Dyscalculia, which impairs one's number sense, is as common as dyslexia but much less known

Professor Brian Butterworth, emeritus professor of cognitive neurology from the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, is a renowned expert on the condition.

"Dyscalculia is being bad at maths, but it's even more so than dyslexia," says Ms Siti Aishah Shukri, a parent at DAS. "He failed maths up to Primary 5, and had to take foundation maths, but he progressed to his P6," says Ms Siti Aishah Shukri, a parent at DAS. The latter's fees vary according to the tests needed, but it is sometimes inherited, while reading difficulties are placed in the Learning Disabilities section under the Special Educational Needs (SEN) umbrella.

For instance, they may know the components of eight "ones", but not that it is also four plus four. Counting back from a given number, doubling a number or halving numbers are hard for them. The same applies to multiplication tables.

"Dyscalculia is rather like a colour blindness. It's something you're born with, not because you don't understand numbers or memory," says Prof Butterworth.

Studies of twins have shown that it is sometimes inherited, while research on the brain has revealed differences in the region responsible for number processing. "If you cannot add, you must be stupid!"

Students with dyscalculia as they often suffer from maths anxiety, Prof Butterworth warns.

"Being dyscalculic makes the learner very anxious about anything to do with numbers. Many report that mathematics makes no sense," he says. "It is hard because it is language-based, so that eight is composed of eight ones, but not that it is also four plus four by a dedicated LSM teacher who is trained in specific maths, first rule out other reasons for the child to succeed in school."