



# A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

# Aims

- To reflect on what it means to have a visible difference and its impact on the child or young person, the family and the school.
- To think about unconscious (implicit) bias and its impact.
- To understand more about living with a visible difference by listening to children and young people with a visible difference and their parents.
- To listen to children and young people and schools to begin to reflect on effective practices.



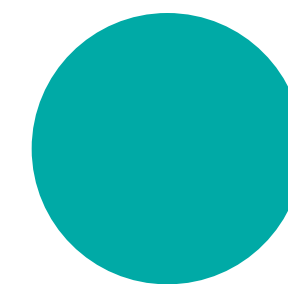
# Visible difference/disfigurement

- What do you understand by the terms visible difference and disfigurement?
- Why do you think there is a move towards using the phrase 'visible difference' rather than 'disfigurement'?
- Discuss these in your groups and make notes, so we can take feedback.



## Some causes of visible difference:

- Skin conditions like eczema, acne, or vitiligo
- Burns
- Birthmarks
- Craniofacial conditions, affecting the growth and development of the skull and face
- Cleft lip/palate (a gap or split in the upper lip and/or roof of the mouth)
- Cancer



# There are many types of **visible difference**



# Equality Act (2010): Severe disfigurement

An impairment which consists of a severe disfigurement is to be treated as having a substantial adverse effect on the ability of the person concerned to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

# GROUP DISCUSSION

Why do you think the Equality Act includes 'severe disfigurement' as a disability that has an adverse effect on the ability of a person to carry out normal day-to-day activities?

# 86,000

**children of school age in the UK have a visible difference:  
A mark, scar or condition that makes them look different.**

Childwise 2018



# Perceptions of visible difference

There are a number of persistent myths and assumptions, which affect how people with a visible difference are viewed by society, such as not being very clever or being characterised as evil.

Stone (2017) found that people with a visible difference/disfigurement are viewed much less favourably than people with other disabilities that are easily identified, such as wheelchair users.

**66%** of people  
held negative attitudes towards  
people with a visible difference.

Changing Faces 2017

When participants in a study compared photos of people with a facial visible difference with those without, they judged them be:

- **Less out-going**
- **Less competitive**
- **Less assertive**
- **More sensitive and emotional**
- **Followers rather than leaders**

Stone (2017)

Wonder  
trailer



# GROUP DISCUSSION

When you see the clip of Wonder for the second time, reflect on the following questions and then discuss them in your groups.

- 1 What do you think the filmmaker wanted you to think and feel when Auggie takes off his helmet for the first time?
- 2 What did you notice as Auggie walked through the playground for the first time?
- 3 If you were Auggie, how would you feel walking through the playground for the first time?
- 4 What do you think Auggie's parents were thinking as they watched him go into the playground for the first time?
- 5 What do you think the other children were thinking as they watched Auggie walk through the playground for the first time?

Wonder  
trailer



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# GROUP DISCUSSION

If you had a child like Auggie joining your class, what would you want to know and what do think some of the **challenges** might be? If you've had to deal with situations like this already, it will be useful to share your experiences with colleagues.

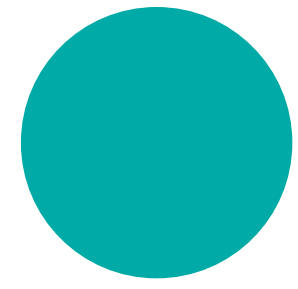
# GROUP DISCUSSION

What do you think unconscious  
(or implicit) bias means?

## Unconscious Bias



Note the things that surprise you in this film about the impact of unconscious (or implicit) bias in the classroom.



## Unconscious (or implicit) biases

Unlike conscious biases, unconscious (or implicit) biases are the views and opinions that we are unaware of; they are automatically activated and frequently operate outside conscious awareness and affect our everyday behaviour and decision making. Our unconscious biases are influenced by our background, culture, context and personal experiences.

Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018, pp.4-5



## Reaction and response

Our initial reaction to a situation or event is instinctive and is not something we have control over.

Our reaction to disfigurement/visible difference might be discomfort and avoidance, due to repeated associations of disfigurement/visible difference with negative qualities that we see presented within popular culture.

By reflecting on such reactions, we can ensure that when we respond, we make the unconscious conscious. This can help us overcome our unconscious biases and unlearn our negative stereotypes.

# Listening to children and young people

While watching the video, ask yourself:

- When a child has a visible difference, what are the implications to their social inclusion and well-being?
- What do you think schools should do to support inclusion of students with a visible difference?

**Children and young people's voices**



## Parents' voices

While watching the video think about:

- Whether the children and their parents have different priorities and views.
- The challenges that parents face when negotiating with schools and if there are practices that your school could put in place to initiate and maintain an honest and open dialogue with parents and their children?



## Parents' voices



## Children and young people's voices



When watching this video, think about anything that surprises you and the key messages you take from the children and young people.

# GROUP DISCUSSION

Was there anything that surprised you?  
What are the key messages you have taken  
from the children and young people?

## Teachers' voices

While watching the video think about:

- The key differences between what the children and young people say and what teachers say about their priorities?
- How you could use both perspectives to support a student with a visible difference in your class.  
Expect to make some mistakes

Teachers'  
voices



# Face

BY HANNAH LINDFIELD

See past the scars, I can laugh and smile too  
See past the disability, I have a brain too

Do you really care  
Or is that a hard question to ask?  
With each stare or with each comment  
You will always open old wounds

If you see me wobble, or if I stutter  
Will you help me or will you let me suffer?

After reading this poem, I hope you know  
Why normal is a place where I have no wish to go!



# Moving forward

Identify three key points that you will take away from today's session and make a note of them.

This is just the beginning, so don't be afraid to make mistakes. It is better to try and fail, than not to try at all.

# Changing Faces resources

For more advice and support from Changing Faces go to:

[changingfaces.org.uk/for-professionals/teachers-youth-workers](https://changingfaces.org.uk/for-professionals/teachers-youth-workers)