

Language support in schools vital for children with autism

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Teachers and parents must be vigilant in observing difficulties with language comprehension, reading and spelling in children and young people with autism, Asperger's syndrome and ADHD.

"It is important that pupils are offered the support to which they are entitled", says Jakob ?sberg in a new thesis at the University of Gothenburg.

"Pupils with these neuropsychiatric disorders are often reported as having problems with spoken and written activities. However, relatively little research has been carried out within the field. Considering how important such skills are for coping independently in school and in working life and society in general, it is of great importance that we become better informed about these issues", considers Jakob ?sberg, who is publicly defending his thesis in psychology.

Among other things, the findings in the five studies that comprise the thesis demonstrate that pupils with [autism](#) or Asperger's syndrome often have problems with comprehension, in particular with continuous texts such as stories. However, it was common that these children and young people were able to read individual words correctly and with a satisfactory flow, even though there was significant variation within the group in this respect.

The pupils' test results improved

"In one study we worked in conjunction with school staff and tested whether it was possible for a group of pupils with autism or Asperger's syndrome to improve in understanding the content of stories through structured and concentrated teaching. We based it on the idea that teaching such as this should make it clear to the pupils what reading and listening with understanding actually involves. It was encouraging that the pupils' test results improved after four weeks teaching. There does therefore appear to be potential for positive

change, even though the results in this sub-study should still be regarded as provisional", says Jakob ?sberg.

Another study focused specifically on girls with autism or [ADHD](#). It emerged in this study that girls with ADHD frequently have more general problems when it comes to dexterity in writing.

"Both reading and spelling words and reading comprehension seem to be difficult for a lot of children with ADHD. It is important that teachers, [parents](#) and other professionals are vigilant regarding the occurrence of such difficulties and that the [pupils](#) are offered the support to which they are entitled", says Jakob ?sberg.

Source: University of Gothenburg ([news](#) : [web](#))

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