



Dyslexics need more help

An estimated one in 10 New Zealanders are dyslexic, including more than 70,000 school children, an issue being highlighted by Dyslexia Advocacy Week.

These numbers are backed up by the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, which is organising the week that started on Monday.

Heather Edwards from the Academy of Learning in Red Beach, which supports dyslexic people with things such as reading, writing, and spelling, is calling for more support in education and the workplace.

"In our culture, it is assumed that if you are good with words you are also highly intelligent, and if you struggle with words you may not be so smart, but the experience of dyslexia shows this assumption to be false," she says.

"The upside of dyslexia is the ability to perceive the world from many perspectives, allowing special skills and talents to flourish in fields such as invention, the arts, design, engineering and entrepreneurship.

"Dyslexia is not an illness or a disease," Edwards says.

"It does not only affect reading and writing, it is a term used to describe a range of persistent issues with reading and writing, and often includes spelling, numeracy and musical notation."

She says difficulties also arise with auditory and visual perception, planning and organising, motor skills, short-term memory and concentration, which make it challenging for dyslexics to follow



Dyslexia week:

Heather Edwards wants to see more support for dyslexic people.

multiple instructions, turn thoughts into words, and to finish work on time.

"Dyslexia must be supported in education and in the workplace, and this often requires specific interventions, as well as awareness and understanding," Edwards says.

Her thoughts are echoed by New Zealand First list MP Tracey

Martin, who is also Mahurangi College board of trustees chairwoman.

"Having someone available to help with reading or writing, allowing the use of a computer or providing additional time for students with conditions such as dyslexia can be the difference between a student passing or failing," Martin says.