



You Mr Squirrel?!?!



Suitable for children aged 6+



Welcomes YOU to their
world of adventures!



This story is written and produced by the Dog, Duck and Cat Trust.

You Mr Squirrel?!?!

Are you sitting comfortably?
Then let's begin...



In a town, not too far from here,
lived a Dog, a Duck and a Cat. They were the best
of friends and always looked out for each other,
because that is what good friends do!

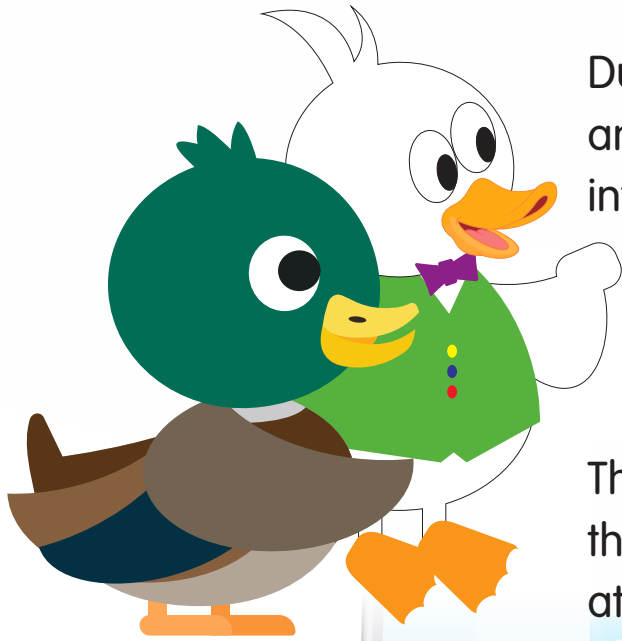


Our story begins at Dog, Duck and Cat's school, Farmyard Lane Primary.

Today is Mal's first day at this school, and he is feeling a little bit nervous. Just to remind you, Mal is Duck's new friend who moved into the house next door during the summer holidays. You might remember Mal from another story called 'Everyone deserves a friend', but don't worry if you can't, we'll remind you all about him.

As I've mentioned, Mal was feeling a bit nervous, but the good news was that Duck was there to help him. He had promised Mal he would stick by his side all day and show him all the things he needed to know. He had also said he'd help Mal to explain to the rest of the class that he had autism, because Mal wanted everyone to understand this about him.





Duck and Mal waddled into the classroom and said hi to all the other animals. Duck introduced Mal to Dog and Cat. They both really liked him and were very much looking forward to getting to know him a lot better.

Their teacher, Mr Squirrel, then came into the classroom and called the animals to attention.



"Good morning, everyone and welcome back to school!!" said Mr Squirrel sounding very excited.

"It's so nice to see you all and have you back at school, I'm excited thinking all about the things we are going to learn this year. But today is an especially exciting day as we have a new member of our class, everyone, meet Mal".

Everyone immediately looked over and smiled at Mal, and he in turn, smiled a nervous little smile back.



“Now I know something that Mal would like to tell you about himself, but he has asked his new friend Duck to help him, because Duck learned lots about Mal when they met over the summer holidays.”

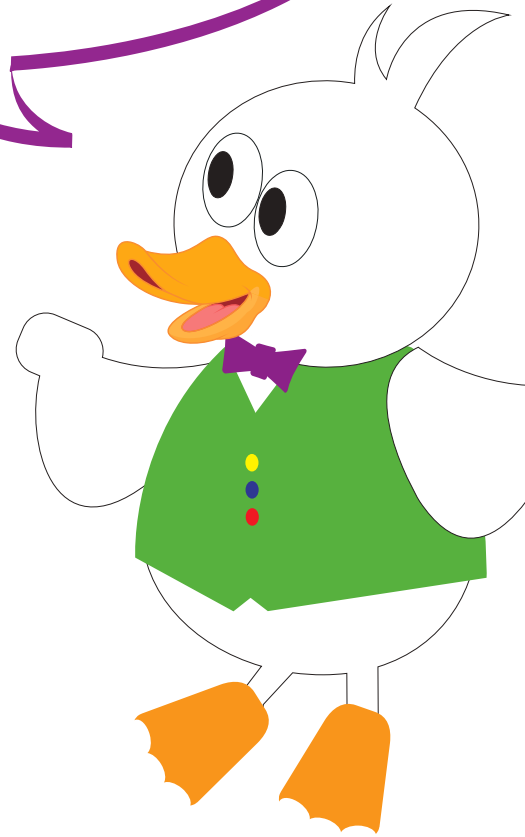
Duck waddled to the front of the class. He cleared his throat and said to Mal, just to check, “Are you 100% OK with me telling the class all about you Mal?”

Mal smiled and gave Duck a big thumbs up!



Duck then told the class all about Mal and his autism. The class listened very politely to Duck and found what he had to say very interesting.

AUTISM



Duck then asked Mal to join him at the front of the classroom. Duck also asked all the other animals to be nice and quiet for Mal, and he would explain why in a minute.

Mal was nervous, and it took a lot for him to go to the front of the room, but as he had Duck by his side this gave him the confidence to get up and speak.

Mal talked to the class about his autism and how it affected him. He told them that sometimes he didn't like loud noises as they made him feel confused and a bit scared. When this happened, he wore his ear defenders, which he then showed to the class.



All the animals thought his ear defenders looked really cool, and they now understood why Duck had asked them to be quiet.



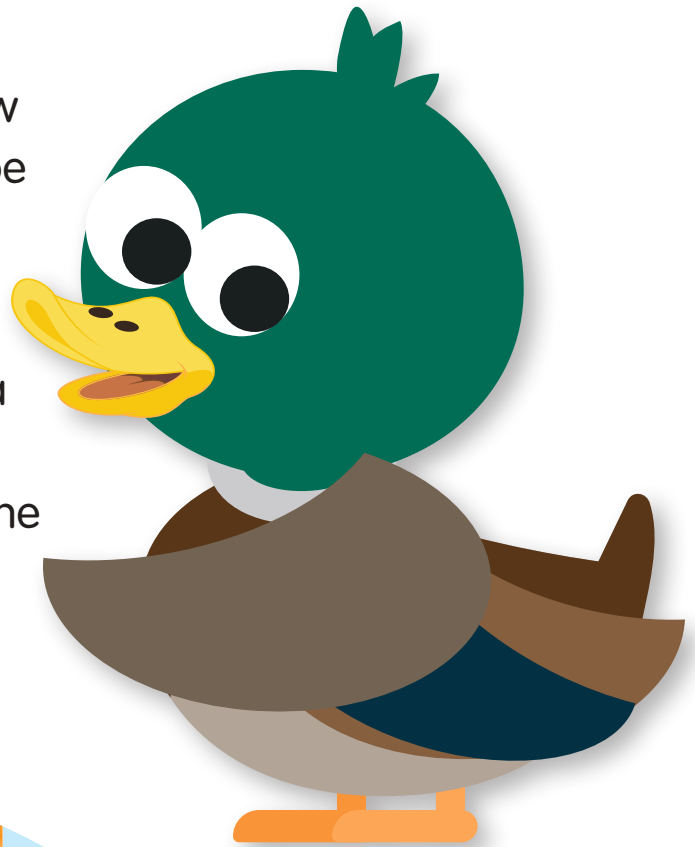
When Duck and Mal had finished Mr Squirrel then spoke.

“Thank you, Mal and Duck, I now know a lot more about autism, but more importantly I know how’s Mal’s autism affects him. As we know we are all unique, and even though Mal has autism we have to remember that his autism is unique to him. I know I’ll remember about loud noises and try my best to help Mal in any way I can”.

Mal felt very welcome at his new school and was very happy to be there.

Now as you might remember from Mal's 'Everyone deserves a friend' story, autism is a kind of neurodiversity, but autism isn't the only kind.

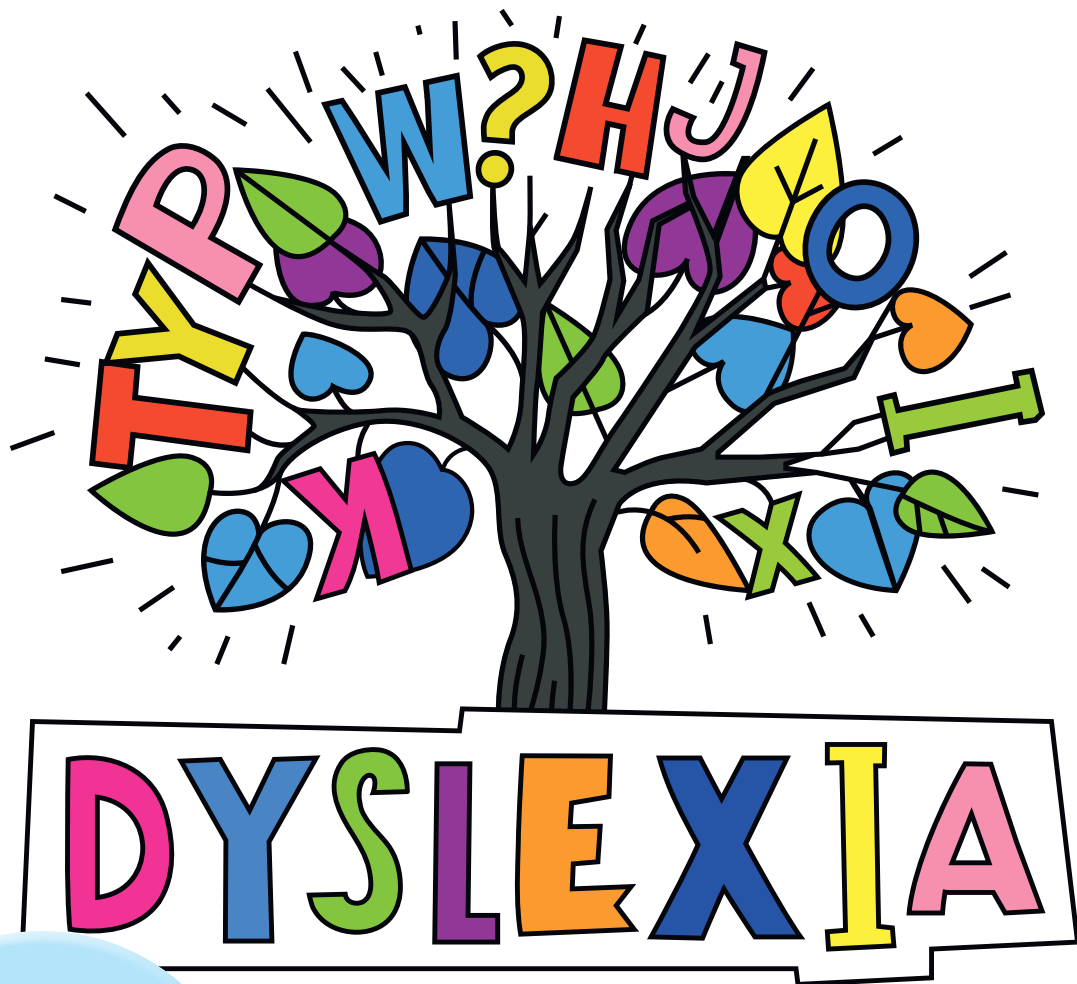
Mr Squirrel then spoke again.



"Mal has shared with us all about his autism, which is a type of neurodiversity, would anyone else in the class like to share something about themselves too?"

Chicken put her hand up.

"Yes Chicken," said Mr Squirrel.
"What would you like to share?"



“Well, I know you lot all know this,” Chicken said looking around at the class, “but I wanted to tell Mal this, I have dyslexia. Sometimes it is very annoying and makes me upset, but I get support that is just perfect for me, so it doesn’t hold me back and most of the time I’m ok about it all.”

Chicken then looked directly at Mal and said, “At this school, Mal, everyone is wonderful, and they really want you to be the best you can be. You’ll get all the support you need, and I know that for a fact!”.

“That’s amazing to hear. I’m so happy I’m at this school already, I just feel so welcome,” said Mal, with a great big smile on his face.



Mr Squirrel then spoke to the class again.

“Would anyone else like to share anything about themselves?”

All the animals sat silently, and no one raised their hand.

But then, to everyone’s surprise, Mr Squirrel put his hand up!!!

“Well, I’d like to tell you all something about myself if that’s OK,”
said Mr Squirrel.



"I have ADHD."

"You Mr Squirrel?!?!" exclaimed Duck.

"Have you really got ADHD?"

Duck now knew a little about ADHD as he has read about it when he was researching about autism since meeting Mal.

"I do indeed young Duck," said Mr Squirrel. "Class, would you like me to tell you all my story?"

Cat was the first to speak.

"I'd like to hear your story Mr S, but only if you feel OK to share".

"Well thank you for checking Cat, but I'm very happy to share with you all," said Mr Squirrel, smiling.

Mr Squirrel cleared his throat and started to tell his story.

"Now this is just my story, everyone, and it's unique to me, but it starts when I was about your age.

When I was at school I messed around a lot. It was because a lot of the time I really struggled to concentrate, no matter how hard I tried.

I found it very hard to sit still and all I wanted to do was keep getting up and moving around. My teachers were constantly telling me to sit down and get on with my work."







"It often felt like my brain was working at one hundred miles an hour and no matter what I did, I just couldn't focus on the work I was supposed to be doing. I honestly thought I was stupid because I felt very different from everyone else in my class, they all seemed to be finding learning so easy!

This made me feel very confused. I didn't understand what all the feelings I was having really meant. The thing I did know was that I did not like what was going on, and that I was often angry with myself for being different."

Confused



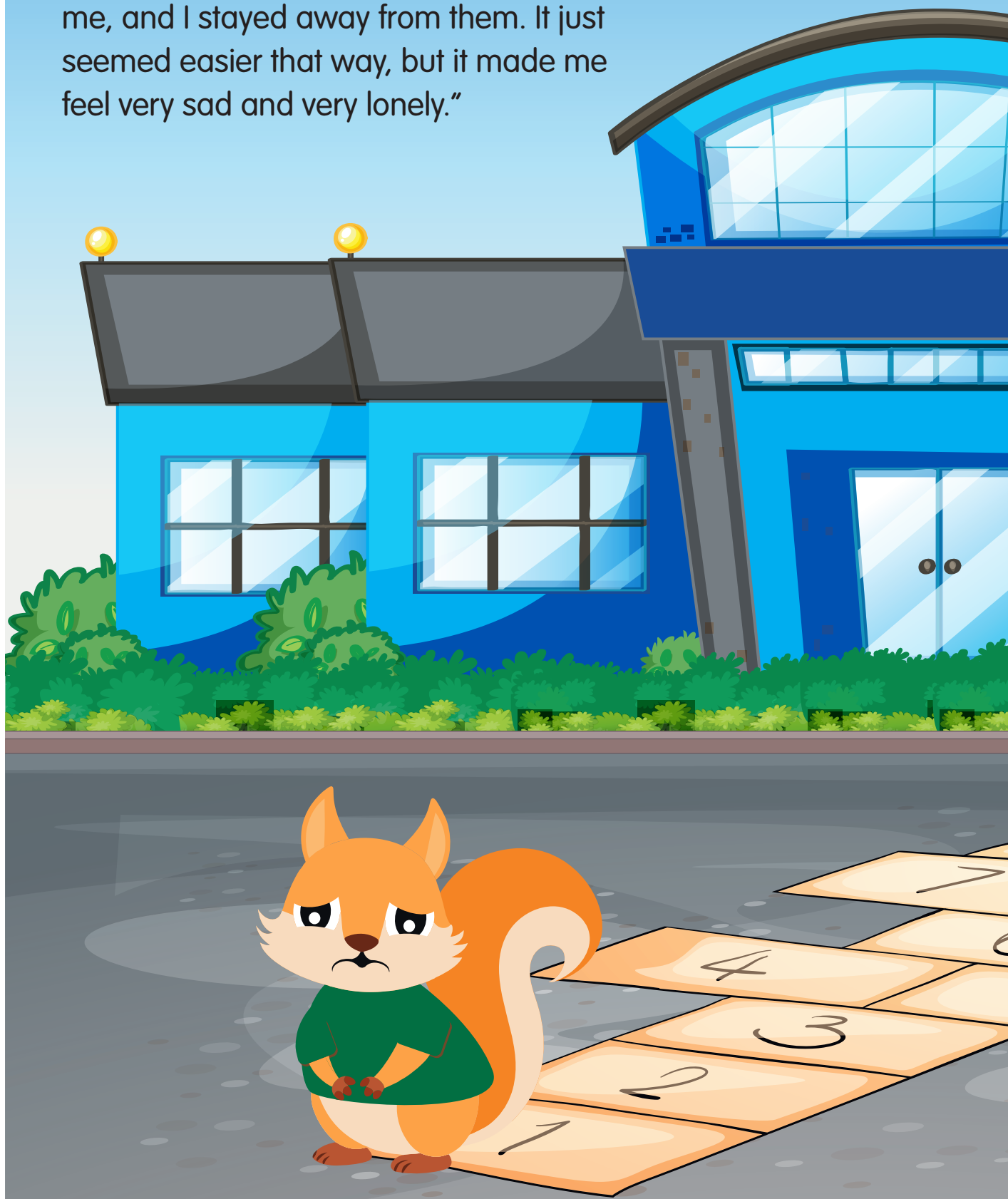
Anxious

"I didn't tell anyone what I was thinking and feeling because I thought they would make fun of me and call me names like 'Stupid Squirrel', or even 'Mad Squirrel'!

I felt really embarrassed because I thought I was the only one who had ever felt like this. That made me feel scared as well."



"I also really struggled to make friends with other animals, so they stayed away from me, and I stayed away from them. It just seemed easier that way, but it made me feel very sad and very lonely."



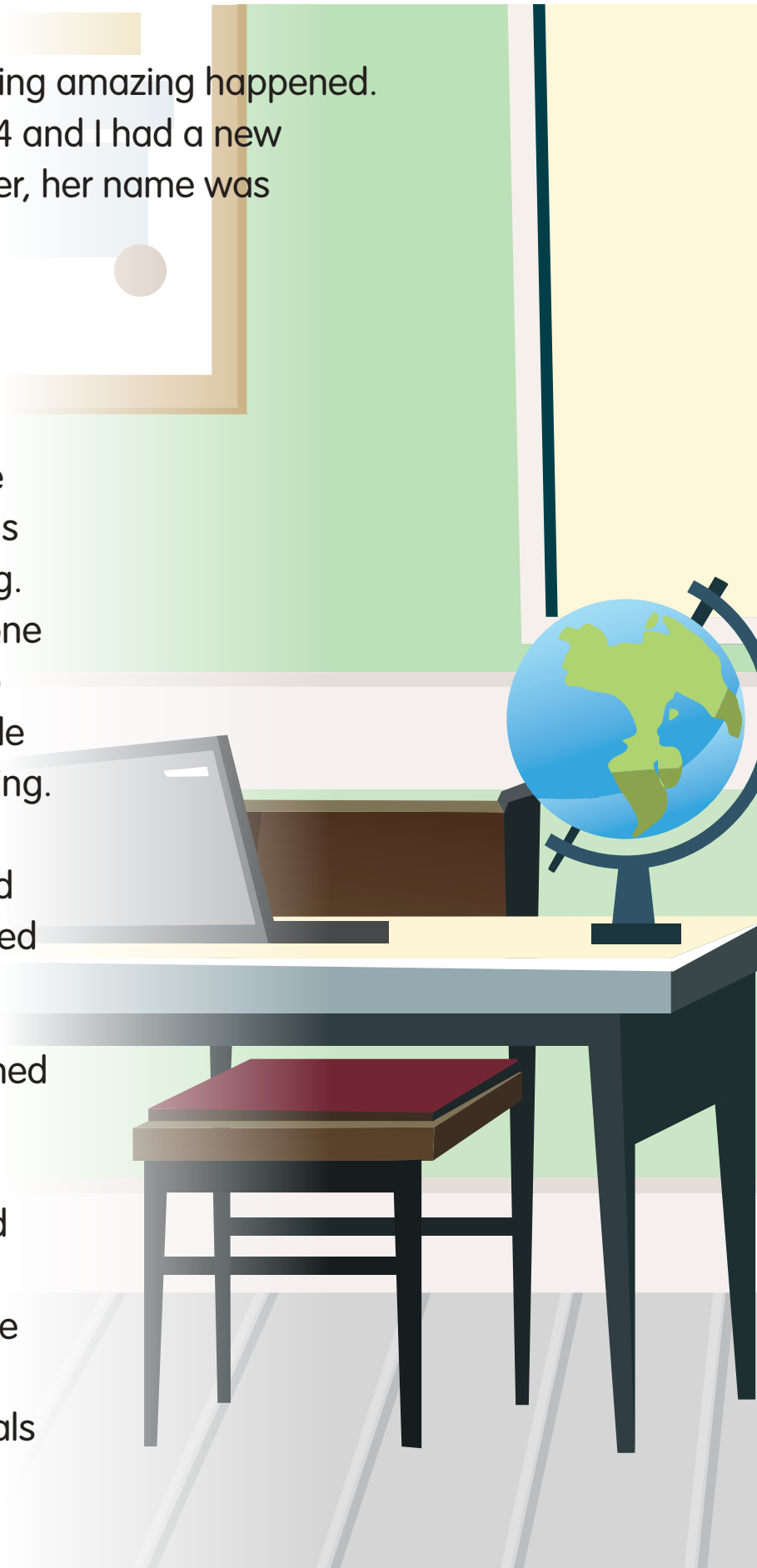
“The only thing I could really do was make others laugh in class by acting silly and distracting them from their learning. It felt good when they laughed and liked me, but I got into lots of trouble because of it.”



"Then one day something amazing happened. I had just started Year 4 and I had a new teacher, I really liked her, her name was Mrs Penguin.

Instead of her just shouting at me for messing around, she tried to understand me and work out why I was doing what I was doing. She had taught someone a bit like me before, so she already knew a little bit about this sort of thing. She had an idea what might be going on, and she thought I might need some extra help.

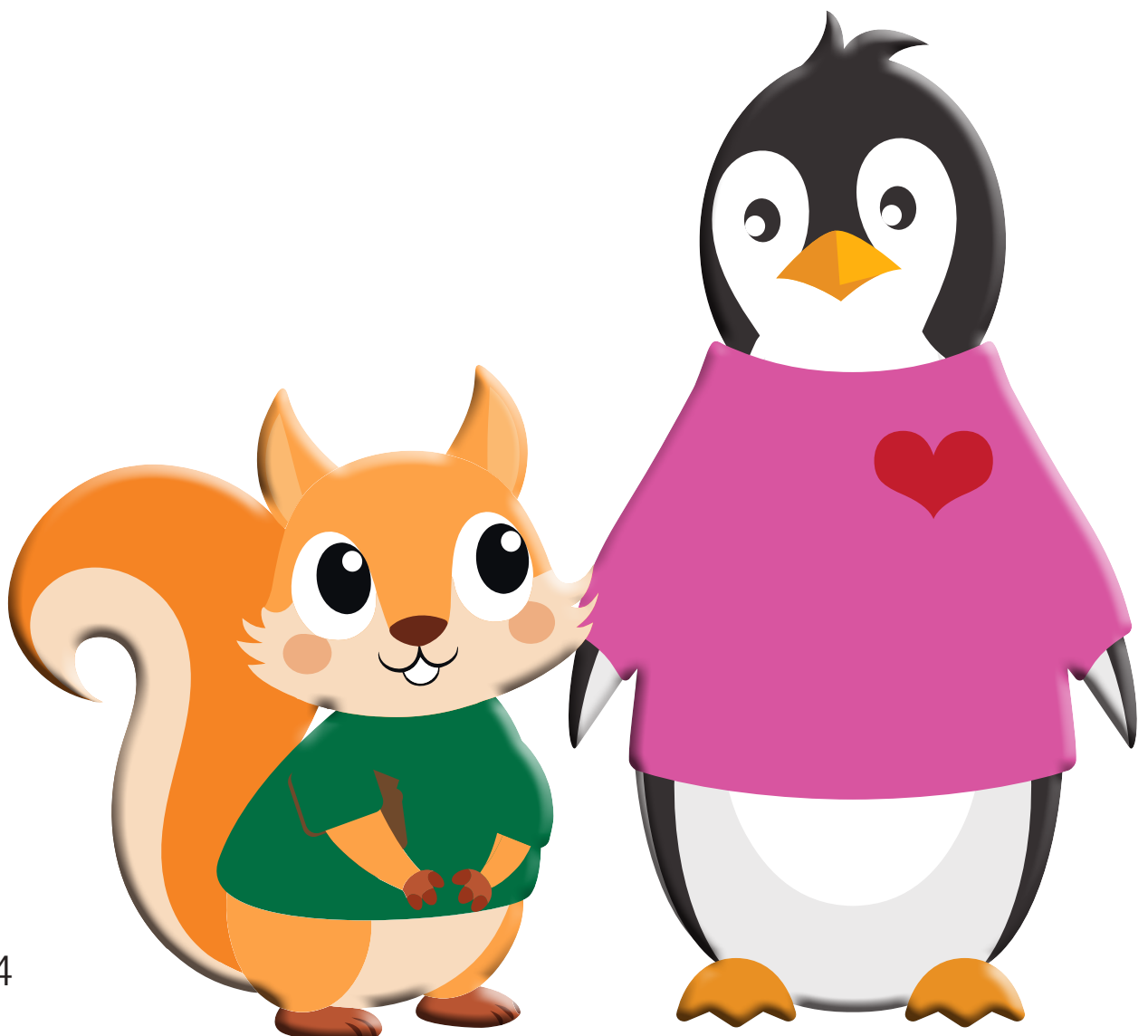
She talked to me, listened to me, and helped me to understand that the confused feelings I had were actually anger and frustration because I couldn't do the same things that other animals were able to do."





“She talked to my parents, and a wise doctor called Dr Owl. Together, they investigated what might be going on for me.

With their help I soon understood that I had something called ADHD. It wasn’t my fault, anyone can have it, but it’s also not the end of the world.”



**Hello,
I'm Dr Owl...**



"I learned that I would just need some extra support to be able to learn things, and that I wasn't stupid at all, just unique in my own way."

“One of the first things we did was find some time for me to move around in lessons. This helped me because after I had moved around for a little while I felt calmer and that made it easier for me to sit down and get on with my work. It also made it easier for everyone else too because I wasn’t distracting them as much anymore.”





Best ways to make a friend

Use the space below to write down some of your own ideas on the best ways to make a friend.

You can use some of the ideas we came up with as a class, or some different ones of your own.

I think the best ways to make a friend are:

-
-
-

Do you have any other ideas or tips on how to make a friend?





How would we want...

In the space below, answer the question and write down what you would want for the people who you love and care about.

- How would we want the people we love to be spoken to?
Example: Respectfully
- How would we want the people we love to be treated physically?
Example: Given personal space



“My schoolwork also changed. I did the same work as everyone else, but the worksheets I used were made so they could help people like me. That made it much easier for me to do my work, and at last I was really learning things.”

What am I...?

Draw a line to match the description to the picture

 Anti-perspirant	1. I am a liquid - I come in a bottle - I remove nail varnish from nails	 Air freshener
 Glue	2. I fix broken things - you don't want to get me on your fingers - I am sticky	 Nail Varnish Remover
 Disposable Lighter	3. I smell good - I can stop you from sweating - I come in an aerosol can	 Hairspray
 Deodorant	4. I may come in a can, I can make a room smell nice and fresh	 Insect Spray
 Liqui-tabs	5. I make fire - I am made of plastic - You throw me away when I'm empty	 Gas Lighter Refill
	6. I kill bugs - I come in an aerosol can - You shouldn't spray me near food	
	7. I come in a pouch - You put me in with your dirty clothes - I wash your clothes	
	8. I smell good - I come in an aerosol can - You spray me under your arms	
	9. I make your hair stay in place - I come in an aerosol can - I am sticky	
	10. You can refill a lighter with me - I am flammable - I am a liquid	

"I also got some extra help with my work and that extra help continued all the way through my education.

Sometimes it felt a bit strange to have help, but I knew I needed it to get on. I had to work through my feelings about this with Dr Owl, and it took a little while, but I found a way to be ok with it all."



“Because of all that support I stopped thinking I was stupid and that gave me more confidence as well which was brilliant. My classmates also understood me better, and I started making some friends, which was the best thing ever!”



“But that wasn’t all, we also found out that the food I ate really mattered.

Before my ADHD had been discovered I’d often been eating sugary treats and chocolate cereal.

My parents and school didn’t realise that these foods weren’t helping me to learn.”



“When I started fuelling my body properly with better food, learning started to become much easier.

Because of all of those changes I was able to do well at school, college and university and I was able to pass my exams and become a teacher, and that’s basically how I got here today!”

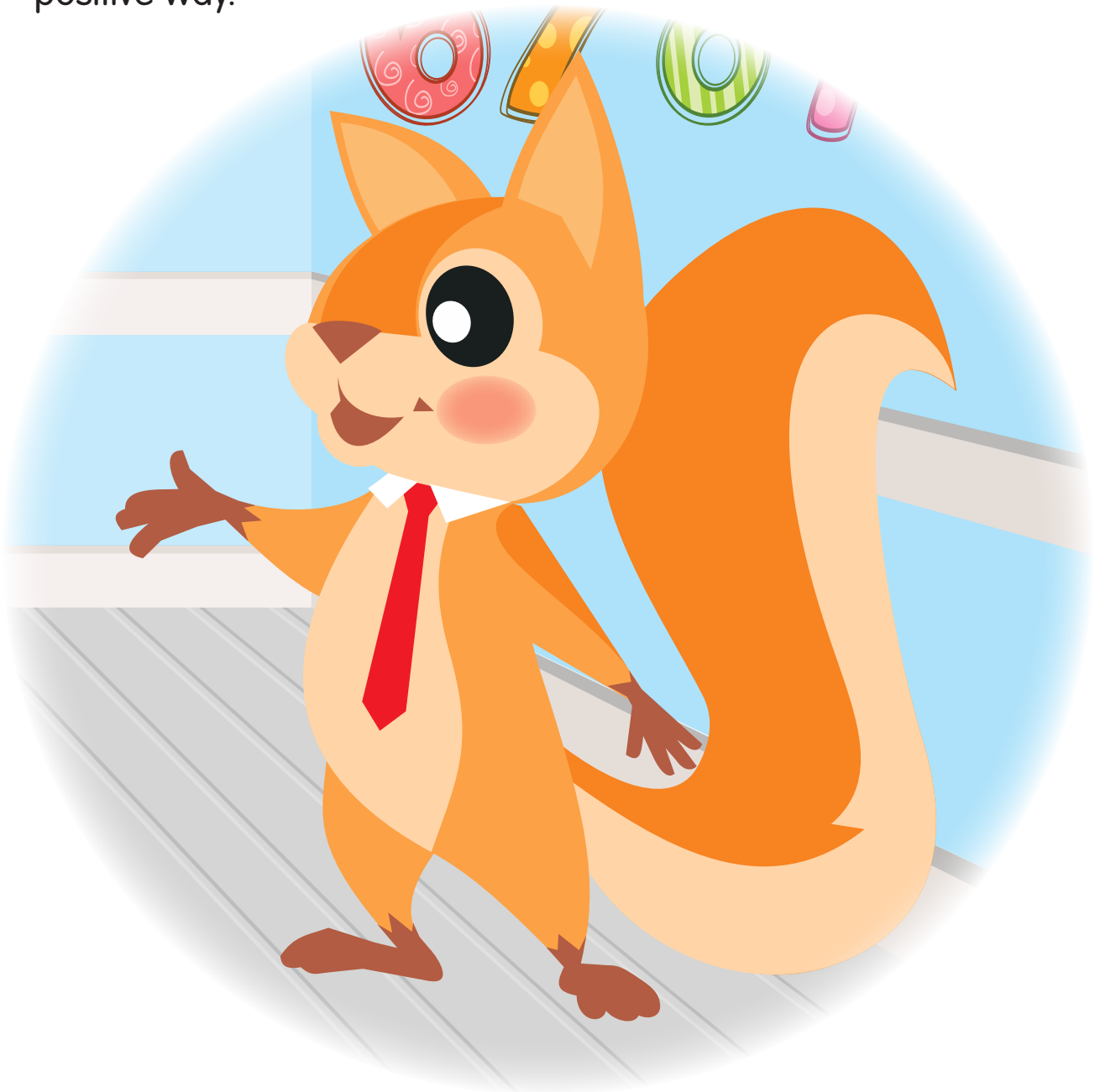




As soon as Mr Squirrel finished speaking the whole class started to clap, and the clapping lasted quite a while! They were so proud of him, what he had achieved, and the story he had told them.

"That's a wonderful story Mr Squirrel," Cat said with a great big smile on her face. "You have really inspired me."

Mr Squirrel blushed at this lovely comment from Cat, he felt humbled that his story had inspired his pupils in such a positive way.

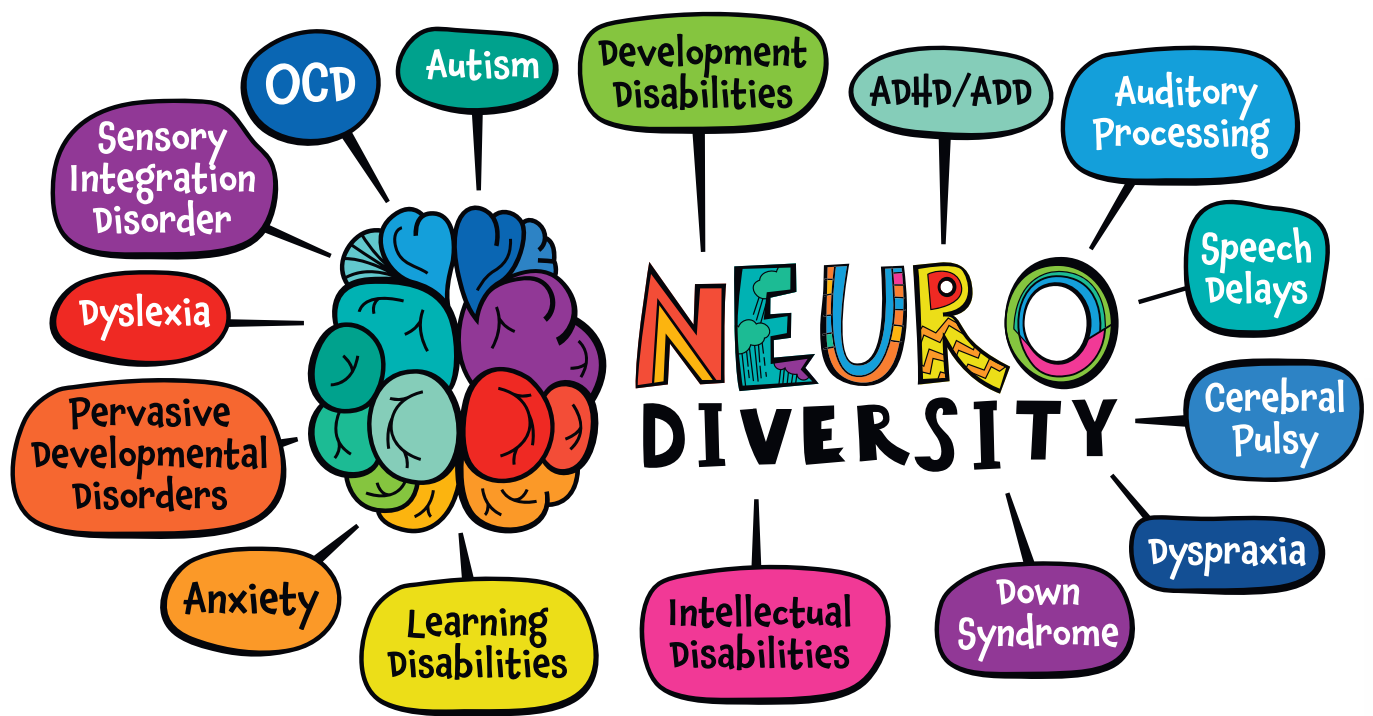




Mr Squirrel then spoke again.

"These are a few things I'd like you all to remember, **today**, **tomorrow** and **everyday**:

- You are amazing, and you are unique, so just be yourself, that's good enough!
- Be tolerant (understanding) of others and try and make others aware so they can be more tolerant too - call out meanness and unkindness if you ever see it.
- Don't judge, don't look down on others. Think, 'What can you do to help?' rather than be uncaring.
- My Mom and Dad had to change when they found out I had ADHD and they educated their friends too - the more of us that know the facts about neurodiverse folks, the better.
- Let's all help by making sure others understand about neurodivergent people and what we can do to support them. They don't need special treatment, just a bit of extra support so they can achieve the same as everyone else."



The whole class were nodding back at Mr Squirrel; everyone absolutely agreed with his important list of things to remember and would try their best to do so.

They also all agreed as a class, there and then, that they would learn more about neurodivergent people and neurodiversity.

That way they could help make the world a more understanding and equal place for everyone.





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Here are some of the other characters
you will get to meet!

