Such initiatives are vital, as they stand to reshape how educational staff interact with and support students, fostering an environment where each individual can thrive.

As Oliver's documentary airs, it becomes not merely a narrative of personal struggle but a rallying cry for educational reform, challenging authorities to rethink how they approach dyslexia and neurodiversity. "I don’t want another child to check out of school," he vows, urging viewers to seek a fairer system where no child is left behind. This impassioned plea underscores the belief that by reforming education to embrace all learning differences, society as a whole could reap the benefits of a more inclusive and effective system.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/documentaries/jamie-oliver-dyslexia/), [[2]](https://www.channel4.com/press/news/jamie-oliver-unpacks-dyslexia-powerful-documentary-channel-4)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/documentaries/jamie-oliver-dyslexia/), [[3]](https://www.ie-today.co.uk/teaching/only-1-in-10-teachers-have-good-understanding-of-dyslexia-report/), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-50095218.amp)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-12-02/debates/DF589064-EBED-4F0F-BBEC-9E0220F24237/DyslexiaScreeningAndTeacherTrainingBill), [[6]](https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/9182/html/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/documentaries/jamie-oliver-dyslexia/), [[7]](https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/91952/html/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.channel4.com/press/news/jamie-oliver-unpacks-dyslexia-powerful-documentary-channel-4), [[3]](https://www.ie-today.co.uk/teaching/only-1-in-10-teachers-have-good-understanding-of-dyslexia-report/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/documentaries/jamie-oliver-dyslexia/), [[2]](https://www.channel4.com/press/news/jamie-oliver-unpacks-dyslexia-powerful-documentary-channel-4)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/documentaries/jamie-oliver-dyslexia/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.channel4.com/press/news/jamie-oliver-unpacks-dyslexia-powerful-documentary-channel-4> - Jamie Oliver, a well-known UK chef, is set to present a documentary on Channel 4 that delves into the challenges faced by children with dyslexia. The programme aims to highlight the systemic issues within the education system that hinder the success of these children. Oliver, who himself struggled with dyslexia and left school with only two GCSEs, emphasises the need for an education system that celebrates diverse ways of thinking and learning. The documentary will also feature Oliver's campaign for government intervention to address these issues.
3. <https://www.ie-today.co.uk/teaching/only-1-in-10-teachers-have-good-understanding-of-dyslexia-report/> - A report by the Made By Dyslexia charity reveals that only one in ten teachers possess a good understanding of dyslexia. The survey, which included over 12,000 teachers and parents across 102 countries, found that more than half of schools globally do not comprehend dyslexic challenges. In the UK, 80% of dyslexic students leave school undiagnosed. The report also highlights that over half of UK prison inmates are dyslexic, and children with special educational needs like dyslexia are seven times more likely to be excluded from school.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-50095218.amp> - A BBC News report indicates that schools in England are failing to diagnose at least 80% of pupils with dyslexia. The report highlights that families are often forced to pay up to £1,000 for private assessments, leaving pupils from less affluent backgrounds at a disadvantage. The British Dyslexia Association criticises the current state of diagnosis and support, stating it is the worst seen since government funding began in the 1980s. The government has expressed commitment to ensuring all children with dyslexia achieve well in education.
5. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-12-02/debates/DF589064-EBED-4F0F-BBEC-9E0220F24237/DyslexiaScreeningAndTeacherTrainingBill> - In a UK Parliament debate, it was highlighted that between 10% to 15% of the UK population is dyslexic, while around 6% suffer from dyscalculia. The British Dyslexia Association estimates that four in five young people leave school with undiagnosed dyslexia, leading to challenges in reading and writing. The debate emphasised the need for early intervention and appropriate support to prevent educational and workplace challenges for individuals with dyslexia.
6. <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/9182/html/> - Evidence presented to a UK parliamentary committee indicates that students with dyslexia are twice as likely to fail to achieve a grade 4 or above in English and maths at GCSE. Additionally, dyslexia rates among university students are just 5%, compared to 10 to 15% in the general population. The evidence also highlights that students with dyslexia are three and a half times more likely to be temporarily or permanently excluded, and youth offending institutes have dyslexia rates between 31 and 56%. The report calls for investment in appropriate IT and assistive technology for young people with dyslexia.
7. <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/91952/html/> - A submission to a UK parliamentary committee highlights systemic failures in identifying and supporting students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia. The Department for Education (DfE) does not collect data on individual types of SEND, making it difficult to analyse the effectiveness of interventions. The submission calls for mandatory components on special educational needs in teacher training and continuous professional development to ensure teachers can recognise and support learning difficulties effectively.