

ADHD AWARENESS MONTH



Different minds.
Same maths potential.

Talking ADHD with Claire Riley



Founder
Classroom Secrets

As part of ADHD Awareness Month, we're speaking with educators and innovators who are helping us rethink what inclusion really means in the maths classroom...and beyond.

This week, we caught up with Claire Riley, founder of Classroom Secrets, to talk about her experience of discovering she had ADHD later in life, and how it's shaped the way she thinks about learning, teaching and creativity.

Q: Claire, when did you first realise that ADHD might be part of your story?

Claire: The possibility of ADHD never crossed my mind until I was well into entrepreneurship. I'd always been passionate about finding ways around things by trying different approaches and testing ideas. It turns out there was a reason for that. One of the common misconceptions about ADHD is misbehaving at school. That wasn't me at all, I just spent my school days playing with ideas in my head. I didn't fit the stereotype of someone with ADHD, so it never occurred to me that's what was going on.

Q: What was school like for you growing up, before you knew about ADHD?

Claire: I loved learning, but I often found myself daydreaming. I wasn't disruptive, I think that's why it went unnoticed, but I was constantly thinking differently. I'd get lost in ideas rather than what was happening in the classroom. Looking back, I can see that my curiosity and imagination were signs of how my brain worked.

Q: You've mentioned that "task capturing" has been really helpful for managing ADHD. Can you explain what that means?

Claire: Task capturing is basically writing down every single idea, task, or thought that comes into your head so it doesn't get lost. For people with ADHD, our minds are busy and full of ideas all the time and it's easy to forget things as quickly as we think them. So I jot everything down in one place.

It's brilliant because it takes the pressure off trying to remember everything, but it does have its downsides. I capture so much that it can become overwhelming if I don't manage it carefully. I have to regularly go through and prioritise, otherwise I end up drowning in my own notes and ideas!

Q: How would you describe what it's like living and working with ADHD?

Claire: Having ADHD is like playing a strategy game, you're constantly using your strengths and weaknesses to figure out how to win the level you're on. You learn how to compensate, how to work with your brain rather than against it. It's about finding systems that help you deliver, even when your brain wants to go in five different directions at once.

Q: How has your experience of ADHD influenced the way you think about teaching and learning?

Claire: When I reflect on my teaching days, I think about how important it is to create a process that works for the child, not one that forces them to fit a rigid system. For pupils with ADHD (and really for all learners) we need flexibility and creativity in how we teach. One size doesn't fit all, and when you've lived that yourself, you really understand it.

Q: What do you think ADHD learners bring to the classroom?

Claire: So much! ADHD learners often think outside the box and make connections where others don't. They're creative, intuitive and can see links between ideas that others might miss. That kind of divergent thinking is such a strength, it just needs to be valued and supported in the right way.

At Rethink Maths, we believe stories like Claire's help us all see inclusion in a new light. As Claire has shown, ADHD isn't a barrier to success, it's a different way of seeing and solving problems - a super power for entrepreneurs.

To keep the conversation going this ADHD Awareness Month, explore our free classroom and CPD resources including a Quick Guide to ADHD in the Maths Classroom, a ready-to-use staff training pack, and inclusive maths activities to try with your pupils.

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