



# Unlock student potential with accessibility tools that support diverse learners

## Microsoft Foreword

As Chief Executive of nasen, I am privileged to have the opportunity to meet with many educators and families. A question that I am often asked is how we can make the world more inclusive in a way that is not prohibitively expensive. Part of my response is always about improving accessibility, because when we do this well, it removes barriers to participation for some, but it also improves the experience for everybody.

When I started my career as a teacher, I spent hours planning my lessons, then more hours again differentiating for those with significant learning differences. But then one day the penny dropped. If I started out by planning my lessons so they were accessible enough to meet the needs of those with learning differences, then it worked for everybody else anyway. And it was often a better lesson as a result.

This principle applies equally to ed-tech. The vast majority of schools and homes have access to Microsoft software, which includes many built-in accessibility tools. However, too many of us are unaware of the full capability of the tools available to us. As a consequence, money is spent unnecessarily on additional specialist software that ends up replicating what already exists.

**Prof Adam Boddison,**  
Chief Executive – nasen

That is why nasen and Microsoft wanted to bring this guide to as broad an audience as possible. We want to save you money and improve accessibility at the same time.

This guide explains how to use some of the key Microsoft accessibility tools to support needs such as:

[Vision and reading support for students >](#)

[Hearing and auditory support for students >](#)

[Cognitive support for learning support for students >](#)

[Speech, language, and communication support for students >](#)

[Mobility support for students >](#)

[Neurodiversity \(brain differences\) in students >](#)

By improving accessibility, we are improving inclusion. I hope this guide helps us as a society to work together on building a more inclusive world.

# Giving every student the ability to achieve more

Every student is unique with different strengths and abilities. Take a few moments and think — what are the strengths of each student you teach? What successes have they experienced? Where do they sometimes struggle? We all want students to succeed academically, and there are tools that can help every student meet that goal.

**72%**

of classrooms have students with individual educational needs

**53%**

of classrooms have English Language Learners

up to **20%**

of students are impacted by dyslexia

There are great inclusive, non-stigmatizing tools available to support each student on their educational journey with the use of technology.

These guides provide suggestions for free, built-in resources and tools that can benefit every child and give them the ability to achieve more!



## An accessibility guide for educators

These resources are intended for all educators, but will be especially helpful for educators and support staff who work in the following areas: special education, assistive technology, blind and visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language pathology, early childhood special education,

behaviour, counselling, school psychology, language interpretation, literacy, autism, and many other areas that assist students who need specially designed instruction.

We have also developed a parents guide to help you support parents



## A parent's guide to learning: supporting your child's success