





And these five are the Umbrella Gang, who founded the Umbrella. They all have neurodiversity – from dyslexia to TS.



They're finishing up at Primary School now, ready to start Secondary School in the new term.



Unfortunately, none of them expected how different things would be.



On the first day, it was FULL of older pupils. The Umbrella Gang hadn't felt so small since Year 1.



CLASS ALLOCATIONS



Also, in secondary school all the subjects are split up into different classes.



Even though they were in the same school and year-group, the 5 friends were rarely in the same class.

But the new facilities, new friends and bigger rooms were all quite exciting!



Secondary school wasn't "bad". It was just... different. Intimidatingly so.

Worse still: Neurodiversity was not so well understood here like it had been at their previous school.



But that doesn't mean there weren't problems. For example, running the classes was a harder job for the teachers.



After their first few days in Secondary School, the five of them decided to meet in the playground.







As for Marcus...



Andy, meanwhile, has a maths teacher (Mrs Ward Kelly) who understands him, and a quiet classroom...



But Josh seems to have it the hardest of all...



His teacher is notoriously not very understanding, and very strict!



I'm so upset... but if I show it he'll call me a baby in front of everyone.



As for the new Umbrella space (or should I say "Special Unit") it feels less than ideal to the struggling friends.



Later, during PE Class, Josh and Siena have a chance to catch up...





As things progressed through the first month of secondary school, things didn't get any better for the gang.



Charlotte stopped taking her mads and fell behind in her classwork.

Marcus fell behind in his work too as he got even sillier to impress his classmates.



Sienna wasn't seeing much of Josh after all...



In fact, the Umbrella Gang were seeing less of each of each other in general.



Eventually you could feel it in the air. The gang was drifting apart from each other.



But whenever they were asked about how they were finding school...



A month later...

I'll check how those five year 7s are getting on with the Special Unit room I arranged for them.



Huh? They're not here. I was sure they usually meet at this time.



Maybe they don't need it anymore? Maybe they've settled-in at last.



Meanwhile, in PE...

I'll pass this one to Siena, and let her score.



Sigh She's not here again?



Fine! It's not like anyone's here for me anyway...



...in this stupid school!



That was class', mate! Have some water.



I hear you've been ditching your English classes to do more PE.





But she hadn't forgotten. That day, Siena finally plucked up her courage to speak with Josh's notorious English teacher...



Meanwhile, Andy seemed to be having the best time at school out of all the gang. His maths teacher was patient and kind about his dyscalculia in maths.

Are you finding the pennies helpful, Andy?

Very much so— *QUINK*

She was understanding about his Tourette's as well, thus so was the rest of her class.

I mean: very much so, thank you. *whistle*

I'm glad. Let me know if you get stuck on a question.

Later, after maths class...

Huh? Are those guys picking on someone?

Haha — loser!

Oh! Leave them alone.

Clear off, mate, this is none of your business.

It's Andy from football.

Chelcee? Is that you?

Sniff Thanks Andy. They were picking on me for giving stupid answers in maths.

Yeah, well I'll make it Mr Corner's business in 5 seconds if you don't beat it.

Geez, sorry— we were only joking.

We were just leaving anyway.

What jerks. I heard Marcus was struggling with something similar.

I wonder how he's getting on now...

Marcus's school performance hasn't been good, and he's been running his teacher ragged.

That doesn't sound like him, Marcus was in the top ten highest SATS scores in the country, and would never...









Later, as Josh comes home from school...











At Josh's house, the gang felt fully reunited at last.



Next day, planning for Neurodiversity Week begins!













A word from Dr Tony Lloyd:



We want you all to encourage your schools to participate in Neurodiversity Celebration week in March and we want you all to shout from the rooftops about your ability and talents and to respectfully challenge those who tell you that you can't achieve your goals simply because your brain works in a different way. So many of you have written to us to tell us that you are tired telling those around you that just because you are neurodiverse does not mean that you lack intelligence or ability – or even that you can't have a successful career. So share this comic book with your friends, your parents and your teachers so we can shine a light on the many incredibly amazing things about you – and make sure that in those areas of school work that you find difficult, that you get the support you need".



You can get your school to sign up to Neurodiversity Celebration week via this link www.Neurodiversity-Celebration-Week.com or the Neurodiversity Umbrella Project that runs from May to September every year by emailing info@adhd.foundation.org.uk.

Dr Tony Lloyd
CEO of the ADHD Foundation

Special Thanks to...



Stephen Fry



Patricia Ward Kelly



Rory Bremner



Loyle Carter



Simon Weston



Matthew Bourne



J Grange



Chelsea Grimes

We would like to thank Comedian and Impressionist Rory Bremner – a patron of the Foundation, Patricia Ward Kelly also a patron of the foundation, and thanks also to Stephen Fry for agreeing to be the face of the character Mr Fry the teacher. Also to UK rap artist & chef Loyle Carter for your support for this series of educational comic books for neurodiverse children and young people with dyslexia, ADD, autism, Tourette's, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. Thanks to Rapper J Grange who joins the cast of the Umbrella Gang and is now a Young Ambassador for the Foundation. A final word of thanks to the British Film Industry and to the English National Opera who will be working with us on the next volume of the comic book. We have a number of celebrities who will be joining the staff team or making an appearance in the next volume of 'The adventures of the Umbrella Gang' in May 2021.

ADHD Foundation Young Ambassadors:



Siena Castellon is an internationally recognised neurodiversity advocate who is autistic, dyslexic, dyspraxic, and has ADHD. She is the founder of Neurodiversity Celebration Week, an international campaign that encourages schools to flip the narrative from focusing on the challenges and drawbacks of being neurodivergent to focusing on their strengths and talents. In 2020, over 500,000 students from over 760 schools took part in Neurodiversity Celebration Week worldwide. Siena is also the bestselling author of 'The Spectrum Girl's Survival Guide: How To Grow Up Awesome and Autistic.'

I suffered from being bullied, misunderstood, discriminated against and even excluded from learning at school. Having ADHD isn't something that has gone away, it is something that I became more aware of, learned how to deal with and turned into a strength. Golf has proved to be the vehicle by which my ADHD became a strength. It kept me occupied and equally challenged on a daily basis, and although I had a fair mixture of good and bad days, I loved the individual challenge so much, that I kept coming back to the golf course for more. Golf is my future. It's the vehicle I can use to achieve all of my goals and dream.



Josh Grenville-Wood



Charlotte Downson

I was diagnosed with ADHD when I was in primary school and I was inspired by the famous creative people who spoke openly about their ADHD – especially the singers and actors. This inspired me because I loved drama at school and I pursued my passion for singing, dancing and acting. I have now appeared in a number of TV commercials and theatre plays and aspire to a career as a professional actor and performer. I am now studying drama at the Famous Paul McCartney School – The Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. Like Josh, Marcus, Siena and Andy, I want to be a voice for other young people who have ADHD like me – or dyslexia, autism, Tourette's and dyspraxia. I won't let anyone tell me that I am 'low ability' or won't succeed in life.

I am autistic and have Tourette's Syndrome. After struggling a lot in education, I have made it my life goal to make sure as many neurodivergent young people as possible avoid the struggles previous generations have faced. Currently, I work full time as an advocate for SEND young people at a local authority and I am co-chair of the North West SEND Young People's Co Production Network. I also run Spectrum Gaming, a community for autistic young people so they can connect with each other through their shared passion of gaming.



Andy Smith



Marcus Wilton

I'm Marcus, I'm 13 years old, I have an Assistance dog called Cocoa and computers are my thing. I am the youngest Ambassador and member of the "Umbrella Gang". I live with ADHD, ASD, PDA, but I don't let this define me. I am bright, articulate, have a great sense of humour and push the boundary's despite anxiety, limited self esteem and confidence which has been affected by people in my life who didn't understand ADHD/ASD and should have known better. I have managed to turn my Autism, ADHD and Mental Health issues into something really positive to help others and have helped myself along the way. I am really happy and proud to be part of "Umbrella Gang".

[Awards Marcus has won include "Young Achiever of the Year" for the National Neurodiversity Awards, "Genius Whistle", 2019.]

This is the story of five neurodiverse friends and the transition to their first year of secondary school. They are all proud of their neurodiversity and together have found ways to thrive in primary school, despite the obstacles neurodiversity can have in a school environment. But what will it be like in secondary school? Will the classes be bigger? Will the teachers be strict? Even though moving up to secondary school can be very exciting, it can also be quite scary...

The ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity collaborates with many agencies in the UK to promote a more positive attitude toward young people with dyslexia, ADHD, autism, dyscalculia, Tourette's, tics and dyspraxia. We want all children and young people to achieve their potential in education. We want to encourage all schools to celebrate neurodiversity and challenge the often negative and stigmatising stereotypes that can result in many children and young people feeling bullied or excluded. (www.adhdfoundation.org.uk).

Helpful Videos on Neurodiversity:

Autism

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=RbwRrVw-CRo>

ADHD

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=xmFWGazn5jU>

Dyslexia

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=11r7CFIK2sc>

ADHD & Medication

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=1jCeSCo9rsM>

Tourette's Syndrome (TS)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TMJLME4TJ>

Hyperactivity

<https://youtu.be/kIPGZs0UCQc>

This comic was written and edited by Rossie Stone, and produced by Dekko Comics Ltd - a company that turns school curriculum subjects into fun comic strip stories as an alternative/additional way to learn.

To find out more, visit www.dekkocomics.com