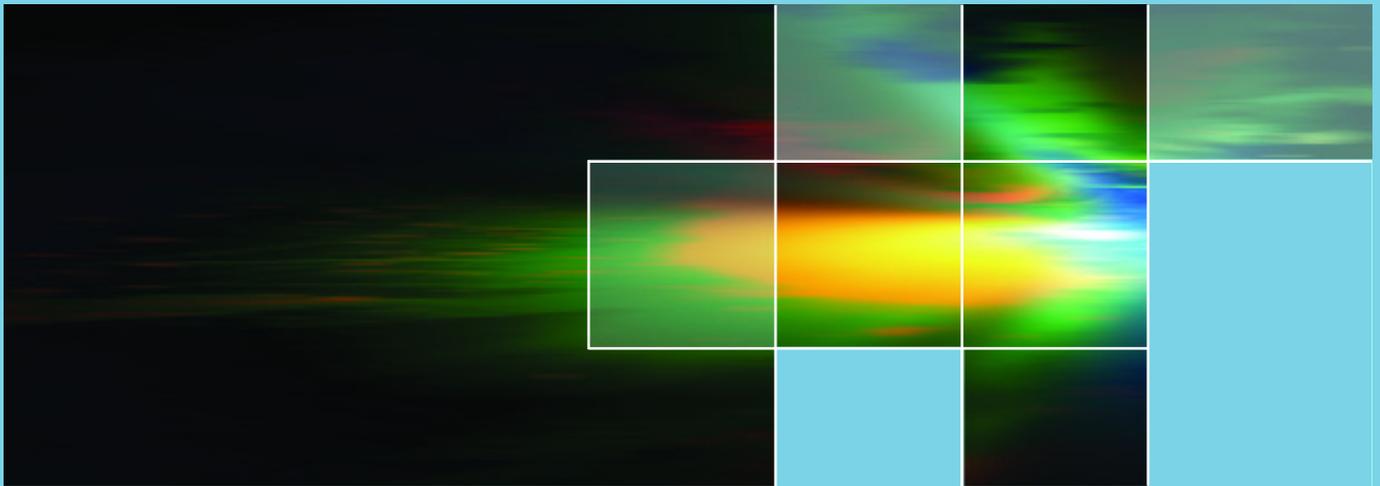


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## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION: *Reflection and Renewal*

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

Research Report by Simon Ellis, Professor Janet Tod  
and Lynne Graham-Matheson, Canterbury Christchurch University for the NASUWT

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# Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

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*The authors wish to thank Dr Ruth Roger and Dr Ray Godfrey for their contributions to this project.*

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*'Any views expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Canterbury Christ Church University'*

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## PREFACE

Following a range of concerns raised by members about issues related to SEN and inclusion, the NASUWT commissioned research to examine these issues. This literature review represents the first stage of this research. It looks at interpretations of inclusion including local authority interpretations and how this translates into policy and practice, at different understandings of the term 'special educational needs', at teacher attitudes to inclusion, at classroom practice and teachers' training and development needs, and at issues of behaviour SEN and inclusion. The NASUWT was also keen to look at what has happened across the UK and the report compares policies and practice in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The literature review raises some very important issues and the NASUWT plans to use the findings to commission further research to explore in more detail some of these.

## OVERVIEW

The terms 'SEN'<sup>1</sup> and 'inclusion' have become inextricably linked through policy interpretation, professional development, personal experience and public voice. Interestingly, inclusion was never intended to be simply about learners with SEN, and it has been argued that the term 'SEN' is itself incompatible with inclusion. Similarly, inclusion was never intended to be simply about school placement. However, in the field of education, public and professional interpretation of inclusion has tended to focus on the placement of children with SEN in mainstream settings. In spite of SEN and inclusion agendas being driven by national policies, teachers are inevitably experiencing the effects of interpretations of these policies at Local Authority and school level.

The field of SEN has a long history, which preceded inclusion as an education policy directive. More recently there has been an overt focus on achieving holistic outcomes for *individual* children and young people through agendas such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003) and *Getting it Right for Every Child* (Scottish Executive 2006). These emerging policies place teachers and schools in a period of change where existing, familiar relationships with the local authority and services are being re-configured, bringing challenges to assumptions regarding the role of schools and the staff within them.

Developments in policy and practice in SEN and inclusion have not developed in isolation but alongside other national and local priorities. Within England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland there have been concerns to address teacher workload and to prioritise a focus on teaching and learning. In England and Wales this is through the National Agreement and in Scotland through *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (SEED 2001) which took forward the recommendations of the McCrone report (2000). The Curran Report (DENI 2003, DENI 2004) has sought to bring about some parity for teachers<sup>2</sup> in Northern Ireland with changes brought about by the National Agreement in England and Wales. The field of special educational needs has a long association with high levels of bureaucracy (e.g. DfES 2005, Gross 2000 and OFSTED 1997). This suggests a potential source of tension between this area of work and the moves to address teacher workload.

This review seeks to clarify the complexities of issues and debates surrounding SEN and inclusion and also seeks to inform debate about the extent to which there is potential for practices related to SEN and inclusion to compromise either the terms or spirit of policy within the four nations intended to reduce teacher workload.

### Structure of the Literature Review

Recognising the complexity of SEN and inclusion and knowing that readers may want to 'dip into' the review, it has been organised into three sections:

- 1. Understanding Inclusion and Special Educational Needs:**
  - 1.1: What is inclusion?
  - 1.2: What are Special Educational Needs?
  - 1.3: Teachers attitudes and inclusion
  - 1.4: Educational policies for inclusion
  - 1.5: Local Authorities responses to the inclusion agenda
- 2. Key issues for the classroom:**
  - 2.1: Classroom practice: Guidance and training for SEN and inclusion
  - 2.2: Behaviour, SEN and inclusion
- 3. Discussion and implications for teachers and their schools.**

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<sup>1</sup> special educational needs.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document the term 'teachers' is used for brevity but should be interpreted where applicable as referring to the wider school workforce.

## Section 1: Understanding Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

This section seeks to enhance teachers' knowledge about SEN and inclusion in relation to ideology, interpretation and policy directives. It seeks to illuminate complexities and conflicts inherent within this area of work and enable teachers to engage with these issues and assume their rightful place in the debate. This is crucial to teacher experience and issues of workload:

*"Information access and communications are critical to addressing problems of workload and stress. Teachers and headteachers working in ignorance often found themselves experiencing high levels of stress, and in these cases workload pressures appeared most acute. Not knowing about current developments and issues serve to undermine teachers' ability to implement the reform agenda."* (NASUWT 2005: pg 19).

## Section 2: Key issues for the classroom

Two areas of concern consistently emerge from teachers in relation to the educational landscape on which the SEN and inclusion agenda is imposed. These are 'behaviour' and 'training'. This section provides an in-depth consideration of literature in these areas. It seeks to synthesise and share existing knowledge with teachers, with a view to developing enhanced understanding of why simply addressing demands for more training might not in itself be sufficient to meet teacher and school concerns.

## Section 3: Discussion and Implications for Teachers and their Schools

This section discusses issues arising from this literature review and considers the possible implications for teachers and their schools.

### Focus of the Review

Questions posed during selection and synthesis of literature on SEN and inclusion included:

1. What do teachers *think* they are expected to know and do in relation to SEN and inclusion?
  - This allows a focus on the information teachers are receiving from the *interpretations* of policy for SEN and inclusion that is relayed to them from a variety of sources including their Local Authorities, the media and through local delivery of training and guidance materials. These interpretations serve to form attitudes and beliefs about SEN and inclusion that are further developed from their personal and professional experiences in the classroom.
2. What do teachers *actually* need to understand, know and do?
  - There is a body of knowledge and information in the literature for which there is a consensus view underpinned by an evidence base. This provides a backdrop against which the varying interpretations of policy and practice can be viewed and provides opportunity to reduce the varying levels and quality of provision for SEN and inclusion that is evident between schools and their Local Authorities. This stance supports the view that teaching is an evidence based profession.
3. What can teachers *feasibly* do?
  - Although crucial, the question of 'feasibility' is far from clear cut. It refers to what is realistic for teachers to provide in terms of their conditions for practice, e.g. class size, incidence and type of SEN, level of additional support, behavioural issues, competing demands, resources etc. Feasibility also refers to levels of confidence and competence experienced by individual teachers and as such relates to teachers' training and experience of SEN and inclusion. Feasibility would be expected to change as schools develop their remodelling agendas and implement national agreements that seek to reduce workloads and improve holistic outcomes for individuals.

## Section 1

Section 1 contains literature that relates directly to question 1 above. All five subsections in this Section are concerned with areas where inclusion and SEN have been subject to a high level of interpretation. Section 1.1 starts this exploration by looking at *'What is Inclusion?'* and predictably concludes that inclusion is a multifaceted construct that is strongly influenced by the context in which it is discussed. As such, inclusion within education has been defined in relation to:

- an ideology and/or aspiration: usually linked to a human rights agenda;
- a place: usually mainstream versus special school;
- a policy: normally from central or local government;
- professional practice: i.e. 'inclusive teaching'?
- personal experience: how an individual and their parent/carer experiences inclusion.

In practice there is not necessarily a coherent relationship between these differing perspectives and definitions. This potential lack of coherence has resulted in teachers tussling with the 'purpose' of inclusion and their professional responsibilities in relation to that purpose. Should schools and their teachers concentrate on delivering policy initiatives so that they are positively endorsed by external inspection? Should they align themselves to their school and/or Local Authority (LA) interpretation of inclusion and engage with parents according to that interpretation? Should they seek to address the 'right' of a child to be included in mainstream or pursue securing the right of the child to an appropriate education? Are the outcomes of inclusion time framed? Is it acceptable for a pupil to attend an alternative to mainstream local provision in order that he/she might experience a greater chance of being included in the longer term? While confusion and interpretation are inevitable when social, moral, political and educational perspectives are interlinked, it has to be remembered that teachers have to deliver a workable version of these agendas.

As Section 1 moves on into section 1.2 *'What is SEN?'* it becomes clear that SEN is not an overarching label that conveys an agreed definition. Neither does it necessarily allow teachers to make informed decisions about provision. It is perhaps more appropriately regarded as an explanatory construct that is used to explain notable differences in rates of pupil progress in relation to a benchmark or point of reference. Historically this benchmark has been 'normal' human development located within a medical model and characteristically linked to the language of diagnosis, labelling, symptoms and treatments and/or interventions. More recent benchmarks have a focus on 'need' in order to identify any additional or different provision required to address the observable differences in pupil progress. However, following the endorsement of the social model of disability that underpins inclusion, teachers are now faced with deciding whether provision should be based on the progress of class peers, or the level of progress expected from the population of same aged individuals or progress from the individual's own baseline. For example, in the case of a pupil with dyslexia teachers may have to decide between:

- 1) Should I apply the term SEN for this pupil in this era of inclusion?
- 2) Does the pupil have SEN if he is functioning below a level expected for his age but is not significantly behind his class peers, many of whom have delayed attainment in written language skills?
- 3) Does s/he have SEN because s/he is achieving consistent with his chronological age and his class group in written language but below his potential given his attainment in other areas of the curriculum?

The coexistence of the inherited so called 'normative' medical model of SEN alongside the 'relative' social model leads to variations in the identification of SEN between schools and their LAs. It also poses an anomaly for teachers who are criticised for low attainment of pupils with SEN in standardised assessments ( SATs, GCSEs etc) when the definition of SEN prescribes that the pupil is making slower or different progress than their peers. This definition of SEN also leads to the potential for a child to be considered to have SEN in one school or context but not in another. Of particular relevance are the different incidence rates for SEN between Local Authorities, also between primary and secondary

contexts and in particular in relation to Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). These anomalies and confusions in identification and assessment of SEN pose particular problems for the effective allocation of resources and provision in relation to initiatives for early identification and intervention.

Section 1.3 is concerned with *'Teacher Attitudes and Inclusion'* and reaffirms that teachers continue to endorse the principle of inclusion but are concerned about the practicalities. This section is of particular importance in that there is evidence to support the view that teacher attitudes towards, and beliefs about inclusion are crucial in determining the success or failure of a policy of inclusion. A major barrier to inclusion, identified by teachers, is a perceived lack of knowledge and perceived skill deficit. There is support for the view that teacher attitude can be positively influenced through the increasing confidence that comes from combining substantial training for inclusion with structured fieldwork experiences involving direct working with pupils with significant SEN and disabilities.

SEN and inclusion is strongly influenced by *'Educational Policies for Inclusion'*. This is the focus of Section 1.4. Inclusion has been transposed on to educational systems that often house competing and opposing systems such as school performance tables, a prescribed curriculum and age assessed attainment.

Literature in this section draws out the view that educational policies in relation to SEN, inclusion, and standards raising have pragmatically tended to develop in parallel, rather than as coherent synergised directives that serve to inform planning and practice in schools. As a consequence within any one school or LA one agenda may be prioritised over another. Senior managers, for example, may be very concerned with performance tables and externally assessed levels of attainment of groups of pupils. This would be quite reasonable given external criteria for ascribing the label of 'successful' to schools and the associated career aspirations of teachers. The SENCO may be more focused on delivering policies for SEN that seek to include pupils and recognise the broader achievements pupils with SEN make from their starting point. Class teachers may experience the tensions between priorities within the classroom as they focus on the day to day provision of quality teaching for the whole class whilst maintaining a responsibility for the learning needs of individual pupils who experience SEN.

Personalised learning is emerging as a strategy that could link these priorities but this too is an interpretable concept.

Section 1.5 *Local Authority Responses to the Inclusion Agenda* concludes Section 1 by highlighting that as a consequence of the interpretative elements within policies for SEN and inclusion there is wide variation between LAs in relation to support service arrangements, specialist provision, statementing and recorded incidence of SEN. This section of the review also highlights the significance of geography and history in the provision available to support SEN and inclusion. Some LAs do not have the same range of special schools and in some rural and outlying areas there is an issue that distance is a barrier to provision being available.

Differing interpretations of SEN and inclusion are likely to impact negatively on initiatives that seek to reduce variations in the quality of provision for SEN between and within areas of the UK. This poses difficulties for the design of research studies that seek to evaluate the impact of policies for inclusion on outcomes for pupils with SEN.

In looking at literature described in Section 1 it can be seen that there is not a clear answer for teachers to the question *'What am I expected to know and do in relation to SEN and Inclusion?'* This section highlights a lack of clarity in relation to definitions and purpose of inclusion. Similarly the application of the term 'SEN' cannot simply be decided by reference to either a social definition of need or a medical definition of delay, difference or disability. It may be helpful for teachers to have this made explicit so that they can use a problem solving approach to their practice rather than seeking to secure compliance to given solutions disseminated through a raft of policy requirements and good practice guidance documents.

Of some comfort is the emergence of policy directives within the UK that recognise that SEN and inclusion should have a focus on individual pupil outcomes, against which efficacy of developments

in provision and practice will be evaluated. This does allow for a consensus view of purpose to be developed in schools which hopefully may reduce the emphasis on place (i.e. mainstream) as the focus for delivery of provision. Teachers may need to know and debate this. It may also be helpful for teachers to consider the adoption of a bio-psycho-social model of disability to replace the dominant social model of disability that underpins inclusion. Although there is little evidence for a specialist pedagogy for pupils with SEN linked to a labelled category of need, knowledge of SEN and the involvement of a specialist teacher are reported to contribute to good progress for some pupils with SEN. This seems to support the view that the social model of disability, which has been a *necessary* trigger for a focus on 'Quality First Teaching' for all, is not sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils. Clearly there are biological and psychological variables in addition to social variables that contribute to individual differences. Teachers should not be wary in recognising these individual differences and addressing them through the design and delivery of provision. Teachers and parents will know that there are some children for whom 'catch up' programmes are not appropriate, and others for whom early identification and intervention will not lead to age appropriate outcomes in the longer term. Such an acceptance by teachers does not detract from the important consensus view that all children can, and should make progress. However, adherence to just a social model of disability does run the risk of promoting strategies for 'normalisation' judged against age related progress, rather than promoting strategies that recognise and foster diversity.

## Section 2

Section 2 is concerned with tackling the question '*What do teachers **actually** need to understand, know and do?*' by placing a focus on the most frequent topics that are raised by teachers in relation to SEN and inclusion, namely training needs and behaviour. Literature in Section 2.1 looks at *Classroom Practice: Guidance and training for SEN and inclusion* and highlights the view that teachers need to accept and understand that they are responsible for the learning of all their pupils, including those with SEN. This is a key issue for teachers as an acceptance of this responsibility prescribes the need for them to develop confidence and competence in relation to teaching and including pupils with SEN and disability. Teachers need to know that there is little evidence that a label, for example 'emotional and behavioural difficulty' or 'autism' justifies or prescribes a specific SEN provision or pedagogy. However there is evidence that knowledge of SEN and specialist support can enhance pupil progress.

There is no shortage of guidance materials to support the teaching of pupils with SEN. These are increasingly being delivered electronically. Teachers need to know of the existence of these materials. They also need to know how to locate specialist support and advice both within their area and through national organisations that support SEN. Teachers need opportunities to experience contact with pupils with significant SEN perhaps through greater flexibility of working within clusters of schools, including special schools and provisions. The literature was less clear on 'what' training would enhance teacher confidence and competence and how that training should be delivered. Exposure to off site training that highlighted 'best practice' may, for example, serve to reduce teacher confidence if it proved impractical to implement on return to the classroom situation. Training and continued professional development remain a key issue. Consideration needs to be given to the possibility that the solution is not necessarily more training on SEN but a greater understanding of the types of training that lead to improved practice in the classroom.

The increased focus on pupil outcomes will require that teachers place increasing emphasis on *monitoring* and *evaluating* the impact of their provision rather than simply *implementing* the latest trend in policy guidance. This concentration on developing an evidence base for choice of provision within schools will support capacity building and sustainability. This building up of an evidence base will allow teachers to make professional decisions rather than seeking to deliver what they perceive is expected of them. This process is developmental and dynamic. Teachers need to accept that there never will be a time of anticipated stability and consolidation. Flexibility, innovation and change are now rooted in the language and discourse of education.

Section 2.2 focuses on literature relating to *Behaviour, SEN and Inclusion*. Teachers are aware of the significance of behaviour, particularly in secondary schools, and the problems this poses for the inclusion of pupils with SEN. Teachers are more likely to experience difficulties in including pupils whose behaviour does not lend itself to the development of *reciprocal relationships*<sup>3</sup> that underpin learning in group settings. This group includes those with speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and SEBD.

There is consensus that many behaviour issues can, and should, be addressed through preventative measures that promote early intervention, the strengthening of teaching and learning, and the promotion of whole school responses. There is an emergent view that 'behaviour' and 'learning' should not be regarded as separate agendas within schools and that social, cognitive and emotional factors influence the development of both. The reduction of emphasis on child development and the psychology of learning in favour of an emphasis on subject knowledge in teacher training may be a factor that needs to be explored. It is difficult to identify what teachers 'should' know about behaviour, SEN and inclusion. It would seem paramount that all teachers secure an enhanced understanding of the links between SEN and behaviour. This is particularly relevant in the area of language and communication and emotional difficulties. The links between language and learning and language and behaviour that may be evident in some pupils with SEN could be studied to enhance schools' existing behaviour policies. Joint agency working between Health and Education has much to offer such a development.

### Section 3

Section 3 discusses issues arising from this literature review and considers the possible implications for teachers and their schools. The discussion focuses on five areas: *Defining Inclusion, Defining SEN, Competing Agendas, Training and Behaviour*. Following general discussion, each area is considered in terms of the likely experience of teachers and possible implications.

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<sup>3</sup> In this context the use of 'reciprocal' serves to stress that inclusion is a two way process underpinned by the quality of the relationship between the pupil and the teacher.

# KEY FINDINGS

## 1.1 What is Inclusion?

- There is not a single agreed definition of inclusion.
- Definitions that do exist are often based on differing combinations of educational, social, moral and human rights grounds.
- Inclusion can be defined and evaluated at the level of principles, place, purpose, practice and person.
- Recent criticisms of inclusion have focused on outcomes for the individual learner.

## 1.2 What are Special Educational Needs?

- National variations in statementing and the incidence of SEN may in part be attributable to the coexistence of medical and social models of SEN. This poses problems for the early identification of SEN that is central to documents such as England's<sup>4</sup> *Every Child Matters* (ECM) (DfES 2003) and *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004). This mixture of perspectives, plus the inherent unreliability within assessment approaches for SEN, has led to confusion about the meaning and usage of the term for teachers.
- The emphasis on assessment of SEN for identifying resource needs (statement of SEN) is being reduced in favour of identifying learning needs.
- Increased emphasis is being placed on using national, local and school data sets to monitor progress and enhance provision for pupils with SEN.
- Although the label 'SEN' does not necessarily prescribe a need for a specialist pedagogy, experience of teaching SEN pupils and knowledge and qualification in SEN are linked to progress.
- There is a change in mainstream and special school populations. This change is characterised by an increase in the proportion of pupils in special schools who have in common (irrespective of cause) a difficulty in forming the social and reciprocal relationships that underpin learning and inclusion, (e.g. autistic spectrum, communication difficulties, SEBD). This is increasing the demand on teachers' time and expertise. There is a demand for enhanced training in SEN for all teachers and specialist training and experience for some.
- The label 'SEN' is limited in allowing teachers to predict and evaluate 'adequate progress'.
- There is likely to be an increasing emphasis on bio-psycho-social approaches to assessment of SEN within the ECM agenda as other professionals (e.g. health) are involved in multi-agency working and there is a return to an emphasis on individual outcomes.

## 1.3 Teacher Attitudes and Inclusion

- Inclusion is endorsed as a principle by many teachers but there are concerns about the practicalities.
- Concerns regarding practicalities often relate to particular types of needs and do not represent a rejection of the principle of inclusion per se.
- Teachers' attitudes and values are crucial to the success of inclusion in mainstream schools.
- Teacher training should not be solely information-based but should have regard to the importance of values and attitudes and provide opportunities for trainees to work with disabled people and people with special needs.

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<sup>4</sup> The proposals in the *Every Child Matters* Green Paper apply to children in England only, except in the areas where policy is not devolved in Wales (e.g. youth justice).

## 1.4 Educational Policy for Inclusion

- Policy has been relatively consistent from Warnock (1978) onwards in recognising a small number of pupils who would require specialist provision.
- The version of inclusion presented within government documents has always involved a role for special schools, though only part of this role is in providing a placement.
- The clarity of the definition of SEN provided in the 1996 Education Act masks a range of complex issues related to the causality of special educational needs, in particular the degree to which special educational needs are socially constructed.
- Since 1997, (e.g. DfEE 1997) the language of individual pupil needs has increasingly been replaced by a policy grounded in a school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm which seeks to improve pupil achievement by transforming schools (Armstrong 2005). There is a potential source of confusion as the field of special educational needs within its history, language and processes has focused on individual need.
- This difficulty has been compounded by recent documents (e.g. DfES 2004, 2005) that have remarked upon and sought to address underachievement of pupils with SEN within the context of an SEN Code of Practice that bases part of its definition of SEN on making inadequate progress.
- Personalised learning is emerging as the means by which to deal with the dilemma of ensuring positive outcomes for individuals while educating in group settings. However, it is yet to be seen how this concept will be interpreted and operationalised.

## 1.5 Local Authority Responses to the Inclusion Agenda

- There is no shortage of statutory and formal descriptions of LAs' functions and accompanying evaluations from inspections of LAs, but research evidence is in short supply on how this is being operationalised in different Local Authorities.
- There is a wide variation in support service arrangements reflecting the history of the LA rather than its size or demographic type.
- There is huge variation in specialist provision between LAs.
- Some LAs had large central services linked to classroom assistant support in mainstream schools, others had smaller central services linked to specialist or advisory functions.
- These differences in support arrangements and availability of specialist provision are likely to impact on the day-to-day experience of teachers. This is an important area for future research.
- Far more children in secondary schools have Statements of Special Educational Need than in primary schools.
- There is a complex relationship between ethnicity and SEN.
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely to have a statement (This has been attributed to parent knowledge and ability to challenge the system).
- Early intervention has yet to become the norm.
- There are large differences between LAs in England in the number and percentages of pupils described as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, but also moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties in language and/or mathematics, including dyslexia.

## 2.1 Classroom Practice: Guidance and Training for SEN and Inclusion

- In England and Wales the National Curriculum inclusion statements have established inclusive teaching as a general teaching requirement and subsequent guidance has consistently presented the view that all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs. In Scotland, guidance on the curriculum *The Structure and Balance of the Curriculum: 5-14 National Guidelines* makes reference to the need for the curriculum to be "inclusive and promote equality of opportunity for all" (SEED 2000, pp 3).

- Research suggests that there is not a distinct SEN pedagogy though specialist knowledge is acknowledged as important.
- Guidance on inclusion through the National Strategies in England have emphasised a generic strengthening of teaching and learning (rather than specialist approaches) based on a belief that this will lead to better outcomes for all children, including those with special educational needs.
- There is a perception that more training is necessary in relation to special educational needs and inclusion, in particular in Initial Teacher Education (ITE).
- The provision of training needs be planned to build confidence as well as competence as there are important links between classroom experiences, a sense of preparedness and teacher self-efficacy.
- Where there is a lack of consensus or clarity in views on special educational needs, there is likely to be a mismatch between training perceived necessary and that which is delivered.
- The training model applied in initial teacher training and subsequent professional development needs to be considered carefully in terms of pedagogy.
- Training based on low level technical responses to need are of limited medium and long-term use, though they may provide reassurance in the short term.
- More substantial training, such as university based courses, that fosters critical thinking and the development of reflective practice offers greater potential but may entail additional work outside course sessions for the teacher.

## 2.2 Behaviour, SEN and Inclusion

- Official data suggests that behaviour represents a considerably greater problem in secondary schools.
- Some of the problematic behaviour in secondary schools is likely to be attributable to factors peculiar to the secondary education system.
- The label SEBD is problematic because it is largely socially constructed; it covers a diverse pupil population and encompasses everything from withdrawn behaviours through to severe 'acting out' behaviours.
- The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials introduced through the Primary National Strategy in England were informed by research, have been piloted and subsequently evaluated. This is a desirable model for implementing new initiatives.
- Though teachers generally endorse the principles of the inclusion they express concern about the inclusion of pupils with SEBD.
- Training has a role to play in supporting teachers in dealing with behaviour but a 'more is better' approach in terms of either the amount of training or the range of strategies offered in it is unlikely to contribute significantly to either competence or confidence.
- The distinction between low level behaviour and more challenging behaviour is often made. This may give insufficient recognition to the fact that the majority of more challenging behaviour will be as the result of an escalation from a more minor problem and therefore may be reduced by greater awareness of proactive, preventative measures applied at the low level disruption stage.
- The distinction between normal naughtiness (DfES 1994) and SEBD may be unhelpful as, though expressed in terms of a continuum, it may imply a threshold past which the child requires highly specialised approaches. This may have a deskilling effect on teachers.
- Accepting that the causes of behaviour rarely reside solely in the individual pupil is potentially challenging as it can create the impression that blame is being attributed to the teacher or school.

- There is a continued tension between the needs of the one and the needs of the many within debates on inclusion. The debate is probably nowhere more sharply focused than in the area of the inclusion of children with SEBD.
- DfES materials on behaviour and attendance have a lot to offer schools but schools need to have the willingness and time to engage with these.

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## KEY THEMES ARISING FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In searching the literature, a number of themes pertinent to all teachers were identified. These are listed below and explored in more depth throughout the Review:

### 1) **Rights**

Traditionally teachers prioritise the needs of all their pupils. Teachers generally endorse the *principle* of inclusion and the 'right' of individual children to be educated alongside their neighbourhood peers. As inclusion has become further entrenched in educational policy and practice there is an emerging view that this 'right' to be included may be superseded by the 'right' for SEN pupils to have an education that can meet their needs.

### 2) **Educational inclusion is set within a political and societal context**

Inclusion cannot be considered in isolation as it sits within a political and societal context and relates to wider considerations of the purposes and priorities of education.

### 3) **Inclusion is a construct open to much interpretation**

The interpretation of inclusion is strongly influenced by the context in which it is discussed. As such, inclusion within education has been defined in relation to:

- an ideology and/or aspiration: usually linked to a human rights agenda;
- a place: usually mainstream versus special school;
- a policy: normally from central or local government;
- professional practice: i.e. 'inclusive teaching';
- personal experience: how an individual and their parent/carer experiences inclusion.

Although intended, there is not inevitably a coherent relationship between these differing perspectives and definitions.

### 4) **The PURPOSE of inclusion for individuals is not always clear**

Given differing perspectives of inclusion, a consensus view of the purpose of inclusion for individuals and society has yet to be achieved. This leads to problems as to how inclusion should be evaluated, e.g. should it be judged against a reduction in special schools? A reduction in exclusions? More school leavers with SEN engaging in educational, community and work activities? An individual pupil or parent 'experiencing' beneficial effects of inclusive practices? Rates of academic progress? Should inclusion be judged in relation to short or long-term outcomes?

### 5) **Does Inclusion relate to individuals or groups and is it only about Special Educational Needs and Disability?**

Inclusion from the perspectives of teachers and most policy makers has tended to be viewed as primarily concerned with individuals with SEN, disability and behaviour problems. Other groups, including OFSTED in England and HMIE and SEED in Scotland, regard inclusion as concerned with inequalities for groups of children, including SEN but also gender, race, social background and attainment. National and local policies for 'SEN', 'inclusion', and 'standards' therefore do not always share aims and procedures.

### 6) **Special schools**

In spite of popular perceptions that inclusion is about the closure of special schools, the reality is that policy has been consistent in recognising the need for some children to be educated in special schools. There are, however, changes in the role of special schools with increasing emphasis on supporting mainstream inclusion and building capacity within the wider workforce.

### 7) **National and local variation in policy and practice for SEN and Inclusion**

There is considerable variation in the response to inclusion and provision for SEN at local,

regional and national levels. This may pose a threat to equal opportunities and parity of educational experience envisaged by national policies for inclusion. The differing experiences and impact of inclusion on pupils, parents and teachers are further influenced by:

- limited *statutory* guidance for SEN and inclusion. This allows for interpretation of policy leading to wide variation in provision and practice;
- teacher training in England and Wales has mandatory standards for achieving Qualified Teacher Status, which make reference to SEN, however more detailed study is optional. Information obtained from websites covering initial teacher training in Scotland and Northern Ireland suggests this situation is not unique to England and Wales. An important caveat is that individual ITT providers in all four nations may cover the SEN component of SEN related standards in a variety of ways (e.g. 'distinct' or 'permeation' models of delivery) and in differing degrees of detail;
- use of support staff for whom qualifications in SEN are desirable but not essential;
- differing roles of support services;
- the use of a 'relative' definition of SEN which allows categorisation as SEN in one school but not necessarily in another;
- varying teacher attitudes to inclusion;
- variations in the type, availability and demand for training.

#### 8) **Policy dilemmas**

Teachers are required to juggle policy initiatives that require them to concentrate on individual outcomes (e.g. *Every Child Matters, Getting it Right for Every Child*) and also group outcomes (e.g. prescribed targets for achievement and attainment). Though there are attempts to balance individual and group outcomes through notions such as personalised learning, in reality teachers have to make decisions about whether individual differences in learning, such as behaviour difficulties, take precedence over the learning needs of the class. Other dilemmas for practice are inherent within and between policies for inclusion, SEN and standards raising which may often be experienced by teachers as competing rather than complementary agendas. There is a lack of clarity as to whether educational policy is concerned with 'normalisation' and conformity, or genuinely values diversity and difference.

#### 9) **Primary/Secondary Differences**

There are differences between primary and secondary schools in the incidence and pattern of type of SEN, in policy and provision for SEN and inclusion, exclusion rates and outcomes data. Behaviour represents a considerably greater problem in secondary schools. These differences may be due to the differing nature of primary and secondary education and this could usefully be explored.

#### 10) **Classroom practice**

Nationally given guidance materials for the teaching of pupils with SEN is prolific. There is limited data on how frequently this is accessed and used by practicing teachers, and more importantly, how these materials impact on teacher competence and confidence and pupil outcomes. This prolific national guidance may serve to support teachers or place them under increasing pressure. Empirical research would be necessary to explore this issue.

#### 11) **Early identification and intervention for SEN**

In spite of early identification being central to SEN policy initiatives, this has yet to become the norm for teachers and their schools and remains an issue for teacher training, funding, parental partnership and systemic development.

#### 12) **Categorisation of SEN**

The coexistence of a medical model for identifying SEN alongside a social model leads to variations in identification between schools. The 'medical' model attributes difficulties in

learning to deficiencies or impairments within the pupil, whereas the 'social' model looks at the barriers that may exist in the nature of the setting or arise through the interaction between pupils and their contexts. The use of a 'relative' definition of SEN allows categorisation of child as having SEN in one school but not necessarily in another. This becomes particularly problematic in relation to children with SEBD where factors such as school ethos and teacher experience are variables.

### **13) Relationships**

Teachers' experience is that inclusion is particularly challenging in relation to pupils with whom it is difficult to establish the reciprocal relationship that underpins teaching and learning (i.e. pupils with extreme behavioural problems, autistic spectrum disorders and speech, language and communication problems). Exclusion and outcome data support this view.

### **14) Behaviour**

Pupil behaviour presents a significant problem for inclusion particularly in secondary schools. For teachers the challenge is balancing the 'right' of the pupil to be included with the 'right' of others to learn. The distinction between 'low level' and 'challenging behaviour' is simplistic but may be helpful in directing attention to applying preventative measures at an earlier stage. A culture of either blaming the individual OR the teacher OR the parent is unhelpful and neglects the potential of adopting a bio-psycho-social approach to inclusive practices. 'Better' behaviour in the Primary phase suggests that combinations of features of secondary school education are contributing to the incidence of behaviour problems. No one approach will meet the needs of all pupils. There is no shortage of national guidance and books on behaviour management but teachers need time to access, implement and evaluate these resources.

### **15) Teacher Attitudes**

Teacher attitude has been identified as an important factor in the inclusion debate and delivery of practice. This should not lead to a simplistic interpretation that a positive attitude is all that is necessary. Attitude is a complex construct influenced by various factors which may include the individual's self efficacy, ethos of the environment they are in, how supported they feel, etc. There is a need for further empirical evidence as to how teacher attitude both influences and is influenced by their experience of practice.

## METHODOLOGY

A number of developments in recent years have led to the growing interest in systematic literature reviews, first in health, then in education and other areas. There have been a number of high profile cases in medicine and health which illustrated the dangers of flawed research. The Government has highlighted the need for policy and practice to be based on sound evidence (Blunkett 2000) and there has been a growing general concern that not enough is done to draw together and disseminate the results of the various studies and research which have been undertaken in a particular area. Traditional literature reviews can be incomplete and hindered by lack of time, money or access to research reports. Publication or selection bias can lead to an imbalance of studies of a particular type or with a particular outcome and reviewers may – often unintentionally – select studies which reflect their own views.

Systematic literature reviews are an attempt to alleviate these problems by following a set procedure, for example, that determined by the EPPI-Centre at the Institute of Education, University of London, working to a peer reviewed protocol and seeking to consider all the research literature on a particular topic. These reviews seek to answer a review question and a systematic review in accordance with EPPI-Centre guidelines would arrive at a very small number – usually four to six – of ‘gold standard’ research reports and a technical report.

Every effort has been made to make this review rigorous in its methodology and wide-ranging in its scope but it is not a systematic literature review. This is partly due to the timescale, but also to its wider context and readership. This review – which is really a scoping study – does not seek to answer a specific review question but to consider the overall topic of SEN and inclusion and through this, shed light on the extent to which there is potential for practices in these areas to compromise either the terms or spirit of policies intended to reduce teacher workload. In making the review ‘fit for purpose’ there was no attempt to arrive at a small number of ‘gold standard’ reports: this would be unlikely to meet the needs of busy practitioners. Reports which are not ‘gold standard’ have their limitations but may still be interesting reading for, in this case, teachers and other practitioners. There is also the problem that relatively few empirical research studies have been carried out in the area of inclusion and special educational needs – most published works are debates or position papers.

In order to adopt the good practice of systematic literature reviews, this review was based on a new approach – Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) – developed within the Cabinet Office to harness relevant research evidence in a similar way to a systematic review but within a shorter timescale (Davies 2003).

There were four strands to the review methodology:

1. electronic databases were searched (further explained below);
2. key journals were hand searched, including *Support for Learning*, *British Journal of Special Educational Needs*, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *Education and the Law*, *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *Educational Psychology*, and *British Journal of Special Education*;
3. legislation, policy documents and reports from the Education Departments of the four countries, OFSTED, the Audit Commission and the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education and other relevant websites were considered;
4. key texts and references in the papers and documents above were considered.

The criteria for including papers in the review were:

- published since 1978 (except papers relating to legislation, where the 1944 Education Act was the start point);
- published in English and mainly concerned with the UK education system;
- having as their main topic the education of children and young people;
- concerned with state-funded schools;
- concerned with inclusion and/or special educational needs.

## Electronic database searching

Three databases were searched:

- **British Education Index (BEI)** which indexes over 300 education and training journals, reports and conference literature published in the British Isles.
- **Zetoc** which provides access to the British Library's Electronic Table of Contents of around 20,000 current journals and around 16,000 conference proceedings published per year. The database covers 1993 to date, and is updated on a daily basis.
- **Australian Education Index (AEI)** indexes over 200 Australian education-related journals comprehensively, and over 500 international journals selectively. AEI also includes reports, books and book chapters, conference papers and online resources, 1979 to date.

The search terms used were as follows:

### BEI

Search term inclusion, used thesaurus mapping to explode into:

Inclusive education	primary education
SEN	education policy
Primary education	secondary education
Mainstreaming	teacher attitudes
Social integration	disabilities
Learning disabilities	human rights
Educational strategies	equal education
Children	change strategies
Adolescents	access to education
Self-esteem	standards
Policy formation	children's rights
Intervention	children at risk
Disadvantaged	educational trends
Teaching methods	reflective practice
Educational innovation	multicultural education
Educational philosophy	computer assisted learning
Educational environment	

### ZETOC

Search – inclusion or education or school

### AEI

Search term inclusion, used thesaurus mapping to explode into:

Disabilities	special education
Special needs students	mainstreaming
Equal education	learning disabilities
Professional development	special education teachers
Teaching process	autism
Cultural differences	disability discrimination
Teacher attitudes	primary school teachers
Multicultural education	school culture
Teaching styles	at risk persons
Teaching methods	educational policy
Behaviour problems	disadvantaged youth
Inclusive curriculum	primary school students
English second language	secondary school teachers

Due to the volume of material found and the timescale for the review professional judgement was used to make the review report as fit for purpose as possible. In doing so, a search stance was agreed that focused on literature pertinent to the following three questions. These were:

1. What do teachers *think* they are expected to know and do in relation to SEN and inclusion?

This allows a focus on the information teachers are receiving from the *interpretations* of policy for SEN and inclusion that is relayed to them from a variety of sources.

2. What do teachers *actually* need to understand, know and do?

In selecting literature, researchers focused on identifying a body of knowledge and information about provision and practice for SEN and inclusion for which there is a consensus view, underpinned by an evidence base. This provides a backdrop against which the varying interpretations of policy and practice can be viewed, and supports the view that teaching is an evidence based profession.

3. What can teachers *feasibly* do?

This review is grounded within a context of national initiatives that seek to address teacher workload and increase time spent on teaching and learning. As such, selection of the literature aims to identify sources describing, exploring or prescribing practices related to SEN and inclusion that have the potential to impact on teacher workload and wellbeing.

There is scope for the review to continue, and to look in more detail at the descriptions of initiatives and programmes and more international studies.

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# SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## 1.1 WHAT IS INCLUSION?

### Key Points

- There is not a single agreed definition of inclusion.
- Definitions that do exist are often based on differing combinations of educational, social, moral and human rights grounds.
- Inclusion can be defined and evaluated at the level of principles, place, purpose, practice and person.
- Recent criticisms of inclusion have focused on outcomes for the individual learner.

### Introduction

It is difficult to trace the point at which the term 'inclusion' first started being used in preference to integration or mainstreaming. As Thomas and Vaughan (2004) suggest, there was no declaration in the move away from segregation that the ultimate aim was inclusion and no definitive event or revelatory piece of research that has led to the current situation. O'Brien and Forest (1989) make reference to a meeting in Toronto held in July 1988 by a group of people, who they do not define, from North America. Concerned with the slow progress of integration in education, the group came up with the concept of inclusion, to formally describe better the process of placing children or adults with disabilities or learning difficulties in the mainstream. A radical change, the use of the word inclusion caught on quickly in Canada and the US but it was a number of years before it was accepted in the UK and elsewhere.

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) was a distinct catalyst for much educational policy within the UK that emerged, attempting to develop more inclusive practices in schools. It is perhaps more useful to view the Salamanca Statement in terms of part of the evolution of inclusion rather than a revolution. Its connection, through UNESCO, with the United Nations undoubtedly gave it a human rights context which has been extremely influential in debates about inclusion. This has also been somewhat problematic as the moral high ground (Low 1996) conveyed by the human rights aspect has potentially limited debate, by leading to the assumption that inclusion is morally and socially right (e.g. DfEE 1997) and therefore incontestable. It is important in understanding the current situation with regard to the policy of inclusion as currently adopted within the UK, to look further back in the history of provision made for children with special educational needs.

### From Integration to Inclusion

As explored in greater depth in *Educational Policy for Inclusion*, the Warnock Report (Warnock 1978) was significant in bringing about a sea-change in the conceptualisation of special education (Warnock 2005). The Committee referred to integration – known as mainstreaming in the United States or normalisation in Scandinavia and Canada – as recognition of the *right of the handicapped to uninhibited participation in the activities of everyday life*, using the definition of the Snowdon Working Party:

*"Integration for the disabled means a thousand things. It means the absence of segregation. It means social acceptance. It means being able to be treated like everybody else. It means the right to work, to go to cinemas, to enjoy outdoor sport, to have a family life and a social life and a love life, to contribute materially to the community, to have the usual choices of association, movement and activity, to go on holiday to the usual places, to be educated up to university level with one's unhandicapped peers, to travel without fuss on public transport..."* (Warnock 1978:99, pp 99).

The Committee said that although this mainly referred to the physically handicapped, the definition caught the spirit of changing attitudes to handicap in all its manifestations.

The description within the Warnock Report of three levels at which integration could operate is significant in its contributions to conceptions of what inclusion is, and perhaps also what it is not.

The three levels were described as:

- *Locational integration*, where provision for children with special educational needs was to be made on the same site as their mainstream peers;
- *Social integration*, where children shared social spaces, in the playground or in extra-curricular activities;
- *Functional integration* where children with special needs and mainstream children were to be educated together, pursuing the same set of curriculum goals and activities.

Integration is typically presented as a progression from a previous era spent

*“building a complex sub-system of special education and segregating particular children out of normal education”* (Tomlinson 1982, pp 76).

The integration movement strongly advocated the placement of children in the ‘least restrictive environment’ but with no expectation that every pupil with special needs would be functionally integrated. In other words, children would be integrated in a manner and to an extent appropriate to their ‘needs’ and circumstances. Integration was seen as an assimilationist process, viewing a full mainstream placement as depending on whether the child can assimilate to a largely unchanged school environment (Thomas 1997). Functional integration is the most advanced level and relates most closely to concepts of inclusion, nevertheless integration as a generic term conveys a sense that pupils must adapt to school, with no assumption that the school will adapt to accommodate a greater diversity of pupils (Mittler 2000). In contrast, definitions of inclusion (e.g. Mittler 2000, Sebba and Sachdev 1997 and Tassoni 2003) tend to reflect a need for establishments to adapt and be flexible enough to accommodate each and every child.

The principles of integration established by Warnock (1978) and incorporated into the Education Act 1981 continued to inform practice through the eighties and led to the development of LEA policies on integration (Gibson and Blandford 2005). In summary, policy was that children with special educational needs should be integrated in mainstream schools where possible, with specialist provision for those whose needs were such that integration was impractical. Such an approach was not without critics. Writing in 1989, Roaf and Bines argue that the concept of need is insufficient on its own for meeting special needs in education and a discourse of equal opportunities and rights, with an emphasis on entitlement, provides a more effective basis for policy and practice. They suggested that ‘need’ remains deficit based and still reflects an individualistic approach to difficulties and handicaps which also clouds issues of values, power and function (Tomlinson 1982) and, despite attempts to limit labelling and stigma, special needs is a euphemism for school failure (Barton 1988). Richmond (1979) had previously expressed concern over the use of the term ‘special’ and also raised questions that resonate with current debates about the existence of a distinctive SEN pedagogy, by suggesting that there is nothing special about schools ensuring they are teaching effectively, that children are learning, that the curriculum is appropriate and that there is a suitable environment with advice and support.

Whilst the education system within the UK broadly pursued an integration agenda, the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) produced its inclusion charter (CSIE 1989), using the term inclusion to describe a state of affairs in which all children are educated in mainstream classes within mainstream schools with only temporary withdrawal from the situation envisaged (Hornby 2001 in O’Brien (ed) 2001).

## Disability Rights

In 1992, Rieser and Mason produced *Disability Equality in the Classroom: A Human Rights Issue*. It contained many powerful stories by disabled people which demonstrated the validity and appropriateness of inclusion and was to make a significant impact on the national debate in education surrounding attitudes to special education generally and disabled people more specifically (Thomas & Vaughan 2004). The Disability Rights lobby, of which Rieser and Mason are representatives, has been a powerful influence in shaping views of what inclusion is or should aspire to be. This was not a new

movement. In 1976, The Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) described disability as:

*“the disadvantage or restriction of ability caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities”* (UPIAS 1976, pp 14).

This can be categorised as reflecting the social model of disability which is a major component of current conceptualisations of inclusion. The United Kingdom’s Disabled People’s Council (AKDPC) was set up in 1981 by disabled people with the aim of promoting full equality and participation in UK society, and now represents some 126 groups run by disabled people in the UK at national level (AKDPC 2002/3).

## Human Rights

In addition to the emerging influence of the disability rights movement, a human rights focus was also developing. The *Salamanca Statement* was the first significant international statement supporting inclusive education (Soan 2005) and frequently appears in the literature in relation to inclusion. In the year prior to the Salamanca conference, the UN document *Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (1993) gave, in Rule 6, the first clear indication that special schools were seen as an interim alternative to integration, stating:

*“In situations where the general school system does not yet adequately meet the needs of all persons with disabilities, special education may be considered. It should be aimed at preparing students for education in the general school system. The quality of such education should reflect the same standards and ambitions as general education and should be closely linked to it. At a minimum, students with disabilities should be afforded the same portion of educational resources as students without disabilities. States should aim for the gradual integration of special education services into mainstream education. It is acknowledged that in some instances special education may currently be considered to be the most appropriate form of education for some students with disabilities”* (UN, 1993, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissre04.htm>, accessed 4/8/06).

Whilst still using the term integration, this document gave strong hints of a general inclusive direction, but the UN fully established its inclusive credentials with the *Salamanca Statement*. This was an outcome of the *World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality* in 1994. More than 300 participants representing 92 Governments and 25 International Organisations met in Salamanca, Spain in June 1994. The World Conference furthered the objectives of the *World Conference on Education for All (EFA)* at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs (UNESCO 1994). Within the *Salamanca Statement* it is clear that its scope extends well beyond those children considered to have special educational needs:

*“The guiding principle that informs this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups”* (UNESCO 1994, pp 6).

The *Salamanca Statement* called on all governments to:

- *give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties,*
- *adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise,*
- *develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries having experience with inclusive schools,*
- *establish decentralized and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special education needs,*

- *encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organization of persons with disabilities in the planning and decision making processes concerning provision for special educational needs,*
- *invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies, as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education,*
- *ensure that, in the context of a systemic change, teacher education programmes, both preservice and inservice, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools (UNESCO 1994, pp ix).*

The *Salamanca Statement* was based on five proclaimed beliefs:

- *every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,*
- *every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,*
- *education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,*
- *those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs;*
- *regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994, pp viii-ix).*

Lindsay (2003), examining these clauses, makes the point that they are based on a combination of a view of children's rights, moral imperatives for action which do not directly relate to the right that is proclaimed and an assertion of evidence. Lindsay (2003) also points to a tension between application of the proposed system for all children and a view that it may not be effective for all. This is reflected in the phrasing of the final clause which claims regular schools are effective for the majority but makes no mention of the minority for whom, by implication, they are not.

Since the stated practical concerns of the UN (1993) and UNESCO (1994) are mainly related to moving children with special needs into mainstream schools with only a passing reference to pedagogical implications, these documents do little to avoid the confusion of meanings surrounding the term 'inclusive education'. Nevertheless, the *Salamanca Statement* was a landmark document in the world of SEN and sets out arguments for inclusion in terms of human rights (Gains 2001 cited in O'Brien (ed) 2001).

Dyson (1999) argues that the *Salamanca Statement* maintains a rights based tone across areas that would be better seen as subjects of debate or research, though Mittler (2000), citing Hall (1997), comments that those who insist on mainstream education as a human right issue, take the view that research validation is irrelevant and continues:

*"...since research evidence is not generally a pre-condition for a change in policy in most countries, why should an exception be made for inclusion?" (Mittler 2000, pp 7).*

Farrell (2001) suggests that arguments for inclusion based solely on human rights, though they may sound powerful, are logically and conceptually naïve and cites Low's (1997) argument that the basic right is for all pupils to receive a good education.

In the wake of the *Salamanca Statement*, policy in the UK has largely followed an inclusive direction, though as the next section explores, a definition of inclusion remains elusive.

## Definitions of Inclusion

Inclusion is a difficult concept to define. There is not a single agreed definition though there are some common principles and undoubtedly descriptions adopted within policy and guidance documents within in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland have contributed to the way in inclusion is conceptualised in schools. The history of inclusion outlined previously has certainly influenced different definitions. Lunt and Norwich (1999), commenting on the often divergent and incompatible definitions of inclusion, highlighted a range of perspectives:

- *Bailey's (1998) view that it is about learning in the same place on the same curriculum as others,*
- *Tomlinson's (1997) view that it is not necessarily about being in the same place and curriculum,*
- *Booth and Ainscow's (1998) view that it is not a state at all, but an unending process of increasing participation,*
- *Thomas' (1997) view that it is about accepting all children,*
- *Sebba and Sachdev's (1997) view that it is about schools responding and restructuring their provision,*
- *Florian's (1998) view that opportunity to participate in inclusion is about active involvement and choice and not something done to the disabled (Lunt and Norwich 1999, pp 32).*

The first two bullet points reflect a key, enduring issue that features in the debates about inclusion, which is the degree to which the place in which the child is educated defines whether practice is inclusive. CSIE, for example, favour full inclusion in the form of the deconstruction and eventual closure of special schools and the transfer of resources to the mainstream and the restructuring of ordinary schools (Rustemier 2002a). Adopting a human rights perspective that recognises the rights of all children to inclusive education, accompanied by the responsibility of governments to provide it, Rustemier (2002b) argues that the existence of segregated special schools is a form of institutional discrimination.

Others are less focused on the place where the education occurs and reject the notion that a location other than mainstream is, by definition, non inclusive. In an attempt to clarify definitions of inclusion, Farrell (2000) describes full, mainstream and educational inclusion. He sees full inclusion as problematic in its implication that if children are not educated in a mainstream school they are being denied a human right and that if this argument is followed, inclusion of all children in mainstream schools is required for human rights to be maintained. This he argues presents, for parents/carers in particular, a dilemma of whether by choosing a non-mainstream placement, as policy (e.g. DfE 1994, DfEE 1997 and DfEE 1998) permitted, it overlooked a human right (Farrell 2000). The term mainstream inclusion, Farrell (2000) argues also has its difficulties as although it can be seen as reflecting government policy (e.g. DfE 1994, DfEE 1997 and DfEE 1998) of increased mainstream provision with a continuum of other provision, it emphasises the value of one venue (the mainstream school). Mainstream inclusion is open to the interpretation therefore that it indicates:

*"a preferably one-way passage from special school or other provision to mainstream, and that education in a venue other than mainstream school is second best"* (Farrell 2000, pp 37).

Clearly such an interpretation has implications for the morale and status of staff in non mainstream provision, for parents/carers who choose non mainstream provision and for children educated in these settings.

Farrell's (2000) preferred alternative is *Educational Inclusion* as it gives equal value to the different settings involved, provided pupils are appropriately placed. As a concept it removes the emphasis from where the education takes place, and focuses on engagement in an appropriate educational experience, implying that the child's special educational needs are met and that s/he is part of the educational community and interacts appropriately (Farrell 2000).

Farrell (2000) is significant in placing the focus squarely on the individual's experience of being included. This is a perspective also adopted by Tod (1999, 2001 in O'Brien (ed) 2001) who argues that whilst inclusive policies may be in place, the individual concerned may not be experiencing the anticipated effect of being included.

Hornby (cited in O'Brien (ed) 2001), drawing on the work of Vaughn and Schumm (1995), advocates a shift from full inclusion to responsible inclusion. Vaughn and Schumm (1995) worked with parents, teachers, administrators and governors at schools over a two-year period helping to reorganise provision for students with disabilities with the aim of developing more inclusive models of provision in order to meet students' needs. They concluded that for inclusion to be effective and therefore responsible rather than irresponsible and possibly damaging, inclusive practices needed to include nine components:

- *using the extent to which students with SEN make satisfactory academic and social progress in ordinary classes as the major criteria for considering alternative interventions – as opposed to insisting on mainstream class placement regardless of the academic and social progress of students;*
- *allowing teachers to choose whether or not they will be involved in teaching inclusive classes – as opposed to expecting all teachers, regardless of their attitudes towards inclusion or their expertise in teaching students with SEN, to teach inclusive classes;*
- *ensuring the provision of adequate human and physical resources – as opposed to expecting reductions in the cost of provision through implementing inclusion;*
- *encouraging schools to develop inclusive practices tailored to the needs of the students, parents and communities that they serve as well and to take into account the expertise of their own staff – as opposed to imposing inclusive models on schools without involving them in discussion;*
- *maintaining a continuum of services including withdrawal of small group teaching and placements in special education classrooms – as opposed to viewing full inclusion as the only option;*
- *continually monitoring and evaluating the organisation of provision in order to ensure that students' needs are being met – as opposed to sticking rigidly to one model of inclusion without ongoing evaluation to assess its effectiveness;*
- *ensuring ongoing professional development is available to all staff who need it – as opposed to not considering teachers' need for training in order to be able to implement inclusion;*
- *encouraging the development of alternative teaching strategies and means of adapting the curriculum in order to meet the specific needs of students with a wide range of ability – as opposed to exposing students with SEN to the same teaching and curriculum as other students;*
- *developing an agreed philosophy and policy on inclusion which provides guidance to teachers, parents and others – as opposed to imposing a policy of inclusion on schools without the opportunity for discussion (Hornby 2001 cited in O'Brien (ed) 2001, pp 12).*

Responsible inclusion is therefore a term used in discussions on inclusion that needs to be considered. It seems, as a phrase, to contain an air of caution, and a strong implication that some of what has been implemented or advocated in the name of inclusion is irresponsible. Responsible inclusion would seem to connect with the endorsement of the principles but reservation about the practicality reflected in studies (e.g. Scruggs and Mastropieri 1996, Croll and Moses 2000) on teacher attitudes to inclusion.

Inclusion can be debated at a range of levels from the pragmatic through to the theoretical and philosophical. Low (1996 cited in Croll and Moses 2000) makes the point that at the theoretical level: *"Inclusion as an educational ideal has the 'moral high ground', but at the day to day level of the thinking that informs educational policy its position is much less secure"* (Low 1996, pp 2 cited in Croll and Moses 2000).

This can be seen not just at the level of practitioners but at policy level. This is illustrated by the English Green Paper, *Excellence for all Children* (DfEE 1997), which states:

*"There are strong educational, as well as social and moral grounds for educating children with special educational needs with their peers. We aim to increase the level and quality of inclusion within mainstream schools, while protecting and enhancing specialist provision for those who need it"* (DfEE 1997, pp 43).

In tempering a declared commitment to inclusion with reference to a continued role for specialist provision, DfEE (1997) were perhaps guilty of:

*"...expressing strong support for the principle of inclusion while, at the same time, qualifying this support to the point where it is hard to see any particular policy direction being indicated"* (Croll and Moses 2000, pp 2).

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004) delivered a clearer message that location (i.e. special or mainstream) was not the main element in its defining of inclusion, stating:

*"Inclusion is about much more than the type of school that children attend: it is about the quality of their experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school"* (DfES 2004, pp 25).

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* is also unequivocal in its view that there was a continued and developing role for specialist provision, expressing a vision of:

*"special schools providing education for children with the most severe and complex needs and sharing their specialist skills and knowledge to support inclusion in mainstream schools"* (DfES 2004, pp 26).

Nevertheless, there is still a duality present with inclusion in mainstream being advocated but only up to a point, with an implication that there is a severity and/or complexity of need that would prevent this. This duality may dissatisfy 'full inclusionists' (e.g. CSIE 1989) but may also concern practitioners in where the line is drawn. Evans and Lunt (2002) make the point:

*"But what does inclusion mean in practice? Does it mean that the local school should provide for 100 per cent of its local pupils, for 99 or 98 per cent, or some other proportion? Does it mean that all pupils should be educated together in the same class or in the same school, and with the same teacher? Should particular schools include particular pupils, thus enabling pupils to attend mainstream though not their local school? Does it include on-site or off-site units?"* (Evans and Lunt 2002, pp 3).

In many ways this sums up the dilemmas presented for practitioners and policy makers by a lack of an agreed definition and the definitions that do exist often being based on differing combinations of educational, social, moral and human rights grounds.

### **Is inclusion about more than children with special educational needs?**

Booth (1999) has consistently rejected the use of the term 'special educational needs' and argued that inclusion (or integration) is not related to children with SEN but to all children. Booth argues that 'special needs education':

*"...has severe limitations as a way of approaching the resolution of educational difficulties. Despite the attempts of some to argue otherwise (Norwich 1990), it remains locked into the attribution of educational difficulties to learner deficits and deflects attention from the barriers to learning that exist in all aspects of the system...The use of this concept [SEN] continues to be confused. Government documents make the assumption that all such categorised learners will have difficulty with 'literacy and numeracy' (DfEE 1997), thus demonstrating, like many others, the difficulty they find in incorporating, within their definition, both learners with impairments and others who experience difficulties in education which may or may not result in relatively low attainments. The concept focuses attention on the difficulties experienced by some learners and deflects attention from those experienced by others as well as the developments in school cultures, policies, curricula and teaching approaches that will minimise educational difficulties for all. It deskills teachers by encouraging them to think that many learners need specialist teaching. Its use helps to marginalise inclusion policies from general education policies and to further fragment them in documents about special education needs, social inclusion and exclusion and ethnic minority education"* (Booth 1999, pp 164).

Within the *Index for Inclusion* Booth and Ainscow (2002) refer to barriers to learning and participation, rather than special educational needs, which they argue has considerable limitations, confers a label that can lead to lowered expectations and deflects attention away from the difficulties experienced by other students without the label. Writing about integration in 1983, Booth (in Booth and Potts (ed) 1983) argued that there were difficulties with such a restricted definition. Using integration to mean the bringing of handicapped children from segregated special schools into ordinary schools first might imply that the necessity of involving handicapped children in the educational and social life of schools is finished once they are in the ordinary school building. Secondly, it might be taken to mean that handicapped children have a greater right to participation and an appropriate education in ordinary schools than other children. Thus integration could be applied not only to children thought of as handicapped but to all children who have needs and interests to which schools do not respond.

In the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) inclusion is seen as an ideal, something for schools to aspire to and move towards. Inclusion in education is defined as:

- *valuing all students and staff equally*
- *increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools*
- *restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality*
- *reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as 'having special educational needs'*
- *learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely*
- *viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than problems to be overcome*
- *acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality*
- *improving schools for staff as well as for students*
- *emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement*
- *fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities*
- *recognising that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society* (Booth and Ainscow 2002, pp 3).

Corbett (2001) takes a similar approach, arguing inclusion means responding to individual needs, with the term 'special' becoming redundant. Corbett suggests that in the past there has been an inference:

*"that inclusion meant bringing those outside ('the special') into the privilege of mainstream without acknowledging that many mainstream learners can feel excluded by a restricted curriculum, inflexible pedagogy and hierarchical ethos"* (Corbett 2001, pp 1).

Responding to individual needs involves recognition of the wide range of needs that exist, from specific learning disabilities and learning difficulties to gender and ethnicity issues, sexuality, poverty and abuse. Recognising that many children come to school with problems and being sensitive to this is part of inclusive education. Corbett argues that:

*"A responsive school climate, which views problems as challenges and not obstacles, is a key factor. The focus is on institutional systems, attitudes, flexibility and responsiveness rather than on the 'special needs' child. In order to provide such a highly developed level of inclusiveness, schools have to be willing to work consistently on improving and adapting their pedagogy. It has to be a pedagogy which relates to individual needs, institutional resources and to community values: a connective pedagogy"* (Corbett 2001, pp xiv).

The OFSTED document *Evaluating Educational Inclusion* (OFSTED 2000) presented a view of inclusion that was far broader than pupils with special educational needs. It states:

*"Educational inclusion is more than a concern about any one group of pupils such as those pupils who have been or are likely to be excluded from school. Its scope is broad. It is about equal opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background. It pays particular attention to the provision made for and the achievement of different groups of pupils within a school. Throughout this guidance, whenever we use the term different groups it could apply to any or all of the following:*

- *girls and boys;*
- *minority ethnic and faith groups, travellers, asylum seekers and refugees;*
- *pupils who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL);*

- *pupils with special educational needs;*
- *gifted and talented pupils;*
- *children “looked after” by the local authority;*
- *other children, such as sick children; young carers; those children from families under stress; pregnant school girls and teenage mothers; and*
- *any pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.”*

(OFSTED 2000, pp 4)

*Evaluating Educational Inclusion* reinforces the strong emphasis on educational inclusion in the *Evaluation Schedule*, published in the inspection framework *Inspecting Schools* (1999a) and in the *Inspection Handbooks* (1999b). A similar range of pupils had been included in the earlier DfEE (1999) document *Social Inclusion: Pupil Support*. There were therefore indicators in the late nineties that definitions of educational inclusion were broadening to support the new Labour Government’s priorities of tackling social exclusion. However the majority of guidance and policy in England has continued largely to focus on special educational needs and disability.

A significant development in Scotland from November 2005 was the introduction of the wider concept of additional support needs which replaced the previous special educational needs system. Under the new law, a child or young person is seen as having additional support needs if, for any reason, they would benefit from extra help with their learning. A child’s education could be affected by a range of factors such as:

- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- a long-term medical condition;
- social, emotional or behavioural difficulties;
- a learning disability;
- being particularly gifted;
- having English as an additional language;
- being a young carer or the sibling of a disabled child;
- bullying;
- bereavement.

In addition to these, there may be many other examples and the effect these factors will have will vary from child to child. The Code of Practice, entitled *Supporting Children’s Learning* (SEED 2005) considers that the wide range of factors which may lead to some children and young people having a need for additional support fall broadly into the four overlapping themes: learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health need, and social and emotional factors. In all cases though, it is how they impact on each child’s ability to learn that is important and it is this that determines the level of support required. Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, Education Authorities in Scotland have a duty to identify and support all children over the age of three who would benefit from extra help.

### Criticism of Inclusion

In 2001 O’Brien edited a collection of papers on inclusion entitled *Enabling Inclusion: Blue skies...Dark Clouds?* The title was intended to indicate that, although all those involved were committed to creating an inclusive learning community, they recognised that there were dark clouds within the blue skies of inclusion. O’Brien suggests that the idealism that can be associated with inclusion is unhelpful in improving provision in schools. If the main stakeholders – learners, teachers, parents/carers and others – see changes as being a combination of externally imposed ideals with inevitable impractical outcomes, the development of practice will be severely restricted. O’Brien and his co-authors take the

stance that for inclusion to be increased, there must be professional discussion, reflection and debate, and questions about its meaning, nature and direction have to be confronted.

Baroness Warnock (2005) in her publication, 'Special Educational Needs: A New Look', commented that:

*"There is increasing evidence that the ideal of inclusion, if this means that all but those with the most severe disabilities will be in mainstream schools, is not working"* (Warnock 2005, pp 32).

Warnock suggests that the Government should consider the definition of inclusion suggested by the National Association of Head Teachers in 2003:

*"Inclusion is a process that maximises the entitlement of all pupils to a broad, relevant and stimulating curriculum, which is delivered in the environment that will have the greatest impact on their learning. All schools, whether special or mainstream, should reflect a culture in which the institution adapts to meet the needs of its pupils and is provided with the resources to enable this to happen...Inclusive schooling is essential to the development of an inclusive society. It involves having an education service that ensures that provision and funding is there to enable pupils to be educated in the most appropriate setting. This will be the one in which they can be most fully included in the life of their school community and which gives them a sense both of belonging and achieving"* (NAHT 2003, pp 1).

Arguing that inclusion should be rethought, at least in as far as it applies to education in schools, Warnock continues:

*"If it is too much to hope that it will be demoted from its present position at the top of the list of educational values, then at least let it be redefined so that it allows children to pursue the common goals of education in the environment within which they can best be taught and learn"* (Warnock 2005, pp 50).

This apparent 'u turn' by Baroness Warnock on the education of children with SEN drew much media attention. However, in reality Baroness Warnock was not saying anything substantially different to others, such as the writers within *Enabling Inclusion: Blues Skies ...Dark Clouds?* (O'Brien (ed) 2001), who had argued that inclusion was about more than just placement and required a greater debate on the impact of the philosophy and policy on outcomes for the individual learner. A number of similar concerns had also been raised by OFSTED (2004) in its evaluation of the inclusion framework. OFSTED (2004) made a number of comments that suggested that outcomes at individual pupil level were not necessarily either clear or positive, noting:

- *Progress in learning remains slower than it should be for a significant number of pupils.*
- *Taking all the steps needed to enable pupils with SEN to participate fully in the life of the school and achieve their potential remains a significant challenge for many schools.*
- *A minority of mainstream schools meet special needs very well, and others are becoming better at doing so.*
- *Expectations of achievement are often neither well enough defined, nor pitched high enough.*
- *Few schools evaluate their provision for pupils with SEN systematically so that they can establish how effective the provision is and whether it represents value for money. The availability and use of data on outcomes for pupils with SEN continue to be limited.*
- *Not enough use is made by mainstream schools of the potential for adapting the curriculum and teaching methods so that pupils have suitable opportunities to improve key skills.*
- *The teaching seen of pupils with SEN was of varying quality, with a high proportion of lessons having shortcomings.*
- *Support by teaching assistants can be vital, but the organisation of it can mean that pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills, understanding and independence.*
- *Despite the helpful contributions by the national strategies, the quality of work to improve the literacy of pupils with SEN remains inconsistent.*

(extracts drawn from OFSTED 2004, pp 5).

Whilst OFSTED was not suggesting inclusion was wrong philosophically, it pointed to the rhetoric-reality gap identified by Hornby (2001 cited in O'Brien (ed) 2001). The rhetoric of inclusion suggests that it is possible to effectively educate all children with SEN in mainstream schools. The reality is that many teachers do not feel able or willing to cope with this scenario (Hornby 2001 in cited O'Brien (ed) 2001).

In many ways OFSTED (2004) summed up the potential problem that inclusion can be discussed, defined and evaluated at the level of principles, purpose policy, practice, place and the impact on the person. Hypothetically, therefore it *could* be possible to point to inclusion as working at the level of commitment to inclusive principles or an increase in the number of children educated in mainstream settings but not working at the level of more positive outcomes for certain individuals.

OFSTED's (2004) evaluation of the impact of the inclusion framework and Baroness Warnock's (2005) comments, together with earlier findings from the Audit Commission (2002) that the move towards the inclusion of children with higher levels of need into mainstream education had progressed very slowly, with only a gradual reduction in the special school population over the previous decade have triggered much debate on the appropriateness of a policy of inclusive education. OFSTED (2006) contributed further to this debate through its finding that there was little difference in the quality of provision and the outcomes achieved by pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) across all types of schools. The only type of provision that was found to be proportionately more effective than others was mainstream schools with additionally resourced provision (OFSTED 2006). Effectively OFSTED attempted to lay to rest arguments of whether special schools or mainstream schools were the better provision with findings that illustrated the point that there are good and bad special schools, just as there are good and bad mainstream schools. The critical element therefore was not location, in terms of either special or mainstream, but the quality of provision available there.

## Conclusion

The lack of an agreed, single definition of inclusion is not necessarily a problem at the philosophical level as it allows for ongoing academic debate about what it means to include a child or young person. However, it does present issues at the level of policy and practice, and when attempting to evaluate whether the individual's experience is one of inclusion. To a large extent it is a misconception that policies of inclusion pursued within the four nations mean every pupil attending mainstream school. English policy, for example, is very clear that though there is an expectation that the proportion of children educated in special schools will reduce over time, the need for specialist provision for a small number of children with severe and complex needs (DfES 2004). However, as DfES (2004) notes in relation to England:

*"The proportion of the school population educated in special schools varies greatly between local authority areas, reflecting both the historic pattern of provision and local commitment to supporting the inclusion of children with higher levels of need in mainstream setting"* (DfES 2004:, pp 36).

The second half of this observation illustrates the problem of a lack of a definition and the interpretive element that this introduces. One interpretation of inclusion, supported by CSIE (1989) for example, is that segregated specialist provision is incompatible with inclusion. Such an interpretation naturally leads to a reduction in specialist provision. An interpretation closer to Hornby's (2001 cited in O'Brien (ed) 2001) view of responsible inclusion potentially leads to a retention of specialist provision. In this context, definitions of inclusion become important at the level of practice and at the experiential level of impact on the workload and wellbeing of teachers. However it would require empirical research to ascertain whether the experience was better for staff in a Local Authority that had committed itself to a version of inclusion based on minimal special school provision and well resourced mainstream schools or in a Local Authority that operated the dual system of mainstream schools together with a relatively high level of specialist provision. The answer is unlikely to be straightforward. Issues of interpretation by Local Authorities is discussed further in 1.5 *Local Authority Responses to Inclusion*.

The lack of a definition of inclusion makes evaluation difficult. If a judgement is to be made about how well inclusion is working, it arguably necessitates some consensus both about what inclusion is and how to define 'working'. As OFSTED (2004) found, it is possible to identify commitment to the principles of inclusion, the existence of policies for inclusion and evidence that practice is becoming more inclusive but still not be clear how any of this contributes to more positive outcomes for the individual child or young person. A developing theme has been a focus on outcomes for the individual learner and a consideration of what inclusion means at the level of the child or young person's experience. The emphasis on place (i.e. in mainstream) as a defining feature of inclusion has reduced correspondingly, with OFSTED (2006) concluding that there was little difference in the quality of provision and the outcomes achieved by pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) across all types of schools.

That inclusion is debated is positive. It is right and proper that it is debated by academics, policy makers, practitioners, parents/carers and children and young people. It is less positive that debate frequently takes the form of simplistic sound bites, such as the widespread reporting (e.g. BBC 2006) of the comment attributed to Professor John Macbeath that inclusion was a form of abuse. This is potentially demoralising for teachers and other members of the school workforce who are working on a daily basis to make inclusion a reality for children and young people who might previously have been placed unnecessarily in segregated provision. Inclusion is a complex issue that cannot be reduced to a simple polarised debate of whether it is working or not. The reality must surely be that it 'works' for some and not for others. This will never fall into straightforward category based distinctions such as saying learners with autism cannot be included in mainstream but those with dyslexia can.

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## 1.2 WHAT ARE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?

### Key Points

- National variations in statementing and the incidence of SEN may in part be attributable to the co-existence of medical and social models of SEN. This poses problems in England and Wales for the early identification of SEN central to *Every Child Matters* (ECM) and *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004). This mixture of perspectives, plus the inherent unreliability within assessment approaches for SEN, has led to confusion about the meaning and usage of the term for teachers.
- The emphasis on assessment of SEN for identifying resource needs (e.g. statement of SEN) is being reduced in favour of identifying learning needs.
- Increased emphasis is being placed on using national, local and school data sets to monitor progress and enhance provision for pupils with SEN.
- Although the label 'SEN' does not necessarily prescribe a need for a specialist pedagogy, experience of teaching pupils with SEN and knowledge and qualification in SEN are linked to progress.
- There is a change in mainstream and special school populations. This change is characterised by an increase in the proportion of pupils in special schools who have in common (irrespective of cause) a difficulty in forming the social and reciprocal relationships that underpin learning and inclusion, (e.g. autistic spectrum, communication difficulties, SEBD). This is increasing the demand on teachers' time and expertise. There is a demand for enhanced training in SEN for all teachers and specialist training and experience for some.
- The label 'SEN' is limited in allowing teachers to predict and evaluate 'adequate progress'.
- There is likely to be an increasing emphasis on bio-psycho-social approaches to assessment of SEN within the ECM agenda as other professionals (e.g. health) are involved in multi-agency working and there is a return to an emphasis on individual outcomes.

### Current Context:

The continued use of the term SEN is something of a paradox to many in the context of an inclusion agenda that seeks to value diversity and difference and plan provision to meet the needs of all learners (e.g. Booth and Ainscow 2002). There have been attempts to use other terms such as AEN (Additional Educational Needs), ASN (Additional Support Needs) (Scotland) and LDD (Learning Difficulties and Disabilities) (OFSTED 2006). Such terms seek to incorporate a 'disability' component following SENDA (2001) and signal that all children or young people may have additional support needs at some stage in their school career.

SEN, however, continues to be the most commonly used term to describe learners who are different from the 'norm', and to single them out for additional or different (DfES 2001) provision. It is interesting to note the finding from research into mainstreaming in Scotland that although inclusion was never intended to be just about pupils with SEN:

*"...our experience suggests that practitioners and parents commonly use the term 'inclusion' to describe educational provision for children and young people with SEN in mainstream schools"* (Pirrie et al 2005, pp 13).

Given this extensive usage of the term 'SEN' it is important that teachers have an understanding of what it might mean for their practice. It would seem that the 'success' or otherwise of inclusion is deemed to depend on how it impacts upon the academic and social progress of learners with SEN. Three influential documents published in 2006, *The Cost of Inclusion* (Macbeath et al 2006), *Inclusion: Does it Matter Where Pupils are Taught?* (OFSTED 2006), and the Education and Skills Committee report (2006), all seek to critically examine the education of learners with SEN within the context of inclusion. These were preceded by Pirrie et al's (2005) report funded by Scottish Executive

Education Department (SEED) that sought to evaluate 'the presumption of mainstreaming', effective in Scotland since August 2003, which placed the onus on education authorities to place children – including those with disabilities – in a mainstream school.

The OFSTED (2006) report states that:

*"the most important factor in determining the best outcome for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is not the type but the quality of the provision"* (OFSTED 2006, pp 2).

As described in *What is Inclusion?*, this observation is important in that it moves the debate away from simply whether pupils with SEN should be educated in special or mainstream schools and places emphasis on the provision of a quality learning experience that will lead to improved outcomes for individual pupils. OFSTED went on to note that the key factors for good progress were:

*'the involvement of a specialist teacher<sup>5</sup>, good assessment, work tailored to challenge pupils sufficiently; and commitment from school leaders to ensure good progress for all pupils'* (OFSTED 2006, pp 2).

There was consensus between all the reports that pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties were disadvantaged in terms of opportunities to receive an appropriate education in mainstream settings. In their survey, Pirrie et al (2005) reported being told time and time again that it was much easier to include a child with physical or sensory impairments in a mainstream setting than to include a child with challenging behaviour.

### **Incidence of SEN:**

In 2005 around 18% (1.5 million children) of all pupils in school in England were categorised as having some sort of Special Educational Need (SEN). Around 3% (250,000) of all children had a statement of SEN. Around 1% (90,000) of all children were in special schools – which represents approximately one third of children with statements.

In Scotland in 2004 there were 25,383 pupils with a Record of Need (RoN) and/or an Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) in mainstream schools with the special school population staying fairly stable at around 1% of the school age population. As part of Scotland's move to the concept of Additional Support Needs following the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act* the Record of Need is being replaced by a Coordinated Support Plan. This is explored in more depth in this report within the section 1.4 *Educational Policy for Inclusion*.

Some 53,164 children and young people in mainstream schools in Northern Ireland have SEN and require additional support to access the curriculum and engage with learning (DENI 2006). In addition, 4,986 pupils are educated in special schools. Some 3.36% of pupils hold statements of SEN, reflecting a rise of 0.86% between October 2000 and October 2004, while the total school enrolment decreased by 1.25% over the same period. Currently, just over 62.75% of statemented pupils are in mainstream education. Despite a decrease in overall pupil numbers, the number of statemented pupils is increasing in all of the Boards. There are also considerable variations in the percentages of pupils in special and mainstream schools and units across the Boards; for example, the percentage of statemented pupils in mainstream schools and units ranges from 35.61% in one Board to 84.96% in another. The greatest variation exists in the area of Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD). Significantly, one Board has decided not to maintain MLD schools.

International comparisons are not straightforward, but some studies suggest that in England and Wales, significantly more children are identified as having special educational needs than most other European countries. It is difficult to use incidence figures in any meaningful way due to the documented variation in identification of SEN within countries that make up the UK. One consistent trend is the changing nature of both the mainstream and the special school population noted recently by both DENI (2006) and the Scottish Executive (2006). More children with SEN are being

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<sup>5</sup> 'specialist teacher' in the context of this report refers to one who has experience and qualifications across a range of learning difficulties and disabilities.

placed in primary schools. There is an increase in the number of children placed in special schools with autistic spectrum and other communication disorders. The DENI report states that:

*“the number of pupils identified with severe or profound learning difficulties, including complex medical difficulties, attending the SLD schools is rising. In addition, the SLD schools have increasing numbers of pupils with ASD and challenging behaviours. In the MLD schools, learning difficulties are more commonly associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In specific provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, there is evidence of more pupils presenting with mental health problems. Similarly, more pupils with physical or sensory impairments are being diagnosed with dual or multiple impairments resulting in complex needs. More pupils are being identified with ASD across all sectors. The evidence indicates a slight decrease in the number of pupils attending special schools because of physical disability and sensory impairment”* (DENI 2006, pp 7.

These reflections upon incidence figures support the view that:

- a presumption of mainstreaming, which has been used as a phrase in Scottish documentation but also aptly describes the approach adopted in the other three nations, has resulted in increasing numbers of pupils with SEN being placed in mainstream settings;
- the proportion of statements of SEN varies between LAs and between primary and secondary schools. In England, 15% of primary schools have 3% or more of pupils with statements compared with 36% of secondary schools. In Wales, 27% of primary schools have 3% or more pupils with statements compared with 55% of secondary schools (Audit Commission 2002);
- pupils who have significant difficulty in forming relationships with the teacher and/or interrupt classroom learning (e.g. those with ASD, challenging behaviour related to SLD, or SEBD) are increasingly likely to be placed in special provision. This is not surprising given that both teaching and learning and inclusion are reciprocal processes based on relationships. It follows that those pupils with whom it is difficult to relate either individually and/or in group settings will be the most difficult to include (Powell and Tod 2004);
- teachers in both mainstream and special schools have to cope with the demand of their changing school populations and are requesting more support and training for SEN;
- there is a trend away from an emphasis on lengthy, bureaucratic ways of identifying and categorising SEN for the purpose of securing additional resources (i.e. a statement or record of need) towards assessment and monitoring that improves the *quality* of teaching and learning needed to secure improved individual outcomes. OFSTED (2006) make the comment:

*‘a statement of SEN usually generated additional resources, but even if this did guarantee the quantity of provision, it did nothing to determine the quality of provision or outcomes for the pupil in any type of setting’* (OFSTED 2006, pp 4).

## Identification and Assessment

The word *Identification* is frequently used in the context of *Identification and Assessment* and it is perhaps useful to ponder on the question of ‘identification of what?’ It might mean identifying as having special educational needs, or underachieving, or being gifted and talented, or in terms of being at risk of, or vulnerable to *something*. The term is frequently applied to special educational needs and the original Code of Practice (DfE 1994) for England and Wales included these words within its title which may reflect, as Mittler (2000) suggests, a within-child model. The Code of Practice currently in use in Northern Ireland follows the format of the Code introduced in England and Wales in 1994. The Codes now in place in England and Wales have lessened the ‘within child’ emphasis by the exclusion of the term ‘identification and assessment’ from their titles. Careful examination of the content of these documents reveals a stronger emphasis on the social model of disability that underpins inclusion, but the processes of identification and assessment described still encourage a ‘within child’ focus. It raises questions about whether it is possible to adopt a policy of inclusion and then attempt to incorporate and adapt existing SEN policy which has its origins in a different policy context. Unlike the rest of the UK, Scotland has adopted a different approach, recognising the limitations of continuing to focus on SEN in the context of a policy of inclusion and abandoning the term in favour of the more inclusive ‘Additional Support Needs’.

The frequent use of the phrase *identification and assessment* may lead to a tendency to assume that there is something very definite, almost scientific about this process and to an undue confidence in the accuracy and consistency with which, having identified and assessed, the term special educational needs is applied to pupils. Based on inspection of English schools OFSTED (2004) made the observation that:

*“The inconsistency with which pupils are defined as having SEN continues to be a concern. Some schools use the term to cover all who are low-attaining, or simply below average, on entry, whether or not the cause is learning difficulty.*

*Clearly, if pupils are not achieving their potential this is a concern, regardless of whether the school has identified them as having SEN. However, looseness in the use of the SEN designation does not help to focus on the action needed to resolve problems and, in the worst cases, it can distract schools’ attention from doing what is necessary to improve the provision they make for all low or below average attainers”* (OFSTED 2004, pp 10).

This observation indicates that teachers in England at least are struggling to achieve consensus about what the term SEN means and when it should be applied. However, in spite of these difficulties in identification and assessment of SEN, reliable data on children's needs is, as noted by the Audit Commission (2002), an essential pre-requisite to effective planning:

- at LA level to ensure an appropriate range of provision allowing the great majority of children to be educated in local mainstream schools;
- among groups of LAs and regions to enable joint planning and investment to meet the needs of children with 'low incidence' needs;
- at a national level to inform spending priorities, workforce planning, teacher training and programmes of research.

(Audit Commission 2002, pp 8.)

Additionally, if individual schools and their teachers are to improve provision for pupils with SEN then it follows that they too need to be able to identify SEN. The increased emphasis on self-evaluation for schools and the need for teachers within England to know, in order to achieve qualified teacher status, *“how to use local and national statistical information to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, to monitor the progress of those they teach and to raise levels of attainment”* (TDA 2007, pp 9) emphasises this point.

In England, the DfES has produced a national pupil data base (NPD) that includes attainment data and demographic information which is drawn from the pupil level annual schools census (PLASC). The usefulness of such data in providing information about pupil attainment and inclusion is, of course, influenced by the consistency with which pupils with SEN are identified (Florian et al 2004).

The DfES and QCA (DfEE 2001, DfES 2003 and QCA 2005) also recommend assessment using 'P' scales for pupils who are working below Level 1 of the National Curriculum to measure progress over a period of time for pupils with significant SEN. These have been the subject of critical review (Martin 2006) in that they do not assure consistency of assessment. This is of concern as P scale assessments are to be collected as part of statutory end of key stage data in the future.

It is the pursuit of *identification and assessment* approaches for SEN that allow for progress to be evaluated, both at individual and collective level, that has been the source of confusion and debate. OFSTED (2006) found there was no agreement about what constituted good progress for pupils with LDD. This is not surprising, given the range of factors that affect the progress of an individual with SEN and the inherent risk of setting expectations either too high or too low.

The general point that emerges from the English experience is that the issue of 'measuring progress' for pupils with SEN is complicated by the co-existence of a standards raising agenda and an inclusion agenda. This has led to dilemmas for teachers as to whether SEN should be identified, and progress monitored, according to differences/difficulty in attainment, or in relation to the social, emotional and cognitive aspects of development that underpin inclusion and the intended individual outcomes of documents such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2004a) and *Getting it Right for Every Child* (Scottish

Executive 2006). What teachers therefore are experiencing is the existence of a mixture of modes for identifying pupils with SEN and understanding and interpreting the term 'SEN'. Despite efforts to frame it otherwise, the term SEN, probably partly due to its incorporation of the words 'special' and 'educational', is inevitably and inextricably linked with the traditions of 'special education' that are based on the medical model of identifying, assessing, labelling and treating. This has become increasingly problematic as the social model of disability has emerged strongly with the gathering momentum of the inclusion agenda. The contradiction develops that although inclusion is often talked about in the context of children with special educational needs, the identification of children as having special educational needs may, itself, not sit comfortably with concepts of inclusion.

It would be simplistic to just adopt *either* a labelling model (e.g. autistic, dyslexic, hearing impaired) or a needs led model (school action, school action plus, statement of need, record of needs, IEP etc) because a child's 'barrier' to learning in school can arise from a wide range of identifiable differences (cognitive, physical, sensory, behavioural, communication) and/or the less easy to identify transient differences, due to the environment in which the child has been reared or schooled. Using *either* a medical/individual or social/situational model of constructing SEN is also contraindicated by the many pupils whose SEN is complex and attributable to a range of individual and social factors.

Interestingly, as inclusion has progressed, the type of SEN that is increasingly making up the special school population represents both significant medical/physical SEN (PMLD, profound and multiple difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and speech and communication difficulties), SEN linked to social, emotional and environmental descriptors (e.g. SEBD) and a mixture of both (described as complex learning needs).

What can be said from the literature is that the term 'special educational needs' neatly conveys the inherent dilemma for those who seek to identify what it is. The 'SE' (Special Educational) within the term ensures some continued legitimacy for special education with its labels, specialist teachers and schools, while the 'N' (Needs) is more in keeping with an emphasis on the social and contextual factors that contribute to the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to individuals and groups of pupils.

This coexistence of different approaches to identifying SEN, and the resulting difficulties and confusion for teachers is perhaps a positive indicator of, and a necessary transition stage within evolving inclusive practice. It is professionally sound and appropriate for teachers to question their confidence in and understanding of the use of the term 'SEN' as this may lead to the encouragement of approaches to identification and assessment that focus more on learning than labelling. The Audit Commission (2002) focusing on England and Wales commented that:

*"...there may be many children for whom the SEN label might no longer be appropriate or necessary, as schools become more adept at responding to the diversity of needs in today's classrooms"* (Audit Commission 2002, pp 52).

The focus on the individual as the source of being 'special' (i.e. different from the norm) is an inheritance from the medical model of disability where identification involved examination and testing to identify how far the individual's development varied from the 'norm' (i.e. the population of same aged peers). The purpose of this form of assessment allowed for individuals to be categorised so that 'special' treatment could be allocated. The justification of this model was to provide educational opportunities for disabled people.

Perhaps more importantly in understanding the origins of the term SEN, the medical model presumes a label (diagnosis) that leads to a particular 'treatment(s)' of choice. Bailey (1998) argues that this kind of model includes the rigorous approach of a scientific analysis to the problems, in order to establish causes and treatments.

Behaviourists rejected the medical model and advocated an approach that dealt only with what they could observe. Some criticised this as a major weakness. However, this work was very important because it stressed the possibility of modifying the problems of children with special needs and placed the responsibility of that modification with the teacher. Behaviourist techniques were seen as very effective in helping with particular difficulties – self-help skills, for example. However, they

were seen to be less effective in helping children with tasks that involved more understanding. Others note that the translation of the medical approach on to educational provision i.e. that a particular label justifies a particular teaching method (Davis and Florian 2004) has not been supported by research. The critique of such a model is that it can lead to individuals being personally separated or excluded from their peers and SEN education being seen as special, compensatory or different:

*“The SEN system often gets discussed as if it is a separate system that operates outside the broader education sector. It is widely recognised that this is not the case. Children with SEN are the same children that are affected by, and in turn have an effect on reading strategies, curriculum flexibility, personalised learning, behaviour strategies, Every Child Matters, the standards agenda, teacher retention, and even youth crime”* (Education and Skills Committee 2006, pp 18).

Following the Warnock Report (1978) there was greater emphasis on looking at the context in which a pupil was placed in order to identify their ‘need’. The current definition of special educational needs reflects this and is based on the child having a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them (DfES 2001). The definition of special educational needs comes from Section 312 of Education Act 1996. It states:

*“Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.*

*Children have a learning difficulty if they:*

- a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or*
- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority;*
- (c) are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.*

*Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.*

*Special educational provision means:*

- (a) for children of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA, other than special schools, in the area;*
- (b) for children under two, educational provision of any kind.”*

(DfES 2001, pp 6).

Though quoted here from the English Code of Practice, this definition applies in Wales and Northern Ireland. The apparent precision of the language used in the definition belies the level of interpretation within terms such as ‘*significantly greater difficulty in learning*’, ‘*special educational provision*’ and ‘*additional to or otherwise different from*’. The fact that there is an interpretive element and that the definition is relative to where the pupil is schooled has undoubtedly contributed to the considerable variance in incidence of SEN between schools and regions. The potential for differences in identification and assessment between schools is acknowledged in policy:

*“Whether or not a child has SEN will therefore depend both on the individual and on local circumstances. It may be entirely consistent with the law for a child to be said to have special educational needs in one school, but not in another”* (DfEE 1997, pp 12).

These two approaches to the identification of SEN – one based on how far the individual is different from the population of same age peers (normative based assessment), and the other based on a relative assessment (how different is the individual in relation to others with whom he/she is placed) – is the source of considerable confusion for teachers and well documented in particular areas such as the identification of dyslexia (Solity 1995 and Tod 1999).

If progress rates are to be used to identify the significantly *greater difficulty in learning* prescribed by the Code of Practice definition of SEN, then teachers need criteria for assessing such progress. The DfES (2001) suggest that adequate progress might, for instance, be progress which:

- *Closes the attainment gap between the child and their peers;*
- *Prevents the attainment gap growing wider;*
- *Is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers;*
- *Matches or betters the child's previous rate of progress;*
- *Ensures access to the full curriculum;*
- *Demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills;*
- *Demonstrates improvements in the child's behaviour.*

(DfES 2001, pp 52).

If inadequate progress becomes the trigger for 'additional or different action' (DfES 2001) then it could be interpreted that this 'inadequate progress' is a prerequisite for defining a learner as having SEN. It is somewhat surprising therefore that the white paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* (DfES 2005a) finds it remarkable or a cause for concern that:

*"Some children who have fallen behind have SEN: 65% of pupils at age 11 who do not attain the expected level in English, and 55% of those not attaining the expected level in maths, are identified as having SEN. By no means all children with special educational needs are falling behind – many are meeting and exceeding expectations"* (DfES 2005a: para 4.17).

One could argue that it would be surprising if this was not the case, given a definition of SEN which requires the child to have a learning difficulty defined in terms of a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age. More worthy of attention might be that there are children being defined as having special educational needs that are meeting and exceeding expectations. The majority of children with statements of special educational needs or recorded as receiving School Action Plus support are those with a moderate learning difficulty (Education and Skills Committee 2006). Therefore, though means of ensuring and measuring progress are essential for these pupils in guarding against low expectations, the referencing against norm referenced, age related targets will inevitably reveal that they are not meeting these.

What is apparent is that in spite of a move from the medical model of segregation towards a social model of inclusion, both normative and relative approaches to identifying SEN are still evident in schools. Pupils in schools are tested and ranked according to normative expectations. Tests are still widely used in schools to identify individuals who fall outside the 'normal distribution' in order to categorise for SEN or underachievement, and report school progress. Children who need support from allied health professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists) are often assessed using reference to normal development scales and tests. 'Emotional Intelligence' has also been subjected to testing with pupils being allocated 'EQs'.

In the context of the Code of Practice (DfES 2001) a relative definition is used with the level of intervention (*School Action, School Action Plus*) being based on the child's level of difficulty in learning compared to others of a similar age and the requirement of provision that is additional to, or different from, that available for other pupils. The nature of the definition inevitably shapes identification and assessment procedures which, in attempting to define both the child's need and the provision necessary, encourage a focus on the individual. Within the Primary and Secondary National Strategies in England, identification is more concerned with under-performing groups and the application of targeted interventions to help learners reach age-related expectations. National and internal testing are therefore key elements of identification, in particular the use of sub-levels to monitor progress. For example, the Primary National Strategy materials (DfES 2005b) suggest minimum expected progress of six National Curriculum sub-levels over Key Stage 2. Many primary schools are encouraged to work on the more aspirational two sub levels per year. As the document

points out, higher rates of progress are needed for individual pupils to 'catch up' and are also required if standards are to be raised nationally (DfES 2005b).

OFSTED also provided guidance on identifying whether *"pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and their achievements are in line with those of pupils with similar difficulties and circumstances"* (OFSTED 2004, pp 25):

- *at least 80% of pupils make the nationally expected gains of two levels at Key Stage 2 and one level at Key Stage 3;*
- *78% of pupils who begin Key Stage 2 at level 1 in English achieve level 3 by the end of Key Stage 2;*
- *at least 34% of pupils below Level 2 in English in Year 7 make a one-level gain by the end of Key Stage 3 and 55% of pupils at level 2 make this gain;*
- *pupils withdrawn for substantial literacy support make an average of double the normal rate of progress;*
- *the attendance of pupils with special needs is good (above 92%) and unauthorised absence is low.*

(OFSTED 2004, pp 25).

Use of sub-levels can lead to the early identification of groups and individuals who are not making the expected rate of progress. In England the 'catch up' programmes within both Primary and Secondary (formerly KS3) National Strategies require the identification of pupils who, with targeted intervention, could meet or close the gap with national expectations.

From a positive perspective, this quite detailed specification of expected rates of progress encourages higher expectations of those identified as having special educational needs. However, some pupils with SEN will not make progress at this rate. For a school seeking to reach the target of at least 80% of pupils making the nationally expected gains of two levels across Key Stage 2 (or one level at Key Stage 3) (OFSTED 2004) it may encourage pressure to focus on those pupils who can contribute to this target, rather than those who, whilst still making meaningful progress, are unlikely to. The emphasis within the National Strategies on the percentage of pupils reaching nationally expected end of Key Stage targets also contributes to this risk. This may lead to certain pupils becoming the priority by virtue of their potential to contribute to school improvement if this is defined in terms of the number of pupils reaching national targets for attainment and/or achieving the nationally expected rates of progress.

### Labelling and Categorisation

The Warnock Report (1978) attempted to remove the use of labels through the introduction of the term 'special educational needs'. Describing the Committee of Enquiry's original motives, Baroness Warnock states:

*"We thought we should try to move away from the medical model of diagnosis, that is of identifying a child as having a certain named condition such as 'mental subnormality', or 'maladjustment' ( the two categories of disability that together made up by far the majority of the 20%). We hoped that, in identifying what needed to be done to help the child to learn, schools could adopt a neutral tone regarding the child's deficiencies, instead calling the attention of parents and others to what some extra help would enable him to do"* (Warnock 2005, pp 17).

Warnock (2005) has since reflected upon the influence she had on changing a system based on the individual's deficit and categorisation to one based on 'need'. She is now critical of the term 'SEN' that has been attributed to her, commenting:

*"The idea of transforming talk of disability into talk of what children need has turned out to be a baneful one. If children's needs are to be assessed by public discussion, and met by public expenditure it is absolutely necessary to have a way of identifying not only what is needed but why (by virtue of what condition or disability) it is needed...the failure to distinguish various kinds of needs has been disastrous for many children"* (Warnock 2005, pp 19-20).

Though the 1981 Education Act, acting on the recommendations of the Warnock Report, abolished the formal labels of handicap that had previously existed, the use of labels to describe SEN is still evident. As Thomas notes in relation to the category of emotional and behavioural difficulties:

*“Although EBD is not an official category in England, it exists as one in everything but name only...it would be clear to a Martian after five minutes study of the English education system that for all practical purposes EBD is indeed a category and that it forms in the minds of practitioners, professionals and administrators one of the principal groups of special needs”* (Thomas 2005 cited in Clough et al 2005, pp 60).

Systems for recording and reporting information in relation to special educational needs inevitably perpetuate categorisation and labelling. In 2002 the Audit Commission noted that in England there were no common definitions of needs, meaning that although Local Authorities might have detailed information on pupils in their areas, this could not be aggregated. In contrast, authorities in Wales and Scotland were required to report how many children have statements (or ‘records’ in Scotland). The categories used are shown in Table 1.

The Audit Commission recognised that there was a much larger group of children – 1.6 million in England and Wales – who were identified as having SEN but who did not have a statement for whom no data was available on the type of need.

**Table 1: Percentage of children with statements/records, by type of need**

Type of need	Wales	Scotland
Moderate learning difficulties; MLD and others	33%	34%
Specific Learning Difficulties	16%	16%
Emotional and behavioural difficulties (Wales); social and emotional difficulties (Scotland)	11%	4%
Severe learning difficulties; SLD and others	11%	5%
Speech and communication difficulties (Wales); language/communication disorder (Scotland)	8%	9%
Physical disabilities (Wales); physical or motor impairments (Scotland)	6%	8%
Autistic spectrum disorders	5%	9%
Profound and multiple learning difficulties; PMLD and others	4%	1%
Hearing impairment	3%	4%
Visual impairment	1%	3%
Other	2%	6%

Source: WAG and Scottish Executive cited in Audit Commission 2002: 7

Since January 2004, Local Authorities in England have been issued with guidance for the submission of Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) data under section 537A of the Education Act 1996. This guidance was updated in 2005. The data is used to help with planning, to study trends and to monitor the outcomes of initiatives and interventions for pupils with different types of SEN. Table 2 shows data on special educational needs in England by type of need.

Table 2: Number and percentage of pupils by type of need in maintained primary, secondary and special schools (England)

Type of need	School Action Plus	Statement of SEN
Specific Learning Difficulty	15.3%	7.9%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	30.2%	24.1%
Severe Learning Difficulty	1.0%	11.7%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	0.1%	3.5%
Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties	26.5%	14.1%
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	14.3%	11.5%
Hearing Impairment	1.7%	3.0%
Visual Impairment	0.9%	1.8%
Multi-Sensory Impairment	0.1%	0.2%
Physical Disability	2.3%	7.2%
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	2.4%	13.1%
Other Difficulty/Disability	5.1%	1.8%

Source: DfES (2006) special educational needs in England, January 2006. SFR23/2006

The SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001) describes four broad areas of need.

- cognition and learning;
- behaviour, emotional and social development;
- communication and interaction;
- sensory and/or physical needs.

It is often overlooked in the Code that these terms are only applied specifically at the Statutory Assessment stage. Within School Action and School Action Plus more general terminology is used. The Code talks for example of a child showing,

*"...signs of difficulty in developing literacy and mathematics skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas"* (DfES 2001, pp 53).

It is perhaps indicative of the strong tradition of categorisation in the field of special education that pupils are so readily assigned to one or more of the four categories even prior to the statutory assessment phase.

Guidance to all Local Authorities and Schools in England intended to provide support to schools and local authorities in recording pupils' needs in the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) has subdivided the four categories used within the Code of Practice (DfES 2001):

#### A. Cognition and Learning Needs

- Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)
- Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)
- Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)

#### B. Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development Needs

- Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD)

### **C. Communication and Interaction Needs**

- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

### **D. Sensory and/or Physical Needs**

- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)
- Physical Disability (PD)

(DfES 2005c, pp 2).

There is also a category of Other (OTH) which only applies to pupils at *School Action Plus* where there is no clearly identified special educational need.

Northern Ireland's approach (DENI 2005) to defining areas of need is similar, to the other parts of the UK, specifying seven main areas of special educational need, but breaking each down into specific SEN categories:

#### **1. Cognitive and Learning:**

- (a) Dyslexia/SpLD (DYL)
- (b) Dyscalculia (DYC)
- (c) Dyspraxia/DCD (DCD)
- (d) Mild Learning Difficulties (MILD)
- (e) Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- (f) Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- (g) Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
- (h) Unspecified (U)

#### **2. Social, Emotional and Behavioural**

- (a) SEBD
- (b) ADD/ADHD (ADD)

#### **3. Communication and Interaction**

- (a) Speech and Language Difficulties (SL)
- (b) Autism (AUT)
- (c) Aspergers (ASP)

#### **4. Sensory**

- (a) Severe/profound hearing loss (SPHL)
- (b) Mild/moderate hearing loss (MMHL)
- (c) Blind (BL)
- (d) Partially sighted (PS)
- (e) Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

#### **5. Physical**

- (a) Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- (b) Spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (SBH)
- (c) Muscular dystrophy (MD)

(d) Significant accidental injury (SAI)

(e) Other (OPN)

## **6. Medical Conditions/Syndromes**

(a) Epilepsy (EPIL)

(b) Asthma (ASTH)

(c) Diabetes (DIAB)

(d) Anaphylaxis (ANXS)

(e) Down's Syndrome (DOWN)

(f) Other medical conditions/syndromes (OMCS)

(g) Interaction of complex medical needs (ICMN)

(h) Mental Health Issues (MHI)

## **7. Other**

Other (OTH)

The guidance document *Recording Children with Special Educational Needs* (DENI 2005) provides information on each of these sub divisions in an attempt to help schools and boards in Ireland decide on pupils' main area of special educational need and the appropriate SEN category (DENI 2005). In its foreword, the document sets out clearly its rationale, stating:

*"The collection and recording of standard information about children with special educational needs who are placed on the Special Educational Needs Register across schools and boards is an essential factor in special educational planning and policy development, identification of current and future funding needs and for monitoring trends, outcomes of initiatives and interventions for pupils with special educational needs"* (DENI 2005, pp i).

This statement portrays a positive reason for categorising pupils according to type of need. However the use of 'labels' in the area of SEN and disability is contentious (Norwich 1999). Some writers (Corbett 1996, Solity 1991, Thomas and Loxley 2001) have argued that the language of SEN itself continues to reflect a deficit model, that it is a stigmatising and discriminatory term and that it expresses a form of bad-mouthing (Norwich 2002). Labels potentially influence perceptions, judgements and expectations of people with difficulties or disabilities and may be used in ways that stigmatise and devalue (Norwich 1999). The 'label' of SEN carries with it expectations (often negative) of progress, and as argued previously in this section, is by definition inextricably linked to inadequate progress and greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age. Good and Brophy (1990) comment on the potential influence of expectations:

*"Expectations tend to be self-sustaining. They affect perception, by causing teachers to be alert for what they expect and less likely to notice what they do not expect, and interpretation, by causing teachers to interpret and (and perhaps distort) what they see so that it is consistent with their expectations. Some expectations persist even though they do not coincide with the facts"* (Good and Brophy 1990, pp 441).

The SEN label can also imply the need for a specialist teaching approach, which can lead the class teacher to feel deskilled and view their efforts to enable learning as second rate to the specialist input they perceive the pupil to need.

Labels have been used positively in the field of SEN to secure resources and, for some, additional exam allowance. Labels have also been used positively as an impetus to develop voluntary specialist bodies, many of which have become powerful in providing specialist support to parents/carers and pupils and have a powerful influence in lobbying for better provision and resources (e.g. Dyslexia and Autism associations). For some parents/carers, the application of a label helps them not only in understanding the nature of their child's difficulty but also in providing a means of engaging in dialogue with schools to ensure their child's needs are given sufficient recognition and support.

However, the nature of the label is also a factor. Some labels are clearly more socially acceptable than others in the area of SEN, which has led to criticisms that middle-class parents/carers are more likely to secure a more socially acceptable SEN statement (e.g. dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder) than parents/carers whose child may have a need that is less desirable and more difficult to identify (e.g. SEBD).

Labels have also had a positive role to play in developing, promoting and researching specialist teaching approaches and in the commissioning and dissemination of research for particular categories of need.

The use of categories of SEN and the whole issue of labelling is far from straightforward. Arguments can be made for it, but there are also powerful arguments that emerge in the context of a policy of inclusion. Such debates are complicated by divisions within the disability movement, with some deaf people, for example, rejecting the identity of disability and instead claiming the status of a linguistic minority.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and other social security legislation are based on the assumption that being disabled accords certain rights and privileges, such as financial support and the requirement that service providers will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate needs. However, it is unclear that the positive aspects of being identified outweigh the negative effects of stigmatisation and marginalisation. Writers like Tomlinson (1982) have warned that, whilst categorisation may appear benign, it may often have hidden, less benign effects. McDonnell (2000) draws on the writings of Foucault to suggest that within special educational needs attempts to categorise are likely to be accompanied by a range of disciplinary mechanisms which restrict, rather than enhance, the experience of individuals.

One way to resolve the tension between categorisation and anti-labelling approaches may be to recognise the importance of who is categorising and for what purpose. Norwich (1999) makes the point regarding the different purposes of labelling:

*"It is important to be clear about the difference between the use of labels for different purposes. It is one thing to use labels to describe syndromes, impairments or conditions, such as Down's Syndrome or autism. It is another matter, however, to use labels to identify those children who are entitled to additional or different educational provision from that made available to most children. There is no necessary connection between labels of impairment and labels of required educational provision. Two children with Down's Syndrome may have different educational needs depending on their settings and other personal characteristics"* (Norwich 1999, pp 179).

Norwich's comment captures the negative potential of labelling to create the impression that those with the label are a homogeneous group, leading to the perception that all with this label will benefit from the same strategies, require the same types of support, experience the same barriers to learning and learn in the same way and at the same rate.

Arguably, the term *special educational needs* and the labels and categories associated with it are typically used for positive reasons such as ensuring access to resources and other forms of strategic planning at school, Local Authority and national levels. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognise that systems which are initially informed by good intentions may have additional, less positive effects that may not be apparent to those responsible for creating and operating the system. Dyson and Slee cited in Phillips and Furlong (eds) 2001), drawing on the work of American special education commentator Tom Skrtic (1991) remark that,

*"It is necessary to look 'behind' the rational and benevolent appearance of special education in order to understand critically the assumptions upon which it is founded, the interests which are at work to maintain it, and of course the perverse impacts which it has upon its supposed beneficiaries"* (Dyson and Slee 2001 cited in Phillips and Furlong (eds) 2001, pp 178).

'Difference' is inevitably a problem which besets mass education systems in Western democracies (Dyson and Slee 2001 cited in Phillips and Furlong (eds) 2001). Special educational policy can be seen as an attempt to deal with the problem created for such systems. Dyson and Slee (2001 cited in Phillips and Furlong (eds) 2001) continue:

*“Learners who resist schooling, who have a language other than the language(s) of instruction, who have disabilities and difficulties which make it hard for them to learn in ‘common’ schools, create problems which call not only for responses in practice, but for responses at the level of national policy.”* (Dyson and Slee 2001 cited in Phillips and Furlong (eds) 2001, pp 178).

This ‘bigger picture’ perspective on the purpose of special education policy as a response to the problem posed for education systems of learners who do not learn like the majority of their peers sets it at odds with the philosophy of inclusion which typically is described in terms of embracing diversity. For the school workforce, the practical difficulty is that they are being encouraged through policy and guidance to develop inclusive practice that encompasses a diverse range of learners whilst at the same time being required to operate a special educational needs system that is implicitly concerned with categorising and quantifying difference in relation to those who do not learn like others. There are therefore inherent tensions and contradictions to be resolved at the levels of principles, policy and practice.

In the context of a policy of inclusion labelling, categorising and other practices associated with special education need to be critically evaluated against the outcomes for, and experiences of, the individual learner rather than accepted without question simply because they are part of the way things have always been done or serve the purposes of the educational establishment.

## Conclusion

In exploring the literature on SEN, it seems that *‘What is SEN?’* is far more complex and unclear than the everyday common usage of the term implies. For teachers, who may have lived through or have considerable experience of biological/medical approaches to SEN, the use of labels may lead them to adopt a view that ‘special’ equates with specialist knowledge and specialist teaching. To some extent, a biological approach and an understanding of the different ways in which an individual (say with autism) may view or interpret his/her environment is helpful in deciding what teaching strategies to use and what progress to anticipate.

Other teachers may have a preference for considering that ‘SEN’ has a psychological component both to its cause and effect, as say in the case of pupils who experience low self-esteem.

Teachers who have consistently operated a ‘needs led’ approach to SEN and inclusion may adopt a social model of difference/disability and seek to reduce SEN by making changes to the teaching and learning environment through a process of identifying and removing ‘barriers to learning’.

In reality, the *experience* of SEN for an individual is likely to differ from the construct of SEN. This prescribes the need for a bio-psycho-social approach to understanding and identifying special educational needs. Such a view allows the acceptance that for a child identified as having special educational needs there may be a combination of biological, psychological and social factors. This is a view explored by Norwich (1990, 2002) and by Blamires (2001 cited in O’Brien (ed) 2001). Though offering no clear cut answers, such a perspective may free teachers from an ‘either...or’ choice that requires acceptance of either the ascendant social model or the more traditional bio-psycho model and allow for a recognition that there are a complex range of interacting factors that influence children’s learning. The emergent agenda for *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2004a) endorses this view by its emphasis on multi-agency working and a focus on improved holistic outcomes for individuals.

Teachers should not feel uneasy about their self perceived capacities to assess and provide for pupils with SEN as this is not as straightforward as guidance on the subject might imply. Rather, teachers should be encouraged to accept that it is a complex process, made more complicated by the convergence of the inclusion agenda, the emphasis on standards raising and Code of Practice (DfES 2001) defined SEN processes in recent years, which will, in the short to medium term at least, create some dilemmas and contradictions. Teachers can either be passive recipients of this complexity or seek to develop evidence based practice that makes sense of these, at times, conflicting agendas.

Accepting that as part of one’s role there will be innovations and that these will require a creative and critical response, is potentially less stressful and more empowering than believing that there is a status quo to be maintained in the face of externally imposed change. The emergence of the inclusion agenda has certainly impacted, as this section has outlined, on what it means to identify

and assess a child as having special educational needs and a creative and critical approach in this changing field is likely to be helpful. However the reasonableness of the innovations, their frequency, the level of compulsion that underpins them and the impact on workload are also salient factors.

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## 1.3 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND INCLUSION

### Key Findings

- Inclusion is endorsed as a principle by many teachers but there are concerns about the practicalities.
- Concerns regarding practicalities often relate to particular types of needs and do not represent a rejection of the principle of inclusion per se.
- Teachers' attitudes and values are crucial to the success of inclusion in mainstream schools.
- Teacher training should not be solely information-based but should have regard to the importance of values and attitudes and provide opportunities for trainees to work with disabled people and people with special educational needs.

### Teachers' Views on Inclusion

In their study, which included interviews focusing on inclusion with local authority officers, headteachers and others, Croll and Moses found that most of the responses could be summarised as *"I am absolutely committed to inclusion in principle but..."* (Croll and Moses 2000, pp 5). Many of those interviewed made a distinction between types of children or types of difficulty. The education of children with moderate learning difficulties or sensory or mobility problems in mainstream schools was generally viewed favourably, whereas children with severe and complex difficulties and children with emotional and behavioural problems were frequently seen as needing to be educated in a special setting.

Some of the statements made by the interviewees were clearly contradictory, and many of those involved were aware that they were making internally contradictory statements. For the most part this came from a strong belief in, and commitment to inclusion, but a feeling that there were still children for whom – because of the nature of their difficulties or pressure from their parents/carers – a segregated placement had to be found. Croll and Moses (2000) use the idea of utopian thinking to consider the "seemingly conflicting" views about inclusion. Giddens (1994) considered the idea of utopian thinking impossibly idealistic compared with 'real' politics, but then argued that they could be brought together in what he describes as 'utopian realism', which characterises an approach to a political possibility which *"has utopian features, yet is not unrealistic because it corresponds to observable trends"* (Giddens 1994, pp 248). Croll and Moses (2000) suggest that this idea could also be applied to inclusion, stating:

*"It is idealistic, in that it represents what many people desire but regard as a far distant aspiration, and, at the same time, it also corresponds to observable trends as the overall proportion of pupils in segregated provision declines, even if slowly and unevenly"* (Croll and Moses 2000:9).

Croll and Moses also found a contrast between teachers' professed ideological position and their actual classroom practice:

*"There is no commitment among the teachers in the survey to inclusion as generalized educational ideology, and there is strong awareness of the pragmatic case for special schools...But, at the same time, there is a good deal of inclusive practice in the classrooms in the study, with teachers committed to meeting very considerable levels of educational needs in the mainstream"* (Croll and Moses 1999, pp 9).

It is salutary to note that, at a time when inclusion is being debated (e.g. Warnock 2005, OFSTED 2004, Macbeath et al 2006) Hegarty et al (1981), researching integration, raised similar issues, suggesting that it was "bedevilled by lack of clarity" and "viewed with unease", with many teachers working in ordinary schools feeling that they lacked the competence to educate pupils with special educational needs. This may indicate that teacher's concerns are not with the principles of integration or inclusion per se but based on a mismatch between their perception of their capacity and their perception of the expectations of policy. An additional issue may be that teachers' understanding of inclusion may be based not directly on government stated policy but on

interpretations of what inclusion is handed down by others such as local authority support and advisory staff, who may in turn have formed their views from an amalgam of the differing perspectives.

### The Importance of Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion

Rajecki (1982 cited in Mushoriwa 2001) argues that attitudes are an important area to study because they influence so much of our personal lives. For Rajecki, attitudes include desires, convictions, feelings, opinions, views, beliefs, hopes, judgements and sentiments. It is thus important to consider attitudes because human behaviour and actions are influenced by attitudes – attitudes are seen as the cause and behaviour as the consequence (Mushoriwa 1998). Thus teachers' attitudes may affect the way they perceive, value, judge, interact with and teach children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Research suggests that teachers' attitudes are the key to successful inclusion, based on the assumption that successful implementation of any inclusion policy is largely dependent on educators being positive about it. Shade and Stewart (2001) note that in America the intention is to place the responsibility for educating all students on the general classroom teacher, and to do that requires major changes in teachers' attitudes and expectations. Tait and Purdie (2000) argue that if teachers do not develop positive attitudes towards people with disabilities during their training, these attitudes will be difficult to change and inclusive schooling will be more difficult to achieve. Similarly Murphy's (1996) research suggests that if teachers emerge from initial teacher training programmes without a positive attitude to inclusion, their attitudes would be difficult to change, particularly if they are exposed to *"information-based courses rather than greater contact with disabled people on an interpersonal level"* (Murphy 1996, pp 25).

Short and Martin (2005) suggest that the acknowledgement of the connection between educators' attitudes and the success or failure of an inclusionary programme is significant, but little data exists on teachers' attitudes. They also argue that although the beliefs of educators play a major role in the success or failure of inclusion, a major concern of educators is the time element, particularly where there is no team teaching or collaboration. Other significant concerns are the use of support services, staff and resources. Their study, in a rural high school in a Midwest state in the USA, found a need for improved teacher attitude towards inclusion through training.

Forlin et al (1999 quoted by Campbell et al 2003) measured attitudes towards disability in a large sample of trainee teachers and identified six factors:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| discomfort    | relates to the level of discomfort experienced in social interactions with people with disabilities;              |
| sympathy      | measures the degree of sympathy for those with disabilities;  |
| uncertainty   | encapsulates feelings of not knowing how to act with people with disabilities;                                    |
| fear          | addresses personal fear of having a disability;   |
| coping        | relates to being able to relate normally to people with a disability without being overwhelmed by the disability; |
| vulnerability | relates to feelings as to how one would personally respond to having a disability.                                |

Campbell et al (2003) surveyed 274 trainee teachers in Australia at the beginning and end of a one-semester unit on human development and education, which combined formal instruction with structured fieldwork experiences. They found that by the end of the semester, students had significantly less discomfort, sympathy, uncertainty, fear and vulnerability, and significantly greater capacity to cope.

Booth and Ainscow (1998) contend that in any study of inclusive education it is necessary for the researcher to specify the type of special educational needs because teacher attitudes have been found to vary with the type of disability and the extent of institutional adaptations required to accommodate the students. Mushoriwa (2001) studied the attitudes of primary school teachers in Harare towards the inclusion of blind children in regular classes. Four hundred teachers were

involved in the study, which found that the teachers had a negative attitude towards the inclusion of blind children. The research suggested that although a blind child may be included physically, s/he may remain socially and academically excluded because of the attitudes of the teachers. Although the situation in Harare is different from that in the UK, with very large class sizes (typically 50 children in a class) and poor resources, the teachers' main concern was time, as reported in other studies (e.g. Short and Martin 2005).

Hastings and Oakford (2003) summarise previous research on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Children with less severe special educational needs, who are less demanding in terms of teachers' input, are generally viewed more positively in terms of inclusion than children with severe disabilities. Typically children with intellectual disabilities or emotional or behavioural problems are rated less positively by samples of teachers and student teachers (Avramidis et al 2000a). Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs are positively associated with their non-work experience of special needs (Harvey 1985).

Although results are mixed, several studies have suggested that the inclusion of younger children in the school system is seen more positively (Scruggs and Mastropieri 1996) and Hastings and Oakford suggest that this may be because younger children usually spend more time with a single teacher or small number of teachers than children later in their school careers, so the impact of a child with special educational needs on the teacher can be quite different.

Avramidis and Norwich (2002), in a review of the literature, found that most research on teacher attitudes is from America and relates to integration. They found evidence to show positive attitudes towards inclusion but no evidence of acceptance of a total inclusion approach to special education provision. Richards and Clough (2004) also argue that attitudes are the critical variable in the success or otherwise of inclusive practice, citing studies by Oliver (1998), Mittler (2000) and Stewart (1990). Oliver suggests that even:

*"...the most enlightened and 'right on' teachers who would have no trouble in recognising oppression on the basis of class or race or gender would be happy to say 'I am not taking a blind child', or 'I am not taking a deaf child into my class, and that is not a political issue, that is a resource issue'"* (Oliver, 1998 cited in Clough and Corbett 2000: 28).

Oliver (1998) also argues that oppressive attitudes have changed very little in the past 20 years.

The importance of training in the formation of positive attitudes towards integration was supported by the findings of Beh-Pajoo (1992) and Shimman (1990). These studies of college teachers in the UK found that teachers who had been trained to teach students with learning difficulties expressed more favourable attitudes and emotional reactions to students with special educational needs and their integration than did those without training. Other studies in the UK (Avramidis et al 2000a), the USA (Buell et al 1999, Van Reusen et al 2000) and Australia (Center and Ward 1987) reinforce this view.

Avramidis et al (2000a), reporting on research into teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, note that early American studies on 'full inclusion' (Coates 1989, Semmel et al 1991) reported results in favour of the current special education system (pull-out programmes) rather than inclusion. Another study by Vaughn et al (1996) examined mainstream and special teachers' perceptions of inclusion. The majority of these teachers, who were not currently participating in inclusive programmes, had strong negative feelings about inclusion and felt that decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, including class size, inadequate resources, the extent to which all students would benefit from inclusion and lack of adequate teacher preparation (Avramidis et al 2000a).

Studies where teachers had active experience of inclusion produced contradictory findings. Villa et al (1996) found results which favoured the inclusion of children with SEN in ordinary schools. The researchers found that teacher commitment often emerges at the end of the implementation cycle, after they have mastered the professional expertise needed to implement inclusive programmes. Similar findings were reported by LeRoy and Simpson (1996) who studied the impact of inclusion over a three-year period in the state of Michigan. Their study showed that teachers' confidence to teach children with SEN increased in line with their experience.

Ellins and Porter (2005), in a single-school study of secondary teachers' attitudes to SEN, found departmental differences. Teachers of the core subjects – English, Maths and Science – had less positive attitudes than teachers of foundation and more 'affective' subjects, and pupils with SEN made least progress in Science, where teacher attitudes were the least positive. There were concerns about safety and access in practical subjects and the levels of literacy and numeracy required by a subject were seen to reflect on its suitability for pupils with SEN, so subjects that did not rely on these skills were seen as most suitable for these pupils.

Hodkinson (2005) says that despite recent government initiatives it has been contended that some teachers see inclusive education relating only to children with special educational needs and others believe that not all children are capable of being included in mainstream education (Croll and Moses 2000, Scruggs and Mastropieri 1996). He suggests that if inclusion is to become the core principle of the English educational system, its future success may rest on the next generation of teachers.

Looking at teachers' attitudes and perceptions about inclusion in relation to the aim of an inclusive society, Reynolds (2001) argues that this makes two demands of education:

*"First, the education system itself must involve inclusive practices and ensure equality of opportunity; secondly schools must promote the kind of pupils who believe in and are capable of participating in inclusive societies, and this involves education for inclusion...An important locus for the development of inclusivity and equality is the school and the kind of learning environment it provides"* (Reynolds 2001, 466).

A "crucial influence" in the development of an inclusive school and education for inclusion is the teacher. Reynolds continues:

*"...it is his/her knowledge, beliefs and values that are brought to bear in creating the effective learning environment for pupils (Bennett et al 1997). The way in which teachers carry out their professional activity will have a profound effect on the extent to which their pupils learn the attitudes and values associated with inclusion"* (Reynolds 2001, 466).

Ward and Le Dean (1996) surveyed student teachers on their views on the most suitable provision for children with special educational needs, based on the assumption that professional attitudes can have a significant influence on the success of educational policies. They questioned 179 students from two Australian universities about the inclusion of children with specified difficulties. The students were receiving, or had received, pre-service courses in the psychology and teaching of children with special educational needs – at that time such courses were mandatory for employment by at least one large state department of education. The courses provided a broad introduction to the psychological and educational characteristics of children with special educational needs, together with familiarisation with a range of instructional and management techniques found to be effective. They also aimed to promote – directly or indirectly – positive attitudes towards disability and inclusive educational practices.

Ward and Le Dean (1996) found no major consensus in favour of mainstreaming with the choice of placement dependent upon the perceived severity of the difficulty and the support and resources required. The types of disabling condition that raised most concern were those involving severe physical and/or intellectual impairment and those characterised by behavioural and emotional difficulties. Children with such problems were seen as requiring the intensive and specialised instruction best provided in a special class or school, but with appropriate support, the mainstreaming of children with mild degrees of physical, sensory or intellectual disability was considered feasible. The researchers added the caveat that these results may be of limited generalisability because the policies and services of the states in which the courses were provided offer the possibility of a range of non-mainstreamed placements, whereas states where the policy is one of inclusion, supported by additional resources in regular classrooms, may promote different attitudes. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) also found that teachers' attitudes were most influenced by child-centred variables (the nature and severity of the disabling condition) and to some extent by environment-related variables, such as the availability of physical and human support, but less by teacher-related variables.

The results of the study were generally in accordance with those of earlier studies (e.g. Larivee 1982, Ward et al 1994) and found that the attitudes of well-informed trainee teachers were not too different from those of experienced practitioners. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found several studies which suggested that trainees and newly qualified teachers were more supportive of integration, although other studies suggested that there was no correlation between length of teaching experience and attitudes towards integration.

Richards and Clough (2004) surveyed one cohort (120) of full-time PGCE students at a UK university. They were given two questionnaires – one in the first week of their PGCE, which asked about understanding the definition and applied practice of inclusion, the identification of children with special educational needs and the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive educational practice. The second questionnaire, at the end of the programme, asked about their experience of inclusion in school and whether it had changed their views on inclusion, the usefulness of their training and experience and the identification of additional training needs.

Initial responses indicated a positive approach to inclusion, with 86% describing it in terms of rights, offering equality for all children to be actively involved in the same school. Awareness of disabled people's views on the Government's initiatives to increase inclusion was very limited, with 91% of respondents saying they had no idea. Most respondents (80%) said that all children should be educated together in the same schools, although a majority (46%) said this could include the use of on-site special units. The disadvantages of special schools were described by most (81%) respondents, who saw them as segregating, isolating and excluding pupils, encouraging dependence, stereotyping and preventing preparation for the real world. The benefits of inclusion were identified by most respondents as having a positive effect on all pupils: social interaction was seen to benefit 'normal' children as it would help understanding and overcome prejudices. But despite the positive comments, concerns were raised about inclusion. Most (51%) related to the disruption of other children's learning and the increased workload for teachers, rather than issues about actual provision for children with special educational needs.

The follow-up questionnaire found that all the students had been exposed to some form of inclusive practice on their school placement, and most (76%) described the inclusion at their school as successful. This was because pupils with special educational needs were seen to join in classroom activities and achieve, described as happy, accepted by their peers and having a sense of belonging. Learning support assistants were identified as the most common means of achieving inclusion, followed by differentiation and setting. One respondent said that inclusion was achieved through "pupils being removed [from class] by the teacher on inclusion duty who was summoned by phone" which Richards and Clough describe as "*an efficient method noted by Ofsted in the school's inspection that enabled efficient exam results*" (2004, 81).

Most of the respondents (59%) said that their views on inclusion had not changed since teaching in school. For some this was because they always had believed in inclusion but for the majority, their experience in school had confirmed their view that inclusion could not work because of the additional support required at the expense of other learners. For those whose views had changed, most now saw inclusion as a sound way of working, particularly where appropriate resources were available.

When asked about what had been useful in preparing them for teaching inclusively, 95% of respondents rated their school experience highest. Only half had found university training to be of any help and a similar number cited reading books. A few said that knowing a disabled person was influential. Suggestions for further training included curriculum differentiation and classroom management skills in the absence of specialist support, although six students said they did not want any further training and half the students did not respond to the question about further training needs.

Richards and Clough (2004) suggest there are two key factors in preparing trainee teachers to work inclusively – university-based training and the inclusive culture of the placement school. Many students seemed to begin their training with a positive belief in inclusion, suggesting that sustaining it and providing them with the tools to manage inclusive learning should be a prominent part of their programme. However this seems to be at least in part contradicted by the observation that:

*“Many of the student teachers’ initial statements about inclusion reflected the Government’s ideology in that they accepted a range of segregated provision. This suggests that, even before embarking upon their PGCE programme, they had internalised values about pupils seen as problematic to the education service. For a significant number of these students there appeared to be reservations about rights to be included automatically, as some pupils were perceived to be less valued than others. Despite a general and clear articulation of the advantages of inclusive systems, individual sacrifice was deemed necessary to protect other learners’ education, especially if time was being taken away from those who were thought to be more able. This, of course, reaches into the argument as to whether schools can balance inclusivity and excellence” (Richards and Clough 2004, 83).*

A particularly significant finding was the student teachers’ lack of awareness of what they should do to work inclusively. This, together with the fact that many teacher educators may not have experienced inclusion themselves and many of the students surveyed saying that they did not find the university-based training helpful, highlights the importance of the school placement. However, the nature of the experience in a school placement is likely to be extremely variable due to both differing interpretations of inclusion and a range of attitudes towards the policy of inclusion, which may stretch from support, through to scepticism and possibly even antipathy that may be encountered in schools.

Campbell et al (2003) conducted a study in Queensland, Australia (following a similar survey in the UK by Wishart and Manning in 1996) surveying 274 trainee teachers at the beginning and end of a one-semester unit on human development and education, which combined formal instruction with structured fieldwork experiences. The trainees were studying early childhood, primary or secondary education. The first questionnaire asked about knowledge of Down’s Syndrome and attitudes towards inclusive education for children with Down’s Syndrome. The students were asked to compare stereotypical views of the personality of children with Down’s Syndrome with typically developing children. A 20 item Likert scale, Interaction with Disabled Persons Scale (IDP) (Gething and Wheeler 1992), was used to measure attitudes towards disability in general.

At the beginning of the semester, 80.6% of students could say that Down’s Syndrome was primarily a chromosomal disorder – by the end of the semester 97.4% could do so. At the beginning of the semester the student teachers tended to underestimate the potential for development of children with Down’s Syndrome. By the end of the semester students had more positive, but still realistic, expectations and the stereotypical views of children with Down’s Syndrome had significantly reduced.

At the beginning of the semester 28% of the students thought inclusion would be detrimental educationally to the child with Down’s Syndrome, 25% saw it as detrimental socially and 38% detrimental emotionally. Thirty-one per cent thought it would be educationally detrimental to the other children in the class although 93% and 89% respectively thought it would be beneficial socially and emotionally. By the end of the semester, students had a more positive view of the benefits of inclusion, with 90% rating it as beneficial educationally, 95% socially and 86% emotionally beneficial for the child with Down’s Syndrome. Students’ beliefs about the best educational setting for a child with Down’s Syndrome also changed in a similar direction.

The Australian and UK studies both showed that trainee teachers held stereotypical views about Down’s Syndrome, underestimating the potential for development and overestimating the level of disability. By the end of the studies the student teachers had more positive and accurate views of developmental milestones and academic achievements and were more positive about the benefits of inclusive practice for the children with Down’s Syndrome and for other children in the class. These changes were anticipated, because it is known that university information-based courses lead to changes in knowledge, but changes in attitude were surprising. The students had more positive attitudes towards inclusion and towards disability in general. The researchers suggest that this is congruent with the findings of other studies regarding the importance of structured, experiential learning activities in addition to university information-based course work in fostering attitude change regarding disability and inclusion. In previous studies (Mayhew 1994, Pernice and Lys 1996, Rees et al 1991, Westwood 1984) this experiential learning was generally provided through direct contact with children with disabilities. Campbell et al (2003) suggest that while this may be difficult to organise for large teacher training programmes, fieldwork experiences in the general community followed by reflection and tasks on the integration of material would be useful. They comment:

*“The challenge is to educate future teachers in ways that promote and sustain understanding and acceptance of a range of disabilities, and provide them with the skills to support children with special educational needs in inclusive classroom settings”* (Campbell et al 2003, pp 377).

Marshall et al (2002) study in Manchester investigated the attitudes of PGCE students towards the inclusion of children with speech and language impairments, interviewing 19 students. Six major themes emerged:

- the effects that inclusion may have on the child with speech and language impairments;
- the effects that the inclusion of a child with speech and language impairments may have on the other children in the class;
- the degree/nature of the disability;
- the subject of teaching;
- resources;
- the role of teachers.

A minority of the students were positive about the effects that inclusion may have on children with special educational needs, although their expectations of the children were low, but most participants were concerned about the negative effects that inclusion may have on a child with speech and language impairments. The researchers were concerned about how trainee teachers may project their own experiences at school (from ten or more years ago) on to the children they teach and how this affects the way they communicate with their families. Many participants commented on who they felt qualified to teach or who they should teach, which, it was felt, raised many questions that need to be addressed by PGCE tutors. Some participants did not seem to be aware that physical and cognitive skills may be independent and tended to see the impact of teaching a child with speech and language impairments from the perspective of teaching a specific subject, usually their own. Most comments in this area were made by students training to teach modern foreign languages, design and technology and maths. Some attitudes were very negative, for example, from a design and technology teacher, but the researchers felt that this could be just an excuse rather than a genuine barrier to inclusion because including a child with a disability in the lesson means extra work and extra time planning.

Resources were a major issue for all the participants. They all felt that they had not received sufficient training about special educational needs and several saw having assistants in the classroom as a condition for accepting children with special educational needs. Many thought that having children with special educational needs in the classroom would need extra time – the teacher's role was *“intimately connected with time management”* (Marshall et al 2002:485). Marshall et al comment that if teachers saw something as beyond their remit it becomes an issue of resources, either their own or resources which should be provided for them. Marshall et al speculate as to whether lack of time is used as an excuse to not fully include children with speech and language impairments – if teachers saw the inclusion of children with special educational needs as clearly part of their usual role, perhaps it would have a higher priority and time management might not be such an issue. They also felt that some negative attitudes expressed by teachers stem from the fact that teachers feel very stressed in their job, and it would be interesting to consider whether attitudes would be different if stress levels were lower. The researchers concluded that further research is needed to see whether these students' views were representative of all trainee teachers, to look at the effects of input in this area and to see whether attitudes have changed by the end of their training.

Hastings and Oakford (2003) surveyed 93 trainee teachers, training to teach children from age four to 19. Two versions of a questionnaire were given, one asking respondents to focus on children with intellectual disabilities and the impact of including these children in their schools and the other focusing on children with emotional and/or behavioural problems. The main finding was that student teachers expressed more negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties than they did towards children with intellectual disabilities: the effects of teacher experience of special educational needs or the school environment (younger or older children) were not found to be significant factors.

Hastings and Oakford (2003) suggest it is clear that teachers' attitudes are not the only factors that determine the success of programmes for children with special educational needs, and the fact that teachers may have more negative attitudes towards a particular group of children does not preclude successful inclusion for the children concerned. Teachers and education managers have said that support and appropriate resources are key factors in successful inclusion (Bennett et al 1997 and Cook et al 1999) so more research is needed to address a range of child, teacher and school variables and the interactions between them in terms of their impact upon inclusion for children with special educational needs. Focusing on the issue of teachers' attitudes, previous research has suggested that teacher training courses have little impact upon student teachers' attitudes towards children with special educational needs (Hastings et al 1996). Thus other ways of making an impact on teachers' attitudes are needed – it may be that teachers' attitudes are moderated by factors likely to reduce the perceived negative impact of inclusion programmes or possibly those that enhance the perceived benefits of such programmes. These factors are likely to include the provision of appropriate support and resources for teachers.

Carrington and Brownlee (2001) conducted a qualitative study in Queensland, Australia to investigate the development of pre-service teachers' attitudes toward people with disabilities during a semester-long unit. Ten students were interviewed at the beginning and end of a special education teaching programme designed to expose them to direct, structured interactions with a teaching assistant who was physically disabled. The student teachers also kept reflective journals. The study questioned students' perceptions of (a) changes in their feelings/attitudes towards people with disabilities and (b) changes in their knowledge base related to people with disabilities.

Nine of the students reported negative feelings about people with disabilities in the first interview and in their journal entries. They referred to their fear of interacting with the teaching assistant and discomfort in not knowing how to react to her. Some expressed feelings such as pity and sympathy. The students initially found the teaching assistant's speech difficult to understand and had to concentrate on listening and understanding her language. Communication difficulties placed the students in an uncomfortable position, and they were unsure how to react if they could not understand the teaching assistant.

The study found that structured experiences with the teaching assistant had a positive effect on the student teachers' knowledge and views of disability. All the students found it a positive experience, and reported that there had been a positive change in their personal comfort levels, improvement in their ability to communicate with the teaching assistant and an increase in their knowledge about disability issues. Although accepting that the results of the study are preliminary and small-scale, the researchers suggest their findings support the findings of earlier studies that preservice teachers' knowledge and experience related to disability may be an important influence on positive attitudes. It may therefore not be enough to provide opportunities for students to reflect on beliefs and attitudes towards disability (Forlin 1997) or to present information about teaching pupils with special educational needs (the information-based approach) (Donaldson 1980). Carrington and Brownlee (2001) suggest that a combination of approaches may be the most fruitful. They found that structured face-to-face contact with a person of equal status who has a disability and does not act in a stereotypical manner had a positive impact on the trainee teachers in the study. This approach combined with the more traditional information-based approach could:

*"...provide the conceptual framework, language and set of teaching skills needed to teach in inclusive schools...part of the success of this study may have been attributable to the positive predisposition of these preservice teachers. A future challenge may be to develop a teaching program similar to that in this study for preservice teachers engaged in a general education unit. This would contrast with the current study, where the teaching program was implemented with preservice teachers who had elected to study a unit in special education. These issues of program development are equally important if we consider that preservice teachers are to be future change agents in our education system, with the potential to become advocates for marginalized people in our society"* (Carrington and Brownlee 2001, pp 356).

Avramidis et al (2000b) conducted a study with 135 students completing their teacher training courses at a UK university. They found that the student teachers generally held positive attitudes

towards the general concept of inclusion but their perceived competence dropped significantly according to the severity of children's needs. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties were seen as causing more concern and stress than those with other types of special educational needs. There were also differences in the student group – female student teachers held more positive attitudes than male, and science student teachers held significantly less positive attitudes towards inclusion than those undertaking humanities courses. (Aksamit et al 1987, Eichinger et al 1991 and Thomas 1985 also found that female teachers were more tolerant towards integration than males). The most notable finding was that although the students held positive attitudes towards inclusion, they lacked confidence in meeting the IEP requirements of children with special educational needs, their confidence dropping considerably according to the stage at which the children were seen as standing within the SEN Code of Practice. There was a correlation between students' perceptions of their skills and their attitude towards inclusion – respondents who saw themselves as possessing generic teaching skills had positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school.

The student teachers were given the opportunity to use three open questions to provide more information - responses were:

- a) factors which could make participants' responses more positive:
  - more knowledge of different disabling conditions and different strategies for meeting their needs (60% of respondents);
  - more experience with SEN pupils during their training (56%);
  - more (constant) ancillary support (53%);
  - more training on managing the behaviour of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (33%).
- b) proposed changes to the classroom environment:
  - different classroom layout which can accommodate children with disabilities (68%);
  - more resources, both human and material – classroom assistants, SEN staff, specialists, differentiated teaching packages, hearing, reading and speech support (71%);
  - smaller class sizes, especially those with included SEN pupils (42%).
- c) proposed changes to the school environment:
  - a stronger SEN department was seen as essential by 64% of respondents, including back up specialists, greater co-ordination between teachers, SENCOs and parents, SENCO consultancy, increased SEN budget, specific time available for in-service training;
  - 24% of respondents underlined the importance of developing a new school ethos, including positive attitudes towards inclusion, well established inclusion policy (schools should abandon the streaming of classes), more work on differentiation in every subject department, better co-ordination, better co-operation between teaching staff, support staff and SENCOs, a welcome atmosphere for newly qualified teachers.

The researchers found that their research confirmed the findings of earlier studies, except they say that in the absence of any studies about subject differences their finding should be interpreted cautiously and more research is needed. They note that although students qualifying as teachers should possess appropriate knowledge and skills (competences) and have had school-based experiences which have broadened and deepened those competences (DES 1992), the participants in the study raised concerns about the nature and extent of SEN coverage, both in college-based work and school placements. Similar findings were reported by Garner (1996).

The students perceived their experience to be unplanned and incoherent, leading the researchers to recommend that all teacher training institutions need to examine carefully coherence within courses and the nature of school-based work with regard to SEN. They suggest that the analysis of the qualitative findings suggested that the respondents are enculturated into the integration model and thus over-stressed the need for more resources in order to accommodate children with SEN in

their classrooms. But this is not what inclusion is about – it is about values (Bayliss 1997 and Lindsay 1997) and nowhere in the data is there any awareness that teachers have moral-obligations to teach pupils with SEN. Teachers cannot, they say, reject a pupil as ineducable because they are Catholic, black or female, and the dimension of disability should be no different. If student teachers see the problem in terms of skills deficits and resource issues rather than social-ethical requirements, there will always be marginalised groups who are deemed ineducable. They strongly recommend that attention should be given to developing an inclusive policy (a mission statement) especially when data from large-scale evaluation studies of inclusion (see Ward et al 1994) have given qualified support to the importance of having such a policy and have reaffirmed the importance of school ethos, of which attitudes are clearly an important component.

Other commentators note the negative feelings of some teachers about inclusion. Hornby (2001) says the reality of the current situation is that many teachers do not feel able, or willing, to cope with educating all children with SEN in mainstream schools. He refers to the analysis by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) of the results of 28 studies on teachers' perceptions of inclusion published between 1958 and 1995. A major finding was that although on average 65% of teachers supported the general concept of inclusion, only 40% believed it was a realistic goal for most children. 53% said they were willing to teach students with disabilities and 54% thought they could benefit from inclusion but only 33% thought a mainstream classroom was the best place for children with disabilities. Only 28% thought they had sufficient time to implement inclusion and 29% thought they had sufficient expertise. There was no correlation between positive attitudes towards inclusion and the date of publication of the study, suggesting teachers' views had not changed significantly over the years. Croll and Moses (2000) recently found similar reservations among teachers in the UK. Garner (2001) also suggests that the reality is that there is minimal input on teaching pupils with SEN in initial teacher training and limited in-service training available so many teachers do not have the skills needed for including pupils with a wide range of SEN in their classes.

Hornby (2001) argues that the need to focus on diversity makes it essential to replace the rhetoric of full inclusion with the promotion of responsible inclusion. Concern about the increasing spread of inclusive practice in USA led to an action research project reported by Vaughn and Schumm (1995) which focused on the implementation of inclusive approaches in three primary schools in large urban areas. The researchers worked with parents, teachers, administrators and governors at schools over a two-year period helping to reorganise provision for students with disabilities – the aim was to develop more inclusive models of provision in order to meet students' needs. They concluded that for inclusion to be effective and therefore responsible rather than irresponsible and possibly damaging, inclusive practices needed to include nine components, one of which is allowing teachers to choose whether or not they will be involved in teaching inclusive classes – as opposed to expecting all teachers, regardless of their attitudes towards inclusion or their expertise in teaching students with SEN, to teach inclusive classes.

Writing in 2001, Tod (in O'Brien (ed) 2001) suggests that teachers have at least two challenges:

- they have to balance their role in promoting educational inclusion and meeting national attainment targets;
- they are required to contribute to the deconstruction of segregation and inclusion within their setting on the basis of a belief that this is the solution to tackling inequalities and social exclusion within education.

In struggling to meet these expectations teachers not only have to bear the burden of trying to make inclusion work but risk experiencing failure if the predicted outcomes of inclusion fail to materialise (Tod 2001 in O'Brien (ed) 2001).

Tod (in O'Brien (ed) 2001), continues:

Interestingly, those at the forefront of debate, whose views are available in the public domain, are educational researchers policy-makers, and academics. Much less is known about the views of recipients and deliverers of inclusive education – pupils, their parents/carers and teachers.

As a consequence of the speed and nature of Government control of education, teachers have become used to accepting imposed constraints to inclusion, while knowing that their voices will be

largely unheard and that some pupils and institutions will benefit from policy while others will be victims of that same policy. They will come to acknowledge the positive outcomes of imposed policy and adjust their attitudes accordingly, while reflecting upon the personal and professional costs of this rapid cycle of policy implementation. Responses from practitioners tend to be concerned with the feasibility of implementation (how?), educational researchers with the rationale and rigour (why?) and LEAs with cost, accountability and evaluation (what?). (Tod 2001, in O'Brien (ed) 2001 pp 24.)

Bines (1988) argues that training curricula are largely based on a form of educational ecology – a needs chain where the needs of children and young people generate the training needs of teachers which in turn generate the training needs of managers, co-ordinators, administrators and policy makers. Although on the face of it this seems straightforward – learner needs are central to teacher training – there are problems. Needs can be defined in a number of ways, resulting in different teaching and training approaches, and are dependent on value judgements. Learner or teacher needs may be defined in a way that reflects the expertise or values of teacher trainers, and may ignore issues about who has the power to define such needs, ignoring issues of ideology or policy. Also identifying particular needs does not lead to a particular model of good practice.

Bines (1988) says that there is little knowledge of, or agreement on, precisely what attitudes, skills, knowledge, strategies and attributes are needed by teachers of pupils with special educational needs, so that training is largely based on ideology, particular theories of teaching and learning and certain views about children's learning, rather than empirical data about teaching in classrooms and teachers' roles in relation to special educational needs. There is evidence to suggest that teachers' decisions about special educational needs may be based on ideas about the 'ideal pupil' or on criteria such as 'fidgetiness' rather than, for example, pupil test results (Croll and Moses 1985). Bines says this suggests that training should address assumptions about the relationship between behaviour and learning difficulties and the way teachers develop their judgements about special pupil needs and difficulties.

Dessent (1987) refers to in-service training as an important professional right for all those in the education service whose work impinges upon children and schools. Contributing to processes such as attitude formation and change, it must not be seen as a vehicle for change on its own but must be linked to other processes and developments. According to Dessent, it is possible that training courses which increase the awareness of teachers in mainstream education can lead to increasing levels of segregation of children with special educational needs. He says this is a very real danger if teachers' awareness is increased without increasing their opportunities to respond practically to children with special educational needs. Teachers' attitudes towards children with special educational needs become markedly more positive as a result of their having an opportunity to work successfully with such pupils (Croll and Moses 1985). Training should also be just a part of what Dessent calls the special needs jigsaw. Too often, he says, mainstream teachers are sent off to be trained and are expected to return as unsupported 'hero innovators' to an unchanged school situation. Training can be effective in bringing about change and progress if linked to an overall resource and support network across the whole school. For Local Authorities too, linking resource inputs to training initiatives has the advantage of making the best use of limited financial resources.

Dickens-Smith (1995) studied the attitudes of 'regular' and special educators towards inclusion with an attitude survey before and after staff development. Both groups showed more favourable attitudes towards inclusion after training, with 'regular' teachers showing the strongest positive attitude change, leading Dickens-Smith to conclude that staff development is the key to successful inclusion.

Reynolds (2001) argues that inclusion demands a particular standpoint; that we value others equally and we act on those values and we accept that all children are different and do not label children with special educational needs as abnormal in some way. She quotes Harrop (2000):

*"...we persist in using negative definitions which effectively exclude children and identify their failure to achieve an artificially 'normed' standard of measurable performance in school"* (Harrop 2000, 11).

Harrop claims that a truly inclusive school is one in which children who are different in some way – such as having special educational needs – are not just singled out for special tuition. The role of values, according to Reynolds, is crucial:

*“Subscription to central values of inclusion, such as respect for the humanity of others, acceptance of difference and belief in equality, is essential” (Reynolds 2001, pp 468).*

Values direct our everyday decisions and professional practice – without values there would be no reason to act in other than a random way (Williams 1981). Inclusion in schools means that teachers have to promote the good for each pupil, rather than ensuring that special measures, such as providing extra classes for special educational needs children, are met.

Writing in Belfast, Reynolds considers whether values and their influence on the ways we teach are a focus for the TTA<sup>6</sup>, and writes from the standpoint of waiting to see whether the standards for qualified teacher status, set out by the TTA for England and Wales in 1998, would also be followed in Northern Ireland. She contends that the standards, with their emphasis on development of classroom skills, subject knowledge and knowledge of official documentation “set the tone for teacher expectation yet no reference is made to the values that underpin teaching nor to the purposes that inform what teachers do” (Reynolds 2001, pp 469). This, she argues, sends “powerful signals to beginning teachers that their professional life is grounded in demonstration of explicit outcomes” (Reynolds 2001, pp 469).

In the development of a competence-based system of teacher education in Northern Ireland there was overt recognition that professional values have a crucial role in the education of teachers, referring to the way teachers should act within their professional role. The competences working party mapped the crucial characteristics of a successful teacher. These are caring for children, enthusiasm for teaching, commitment to reflective practice, commitment to equality of opportunity and recognition of the worth of the whole child (DENI 1993).

Reynolds argues that the TTA must include reference to the less tangible elements of performance if the standards are to truly reflect appropriate practice.

In the review of *Circular 4/98 Teaching: High Status, High Standards* (DfEE 1998) conducted in 2001 there was recognition among providers of initial teacher training that professional values had been neglected. Whilst acknowledging this, TTA did not intend to include reference to values in the revised standards, noting that the General Teaching Council would be producing a Code of Practice.

Implications for teacher training (and continuing professional development) are that simply providing trainees and teachers with information and guidance is not enough. Trainees and teachers need to have a positive attitude towards inclusion in mainstream schools in order to be able to implement it effectively. Training programmes should not be solely information-based but should provide opportunities for trainees to work with disabled people so that they become more knowledgeable and more confident in their skills.

## Conclusion

There is consensus in literature that attitudes are crucial in determining ultimate success or failure of a policy of inclusion. Given the importance of teachers’ attitudes and beliefs it would seem crucial that this aspect of personal and professional development continues to be addressed in schools once teachers have completed their initial teacher training. Factors found to contribute to positive teacher attitudes and feelings of self-efficacy include: access to substantial, high-quality training opportunities; opportunities for ‘hands-on’ experiences with students with special educational needs; support and encouragement. Other factors identified from research included a good quality working environment; opportunities for planning and school leadership which is characterised by a commitment to inclusive values. Given that inclusion is often perceived to be the ‘right thing to do’ teachers may feel it is inappropriate to voice any concerns that may suggest otherwise. This variation in attitude, rather than being a source of stress, could usefully be used as a focus within school debate and dialogue between schools in order that an exploration of the issues is open and shared. Given the influence of the complex interaction of personal experience, professional identity, political directives and public response on attitudes to SEN and inclusion, any attempt to impact directly on teacher attitude would appear to be fraught with difficulties. Better perhaps to work initially through teachers’ experiences of SEN and inclusion and seek to improve their confidence and competence through appropriate professional development and within school leadership and support.

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<sup>6</sup>Teacher Training Agency, now the Training and Development Agency

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## 1.4 EDUCATIONAL POLICY FOR INCLUSION

### Key Points

- Policy has been relatively consistent from Warnock (1978) onwards in recognising a small number of pupils who require specialist provision.
- The version of inclusion presented within government documents has always involved a role for special schools, though only part of this role is in providing a placement.
- The clarity of the definition of SEN provided in the 1996 Education Act masks a range of complex issues related to the causality of special educational needs, in particular the degree to which special educational needs are socially constructed.
- Since 1997 in England and Wales the language of individual pupil needs has increasingly been replaced by a policy grounded in a school effectiveness/school improvement paradigm which seeks to improve pupil achievement by transforming schools (Armstrong 2005). There is a potential source of confusion as the field of special educational needs within its history, language and processes has focused on individual need.
- This difficulty has been compounded by recent documents (e.g. DfES 2004a, 2005a) that have remarked upon and sought to address underachievement of pupils with SEN within the context of an SEN Code of Practice that bases part of its definition of SEN on making inadequate progress.
- Personalised learning is emerging as the means by which to deal with the dilemma of ensuring positive outcome for individuals while educating in group settings. However, it is yet to be seen how this concept will be interpreted and operationalised.
- The means by which a policy of inclusion (at school, local or national level) is introduced can be viewed as either 'additive' (i.e. new methods and new philosophies are applied to existing practice) or 'generative' (i.e. there is a complete rethink of policy assumptions and practice) (Lambe and Bones 2006). At national level developments in Scotland appear to reflect a more generative approach than in the rest of the UK.

The discourse of special education is deeply ingrained (Thomas and Loxley 2001). In considering the current policy of inclusion it is important to examine educational policy from the last century as it reveals how attitudes and priorities have changed, but also how some has left a legacy in terms of attitudes and beliefs regarding disability and difference, the role and value of education generally and the purpose and nature of special education.

In the 19th century, discourses on education produced the medical and charitable models of disability. The medical, or deficit model saw children's behaviour in terms of internal biological differences, so conditions were viewed as defects within the child, with external factors such as poverty having no bearing on the disability. The charitable model saw disabled children as tragic figures deserving of pity (Kellett 2004). There were then four levels of special condition – idiot, imbecile, feeble-minded and moral-defective. Idiots were seen as ineducable and excluded from the education system, imbeciles were placed in asylums and the others in special schools. The 1921 Education Act required that the numbers of feeble-minded and backward children in each local authority were recorded so that separate education could be provided. This link between a condition and a particular type of education led to the development and use of the intelligence test (Burt 1937) to determine educational needs (Kellett 2004).

The 1944 Education Act (the Butler Act) was significant in establishing a greater coherence of provision and a more centrally-controlled system. It established the duty of parents to ensure that all children were educated according to their 'age, ability and aptitude' and implemented the tripartite system of secondary schools (grammar, secondary modern and technical high schools), with the principle of free and compulsory schooling for all primary and secondary aged children. The view was that transfer to secondary school was best at age 11 (12 in Scotland) and that tests at that

age established a fairly fixed intellectual ability. In Northern Ireland, legislation in 1947 paralleled the Butler Act, introducing free secondary education for all within a differentiated secondary school system, based on academic selection.

The 1921 Education Act had provided for handicapped children to be educated only in special schools or special classes. Now children with severe disabilities were to be educated in special schools wherever possible, and those with less severe difficulties were permitted into mainstream schools. Children with very severe disabilities were not admitted into school:

*"...where it appears to the local education authority that any child in their area who has attained the age of two years is suffering from a disability of mind of such a nature as to make him incapable of receiving education at school"* (Education Act 1944 part 2, section 57, pp 46ff).

This had implications not just for children's education but also for their social welfare. Children at school received free milk and clothing, if "by reason of the inadequacy of his clothing" they were unable to participate fully in school activities, but children not at school missed out on these benefits. Perhaps surprisingly, it was not until 1971 that all school age children in England and Wales were entitled to an education.

The Butler Act brought a radical reappraisal of the education system (Stakes and Hornby 1997) and established a number of categories of need:

- severely subnormal (SSN);
- educationally subnormal;
- blind;
- partially sighted;
- deaf;
- partially deaf;
- epileptic;
- delicate;
- physically handicapped;
- diabetic;
- speech defective;
- maladjusted.

Educationally subnormal children were those retarded by more than 20% for their age but not so retarded as those children who were classed 'severely subnormal' and deemed ineducable. The Educationally Subnormal category accounted for about 10% of children, 1% of whom attended special schools or hospitals.

In Scotland, the Education (Scotland) Act 1945 was similar to the Butler Act, establishing a bipartite system of junior secondary and senior secondary schools. Education authorities were empowered to provide a child guidance service to study handicapped, backward and difficult children and to advise teachers and parents on appropriate methods of education and training for these children. This was particularly significant in establishing the importance of assessment by educational psychologists. The 1945 Act also recognised the importance of the early identification and treatment of any disability by imposing on local education authorities the duty to make this known.

The 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act and the 1974 Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act brought all children into education irrespective of disability or learning difficulty and ended the practice of describing a minority of children as ineducable. It removed the power of health authorities to provide training for children who suffer from a 'disability of mind' and was significant in that, for the first time, all school age children had the right to an education. From 1971 some 24,000 children from junior training centres and special care units across England, together with 8,000 in 100 hospitals, were entitled to special education (Thomas and Vaughan 2004).

In Scotland, education authorities became responsible in 1947 for the education of children who were described as 'ineducable but trainable'. These children were placed in occupational centres and trained by instructors. The provisions of the Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act 1974 appointed teachers in addition to instructors, and re-named the centres as schools.

According to Rose (2001) the absolute right to a full education for all children led educators to turn their attention to better understanding ways in which children with severe or complex learning difficulties could be taught. Many of the approaches adopted were based on behaviourist methods, which assume that behaviours are learnt, including challenging or difficult behaviour. Rather than diagnosing a deficit, the behaviourist model begins by identifying what the child needs to learn and then constructs a way of teaching this behaviour (Kellett 2004). Although this technique achieved some modification in behaviour and the acquisition of some skills, it was criticised because it promoted learning without understanding and the learned skills were not transferable (McConkey 1981, Collis and Lacey 1996).

The 1976 Education Act (Section 10) imposed on all LEAs in England and Wales a duty to integrate disabled children into schools, except where it was impracticable, incompatible with efficient instruction in schools or involved unreasonable public expenditure. It had the status of coming into force on a *day to be decided by the Secretary of State* but was never implemented because by this time (1976) the Warnock Committee was investigating special education and it was clear that this would lead to more far-reaching legislation.

### ***Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People (1978)***

*The Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People* (Warnock 1978), better known as the *Warnock Report* was the biggest ever study of special education in England, Scotland and Wales, putting the issue of the integration of disabled children into ordinary schools on to the national agenda for the first time, but it was a sign of the times that the Committee was looking into the education of 'handicapped' and 'maladjusted' children. Such terminology now seems remarkably anachronistic. The report introduced the term 'special educational need' and a focus on appropriate provision rather than a 'condition' and treatment, and said that the stigmatising terms 'educationally subnormal' (England and Wales) and 'mentally handicapped' (Scotland) should be replaced by 'children with learning difficulties'. Roaf and Bines (1989) suggest that the *Warnock Report's* new concept of special educational need was an attempt to remove formal distinctions between handicapped and non-handicapped students with an expanded and more flexible definition of special need, with a shift of emphasis from medical or psychological criteria of assessment *"towards an educational, interactive and relative approach which would take into account all the factors which have a bearing on educational progress"* (Warnock 1978 para 3.6). Although it attempted to remove differences between handicapped and non-handicapped students, it did not separate special education from handicap and further divisions were created between children with Statements and those without. Reflecting in 2005 on the reasons for introducing the concept of Statements Baroness Warnock suggests:

*"Mindful of the needs of those hitherto held to be ineducable, we wanted to protect the interests of those who had the most severe and complex educational difficulties, so that in the enthusiasm for 'normalising' special needs, we would not allow those children to slip back into the position where they received no education, because their education could never approach the normal"* (Warnock 2005, pp 17-18).

Baroness Warnock goes on to explain that within this category she was thinking of:

*"...those with the most severe and often multiple disabilities, such as children with rapidly progressive diseases, such as children who were most severely brain damaged, or children who were both blind and deaf"* (Warnock 2005, pp 27).

The Committee of Inquiry considered most of these children would be educated in special schools (Warnock 2005). The Statement therefore had a strong protective, safeguarding role, seen as necessary within the transition from the system, as it existed prior to the *Warnock Report* (1978), to the system envisaged. The *Warnock Report* considered that around 2% would have SEN of a severity or complexity that might need support over and above what the mainstream school could provide.

The *Warnock Report* estimated that about one in six children at any time and up to one in five children at some time during their school careers would require some form of special educational provision. Children with special educational needs were likely to need one or more of:

- (i) *the provision of special means of access to the curriculum through special equipment, facilities or resources, modification of the physical environment or specialist teaching techniques;*
- (ii) *the provision of a special or modified curriculum;*
- (iii) *particular attention to the social structure and emotional climate in which education takes place* (Warnock 1978, pp 41).

The significance of one in five children requiring some form of special educational provision at *some time* during their school careers is that it emphasised that special educational needs and the provision required to meet these were not fixed.

The report was also a landmark for giving weight to the importance of parental views, saying that parents of disabled children had important information about their children that must be incorporated and used in the assessment, placement and educational process.

Other key proposals included the integration of children into mainstream schools wherever possible and the need for early diagnosis and pre-school support. The principle of integration was to underpin special educational needs policy up until the early nineties.

### **The Education of Pupils with Learning Disabilities in Scotland (1978)**

In Scotland *The Education of Pupils with Learning Disabilities in Scotland* (SED 1978) struck a different balance to that of the *Warnock Report* (1978) arguing for a much stronger commitment to integration of children with learning difficulties to mainstream classes (Riddell 2000). Indeed, in the view of the Scottish HMI, withdrawing children into segregated remedial classes tended to accentuate rather than alleviate their difficulties and distract attention from the central source of the problems, the curriculum in mainstream schools (Riddell 2000).

### **The Education Act 1981**

Implemented on 1 April 1983, the Education Act 1981 reflected the findings and recommendations of the *Warnock Report* (1978).

The 1981 Education Act:

- provided an overall descriptor (special educational needs) to reduce (negative) labelling effects;
- involved a range of professionals (multi-professional approach) in provision, thus capitalising on the range of expertise offered by these professionals;
- integrated provision (in three levels) in schools;
- defined provision for children under and over two years old;
- provided a staged framework for the internal and external assessment of children with special educational needs and to provide a statement of these needs;
- required local education authorities to provide suitable support and resources to meet needs identified on the Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Thomas and Vaughan (2004) refer to the dishonesty (in operation) of this legislation, suggesting the law was weak and so those in authority had no legal duty to move towards integration and inclusion if they did not want to. Thomas and Vaughan describe the appeals procedure as:

*“so inept and discriminatory that it is embarrassing to look back and think that such an unfair system could have been established by a modern democracy, apparently to give the consumer a proper hearing against grievance”* (Thomas and Vaughan 2004, pp 124).

A national survey in 1985 (CSIE 1986) found that in their literature explaining the relevant law, only 11% of all English education authorities referred to the duty to integrate children with special needs in ordinary schools, only one-third of LEAs told parents/carers they had a right to be fully consulted by the Authority and only 14% referred to parents/carers as partners in the assessment process. In

these and other areas of LEA information for parents/carers, the Government's intention had been that all figures would be 100%.

The 1981 Education Act stated that children with Special Educational Needs should be educated in mainstream schools as long as:

- this was in accordance with their parents' wishes;
- the child's SEN could be met in the mainstream school;
- the education of other children in the school would not suffer; and
- the placement was compatible with the efficient use of resources (Hornby et al 1995, pp 3).

The final two conditions effectively undermined the parental choice implied in the first condition as local authorities and schools could cite these in response to parents' requests for their children to be educated in mainstream schools. Significantly it is only the second condition that relates directly to the interests of the child and this is couched in terms of the school's ability to meet the need.

Significant in its implications for children with special educational needs, the 1981 Education Act was also significant in heralding a period of rapid educational change. Tomlinson (2005) notes that when Finch (1984) considered education as social policy in the period from 1944 to 1979, major events could be summarised in a table containing only three Education Acts. During the twenty-five year period from 1980 to 2005 some 34 Education Acts were passed, *"with hundreds of accompanying circulars, regulations and statutory instruments"* (Tomlinson 2005). Armstrong (2005) notes that the current Government's policy intervention for children and young people with disabilities and Special Educational Needs far exceeds that of any previous Government.

### Education Reform Act 1988

The Education Reform Act 1988 introduced the National Curriculum in England and Wales and inevitably led to consideration of how the curriculum could be made accessible to children with special educational needs. Some writers thought it brought new opportunities to previously excluded children (Carpenter et al 1996) while others saw significant parts of it as inappropriate or limiting (Fletcher-Campbell 1994). Tilstone (1991) argued that the first level of attainment was so far beyond the reach of some pupils that they would have no realistic opportunity of achievement. It was not until 1998 that the Qualifications and Curriculum Association (QCA) introduced P levels (DfEE 2001) in an attempt to address this, though critics say that even these level descriptors are too widely spaced to be meaningful for many pupils with profound learning difficulties. Assessment by level of attainment is seen by some as anti-inclusionary because it leads to grouping of children by ability (Kellett 2004).

Barton (1988) writing at the time of the Education Reform Act makes the interesting observation:

*"We can envisage a system in which more children will be defined as having particular needs as a result of not being able to reach the particular bench marks relating to their age...the most disturbing outcome of the proposed changes will be that children and young people with special educational needs become more deviant and there will be more of them"* (Barton 1988, pp 4).

Barton was pointing towards the possibility that by setting out expectations of what children would learn by certain ages and testing based on this it inevitably created a group of children who fell short of this. Barton's early thoughts on this subject raise an important enduring theme that when age related, norm referenced criteria are set it will always lead to a group of pupils who fall outside this range.

Though England and Wales have become accustomed to the National Curriculum with its key stages, age-related norm referenced expectations and testing at ages 7, 11 and 14<sup>7</sup>, a different model has been pursued in Scotland. The curriculum in Scotland is not set by law. It is a flexible system that places responsibility on individual education authorities and schools, though there is considerable similarity across the country. Currently the 5-14 guidelines for Scottish local authorities and schools cover the structure, content and assessment of the curriculum in primary schools and in the first two years of secondary education.

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<sup>7</sup> Mandatory national testing in Wales has subsequently been discontinued for 7, 11 and 14 year olds

Up to school-leaving-age the Scottish curriculum in schools is divided into two stages:

- the first stage is the 5-14 curriculum;
- the second stage is the Standard Grade for 14 to 16 year-olds;
- at 16+ courses are offered at Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher. Some candidates follow Intermediate courses at 14-16.

The 5-14 curriculum is divided into five broad curricular areas: language, mathematics, environmental studies, expressive arts and religious and moral education. For each curricular area there are broad attainment outcomes, each with a number of strands or aspects of learning that pupils experience. Most strands have attainment targets at five or six levels: A-E or A-F.

Assessment to attain these target levels can be taken by individuals or groups as and when their teacher considers them ready. Whole classes or year groups do not sit tests. The tests are designed to be used by teachers as a confirmation of the point the pupil has reached in his or her learning. A potential criticism of the National Curriculum framework of testing that operates in England and Wales is the continual referencing to norm referenced expectations at a particular chronological age which will always create children who fall below to varying degrees, with some falling far enough below to be categorised as having special educational needs. The Scottish system appears to offer a more positive alternative, with testing based on an individual child's readiness rather than chronological age. However, official documents in Scotland relate each of the levels to a particular age:

*Level A should be attainable in the course of P1-P3 by almost all pupils.*

*Level B should be attainable by some pupils in P3 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P4.*

*Level C should be attainable in the course of P4-P6 by most pupils.*

*Level D should be attainable by some pupils in P5-P6 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P7.*

*Level E should be attainable by some pupils in P7/S1, but certainly by most in S2 (SOEID 1991, pp 9).*

Interpretation of legislation and guidance is frequently a key factor in shaping the experience of teachers and pupils. Whilst the Scottish system is based on a principle of assessing the pupil when ready against the appropriate level, there is a very clear message from official guidance that, much like the framework of national testing operating in England and Wales, there is an age related expectation.

Scotland is currently undergoing a period of change following the publication of *A Curriculum for Excellence* (SEED 2004). Like the *Every Child Matters* (Treasury Office 2003) agenda in England, this policy adopts a more holistic view based on the aspiration of enabling all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. Peter Peacock, the Minister for Education and Young People, presented a rationale for change:

*"The curriculum in Scotland has many strengths...However, the various parts were developed separately and, taken together, they do not now provide the best basis for an excellent education for every child. The National Debate showed that people want a curriculum that will fully prepare today's children for adult life in the 21st century, be less crowded and better connected, and offer more choice and enjoyment"* (SEED 2004, pp 6).

It is anticipated that implementation of *A Curriculum for Excellence* will begin in August 2008.

### **The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

An international contribution to policy direction came in 1989 in the form of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989). Article 23 of the Convention calls for a child to be educated in a way that will allow him or her to achieve the 'fullest possible social integration and individual development'.

Article 2 says that all rights in the Convention shall apply to all children without discrimination – and it specifically mentions disability. Articles 3, 6, 12, 28 and 29 in the Convention give further support

to inclusive education for all disabled children. The UK ratified the Convention in 1991, thereby accepting responsibility for the obligations in it.

### Education Act 1993

The Education Act 1993 was the largest piece of educational legislation ever enacted in the UK, with 308 sections, 21 schedules and many last-minute amendments (Morris et al 1993). Much of the 1981 Act was repealed but local authorities retained primary responsibility for children with SEN. The 1993 Act gave the Secretary of State a duty to issue a Code of Practice in relation to special educational needs and to review it from time to time. It also provided the definition of special educational needs (see 1.2 *What are Special Educational Needs?*) that remains in use, incorporated in the 1996 Education Act and included in the Special Educational Needs Codes of Practice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The same definition was also included in section 1(5)(d) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (Scottish Executive 2002).

### ***The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (DfE 1994)***

All schools had to 'have regard to' the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* from September 1994. This document sought to implement a national policy, with schools taking responsibility for as many children with SEN as possible and LEAs undertaking their statutory duties. There was a conflict here, as many LEAs did not have the money to fund increasing demands for additional resources. The Code's full title, through its emphasis on identification and assessment is significant in implying a 'within child' model (Mittler 2000), though in its content it also reflects a social model in its proposals for major environmental modifications and changes of professional role with the aim of enabling children with SEN to remain in ordinary schools (Mittler 2000).

The *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* provided practical advice for local authorities, schools and others in carrying out their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children's special educational needs and established the need for a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in every school. It had an emphasis on individual children's difficulties rather than a whole-school approach but involving pupils in the process was a step towards children's rights and empowerment. The Act established the Special Educational Needs Tribunal but still did not remove the provisos within the 1981 Education Act inhibiting integrated placements. The central duty of integration was maintained in the 1993 Act and the views of parents/carers – which in the 1981 Act had only to be taken account of – were strengthened, so that children should be included in mainstream schooling if the parents/carers were in agreement.

The Code established a continuum of needs and provision and re-emphasised that all children were to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, that there should be a partnership between schools, LEAs, other services and parents/carers and most children should be in a mainstream school, whether or not they had a statutory assessment and statement.

For schools, the main impact felt at grass roots level was the creation of the role of SENCO, the introduction of a five-stage model and the requirement for the writing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Implementing the Code generated a heavy administrative and bureaucratic burden on schools based on the well intentioned aim that every child with significant special educational needs should have an IEP describing their needs and how their needs should be met (Gross 2000). Reviewing the implementation of the Code, OFSTED subsequently commented:

*"The evidence from this and previous HMI surveys is that the format of the IEP is only part of what teachers describe as burdensome; the number of IEPs that need to be produced and reviewed for many secondary schools and some primary schools constitutes a very significant burden for many teachers"* (OFSTED 1997, pp 6).

### The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994)

Whilst the UK was continuing to enact the principles of integration from the *Warnock Report* and the 1981 Education Act, through the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*, interest in the concept of inclusion was developing internationally and in 1994 the Salamanca Statement was issued. The content of the Salamanca Statement is explored

in more detail in 1.1 *What is Inclusion?* In the chronology of policy development, the Salamanca Statement of the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (June 1994) is significant as a major catalyst for much of what followed within the UK.

### Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 made no mention of inclusion or access to education and led to a major debate about the Government's continuing tolerance of discrimination against disabled children and young people. It was not until 2001 that the Disability and Discrimination Act was amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act to cover every aspect of education.

### DfEE (1997a) Green Paper, *Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs*

It is important to view *Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs* in the light of the earlier white paper *Excellence in Schools* (DfEE 1997b) which launched the new Labour Government's educational crusade (Armstrong 2005) which grounded educational policy in the school effectiveness and school improvement movements. The language of individual pupil needs, Armstrong (2005) asserts, was ostensibly rejected and replaced by a policy focused upon failing schools and the actions required to transform institutional failure into success and by this means into individual pupil achievement.

*Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997a) expressed the English Government's commitment to the development of an inclusive education system and set out targets for 2002 which fell into six main areas:

- standards of expectation for children with SEN will be raised;
- effective support and involvement of parents of children with SEN, e.g. support of an independent 'Named Person';
- increased inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools;
- an emphasis on practical support not procedures;
- boost in training and support for teachers and other education professionals, particularly SENCOs;
- effective partnership and information exchange between service providers, LEA, Social Services Departments and Health Authorities.

*Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997a) supported the move to mainstream education for more children with special needs. David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education, made a number of significant comments in setting out the strategy that reveal important shifts in attitudes and priority, stating:

*"The great majority of children with SEN will, as adults, contribute economically; all will contribute as members of society"* (DfEE 1997a, pp 4).

This statement moves away from benevolent humanitarianism (Tomlinson 1982), in that it positions people not as needy but as contributors (Benjamin 2002). Blunkett (DfEE 1997a) continues:

*"Where all children are included as equal partners in the school community, the benefits are felt by all. That is why we are committed to comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people. Our aspirations as a nation must be for all our people"* (DfEE 1997a, pp 5).

This further confirms a commitment to the idea that children with SEN are to be included, not primarily because they have something to gain, but something to offer (Benjamin 2002).

In his foreword David Blunkett also states:

*"Schools currently identify 18% of children as having special educational needs of differing kinds. Almost 3% have individual statements showing the additional special educational provision they require. This Green Paper asks some questions about these figures. What is not in question is the case for setting our sights high for all these children. Good provision for SEN does not mean a sympathetic acceptance of low achievement"* (DfEE 1997a, pp 4).

Taken in the context of a later line within the *Excellence for All Children* which states:

*“...we believe that, as our policies take effect, the proportion of secondary age children whom schools need to identify as having SEN should move closer to 10%”* (DfEE 1997a, pp 12).

this would seem to suggest that for David Blunkett the current figures said something very telling about the quality of education being provided within mainstream schools (Armstrong 2005). Though *Excellence for All Children* states that it would not be appropriate to set a figure for reduction, there seems to be an underlying message that some children would not need to be defined as having special educational needs if practice was better. This points to the problematic nature of the term special educational needs as it is inextricably linked with processes that are oriented towards registering the child as the concern rather than the teaching and learning environment (Booth 2000).

*Excellence for All Children* sought to clarify misinterpretations about definitions of SEN in its opening section but still demonstrated the difficulty in framing the term.

*“The law says that a child has special educational needs if he or she has:*

- *a learning difficulty (i.e. a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or a disability which makes it difficult to use the educational facilities generally provided locally); and if that learning difficulty calls for;*
- *special educational provision (i.e. provision additional to, or different from, that made generally for children of the same age in local schools).*

*Whether or not a child has SEN will therefore depend both on the individual and on local circumstances. It may be entirely consistent with the law for a child to be said to have special educational needs in one school, but not in another”* (DfEE 1997a, pp 12).

The first part of the definition locates the need in intrinsic deficiencies of the pupil whereas the second part refers to institutionally located ones (Benjamin 2002). To its credit, the document does not shy away from the obvious implication of this in its confirmation that the latter part of the definition could indeed mean that a child could be viewed as having SEN in one school but not in another. As Benjamin (2002) suggests:

*“This take on causality may be fine in that it allows that both factors are necessarily associated with the production of ‘special needs students’, it does not interrogate the meanings held in place by the identification and assessment of pupils with SEN, or the social and material consequences for individuals who are categorised in this way”* (Benjamin 2002, pp 55).

Booth and Ainscow (2002) suggest that identifying some children as having special educational needs can confer a label that leads to lowered expectations. This suggests that caution needs to be exercised in the allocation of the label of SEN, particularly where its use is a reflection of insufficient flexibility in the school’s usual differentiated curriculum offer (DfES 2001a) that spawns the need for additional or different interventions or where identification is based simply on the discrepancy between the child’s attainment and that of a high attaining school or class.

It is clear from *Excellence for All Children* that the DfEE was adopting a model of inclusion that encompassed the continuation of special school provision. Special schools were given a more flexible role, which included providing support for children moving to mainstream schools and being a source of training and information for mainstream staff. By this time local education authorities were spending a seventh of their budget (£2.5 billion) on special education and the costs, particularly of statementing, had risen “quite staggeringly” (Armstrong 2005).

Armstrong (2005) is critical of the Green Paper, remarking that although it adopts the language of inclusion, its focus is entirely on individual pupils’ needs and improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of systems for meeting those needs. Nowhere does the strategy refer to the barriers that can create educational disadvantage and it does not mention the institutional or social discrimination experienced by pupils from some minority groups, for example, children of Caribbean or Irish heritage. Nor does it refer to the principles of an inclusive society or the role of education as a tool of social policy for supporting social cohesion and inclusion. Armstrong agrees with Booth (2000) that policy:

*“remains locked into a response to difficulties in learning experienced by children and young people which predates the Warnock Report of 1978”* (Booth 2000, pp 91).

Armstrong (2005) suggests that:

*“Given the continuing reliance upon special schools for the more disabled and troublesome pupils the reality did not represent such a radical departure from the past as it was claimed to be. The replacement of a discourse of individual failure by a discourse of school failure based upon the promotion of academic excellence for those identified as having special educational needs did little to challenge the underlying conceptualization of individual deficits”* (Armstrong 2005, pp 139).

Another strong critic of *Excellence for All Children* was Lloyd (2000) writing in the *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, who stated:

*“Perhaps the most dangerous assumption underpinning this document, and indeed the whole stream of recent and current government documentation relating to education, is that there is some kind of agreement about what is meant by equality of opportunity and inclusion. There is no attempt in the document to define these concepts, except in relation to existing educational provision, as seen above in the ‘vision’ for education for the 21st century. Indeed, there seems to be a complete failure to recognize that these are problematic and contentious concepts open to a number of different interpretations.*

*Further assumptions resulting from this lack of conceptual definition and clarity are highlighted in the simplistic notion that success in basic literacy and numeracy equals excellence in education. The emphasis on parental involvement is also represented as non-controversial and unproblematic, which takes no account of the reality of modern society, where families are often dysfunctional and disparate and parents may be unwilling, unable and even unsuitable as partners in their children’s education. The possibility that parents may contribute to or even create their children’s SEN is also totally ignored by the rhetoric”* (Lloyd 2000, pp 135).

### ***The BEST for Special Education (Wales) (1997)***

The Green Paper *The BEST for Special Education* was published in October 1997. It contained six key themes:

- promoting the inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) within mainstream schooling wherever possible;
- setting high expectations for children with SEN, reflected in all schools’ practices;
- supporting parents of children with SEN;
- shifting the focus in meeting special educational needs from procedures to practical support and, wherever possible, from remedial action to prevention and early intervention;
- boosting opportunities for professional development, for teachers and others;
- promoting partnership in SEN, locally, regionally and nationally.

It set out a number of objectives for reform and modernisation, stating an intention to:

- have an education system which achieves consistently high standards, has high expectations of all children whatever their background, seeks constant improvement, takes change in its stride, meets the objectives and targets for achievement set out in *Building Excellent Schools Together* (Welsh Office 1997) and contributes to achieving those in *Learning Is For Everyone* (Welsh Office);
- recognise the key role of teachers in raising standards and acknowledge the important role and achievements of initial teacher training institutions in Wales;
- ensure there is wise and strong leadership and good use of funds in every school;
- exploit the opportunities for new approaches to teaching and learning which additional staff and investment in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) make possible;
- provide rewards for success and incentives for excellence;

- enable all staff in the education service to benefit from good quality training and development throughout their careers so that they can adopt proven best practice and innovative ideas and manage constant change;
- attract a sufficient supply of good teachers and a greater share of the able and the talented for both Welsh and English medium schools;
- improve the esteem in which the teaching profession holds itself and is held by the community.

#### ***Meeting Special Education Needs: A Programme of Action (DfEE 1998)***

This action programme built on the Green Paper Excellence for All Children, consultation responses and advice from the National Advisory Group on SEN (DfEE 1998). The section headings related to the main priorities for action. These were:

- working with parents to achieve excellence for all;
- improving the SEN framework;
- developing a more inclusive educational system;
- developing knowledge and skills;
- working in partnership to meet special needs.

The comments on inclusion were important in clarifying the Government's interpretation of the concept. The document stated:

*"Inclusion is a process, not a fixed state. The term can be used to mean many things including the placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools; the participation of all pupils in the curriculum and social life of mainstream schools; the participation of all pupils in learning which leads to the highest possible level of achievement; and the participation of young people in the full range of social experiences and opportunities once they have left school"* (DfEE 1998, pp 23).

This contributed further to debates (see 1.1 *What is Inclusion?*) about the definition of inclusion and made clear that mainstream placement was only one interpretation.

The document also expressed a clear view that the wide variations across England in the opportunities for those with more complex needs to attend mainstream schools noted in *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997) were unacceptable.

#### ***Special Educational Needs in Scotland: A Discussion Paper (1998)***

The discussion paper expressed a commitment to the development of a policy framework which:

- places the child's educational needs at the centre of education policy and decision-making;
- ensures that special educational needs are routinely taken into account when framing and implementing educational policies;
- develops the earliest practicable assessment of the educational needs of every child;
- encourages the earliest practicable identification of special educational needs;
- promotes earliest practicable intervention to tackle the needs identified;
- supports diversity of provision consistent with the diverse needs of the individual child;
- encourages and furthers the role of parents;
- places continuing and increasing priority on the development and training of staff working with children with special educational needs;
- ensures that every education authority prepares, publishes and makes readily available in consultation with relevant interests in this area a full policy on special educational needs.

(SOEID 1998, pp 5).

These points largely echo themes present within England's *Excellence for All Children*. However, Riddell (2000) suggests there were also different nuances between the Scottish and English

documents in their approach to inclusion. Whilst the English document makes clear that mainstream is the preferred option, the Scottish counterpart is more circumspect, stating:

*“In recent years there has been much discussion about the development of integration and inclusion for pupils with special educational needs. However, there is no single universal answer to how these are achieved. An inclusive society must ensure that the potential of each individual is fully developed through education and that their attainment and achievement are developed and respected. It is on the realisation of this potential that inclusiveness depends; an inclusive society and education system will therefore strive to ensure that it creates the range of approaches and opportunities to ensure that this is brought about”* (SOEID 1998, pp 4).

Riddell (2000) summarises the differences between the Scottish and English proposals in terms of *Excellence for All Children* promoting placement in mainstream as the preferred option on moral and social grounds and *Special Educational Needs in Scotland: A Discussion Paper* placing more emphasis on diversity of provision.

### **Shaping the Future for Special Education: An Action Programme for Wales (1998)**

The National Assembly for Wales published *Shaping the Future for Special Education: An Action Programme for Wales*, based on responses to *The BEST for Special Education*, published in 1997.

A significant difference between plans in Wales and those in England is that the commitment to provide training for teachers was coupled with a contractual responsibility for teachers to keep their skills up to date. In England, consultation on professional development, including whether there should be a contractual obligation alongside an entitlement to professional obligation was not conducted until 2000 in the form of *Professional Development: Support for teaching and learning* (DfEE 2000).

*Shaping the Future for Special Education* outlined its proposals for:

- a new focus on professional development bringing together all Wales, schools and individual priorities;
- a national Code of Practice for training providers and a new inspection programme to ensure that training gives value for money and delivers results;
- sustained attention to the needs of Welsh medium and bilingual education;
- more training during out of school hours to minimise disruption to children's education;
- a review of the training arrangements for supply teachers;
- continued emphasis on equipping teachers with ICT skills;
- a new programme of scholarships and international development opportunities.

Action was to be taken through:

- introducing a less bureaucratic SEN Code of Practice in 2001 which safeguards the interests of children, focuses on preventative work and promotes effective school-based support and monitoring;
- publishing guidance on the placement of children under the Code and the provision to be made for them, and on criteria for making statements of SEN;
- improving accountability by requiring LEAs to publish more comprehensive information about their SEN policies, including information about what schools should normally provide from their own budgets and the SEN support LEAs will provide, and monitoring their performance against key indicators;
- improving the effectiveness of the SEN tribunal.

This work was to be supported by additional funding.

The assembly echoed comments made by David Blunkett in the *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997a) relating the number of children identified with SEN, stating:

*“International comparisons are not straightforward but some studies suggest that in England and Wales we identify significantly more children as having special educational needs than most other European countries. It has been suggested that fresh consideration be given to the types of educational need which are regarded as ‘special’. We do not however see the legal definition of special educational needs as the decisive factor. Schools and LEAs undoubtedly interpret the term in different ways; but it is unlikely that any alternative definition would in itself lead to greater consistency. We shall instead seek to establish a more consistent understanding of the provision that is appropriate to meet different levels of special educational needs” (Welsh Office 1998).*

Whilst Wales, like the rest of the UK at this stage, retained commitment to the term special educational needs, feeling that the adoption of another term would not solve the problems, the comment was indicative of a growing recognition that the identification of so many children with special educational needs could reflect shortcomings in the educational system.

### ***The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (Ireland) (1998)***

The Irish *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DE 1998), effective from September 1998, follows very closely the staged approach within the Code of Practice (DfE 1994) implemented four years earlier in England and Wales based on a recognition of a continuum of needs. This Code is still in place, whereas in England and Wales a revised Code became effective from 2002 which applied the terms School Action, and School Action Plus to the school-based stages.

### ***Social Inclusion: Pupil support (DfEE 1999)***

*Social Inclusion: Pupil Support*, borne out of new Labour’s social inclusion priorities, sought to provide guidance to help schools reduce the risk of disaffection among pupils. The document identified certain pupils as being at particular risk. These were:

- those with special educational needs;
- children in the care of local authorities;
- minority ethnic children;
- travellers;
- young carers;
- those from families under stress;
- pregnant schoolgirls and teenage mothers.

This guidance document can be viewed as a response to a rising number of disciplinary exclusions within the 1990s. Its significance in the chronology of policy on inclusion is that it used the term not just in relation to children with special educational needs. This was seen as a development of government thinking on inclusion by Booth (2000) who considered this broad examination of groups vulnerable to exclusion as a potential starting point to link all learners who experience barriers to learning within a common policy framework. Booth has been a regular critic (e.g. Booth 1999, 2000, Booth and Ainscow 2002) of the tendency within policy to frame inclusion solely in terms of children with special educational needs.

### ***Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) (SENDA)***

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) delivered a strengthened right to a mainstream education for children with special educational needs in England, Wales and Scotland but not Northern Ireland. The intricacies of the territorial issues were explained in the Act,

*“The provisions in the Act relating to special educational needs (SEN) extend to England and Wales only.*

*The provisions on rights for disabled people in education extend to England, Wales and Scotland since equal opportunities issues are matters reserved to the UK Parliament under the Scottish and Welsh settlements. The exception is the duty to produce an accessibility strategy or plan, which,*

*although intended to help disabled pupils, primarily relates to the organisation and administration of schools and hence is a devolved matter. This aspect of the Act therefore does not extend to Scotland, and it will be for Scottish Executive Ministers to consider whether to apply this policy in Scotland. This planning duty does extend to Wales though it will be for the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) to consider implementation.*

*This Act does not extend to Northern Ireland since responsibility for equal opportunities matters has been transferred and is now a matter for the Northern Ireland Assembly” (Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001).*

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act made it illegal for providers of education and educational services to discriminate against disabled people. SENDA Part 2 came into force in September 2002. The Act amended part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 so that parents/carers in England could have redress through new SEN and disability tribunals and through admissions and exclusions appeals panels. LEAs had a new duty to make arrangements for resolving parents’/carers’ disagreements with schools and LEAs. In Scotland, the law worked with the SEN framework and new planning duties under the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002. The Act covered all aspects of school life, from teaching to after-school clubs, timetabling, classroom support, building access, admissions and exclusions. Education providers had to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils and students were not disadvantaged.

From 2001 there was a duty to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools unless this would be incompatible with the wishes of the parent/carer or the provision of efficient education for other children. The conditions within the 1981 Education Act which stated that the child should be educated in mainstream schools as long as his/her SEN could be met in the mainstream school and the placement was compatible with the efficient use of resources were removed.

The retention of the requirement that mainstream education was compatible with the provision of efficient education of other children by itself was perhaps open to the same abuse that DfES (2001b) suggested had occurred since the 1993 Education Act, however it was accompanied by a requirement to take reasonable steps to prevent incompatibility. Interestingly, although compatibility with efficient use of resources had been removed as a condition within decisions about what constitutes reasonable steps, it was acknowledged that cost implications would be a factor (DfES 2001b).

### **Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000 (Section 15)**

The strengthened right to mainstream education was introduced in Scotland through the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000 (Section 15), effective from August 2003. It introduced what is now referred to as the ‘presumption of mainstreaming’ in relation to pupils with special educational needs. This meant that the onus is on education authorities to place all children in a mainstream school, although the child may be educated in a special school if education in a school other than a special school would not be suited to the ability or the aptitude of the child, would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom the child is being educated, or would result in unreasonable public expenditure. The effect of this is that schools in Scotland are now required to provide for a wider range of pupils with special educational needs than they would have had to prior to the introduction of the legislation. Education authorities have to take account of parents’/carers’ views in reaching a decision about a placement, and parents/carers have the right of appeal if they disagree with the placement proposed by the authority.

### **The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES 2001a)**

England’s revised Code emphasised a stronger right for children with SEN to be educated at a mainstream school. It replaced the ‘stages’ from the original Code (DfE 1994) with Early Years/School Action, Early Years/School Action Plus and Statements of Special Educational Need. Though not explicitly stated, the new terms effectively meant that children who previously had been identified as being at Stage 1 of the original Code of Practice (DfE 1994) fell into the broad range of children that teachers were expected to be able to differentiate for under the expectations of the National Curriculum inclusion statement. The Code (DfES 2001a) suggests that all schools will, through their

cycle of observation, assessment, planning and review, make provision for increased curriculum differentiation, curricular adaptations, and pastoral or disciplinary procedures dependent on the individual child's strengths and weakness. It goes on to say that these kind of arrangements apply to all children and are not part of special educational provision.

The inclusion of sections devoted to 'Working in Partnership with Parents', 'Pupil Participation' and 'Working in Partnership with Other Agencies' established an expectation that where previously these might just have been considered good practice and desirable, they were now key components in special educational needs provision. All LEAs were now required to make arrangements for parent partnership services to a minimum defined standard.

Significantly the Code of Practice includes the line,

*"The assessment process should always be fourfold. It should focus on the child's learning characteristics, the learning environment that the school is providing for the child, the task and the teaching style. It should be recognised that some difficulties in learning may be caused or exacerbated by the school's learning environment or adult/child relationships. This means looking carefully at such matters as classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation in order to decide how these can be developed so that the child is enabled to learn effectively"* (DfES 2001a, pp 44).

This acknowledges the ecological perspective that it is the structure of schools as organisations rather than the differences between individual pupils that creates special educational needs (Skrtec 1988) and places an emphasis on schools and teachers examining and developing their policy and practice. This is not to blame teachers or schools but to recognise that human strengths and weaknesses can only be understood in the context in which they occur (Florian and Rouse 2005 cited in Nind et al 2005). How threatening this concept is depends on how inclusion is interpreted (see 1.1 *What is Inclusion?*). An interpretation that allows for a developmental approach, based on the idea of inclusion as a process (Booth 1999, Ainscow 1999) is likely to be an easier context in which to work than one in which inclusion is interpreted as being a fixed, but in reality, ill-defined standard that must be attained. The former interpretation, while challenging, accepts that policy and practice will constantly need to be examined; it is part of the role of being a teacher or a school to engage with this constant examination. The latter interpretation implies underperformance, with the examination of policy and practice being an additional element necessary as a consequence of falling below the standard.

The language of School Action and School Action Plus emphasised that the focus was on the school's response necessary to ensure pupils are making adequate progress (DfES 2001a), and the purpose of identification and assessment was to inform this response, not to prove level of need or to progress the child through to statutory assessment.

The English version of the Code of Practice (DfES 2001a) came into force from January 2002 whereas the Welsh version (WAG 2002) came into force in April 2002. It is very similar in content and structure to the English version.

### ***Inclusive Schooling (DfES 2001b)***

Inclusive Schooling provides statutory guidance on the practical operation of the statutory framework for inclusion. It puts many of the details from the 2001 Special Educational Need and Disability Act and the 1996 Education Act into a more accessible format. *Inclusive Schooling* made clear:

*"Mainstream education cannot be refused on the grounds that the child's needs cannot be provided for within the mainstream sector"* (DfES 2001b, pp 9).

This is a significant statement in inclusion terms as it reinforces the message that instead of expecting the child to come up to a 'standard' before they can be included, it places the duty on the school to adapt and be flexible enough to accommodate each and every child (Tassoni 2003). Nevertheless, as acknowledged within the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act there were some occasions where schools could refuse admission. *Inclusive Schooling* (DfES 2001b) contained guidance on interpreting 'Reasonable steps and Efficient education' in relation to the admission of pupils, but carried the warning:

*“The efficient education caveat...must not be abused. OFSTED will be monitoring how schools and local authorities operate the new inclusion framework. The Secretary of State will also not hesitate to act if she or he believes a maintained school or local education authority was acting unreasonably and using the caveat inappropriately”* (DfES 2001b, pp 13).

This served as a reminder that OFSTED was now inspecting in relation to inclusion and, in order for a school to be judged satisfactory or better, it had to be: *“inclusive in its policies, outlook and practices”* (OFSTED 1999a/1999b, pp 14).

Backed by its statutory guidance status, *Inclusive Schooling* resolutely demonstrated the Government’s commitment to implementing its policy of inclusion and does not shy away from delivering firm messages such as those previously cited.

### **The Audit Commission**

Though evaluations of policy rather than policy themselves two Audit Commission reports from 2002 are important in shaping future policy and stimulating debate on inclusion. The first of the two reports *Statutory Assessment and Statements: in Need of Review?* (Audit Commission 2002a) raised concerns that the statutory assessment was a costly and bureaucratic process that many parents/carers found stressful and alienating. In addition, the report commented that statements of special educational needs often provided little reassurance to parents/carers, led to an inequitable distribution of resources and may provide resources in a way that fails to support inclusive practice.

After the 1981 Education Act there had been a dramatic increase in parents’ requests for statements and extra resources (Tomlinson 2005). The Audit Commission noted a rise in the numbers of statements since the 1981 Act, to just over three per cent of pupils. In 2001, almost 275,000 pupils in England and Wales had a statement – an increase of ten per cent over the five years from 1997. The date is significant – 1997 was the year the DfEE expressed its commitment to inclusion through *Excellence for All Children*. The increase in statements could be an indication that some parents/carers and schools felt excellence for some individuals might best be ensured with the protection provided by a statement. In 2001/02, Local Authorities in England and Wales spent almost £3.6 billion on SEN provision – representing 15 per cent of all spending on schools (or the ‘local schools budget’) – and this was a frequent area of LEA overspending.

The second and final report from an Audit Commission research project on children with SEN was entitled *Special Educational Needs: A Mainstream Issue* (Audit Commission 2002b). This looked at how well the education system was serving children with SEN by considering their experience in four stages:

- **Identifying needs:** Are children’s needs identified appropriately and responded to at the earliest opportunity?
- **Presence:** Are children with SEN able to attend a local mainstream school or early years setting?
- **Participation:** Are children with SEN able to participate fully in the life of their school or early years setting?
- **Achievement:** Are children with SEN enabled to reach their potential in school?

The four stages raised the important consideration that the effectiveness of inclusion needs to be judged not just in terms of whether the child was in mainstream school.

Perhaps worryingly for the Government, which in its five years of office had produced a number of policy documents designed to promote inclusion, the Audit Commission noted that progress towards inclusion had slowed down over the last decade. The report found that some children with SEN continued to face considerable barriers to learning, including inaccessible premises, unwelcoming attitudes, shortfalls in specialist support, and exclusion from aspects of school life. Children with SEN were more likely to be persistent non-attenders and to be permanently excluded. Perhaps most significant of all however was the comment that very little was known about the educational attainment of children with SEN or about how they fared beyond school. The implication of this was that though a set of policies had been put in place and were being implemented by schools across the country, there was little awareness of the medium and long term outcomes for individuals.

Though Baroness Warnock (2005) depicts these Audit Commission reports as highly critical of the efficacy of the current provision for children with special educational needs, *Special Educational Needs: A Mainstream Issue?* offered some comments that can be interpreted as endorsements of approaches and ideas associated with inclusion, stating:

*“Although many children with SEN require some additional support and a small minority need significant support, for the most part what they need is effective mainstream practice. Curriculum differentiation, target-setting for individual pupils and behavioural management are now expected of all teachers. ‘Diversity’ is the new vision for comprehensive education. In this context, arguably the time has come to rethink SEN: for real and sustainable improvements for this sizeable group of children may best be achieved by focusing on mainstream practice and, in particular, how our system of education responds to diversity. The debate now needs to move forward in a number of ways:*

- *from its current focus of ‘picking up the pieces’ for individual children, to responding to the diversity of needs in every classroom;*
- *from a focus on paperwork, processes and inputs, to how each child is to be helped to progress and the outcomes they achieve;*
- *from a focus on what type of school children attend, to the quality of their experience there; and*
- *from treating children with SEN as a peripheral interest in education policymaking, to putting them at the heart of mainstream policy and practice (Audit Commission 2002b, pp 51).*

The Audit Commission also raised the issue of how useful the term ‘special educational needs’ was and coined the phrase ‘removing barriers’.

*“Schools and LEAs have important new duties resulting from the SEN and Disability Act 2001 to increase their accessibility in the broadest terms and not to treat children with disabilities less favourably than their peers. This will require sustained investment in school facilities and staff skills as well as an attitudinal shift, so that children with SEN feel genuinely included in the life of their school. If successful, this could do much to remove the barriers to learning faced by many – which could in time allow for a refocusing of our system of special educational needs. Children with ‘severe, complex and lifelong needs’ (Warnock 1978) – for whom statements were initially envisaged – would continue to benefit from special planning and support mechanisms; but there are many children for whom the SEN label might no longer be appropriate or necessary, as schools become more adept at responding to the diversity of needs in today’s classrooms” (Audit Commission 2002b, pp 52).*

Implicit in this statement is the notion that there will be a group of children who do require specialist provision but that the majority of children currently identified as having special educational needs would be educated within mainstream school and may not require the label of SEN.

### **Every Child Matters (Treasury Office 2003)**

The Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (Treasury Office 2003) had its origins in the Victoria Climbié Report (Laming 2003) and made a commitment to reform children's services to prevent vulnerable children “falling through the cracks between different services” (Treasury Office 2003, pp 5) and recognised that “child protection cannot be separated from policies to improve children’s lives as a whole” (Treasury Office 2003, pp 5). It outlined five outcomes for children and young people of:

- **being healthy:** *enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle*
- **staying safe:** *being protected from harm and neglect*
- **enjoying and achieving:** *getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood*
- **making a positive contribution:** *being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour*
- **economic wellbeing:** *not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life” (Treasury Office 2003, pp 6-7).*

Cheminais (2005) suggests that *Every Child Matters* marks a significant commitment to the nurturing and education of the whole child and that:

*“It represents a core legislative framework within the Children Act 2004 that works in synergy with other key government strategies to drive forward a holistic approach to learning and development”* (Cheminais 2005, pp 1).

The priorities of the *Every Child Matters* agenda have underpinned subsequent policy documents in England.

In Scotland, *Getting it Right for Every Child* (SEED 2006) shares many of the priorities of England's *Every Child Matters* (Treasury Office 2003). It is based on the vision that:

*“Scotland's children and young people should be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens”* (SEED 2006, pp 4).

The report continued:

*“To achieve this, children need to be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included”* (SEED 2006, pp 4).

Like its English counterpart, the Scottish document is therefore emphasising a more holistic view of children and young people.

### ***Removing Barriers to Achievement (DfES, 2004a)***

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* opens by re-stating three main points from the two Audit Commission Reports (2002a, 2002b):

- too many children who should be able to be taught in mainstream settings are sometimes turned away and many staff feel ill-equipped to meet the wide range of pupil needs in today's classrooms
- many special schools feel uncertain of their future role
- families face unacceptable variations in the level of support available from their school, local authority or local health services (DfES 2004a, pp 5).

This suggests *Removing Barriers to Achievement* was, at least in part, a response to the Audit Commission reports. Certainly this is the interpretation applied by Baroness Warnock (2005) in her 'new look' at the field of special education.

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004a) linked special education to the *Every Child Matters* agenda. *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004a) places inclusive education within a similar framework of child protection, identifying four areas of activity seen as essential for the promotion of learning opportunities for children with special educational needs and the protection of vulnerable children in schools. The four areas are:

- early intervention, to ensure that children with special needs receive help as soon as possible and that parents of children with disabilities and special educational needs have access to suitable childcare;
- removing barriers to learning, by embedding inclusive practice in every school and early years setting;
- raising expectations and achievement, by developing teachers' skills and strategies for meeting the needs of children with SEN and focusing on children's progress;
- delivering improvements in partnership, taking a hands-on approach to improvements so parents can be confident that their child will get the education s/he needs.

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* locates special educational interventions within the broader context of social disadvantage which comes from risk factors associated with educational failure, community breakdown, parenting inadequacies, social disorganisation and individual and/or peer group difficulties (Armstrong 2005). This risk factor model has been instrumental in promoting an interventionist strategy of risk reduction to be delivered by cross-agency childhood services. Dyson (2001) argues that notions of risk and resilience “offer the sort of 'hook' that is now needed ... [for] 'reconnecting' educational difficulty to wider issues in social and economic disadvantage” (Dyson 2001 pp 103). This is supported by *Removing Barriers to Achievement*.

*“We have never been so well placed to deliver such a wide-ranging strategy to transform the lives and life chances of these children. The reform of children’s services set out in Every Child Matters, with its focus on early intervention, preventative work and integrated services for children through Children’s Trusts, will deliver real and lasting benefits to children with SEN and their families. And our commitment to reducing child poverty, investing in early years education and childcare and targeting support at areas of social and economic disadvantage will enable us to address the underlying causes of children’s difficulties” (DfES 2004a, pp 8).*

Armstrong (2005) is sceptical about the ideological claims in this statement – that poverty is the underlying cause of educational disadvantage, that the effects of poverty can be transformed through targeted social interventions and that we now have the technical skill and organisational structures to maximise the impact of such interventions. The reduction of poverty and disadvantage is thus represented as possible through technical solutions aimed at the individual child. Armstrong quotes Susser’s (1998) argument that there are serious problems about extrapolating from factors identified at group level to assessments of individual risk. Although there is an apparent link between individual risk and social disadvantage, the model proposes a focus on protecting individuals at risk from the micro-social factors of disadvantaged families, schools and communities correlated with risk. Armstrong (2005), citing his earlier work (Armstrong 2004), suggests that what is missing from this approach is:

*“any theorisation of the ways in which risks are situated historically in cultural and social formations in relation to the construction and negotiation of individual identities as ‘normal’ or ‘abnormal’ and of how social power is exercised both in the social construction and academic theorisation of what constitutes risk” (Armstrong 2004 cited in Armstrong 2005, pp 145).*

It also suggests that such risks and their likely effect on future behaviour can be measured and then controlled by appropriate interventions.

Going further than the Code of Practice’s (DfES 2001a) reference to the need to recognise that some difficulties in learning may be caused or exacerbated by the school’s learning environment or adult/child relationships, *Removing Barriers to Achievement* expresses a firmer belief in the socially constructed nature of special educational needs, stating:

*“Difficulties in learning often arise from an unsuitable environment – inappropriate grouping of pupils, inflexible teaching styles, or inaccessible curriculum – as much as from individual children’s physical, sensory or cognitive impairments. Children’s emotional and mental health needs may also have a significant impact on their ability to make the most of the opportunities in school, as may family circumstances” (DfES 2004a, pp 28).*

For the classroom teacher there was the reminder of the expectation, present in the Code of Practice (DfES 2001a) and the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (DfEE/QCA 1999a, 1999b) that they should expect to teach children with special educational needs. There was recognition in *Removing Barriers to Achievement* that there was a need to ensure through training that teachers are equipped with these skills. The three-tier model of training outlined in *Removing Barriers to Achievement* is covered in more detail within this report in *2.1 Classroom Practice: Guidance and Training for SEN and Inclusion*.

A new Inclusion Development programme is promised within *Removing Barriers to Achievement* with the aim of developing an evidence base about what works and building consensus about how to implement good practice most effectively. The four areas for initial focus are proposed as:

- autistic spectrum disorder (ASD);
- behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD);
- speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and dyslexia;
- moderate learning difficulties (MLD).

These are acknowledged as presenting particular and growing challenges for schools. MLD is justified in terms of the sheer numbers involved. ASD is justified in terms of the wide and complex range of needs. BESD is justified on similar grounds as well as the link with disciplinary exclusion and SLCN is justified on the grounds of the barrier this creates in accessing the whole curriculum. No justification

is outlined for the inclusion of dyslexia in this list, though no doubt an argument could be built along similar lines to that for SLCN, that it creates a barrier across a number of curriculum areas.

In its discussion on the future of special schools DfES (2004a) highlights the important strategic role Local Authorities have to play in planning provision and suggest that they should take account of the following considerations:

- *the proportion of children in special schools should fall over time as mainstream schools grow in their skills and capacity to meet a wider range of needs*
- *a small number of children have such severe and complex needs that they will continue to require special provision*
- *children with less significant needs – including those with moderate learning difficulties and less severe behaviour, emotional and social need – should be able to have their needs met in a mainstream environment*
- *successful special schools have an important contribution to make in preparing mainstream schools to support their inclusion.*

(DfES 2004a, pp 36-38).

These themes are easily detectable in previous documentation but in these statements, the DfES is far more explicit than in earlier documents regarding its vision of provision and clarifying with some precision the pupils who would and would not be in mainstream schools.

A section within chapter 3 of *Removing Barriers to Achievement* is entitled 'Personalising Learning for Children with SEN'. DfES suggest that:

*"We need to provide a personalised education that brings out the best in every child, that builds on their strengths, enables them to develop a love of learning; and helps them to grow into confident and independent citizens, valued for the contribution they make"* (DfES 2004a, pp 49).

A definition of personalised learning is defined within the DfES pamphlet *A National Conversation about Personalised Learning* using a quote from a speech given by David Milliband to the North of England Conference in February 2004. He described it as:

*"High expectations of every child, given practical form by high quality teaching based on a sound knowledge and understanding of each child's needs. It is not individualised learning where pupils sit alone. Nor is it pupils left to their own devices – which too often reinforces low aspirations. It means shaping teaching around the way different youngsters learn; it means taking the care to nurture the unique talents of every pupil"* (DfES 2004b, pp 4).

The pamphlet expands further:

*"Personalisation is a very simple concept. It is about putting citizens at the heart of public services and enabling them to have a say in the design and improvement of the organisations that serve them. In education this can be understood as personalised learning – the drive to tailor education to individual need, interest and aptitude so as to fulfil every young person's potential"* (DfES 2004b, pp 4).

The pamphlet offered the reassurance that this was not a new DfES initiative, stating that many schools and teachers have tailored curriculum and teaching methods to meet the needs of children and young people with great success for many years. The new element was the drive to make the best practices universal (DfES 2004b).

Reflecting the informal, solution-focused (de Shazer 1985) structure applied throughout the document (i.e. *where we are, where we want to be*), *Removing Barriers to Achievement* frames its success indicators in terms of how we will know the strategy has been successful. The success indicators are:

- *children with SEN have their needs met as soon as they become apparent, without the need for a period of failure;*
- *children with SEN feel valued members of their school community;*

- *the barriers that divide mainstream and special schools have disappeared and all schools work in partnership with other services and the voluntary sector to meet the needs of local children;*
- *there is much greater consistency in the quality of provision that children with SEN receive in school and from the local authority, and parents are confident of this.*

(DfES 2004a, pp 89).

### **OFSTED 2004 *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools***

*Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools* was based on a survey conducted prior to the publication of *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004a) which had examined the extent to which the inclusion framework had an impact more generally on the capacity of schools to cater effectively for a wider range of needs. The survey sought to assess the extent to which the vision of inclusion was becoming a reality in schools and to make recommendations to support *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004a).

*Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools* presented a varied picture of practice and a number of concerns:

- *The Government's revised inclusion framework has contributed to a growing awareness of the benefits of inclusion, and response to it has led to some improvement in practice.*
- *The framework has had little effect as yet on the proportion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools, or on the range of needs for which mainstream schools cater. There has been an increase in the numbers of pupils placed in pupil referral units and independent special schools.*
- *Most mainstream schools are now committed to meeting special needs. A few are happy to admit pupils with complex needs. The admission and retention of pupils with social and behavioural difficulties continue to test the inclusion policy.*
- *A minority of mainstream schools meet special needs very well, and others are becoming better at doing so. High expectations, effective whole-school planning seen through by committed managers, close attention on the part of skilled teachers and support staff, and rigorous evaluation remain the keys to effective practice.*
- *Taking all the steps needed to enable pupils with SEN to participate fully in the life of the school and achieve their potential remains a significant challenge for many schools. Expectations of achievement are often neither well enough defined nor pitched high enough. Progress in learning remains slower than it should be for a significant number of pupils.*
- *Few schools evaluate their provision for pupils with SEN systematically so that they can establish how effective the provision is and whether it represents value for money. The availability and use of data on outcomes for pupils with SEN continue to be limited.*
- *Not enough use is made by mainstream schools of the potential for adapting the curriculum and teaching methods so that pupils have suitable opportunities to improve key skills.*
- *The teaching seen of pupils with SEN was of varying quality, with a high proportion of lessons having shortcomings. Support by teaching assistants can be vital, but the organisation of it can mean that pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills, understanding and independence.*
- *Despite the helpful contributions by the national strategies, the quality of work to improve the literacy of pupils with SEN remains inconsistent.*
- *Effective partnership work between mainstream schools and special schools on curriculum and teaching is the exception rather than the rule.*
- *Over half the schools visited had no disability access plans and, of those plans that did exist, the majority focused only on accommodation*

(OFSTED 2004, pp 5).

A number of the concerns echoed the point raised within the Audit Commission's *Special Educational Needs: A Mainstream Issue?* (2002) that information on the attainment and longer term outcomes for

children with SEN was insufficient. This suggested that while policy was in place, principles had generally been accepted and there were some examples of good practice, at the level of securing better outcomes for individual pupils there were still significant questions regarding the positive impact of the inclusion policy pursued by the Government.

The publication of *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools* after *Removing Barriers to Achievement* can potentially paint a rather misleading picture as it suggests that the latter document was written without the benefit of this information and was continuing to roll out a flawed policy in ignorance of these concerns. This is not the case. Whilst the impact for good or ill of the vision of inclusion incorporated within *Removing Barriers to Achievement* has yet to be seen, it seems that it was informed by the same information that contributed to *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools*.

### **Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004**

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004<sup>8</sup> which came into force in November 2005 included:

- the replacement of the term special educational needs with additional support needs;
- new duties for education authorities and other agencies;
- measures to improve integrated working;
- greater rights for parents and young people along with provisions for avoiding and resolving disputes;
- introduction of co-ordinated support plan (CSP).

The term additional support needs is considerably wider in scope than special educational needs and refers to any barrier to learning. The legal definition of additional support needs and additional support is:

- (1) *A child or young person has additional support needs for the purposes of this Act where, for whatever reason, the child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support to benefit from school education provided or to be provided for the child or young person.*
- (2) *In subsection (1), the reference to school education includes, in particular, such education directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.*
- (3) *In this Act, “additional support” means –*
  - (a) *in relation to a prescribed pre-school child, a child of school age or a young person receiving school education, provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children or, as the case may be, young persons of the same age in schools (other than special schools) under the management of the education authority for the area to which the child or young person belongs;*
  - (b) *in relation to a child under school age other than a prescribed pre-school child, such educational provision as is appropriate in the circumstances”*

(SEED 2005, pp 15).

The changes in Scotland signal a general recognition that all children may have additional support needs at some stage in their school career: a child has additional support needs if they need extra input in order to ‘benefit from education’. The introduction of the duty on authorities to identify and make ‘adequate and efficient’ provision for all individuals with additional support needs potentially gives far more robust legal rights to these children and young people. The duty applies to far more children and young people including many who do not fall within the SEN system but who do have additional support needs as defined by the new law. There are new duties on agencies

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<sup>8</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/01/05142243/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/01/05142243/0)

other than education and this should help to ensure that where support is needed from health, social work and others, this is delivered and co-ordinated.

The Act replaces the Record of Needs, which was the equivalent of the Statement of Special Educational Need in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the Co-ordinated Support Plan. Though broadly equivalent to the Record of Need, the Co-ordinated Support Plan is not a direct replacement for it and there are some significant differences. Whereas a Record of Needs was for those children or young people with the most severe, most complex needs, eligibility for a co-ordinated support plan depends not so much on severity or complexity of needs, but on the sources of the support required to meet those needs. Much like the shift in terminology in England and Wales to the *School Action* and *School Action Plus*, this can be seen as shifting the emphasis away from within child deficits to the measures necessary to overcome barriers and enable learning.

Arrangements are in place to manage the transition to the new system for children and young people who have a Record of Needs. All children with a Record of Needs are automatically considered to have additional support needs. The education authority will have up to two years to decide, on the basis of an assessment, whether children with a Record of Needs require a Co-ordinated Support Plan. During this time the existing level of support must be maintained. Where it is decided that a Co-ordinated Support Plan is not required, the Act ensures that existing provision is preserved as a minimum for a further two years unless there is a change in the child's needs during that time.

The Scottish Executive and education authorities have been planning the implementation of the Act on the basis of approximately 1% of pupils requiring a co-ordinated support plan. This is around half the proportion of pupils who had a Record of Needs. This has implications for both parents and teachers in terms of perceptions of how well children's additional support needs are being met, as in numerical terms it may imply less support.

The Co-ordinated Support Plan is the only statutory document of this type which exists under the 2004 Act, just as the Record of Needs was under the 1980 Act.

A Code of Practice has been produced entitled *Supporting Children's Learning* that explains the new duties on education authorities and other agencies to support children's and young people's learning. It provides guidance on the provisions from the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 as well as on the supporting framework of secondary legislation. It also includes features of good practice on how these can be applied and sets out new arrangements for avoiding and resolving differences between families.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO), which became law in September 2005, is intended to enact provisions for Northern Ireland similar to those already in existence in England, Scotland and Wales under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Hunter and O'Connell 2006).

The SENDO states that if a child does not have a statement s/he shall be educated in an ordinary school. The Order strengthens the right for a child with a statement also to be educated in an ordinary school – if a child does have a statement s/he will be educated in an ordinary school unless that is incompatible with the wishes of his parent or the provision of efficient education for other children. SENDO also imposes on schools and Education and Library Boards,

- a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that pupils who have a disability are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to pupils who do not have a disability; and
- a duty to plan and make progress in increasing accessibility to schools' premises and the curriculum, and in improving ways in which information provided in writing to pupils who do not have a disability is provided to pupils with a disability.

### ***Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (Ireland) (2005)***

In Ireland, the *Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* was produced in 2005 to take account of the implications of the SENDO. The

supplement included a section specifically on the 'Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs'. The terminology is very similar to that used within *Inclusive Schooling* (DfES 2001b) and *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004a). The supplement does not change the status, coverage, principles and essential practices and procedures and detailed guidance contained in existing *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DE 1998). The Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) therefore seems content currently to retain the five-stage model and the terminology of assessment and identification, unlike the DfES who, as outlined previously, revised its *Code of Practice* (DfES 2001a) with the intention of making it more consistent with an inclusive approach.

### **Higher Standards, Better Schools for All (2005) and the Education and Inspections Bill 2006**

In autumn 2005, the Government in England published the Schools White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*. Many of the changes within the White Paper did not require legislation; others were taken forward by the Education and Inspections Bill which was published on the 28 February 2006. The Bill also included some provisions which were not included in the White Paper, for example those on inspectorate reform.

The White Paper expresses commitment to Personalisation and endorses the personalisation it sees as inherent in the SEN framework, including Statements of Special Educational Need which it suggests ensure access to the school and to other services which can best meet the needs of the pupil. Personalised learning is part of a wider move towards personalisation which is a concept that features strongly within the *Five-Year Strategy for Children and Learners* (DfES 2004c) and reflects a focus on outcomes for the individual inherent within *Every Child Matters* documentation.

Like the earlier *A National Conversation about Personalised Learning* (DfES 2004b), the White Paper stressed that personalised learning is not new. The White Paper claims that the best schools provide a tailored education which combines:

- *extra small group or one-to-one tuition for those that need it – not as a substitute for excellent whole class teaching, but as an integrated part of the child's learning;*
- *opportunities for all children to get extra support and tuition in subjects and activities they are interested in, as well as access to a range of opportunities beyond the school day, including weekend and holiday courses and online learning;*
- *exciting whole-class teaching, which gets the best from every child;*
- *setting or grouping children of similar ability and attainment;*
- *a rich, flexible and accessible curriculum and, for older pupils, one that allows them to mix academic and vocational learning; and*
- *innovative use of ICT, both in the classroom and linking the classroom and home*

(DfES 2005a, pp 50).

Setting by ability is a practice referred to and encouraged a number of times within the White Paper. Indeed it laments the decline of this practice, suggesting it became all too rare with the move towards comprehensive schools and the conversion of grammars and secondary moderns in the 1960s and 1970s (DfES 2005a). Whilst the implied attribution is to political drivers during this period it is important to acknowledge that, as Hallam et al (2002) point out, the trend was also supported by research indicating that ability grouping had no significant effect on overall attainment, and had negative personal and social consequences for pupils in the lower streams (Jackson 1964 and Barker Lunn 1970, 1984). *Excellence In Schools* (1997b) had earlier suggested that setting by ability could be beneficial in raising standards and that:

*“setting by ability should be the norm in secondary schools. In some cases it is worth considering in primary schools”* (DfEE 1997b, pp 38).

*Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* promises independent research in 2006 into best practice regarding pupil grouping. It will be interesting to see whether this substantially contradicts the range of studies that have found setting by ability makes little or no difference (e.g. Whitburn 2001,

Harlen and Malcolm 1997, Sukhnandan and Lee 1998, Kutnick et al 2005 and Benn and Chitty 1996). Wiliam and Bartholomew (2004) have been particularly critical of the government for its encouragement of setting over recent years, stating:

*“The current government claims to be interested in developing educational practice that is informed by research evidence. And yet, it continues to advocate the adoption of setting in all secondary schools despite the accumulating evidence that setting does not improve overall standards of achievement (and in fact probably reduces them), while also contributing to social exclusion by polarizing achievement, and in particular by disadvantaging students from working class backgrounds”* (Wiliam & Bartholomew 2004, pp 291).

In the light of concerns such as those expressed by Wiliam and Bartholomew (2004) the endorsement of setting by ability within the White Paper clearly has potential implications for the many children defined as having special educational needs, who may find themselves in 'bottom' sets.

The Education Bill incorporates the Steer Report's (DfES 2005b) recommendations on school behaviour and discipline. The Steer Report made the recommendation that the DfES should look separately at how to improve the quality of provision for those with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) and acknowledged that time constraints had limited the further investigation of the issues around behaviour and pupils with SEN (DfES 2005b). It is a potential concern that the Steer Report's proposals, which were set within the context primarily of children without SEN, are being universally applied within the White Paper and the Education Bill, without the Steer Report's caveats regarding the need for further study in relation to those with SEN. The National Autistic Society (NAS) makes the point:

*“The proposals for school discipline within the Education Bill will have a disproportionate impact on children with autism. 27% of children with autism are excluded from school (Office of National Statistics), often because schools lack the training and understanding to cope with the needs of the child and therefore use disciplinary measures inappropriately”* (National Autistic Society 2006: <http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/isp/polopoly.jsp?d=912&a=9053>, accessed 3/10/07).

It is not just children with Autism who are likely to be adversely affected. National statistics already show that children with statements of SEN are almost four times more likely to be excluded from school than the rest of the school population, and pupils with SEN (both with and without statements) are more likely to be excluded than those pupils without special educational needs (DfES 2005c).

Proposals regarding school admissions outlined in the White Paper caused some concern. The Education and Skills Select Committee report on the education White Paper highlighted concerns that children with SEN may be disadvantaged in the proposed admissions policies for Trust schools. The Bill now promises that there will be new safeguards to ensure that Trusts operate in the best interests of local children. Many of the main changes between the White Paper and the Education Bill have centred on the issues related to pupil admissions.

The White Paper devotes a number of paragraphs specifically to pupils with special educational needs. The SEN section begins by giving the statistics that 65% of pupils at age 11 who do not attain the expected level in English, and 55% of those not attaining the expected level in maths, are identified as having SEN. The White Paper makes the point that by no means all children with special educational needs are falling behind and that many are meeting and exceeding expectations. The inclusion of this information is clearly linked to concerns expressed in *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools* (OFSTED 2004) and *Special Educational Needs: A Mainstream Issue* (Audit Commission 2002b) regarding the attainment of children with SEN. However, as previously explored in 1.2 *What are Special Educational Needs?* this observation seems to reveal some inherent contradictions and inconsistencies when compared to the definition of special educational needs within the 1996 Education Act and the Code of Practice (DfES 2001a). It should surely not seem surprising that a high proportion of pupils not meeting national targets have SEN, when the definition of SEN is based on experiencing a greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age and the requirement of provision *“additional to, or otherwise*

*different from educational provision made generally” (DfES 2001, pp 6) for which a key trigger is “progress that is not adequate” (DfES 2001a:6, pp 52) as a trigger for receiving the additional and different provision (DfES 2001a) that forms part of the definition of special educational needs. These contradictions and inconsistencies are indicative of a developing lack of clarity regarding the definition of special educational needs as policy documents have had more regard for the view that a lot of special educational needs are socially constructed. It is difficult to pursue a social construction view within a system that is based on norm referenced age-related expectations.*

Within the White Paper, a future for special schools is defined with the proposal to increase the sharing of expertise between special and mainstream schools. There is also the suggestion that the specialist schools model has the potential to drive up standards in special schools and to promote collaboration with mainstream schools.

A commitment to training is also expressed in terms of equipping the school workforce with appropriate skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence in working with children and young people with SEN.

The emphasis on positive outcomes for individuals is reflected in the intention to promote more effective measurement of and accountability for the progress made by pupils with SEN across a wide range of abilities, facilitating early intervention and high expectations.

In addition to the specific section devoted to children with special educational needs, these pupils are also mentioned elsewhere in the White Paper. They are mentioned in relation to the need to reduce bureaucracy associated with SEN, referring to the work of the Implementation Review Unit (IRU) (DfES 2005d), and also in terms of school places, with the statement of an intention to continue to ensure that priority is given for the most vulnerable groups such as children in care (looked after children) and those with special educational needs.

In relation to teacher workload the positive reference to the work of the Implementation Review Unit is significant. The IRU’s Annual Review 2004-5 acknowledges:

*“...the widespread and longstanding view that the processes and paperwork associated with meeting legal commitments towards pupils with special educational needs are both more burdensome and less effective than they should and could be” (DfES 2005d, pp 17).*

The IRU supports the move towards alternative planning and recording approaches to IEPs, highlighting examples of DfES guidance already produced that details when it may not be appropriate to use IEPs and highlighting National Strategy guidance on provision mapping as an alternative approach. The IRU also identifies that SENCOs are spending too much time on paperwork at the expense of guiding other members of the school leadership team and workforce on effective practice.

The IRU supports the message from DfES to Local Authorities to reduce reliance on statements. The mechanism by which it is considered this will happen is the delegation of more resources for SEN directly to schools. As a result, it is believed there will be greater capacity in schools to promote earlier intervention, which should reduce the need for statements and associated bureaucracy (DfES 2005d).

## Conclusion

Though the pace has varied, policy developments in all four nations have moved in the direction of greater inclusion in keeping with a common drive by international governments towards inclusion as a model for education (Lambe and Bones 2006). Lambe and Bones provide an interesting observation in their consideration of the Irish context and the form the development of a more inclusive approach might take, suggesting:

*“It could simply be the integration of SEN pupils using new methods, or it could be a means to ‘recast education from the ground up’ (Pugach 1995). The former can be seen as an additive model of inclusion where change comes from within the already confirmed SEN practice. Already there is a growing belief that the role of the special school will change so as to develop stronger links between themselves and mainstream schools. This might be seen as an acceptable model within*

*present school environments where modification and adaptation of the existing curriculum would be routinely used to accommodate difference. Specialist support would be of a peripatetic nature. Some SEN units that are attached to a mainstream school already use this approach. More cynically, it could then be seen as less of a new initiative and more of a 'misleading veneer for old special education practices' (Slee 1996, pp 29). In contrast however, might be offered a vision of a more generative model of inclusion as a means of transforming thinking on the whole concept. Existing school systems and curricula would necessitate redesign in a much more complex and extensive way. Schools would not simply point to their inclusion policy as evidence of change. Inclusion would, instead, be seen as part of a total rethink about what it means to educate all children in parallel with coordinated curriculum and social reform (Pugach 1995)" (Lambe and Bones 2006, pp 515).*

Many of the changes and developments in policy in the four nations can be related to the two models described in this quote. Some reflect a generative model, requiring a rethinking of assumptions about how to educate a diverse range of pupils. Others reflect the additive model where new methods and new philosophies are applied to existing, and often long established, practice. The developments in Scotland are particularly interesting, reflecting perhaps a more generative approach than the rest of the UK. Scotland has undertaken a review of its curriculum through *A Curriculum for Excellence* (SEED 2004), abandoned the term special educational needs in favour of the more inclusive 'Additional Support Needs' (SEED 2005) and embarked on the *Getting it Right for Every Child* policy (SEED 2006). The fact that these changes have come within a very few years of each other offers potential for a high level of coherence and the opportunity to avoid some of the tensions and contradictions that may exist when attempting to develop a policy of inclusion based on existing systems. Whilst at a theoretical level this suggests that Scottish schools should have quite a positive experience of change, it is possible that at an experiential level, teachers and other members of the school workforce may feel that everything is changing and that there are few areas of certainty. Only empirical research could confirm or refute this.

The popular perception (e.g. Warnock 2005) is that the policy of inclusion in England has led to the closure of special schools and the 'forcing' of some children into mainstream schools when it is not in their best interests to be there, resulting in distress for pupils and parents/carers. Whilst there are local variations (see 1.5 *Local Authority Responses to the Inclusion Agenda*), national policy has been relatively consistent from Warnock (1978) onwards in recognising that a small number of pupils would require specialist provision. The version of inclusion presented within government documents has always involved a role for special schools, though only part of this role is in providing a placement.

The Education and Skills Committee on special educational needs reports that:

- in 2004 there were the 1,148 maintained and non-maintained special schools in England;
- the number of special schools in England has fallen in each year since 1979;
- the vast majority of the decline took place before 1999, and indeed before 1991;
- from 1997-2005 (eight years), the number of special schools has fallen from 1,239 to 1,148 – a 7% decline;
- in 2005 there were 90,300 full-time pupils in special schools (not all with statements);
- looking back, the number of pupils in special schools fell by nearly 30% in the 12 years from 1979 to 1991;
- from 1997 to 2005 there has been a 4% decline in the total number

(House of Commons Select Committee 2006, pp 29).

Therefore, the move in the late seventies and through the eighties towards a policy of integration seems to have had the most dramatic effect on special school numbers rather than the policy of inclusion followed in the wake of *Excellence for All Children* in 1997. The figures dispel the myth of a wholesale policy of special school closures since adopting a policy of inclusion. However, teachers' experience of a policy of inclusion may be that the additional decline since 1997, though at a much slower rate, was enough to tip the balance of manageability.

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## 1.5 LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES TO THE INCLUSION AGENDA

### Key findings

- There is no shortage of statutory and formal descriptions of LAs' functions and accompanying evaluations from inspections of LAs, but research evidence is in short supply on how this is being operationalised in different local authorities.
- There is a wide variation in support service arrangements reflecting the history of the LA rather than its size or demographic type.
- There is huge variation in specialist provision between LAs.
- Some LAs had large central services linked to classroom assistant support in mainstream schools others had smaller central services linked to specialist or advisory functions.
- These differences in support arrangements and availability of specialist provision are likely to impact on the day to day experience of teachers. This is an important area for future research.
- Far more children in secondary schools have statements than in primary.
- There is a complex relationship between ethnicity and SEN.
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely to have a statement. (This has been attributed to parent knowledge and ability to challenge the system.)
- Early intervention has yet to become the norm.
- There are large differences between LAs in England in the number and percentages of pupils described as having social, emotional difficulties, but also moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties in language and/or mathematics (including dyslexia).

In England and Wales, following *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003) legislation, the terminology has recently changed from *Local Educational Authority* to *Local Authority*. These terms will be used largely interchangeably within this chapter, depending on the period being referred to. In Northern Ireland, the equivalent to the local authority is the Education and Library Board. Like England and Wales, Scotland uses the term local authority though the relationship with schools is considerably different with the Scottish Local Authorities having greater control over schools. An issue for further research is whether an outcome of this is that local authorities in Scotland are able to implement more coherent support than their counterparts in the other nations and ensure that resources are appropriately accessed.

In England since the Education Act 1981, arrangements for identifying and meeting special educational needs have been subject to further legislation and guidance. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have experienced similar change over this period. Details of this are explored in section 1.4 of this report, *Educational Policy for Inclusion*. Under the Education Act 1993, Local Authorities and school governing bodies in England and Wales had to have regard to the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DfE 1994) which set out how they were expected to carry out their duties. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2001, with their accompanying guidance, underpin the Government's education policy, part of which is that mainstream schools should include all pupils fully, and place duties on schools and local authorities to ensure that this happens. The revised Code of Practice which came into effect in 2002 in England (DfES 2001) and Wales (WAG 2002) reflected these new rights and duties, and placed greater emphasis on outcomes for pupils rather than on procedures and systems. The Irish *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DE 1998), effective from September 1998, is very similar to the original Code of Practice (DfE 1994) that applied to England and Wales. The *Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* was produced in 2005 to take

account of the implications of the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO)*. The supplement included a section specifically on the 'Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs'. Scotland has recently produced its Code of Practice on supporting children's learning (SEED 2005) which sets out the responsibility of Local Authorities in relation to a broader range of children than those encompassed by the term special educational needs.

Bines and Thomas (1994) trace the history of LEAs, which were established in 1902 to ensure co-ordination and control of educational provision. They were given responsibility for SEN (though the terminology of SEN was not used until 1978), in particular, deciding which children were educable and which were not. They also established schools for particular educational needs. Bines and Thomas suggest that changes in LEA roles and responsibilities can be 'matched with the particular history, practices and dilemmas of policy and provision for SEN' (Bines and Thomas 1994, pp 62). They identify three distinct periods:

1. the period up to the 1944 Education Act. With the beginning of universal compulsory education, provisions for SEN started to be developed and systems of national and local administration were established;
2. the post-war development of more extensive universal provision under the umbrella of the welfare state, in a largely consensual political climate with growing national wealth and security;
3. the period beginning with the oil crisis in the 1970s but really taking shape from the wide-ranging government reform of education from the mid-1980s onwards.

Until recently the role of the LEA was seen as a partnership between central and local government (Ranson 1990, cited in Flude and Hammer (eds) 1990). Bines and Thomas (1994) highlighted the tension in the role of LA within a market approach to education, with an imperfect purchaser/provider role which did not give LAs enough power to monitor the services they contracted, but noted that LAs were beginning to develop a new approach, suggesting the possibility of a more flexible, focused and effective service for SEN.

### Variation between Local Authorities in relation to SEN

Making comparisons between the four countries of the UK can be difficult because there are regional variations and a lack of statistical data but it is clear that there are differences in the support for, and management of, SEN.

Fletcher-Campbell and Lee (DfES 2003) note that while there is no shortage of statutory and formal descriptions of LEAs' functions and formal assessment by agencies such as OFSTED and the Audit Commission, research evidence is in short supply. In 2002 the Audit Commission (2002a) reported that although LEAs in England might hold detailed information about the needs of pupils in their area, there were no common definitions of need so the data could not be aggregated. Authorities in Wales and Scotland, by contrast, are required to report how many children have statements (Record of Need in Scotland up to November 2005, now changing to a Co-ordinated Support Plan) by type of need but there was no data available on the needs of the much larger group of children – 1.6 million in England and Wales – who have SEN but do not have a statement. Since January 2004, local authorities in England have been required to collect data according to need type (see section 1.2 *What are Special Educational Needs?*).

The Audit Commission (2002a) found that the lack of comprehensive data about the performance of children with SEN meant that schools lack national benchmarks against which they can measure the performance of their pupils and reported it. This concern was raised again in a later OFSTED report:

*"Data provided by most LEAs are not in a form which allows schools easily to compare how well they are doing with the lowest-attaining pupils when compared with other schools. This weakens the drive to challenge under-achievement"* (OFSTED 2004, pp 10).

The Audit Commission (2002a) found that many people in their study commented on the changing nature of children's needs and local pressures in terms of demand for specialist provision, but suggested that a lack of robust research made it impossible to say whether there had been actual changes in numbers or whether this just reflected developments in medical and educational practice.

A study of LEAs in Wales (Colebourne et al 2001 cited in Avery et al 2003) revealed considerable variation in the organisational structures through which education services are delivered. In five of the 22 local authorities education services are delivered from within Departments of Education headed by Directors of Education. In the other authorities education functioned within various corporate directorates, which also had responsibility for other services including leisure, community services, children's services and culture.

The DfEE and NASEN jointly funded a research project to look at LEA support services (Gray 2001). A questionnaire was sent to all English LEAs, followed up with case study visits. About two-thirds of LEAs responded. The study found wide variation in the support service arrangements in LEAs, apparently reflecting the history of individual LEAs rather than authority size or demographic type. Some LEAs retained very large central services that included most of the teaching and learning support assistant provision associated with pupils with statements in mainstream schools, whereas others were much smaller, linked to more specialist or advisory functions. There was evidence of increasing use of alternative support providers by the LEA, such as special schools or the voluntary sector.

There are *"huge variations in special provision between LEAs"* (Rustemier 2002, pp 15), which have been well documented. Being given a statement of SEN or placed in a special school varies widely across the UK with little correlation with the type or severity of need. OFSTED (1999) noted that there were many pupils who were placed as a matter of course in special schools in one LEA who would be integrated individually, equally as a matter of course, into their local school in another LEA.

In a study of inclusion trends between 1997 and 2001, Norwich (2002 for CSIE) noted wide variations between LEAs in England. In 2001 the London Borough of Newham had the smallest percentage of pupils in special schools with 0.35% and Manchester had the highest, with 2.64%. Thus a disabled pupil in Manchester was more than seven times as likely to be placed in a special school in 2001 than a pupil in Newham. A pupil in Lambeth (2.48%) was more than six times as likely to be placed in a special school than a pupil in Newham, ten miles away. In 2001 8.8% of pupils with statements in Newham were placed in special schools – the comparable figure in Liverpool was 66.88%.

The Audit Commission (2002a) found that in England and Wales the proportion of children with statements varied five fold between LEAs and that the proportion of children with statements in schools varied greatly. In England 15% of primary schools had 3% or more of pupils with statements compared with 36% of secondary schools, and in Wales 27% of primary schools have 3% or more of pupils with statements compared with 55% of secondary schools:

*"This variation may be explained in part by local policy decisions, resulting in different eligibility criteria for statutory assessments, funding arrangements and so on. However, it also reflects varying attitudes and practice. Some highly inclusive schools have a lower level of statements than one would expect because they are more experienced at meeting children's needs and perhaps better equipped to do so. Conversely, some academically successful schools have a relatively high level of statements, given the needs of their pupils, because they have less experience of working with children with SEN"* (Audit Commission 2002a, pp 11).

The Audit Commission (2002a) found that the proportion of children in special schools varies more than tenfold across LEAs. This was said to reflect a combination of factors, including the historical pattern of provision and local commitment to educating children with higher levels of need in mainstream schools, as well as the boundaries between the special and mainstream sectors becoming blurred. OFSTED (1999) had previously commented that through an accident of geography, pupils may find themselves within a Local Education Authority with very few special schools, or in one with a full range of such schools.

The Audit Commission (2002a) also identified an issue that there were certain groups of pupils that schools were reluctant to admit. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) were the group least likely to be admitted, by a considerable margin, but other groups included children with autistic spectrum disorders, physical difficulties, and moderate or severe learning difficulties. Most headteachers surveyed were able to point to a local school that had a reputation for not taking children with particular needs and some admitted that they were reluctant to do so. Some schools that were striving to develop their inclusive practice expressed concern about the 'magnet

effect' created by their growing reputation for being able to include certain types of children. The Audit Commission commented on this potential phenomenon:

*"While there are benefits from having a 'critical mass' of children with particular needs attending a school, in terms of planning provision and developing staff expertise, there is also a risk that individual schools may become over-stretched and a polarised pattern of provision develop – restricting parental choice and effectively letting other schools off the hook"* (Audit Commission 2002a, pp 18).

The Audit Commission (2002a) found that some groups were more likely to be identified as having SEN, which influences how their needs are met in school and how much additional support they receive. The likelihood of getting a statement appeared to be influenced by a range of factors relating to the child, their family and the institutions responsible for their education. Data from Wales and Scotland (equivalent data was not available for England) showed that boys were more likely to have a statement than girls across every type of need. Although there are some conditions that more commonly occur in males – for example speech and language difficulties – this might suggest that boys are being disadvantaged by having their needs emphasised and being 'labelled' unnecessarily, or that girls might be disadvantaged by not having their needs identified and appropriate action taken. The relationship between ethnicity and SEN is complex and is made more complicated by factors such as a lack of accessible information in minority languages, inadequate translation and interpreting services (including for Welsh speakers) and difficulties in accurately assessing needs in children who are not fluent in English or have recently arrived from overseas. Only two-fifths of LEAs gather data on ethnicity in relation to children with statements and just over a quarter for children without statements, and only one in ten make use of this data to see whether children from minority ethnic groups are being over or under-identified. Family background was also important – although, again, the relationship was complex. The Audit Commission (2002a) report suggests that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to be identified as having SEN. Research with parents suggests that those with the knowledge, resources and confidence to challenge staff in schools and LEAs are more likely to get their child's needs assessed and to secure a more generous package of provision.

### The role of the Local Authority in England and Wales

Whitbourn et al (2000) suggest that,

*"A clear role of LEAs throughout their history, and one which certainly continues today, is to act as a local buffer between national direction or expectation and local or institutional capacity to respond"* (Whitbourn et al 2000, pp 10).

and

*"The character of the LEA as a corporate body of (primarily) elected members is crucial to its broad legitimacy and the pragmatic discharge of its role. The very term "local education authority" and its abbreviation have been common currency in the public education service since the Education Act 1902 abolished school boards and conferred education functions on county and county borough councils"* (Whitbourn et al 2000, pp 10).

There is some ambiguity about what the LEA is, as well as what it is for. At the North of England Education Conference in January 2000, David Blunkett, the then Secretary of State, responded to a question with what has become known as the "Wigan challenge":

*"It seems to me that it is asking people to redefine their role. I repeat what I have said on previous occasions at the North of England Conference and elsewhere: if education authorities did not exist, we would have to invent them; but we would not invent them in the guise of 1988 or 1992 or even 1998. We would invent them for the coming century. The challenge is not to whine about what has been done by central Government, but to get up and show what education authorities can do in that task, as many of them are doing, with great esteem, recognised by the inspection process, in transforming the life chances of children, rather than turning the service in on itself"* (Whitbourn et al 2000, pp 16).

In May 2000, at the Education Network's conference on "What makes a good LEA?", the Secretary of State said:

*“The question we have to ask ourselves is not whether an education authority should exist – I have said before that if we didn’t have authorities we would have to invent something similar. Rather, it is in what form and for which century? What functions have to be carried out by the education authority itself?”*

*Over the last ten years we have seen the introduction of the National Curriculum, national assessment and testing, local management, fair funding, the development of the inspection system, and of course the major drive on standards and the implementation of the 1988 School Standards and Framework Act.*

*Taken together with the renewed emphasis on equality and intolerance of low standards, it is surely time to address the changes needed for the service of tomorrow...*

*Councillors play a vital role in the success of Local Education Authorities. Good, strong and committed leadership in education is vital in raising standards in schools. The new role in overview and scrutiny that many councillors have will bring more transparency and accountability to local decision-making.*

*Local Education Authorities have a duty to promote high standards. What is emerging clearly is that successful Authorities – those that continually improve education standards, challenge and support poorly performing schools – have a chief education officer and senior managers personally committed to raising standards and councillors with a firm commitment to education” (Whitbourn et al 2000, pp 16).*

The DfEE text to the speech emphasised:

- *Through the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Government has given the LEA a new, clearly defined role. Whilst the responsibility of a school’s performance rests with the school, the LEA should challenge, support and intervene where necessary. The LEA also provides strategic management and an infrastructure within which schools can work.*
- *Through Fair Funding, the Government has given the LEA four key roles: school improvement, access for pupils, support for pupils with special educational needs and strategic management. This allows the LEA to support its schools in the delivery of education” (Whitbourn et al 2000, pp 17).*

In his speech, the Secretary of State said that one of the objectives for LEAs was support and intervention for those with special or specialist needs – special educational needs, gifted children, work with those who are alienated (Whitbourn et al 2000, pp 17).

Whitbourn et al (2000) carried out a large-scale study of LEAs and illustrates the way in which the roles and functions of LEAs have changed by a series of quotations:

*“LEAs will take on a more strategic role...but will have a vital overall responsibility for ensuring that Local Management is effective in delivering better education” (DES 1988).*

*“The Government sees a significant continuing role for LEAs...Their role should be to provide those services and undertake those functions which schools cannot carry out for themselves and which no other agency is better placed to carry out” (DfEE 1996).*

*“This new constructive role will replace the uncertainty from which LEAs have suffered in recent years” (DfEE 1997a).*

*“As the 1990’s have progressed, the limitations of a school-driven model of education without a clear and complementary LEA role become increasingly apparent” (Audit Commission, Held in Trust, 1999).*

(cited in Whitbourn et al 2000).

### **The changing role of the LA in England and Wales**

Whitbourn et al (2000) suggest that there are legitimate questions which can be asked about the fitness of a system of local government developed in the nineteenth century to exercise responsibility for some of the great public services, such as schooling, and institutions dedicated to enhancing the quality of people’s lives (e.g. adult education institutions), at the end of the 20th century. They highlight some of the changes that have taken place:

- new forms of participatory democracy have been inserted into the public education service, notably school governing bodies, which include parent and staff representatives and seek to involve the wider community;
- accountability has been increased by changes including the transformation of HMI into OfSTED and Estyn and the work of the Audit Commission and its extension from basic audit to the promotion of good practice;
- society has itself changed, for example, through technological change which has brought new accountability through new and fast forms of communication;
- there has been increasing recourse to litigation;
- the State is now part of the European Union and so domestic law is made and interpreted outside the UK, for example, the Human Rights Act 1998, fully in force from 2 October 2000;
- Wales has acquired a directly elected Assembly, with two Secretaries for Education, one for Education and Children and one for Education and Training.

Writing in 1999, Moore was critical of the study by Ainscow et al (1999) for considering the role of the LEA in isolation and suggested that the changing role of the LEA had to take into account work with health authorities, social services, parents and voluntary agencies. Moore argues that it will be necessary to redefine 'need' and move away from traditional descriptors associated with SEN by:

- placing less emphasis on the individual child and more on the whole school;
- promoting school effectiveness strategies and focusing on teaching and learning for diversity;
- enabling the effective deployment of resources without recourse to statutory assessment;
- avoiding, as much as possible, registering pupils as having SEN, so they are not 'singled out as educational failures' (Moore 1999, pp 175).

Fletcher-Campbell and Lee (2003) found that increasingly LEA functions of support and advice were being shared with other experts in the Authority, including outstanding classroom practitioners and school managers. This was perceived to be mutually beneficial in raising standards of achievement in schools.

Ainscow et al (2000) in their study of the changing roles of English LEAs comment on the tension between notions of challenge, support and need (as in *"The role of LEAs is not to control schools, but to challenge all schools to improve and support those which need help to raise standards"* (DfEE 1997a, pp 67)) which is suggestive of a fundamental tension "between autonomy and external intervention" (Audit Commission 1998, pp 9). Ainscow et al suggest there are four main ways in which the *"attack on the traditional organisation of the school system has been carried forward, of which three hit hard at established local education authority structures"* (2000, pp 2). These are:

- increasing prescription, e.g. the National Curriculum and associated national testing at 7, 11 and 14, which reduced schools' control of the curriculum and increased the influence of the DfEE;
- decentralisation, with policies such as local management of schools and increased power for school governors;
- competition, including the introduction of grant-maintained status and the publication of league tables, and;
- privatisation of services to schools.

Gray (2002) notes that during the 1980s there was significant overall growth in the number of SEN support services in local authorities across the UK (SEN support services here is taken to mean the range of services, teams and individuals that work in the various areas of special educational needs). These services were generally funded by LEAs and there was an assumption that the duties they performed were necessarily performed at that level, rather than by schools. At the same time there was an increasing professional trend towards empowerment, with staff and services seeking to 'do themselves out of a job' by developing schools' own practice in relation to pupils with SEN. There

was, though, still a strong belief among many parents and schools that some pupils could only access an appropriate education if they were supported by LEA personnel external to the school. Some commentators, e.g. Dessent (1987), argued that support services might be contributing to deskilling mainstream teachers, rather than assisting them to become more confident and competent in meeting pupils' individual needs.

During the 1990s, while the Government's funding model encouraged schools to be self-sufficient, the size and range of SEN support services in many LEAs continued to grow, so that some schools became more dependent on additional resources and provision for SEN rather than less. Concern about the pace of change in the funding of SEN support services and its impact on pupils led to a NASEN position paper on delegation (NASEN 1999). This was not critical of the delegation of SEN support services per se but identified a number of key factors that LEAs should take into account when delegation was being considered, including the need to ensure quality in school-based staffing and ongoing opportunities for professional development, the need for accountability in the use of delegated funds and an equitable approach to resource distribution between schools (Gray 2001).

Gray (2002) highlights a number of barriers to the delegation of responsibility for SEN support services from LEAs to schools, including the need for a strong link between LEAs' strategies for delegation and inclusion, clarity for schools about the nature and extent of the responsibilities, the uneven spread of pupils who have complex or specialist needs and the loss of some specialist skills and professional development opportunities. Gray also notes that there is evidence that inclusion does not happen spontaneously, stating:

*"both schools and support services recognise that an external input is needed to provide a 'kick-start', particularly in cases where pupils are more socially or behaviourally challenging. This barrier could only be overcome if there was an even stronger shared national expectation about inclusion being an issue of school quality and improvement. Further developments are still needed to ensure that inclusion is given sufficient priority by all schools and LEAs"* (Gray 2002, pp 7).

### Early intervention in England and Wales

The Audit Commission (2002a) found that although government policy in England and Wales emphasises the need for early intervention, both for children whose needs may best be addressed by prompt action and support for a limited period and for those with lifelong needs who should receive support as soon as possible, early intervention has yet to become the norm, despite many local initiatives. This was thought to be partly due to LEA spending on children with statements, which was limiting their scope for supporting other children. Over the previous three years LEAs in England and Wales had increased their spending on children with statements almost ten times as much as they increased spending on children with SEN but without a statement. Many LEA officers saw this as a 'catch-22' situation: their responsibilities towards children with statements meant they were unable to spend more on children at School Action and School Action Plus, but until they did the demand for statements was likely to continue to rise.

### Provision in England

OFSTED, in their study of LEA policy and support services, surveyed LEAs whose policies on SEN and value for money had been judged satisfactory or better (OFSTED 2003). They found that the LEAs and schools in the survey were making "significant efforts" to include some pupils with complex needs in mainstream schools, but the Audit Commission's (2002a) finding that the move towards the inclusion of pupils with higher levels of need into mainstream education was progressing very slowly remained valid. The general view of the schools in the survey was that they saw LEAs as supporting them in their efforts to become more inclusive. They valued the work of the support staff and recognised their expertise, and saw themselves as being in partnership with the LEA. Financial arrangements for providing services to schools varied between LEAs. Strategic planning by LEAs was seen to be difficult given the short-term nature of much government funding, and the bidding process often put a strain on resources, especially in small LEAs.

The study supported the findings of OFSTED's annual report for 2002/03 which:

*"identified that only a quarter of LEAs have strong strategic management of SEN and the majority have weak evaluation systems. Only seven out of ten LEAs provide at least satisfactory value for money. This*

state of affairs was reflected in the survey visits. Most LEAs did not evaluate effectively the outcomes of the provision they funded. Funding was seldom linked to improvements in learning and pupils' progress was often not at the heart of negotiations on placements and annual reviews. Eight out of ten schools said the LEA largely responded to requests for additional funding rather than thinking ahead about placements and planning strategically for the longer term. In this respect and others, few of the schools visited believed that their LEAs were as effective as they could be in promoting inclusion.

The response from schools was different in response to support for schools' work with individual pupils. Eight out of ten schools found LEAs supportive in finding ways to include pupils more effectively. They generally appreciated the advice of specialist support services and found it helpful" (OFSTED 2003, pp 21).

### Provision in Wales

In 2003 Avery et al carried out a study of provision in Wales. They reported:

*"There are 229 secondary, 1631 primary and 45 special schools in the maintained sector in Wales. Many of the primary schools are small and the closure or amalgamation of these schools has resulted in the slight annual decline in the total number. There are 56 private schools, fewer as a proportion of the number of schools in the maintained sector than elsewhere in the UK. At a national level, the National Assembly for Wales is responsible for the Welsh education system, whilst at a local level, the system is administered by 22 LEAs. They have a significant role in the management of schools more so for example than LEAs in England (Farrell and Law 1999) and there is no private sector involvement in Wales as there is in England. LEAs in Wales vary considerably in area...population and in their social, political and economic characteristics.*

*Provision at secondary school level is much more uniform than in England with maintained comprehensive schools being very much the norm. Only a very small number of schools left LEA control to become grant-maintained following the 1988 Education Reform Act. There are no Education Action Zones (Dickson and Power 2001), Specialist Schools (DfES 1997b) or Beacon Schools (DfES 2000) as there are in England. Wales has its own inspection service, Estyn, which is a Welsh term meaning 'extension'. Schools are inspected using an inspection framework different from the one used by OFSTED in England (Estyn, 1998). Welsh is the medium of communication in about a quarter of all schools. On average, classes in primary and secondary schools in Wales are smaller than those in England. The National Curriculum in Wales (Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Acesu Cymru (ACCAC, 2001)) includes Welsh and differs slightly in other respects in comparison with the National Curriculum elsewhere in the UK" (Avery et al 2003, pp 2).*

### Provision in Northern Ireland

Currently, Education and Library Boards (ELBs) are responsible for securing provision for SEN. There will, however, be major changes as ELBs are being replaced by the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). The ESA becomes fully operational in April 2009. From April 2009, the ESA will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of special educational needs support across Northern Ireland. At the time of writing, the precise nature and extent of ESA's functions were still being determined and it is possible that responsibility for ensuring the effective delivery of some aspects of SEN could be delegated to other authorities.

### Local Authorities in Scotland: Response to the presumption of mainstreaming

In 2003 the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) commissioned the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) to evaluate the effect of Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 which came into effect in August 2003 and introduced the presumption of mainstreaming in relation to pupils with special educational needs. The results of the research are reported by Pirrie et al (2005). The main aims were to examine the response of education authorities throughout Scotland to section 15 and to assess its impact on all those involved, including pupils, parents, and teachers, as well as other professionals and agents involved in supporting pupils with SEN (Pirrie et al 2005).

Although it was thought that the 2000 Act would lead to an increase in the number of children with SEN in mainstream schools, the study found that the movement towards mainstream schools predated the Act, in many cases dating back to the local government reorganisation of 1995-98. In

some cases this meant that specialist provision was no longer available within the Authority's area, and in other cases led to a substantial reduction in the number and range of specialist facilities. The SCRE research (Pirrie et al 2005) found that few local authorities could say how many children being educated in mainstream schools would previously have been educated in specialist provision. Another finding was that the statistical evidence suggested local authorities have different constructions of what constitute learning difficulties. The 2004 census data showed large inter-authority variations in the number and percentage of children described as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, but also in respect of those with moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties in language and/or mathematics (including dyslexia). As Wilson (2002) has pointed out:

*"whether someone has a special need is not a matter of empirical fact: it calls rather for a judgement of value"* (Wilson 2002, pp 64).

Evidence from one of the case study schools suggests that children on the autistic spectrum may exhibit behaviour that is incongruous and challenging, and which severely disrupts teaching and learning, leading them to suggest that the perceived rise in the incidence of challenging behaviour in schools, and indeed in the overall incidence of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, is related to the reported increase in the number of children on the autistic spectrum. However, as MacLeod and Munn (2004) point out, there is also a *"lack of consensus as to what SEBD actually is"* and *"broad agreement in the literature that the definition of SEBD is problematic"* (MacLeod and Munn 2004, pp 71).

Local authorities were asked whether they routinely monitored the experiences and outcomes of children who had transferred from special schools/units into mainstream provision. The majority of authorities (22) did so, generally through the annual review. This suggests that at the systemic level, the focus is on meeting the needs of individual pupils rather than on monitoring and evaluating any changes in placement patterns across the board.

The study found that children with physical impairments were generally found to benefit more from mainstream provision than children with severe, profound or complex and multiple impairments. There was a range of opinion on how effective mainstream provision was for children with autistic spectrum disorders, which may be partly explained by the problems of defining and diagnosing this condition.

The report concluded that there was considerable variation in the amount of political leverage afforded by the presumption of mainstreaming and there were good reasons why the pattern of 'high mainstreaming in outlying areas' and 'low mainstreaming in cities' first observed by Riddell (Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2001) persisted. Reasons included the choices available to parents of children with SEN and factors such as the reputation of the local school, the nature of the child's needs, and the perspectives of the family and of the health professionals and educational advisers who provided counsel and support. A key part of education policy regarding inclusion is the empowerment of parents to make informed decisions about their children's future: there are parents who prefer the special school option, and the mainstreaming legislation enables full account to be taken of their views. The researchers conclude that in this context:

*"...parental choice - enshrined in Scottish legislation since the 1981 Education (Scotland) Act – is one of the factors that makes inclusion a contingent, means-oriented project rather than one governed by the logic of instrumental rationality. The fact that there are two distinct viewpoints, one put forward by a group of parents who prefer specialist provision, and another by a group that prefers their children to attend their local school, presents a significant challenge for policy-makers"* (Pirrie et al 2005, pp 28).

### Spending on SEN in England and Wales

In 2002 a report by the Audit Commission (2002b) found that 15% of money spent on schools goes on special educational needs services, an increase of 25% since 1992. In 2001/02 this 15% represented £3.6 billion in England and Wales. Almost 275,000 pupils in England and Wales had a statement in 2001, an increase of 10% over the previous five years. Each statement cost almost £2,500 to produce, with LEAs spending about £90m every year on statutory assessments and writing

statements, *“not to mention the excessive diversion of professional energy and time away from direct work with schools”* (Rustemier 2002, pp 18). The Audit Commission’s report refers to statutory assessment as:

*“a costly, bureaucratic and unresponsive process...which may add little value in helping to meet a child's needs”* (Audit Commission 2002, pp 13),

and acknowledges that statements:

*“do not in practice always provide a guarantee that a child will get the provision that they need”* (Audit Commission 2002, pp 64).

The headline of a CSIE press release in 2005 was *Are LEAs in England abandoning inclusive education?* CSIE suggested that new rankings of all LEAs in England on the way they place pupils with statements of SEN questioned authorities’ commitments to inclusion. CSIE’s analysis of government data showed that, nationally, very little progress had been made towards inclusion between 2002 and 2004. The percentage of 0-19 year olds placed in special schools and other segregated settings by LEAs fell from 0.84% in 2002 (103,721 pupils) to 0.82% in 2004 (101,612 pupils). One-third of LEAs had increased the segregation of disabled pupils over the three years and the figures revealed ‘disturbing’ local variations in placement across England – in 2004 pupils with statements of SEN in South Tyneside were 24 times more likely to receive a segregated education than those in Newham, London. The LEAs with the highest and lowest percentage of pupils segregated in England in 2004 were:

Highest percentage		Lowest percentage	
LEA	% pupils segregated	LEA	% pupils segregated
South Tyneside	1.46	Newham	0.06
Wirral	1.34	Rutland	0.23
Halton and Knowsley	both 1.32	Nottinghamshire	0.45
Stoke on Trent	1.23	Nottingham	0.47
Birmingham and Lewisham	both 1.21	Cumbria	0.49

Source: CSIE website <http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/segregationstats2005.htm> accessed 18/1/08

Mark Vaughan, Founder and Co-Director of CSIE said:

*“It is simply unfair and unjust for families that moves towards inclusion have been so slow, and that these variations still exist 22 years after the law to include disabled pupils in mainstream education first came into force”* (CSIE 2005 Press Release).

CSIE wrote to Ruth Kelly, then Secretary of State for Education, calling for the Government to publicly restate its commitment to inclusion in education and to ensure that appropriate incentives and finances are available for schools and LEAs to make the necessary changes to reduce segregation.

The local variations have major implications for children and young people, parents and also for teachers. It appears from these figures that local authorities are interpreting the policy of inclusion in different ways and arranging their provision accordingly. CSIE have responded from the stance that higher percentages of specialist provision represent a lack of opportunity to access mainstream education and some parents, children and young people and teachers may feel the same. Others may argue, however, that the lack of non-mainstream education in some authorities denies access to appropriate specialist provision. Further research is necessary to consider the effects on teachers of local authority interpretation of inclusion that lead to such variations in the amount of specialist provision available. It is difficult to hypothesise about the possible findings.

For example, though it might be assumed that teaching is more difficult in a local authority that is pursuing a version of inclusion that makes little use of non-mainstream placement, if there is total commitment to this philosophy and an appropriate infrastructure to support this model this may not

be the case. Equally, though it might be assumed that teaching is easier in a local authority that is pursuing a version of inclusion that makes a lot of use of non-mainstream placement, the dual system may mean that the mainstream schools feel under resourced and teachers are unclear about their inclusive responsibilities and are continually under pressure to evidence why a child's needs are such that they cannot be met in mainstream schools.

## Conclusion

Local Authorities represent an important interpretive layer between national policy and the experience of teachers and other members of the school workforce. As this report has shown elsewhere (section 1.1 *What is Inclusion* and 1.2 *What are Special Educational Needs?*) there are numerous interpretable elements in relation to inclusion, including the role of specialism, the existence, or not, of a specialist SEN or inclusion pedagogy and the place of special schools. The interpretation made will be influenced by the interpreter's own philosophy about how best to respond to pupils with special educational needs or indeed whether 'special educational needs' is a valid construct in relation to a policy of inclusion. Certain interpretations of inclusion, focusing on notions of place (i.e. mainstream) as a key defining feature of inclusive practice, logically lead to the closure of specialist provision. Some local authorities have moved in this direction, substantially reducing the number of special school places available. *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004) has reiterated the consistent government view regarding a continued role for special schools in relation to a small number of pupils.

Interpretations of inclusion also have the potential to influence arrangements for the availability of support services. It could be argued that the focus of specialist teachers from a support service on individual 'special' children sustains the medical model of disability by reinforcing the idea of deficit within the child (Ainscow 1999). Depending on interpretation, some local authorities might operate separate teams for particular categories of need, others might develop integrated services rather than overtly retaining specialist staff for particular categories of need and some might substantially reduce their support services believing that this is contra-inclusion. Interpretation of inclusion also plays a part in the work that support services are retained to carry out within schools in the local authority. Blamires and Moore (2004) suggest that:

*"Support services...need to be seen to be in the business of enhancing professional expertise of teachers through the continuous development of their specialist teaching skills that are shared across different schools"* (Blamires and Moore 2004, pp 17).

This casts the visiting specialist teacher in a capacity building role rather than in a role involving extensive direct working with individual pupils either in the delivery of individualised programmes or for the purpose of identification and assessment.

In addition to the interpretive aspect based on a local authority's understanding of the philosophy and policy of inclusion, this section of the Review has highlighted the significance of geography and history in the provision available. Some local authorities simply do not have the same range of special schools as others and this situation may have arisen for a range of reasons in the past that are difficult to identify now. For some rural and outlying areas, there is the issue that distance is a barrier to provision being available. This is the case in relation to some of the Scottish islands for example where the determining factor regarding specialist provision is not philosophy but pragmatics.

The variables noted within this section point to both the history and geography of the local authority as well as its interpretation of the philosophy and policy of inclusion as being key determining factors of the experience of teachers and other members of the school workforce. As such local authority interpretations of the inclusion agenda are an important area for research.

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## SECTION 2: KEY ISSUES FOR THE CLASSROOM

### 2.1 CLASSROOM PRACTICE: GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR SEN AND INCLUSION

#### Key Findings

- In England the National Curriculum inclusion statement has established inclusive teaching as a general teaching requirement and subsequent documents have consistently presented the view that all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs.
- Research suggests that there is not a distinct special educational needs pedagogy though specialist knowledge is acknowledged as important.
- Guidance on inclusion through the National Strategies in England have emphasised a generic strengthening of teaching and learning (rather than specialist approaches) based on a belief that this will lead to better outcomes for all children, including those with special educational needs.
- There is a perception that more training is necessary in relation to special educational needs and inclusion, in particular in Initial Teacher Education (ITE).
- The provision of training needs to be planned to build confidence as well as competence as there are important links between classroom experiences, perceptions of preparedness and teacher self-efficacy.
- Where there is a lack of consensus or clarity in views on special educational needs (e.g. Thomas and Loxley's (2001) advocacy of shared needs or Aird's (2001) assertion of difference) there is likely to be a mismatch between training perceived necessary and that which is delivered.
- The training model applied needs to be considered carefully in terms of pedagogy.
- Training based on low level technical responses to need are of limited medium and long term use, though they may provide reassurance in the short term.
- More substantial training, such as university-based courses, that fosters critical thinking and the development of reflective practice offers greater potential but may entail additional work outside course sessions for the teacher.

This section of the report focuses largely on the English approach to the development of inclusive practice. This approach has arguably involved what Lambe and Bones (2006) termed an 'additive' model where changes are made to existing systems and structures. This is discussed in more detail in 1.4 *Educational Policy for Inclusion*. The National Curriculum predated the commitment to inclusion as did the Code of Practice (DfE 1994). The English example, therefore, is an interesting case study because having expressed commitment to the principles of inclusion in 1997, the English government has sought to drive this forward by revising these documents and issuing copious quantities of guidance. This guidance has varied from strategic management through to issues of pedagogy. Wales has followed a similar direction though it has a number of its own documents related to special educational needs and inclusion. Scotland has moved in a different direction by rethinking its curriculum and its approach to SEN, which is discussed in more detail in 1.4 *Educational Policy for Inclusion*. Arguably this is closer to the 'generative' approach described by Lambe and Bones (2006). It would be useful, through further research, to compare the experience of English and Scottish teachers. As commented by Lambe and Bones (2006), Northern Ireland in contrast has not yet made a definitive decision as to which model of inclusion will be adopted and is on the cusp of embracing major, historic educational changes.

The English document *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997) sets out the Government's commitment to pursuing an inclusion agenda in relation to the provision made for children with special educational needs. In keeping with this policy direction the revised National Curriculum contained a section, commonly referred to as the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement. This was

significant in setting inclusion within the context of being a general teaching requirement (DfEE/QCA 1999a/1999b). Within the document, the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement is described as a:

*“...detailed, overarching statement on inclusion which makes clear the principles schools must follow in their teaching right across the curriculum, to ensure that that all pupils have the chance to succeed, whatever their individual needs and potential barriers to learning may be”* (DfEE/QCA, 1999a, 1999b, pp 3).

It outlined three principles essential to develop a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
  - responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs;
  - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils
- (DfEE/QCA, 1999a, pp 30, 1999b, pp 32).

Each of these principles were elaborated on by a range of examples. The three principles have subsequently been depicted schematically as the Circles of Inclusion in the form of a Venn diagram within Primary National Strategy documents (e.g. DfES 2002, 2004a). The representation in this form emphasised the view that all three elements were necessary and that when correctly balanced the teacher had maximised the opportunities for the whole class and all the pupils were included in learning (DfEE 2000a).

There was a strong implication within the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement that differentiation and adaptations to the curriculum were part of the classroom teacher’s role and not a special needs intervention, or indeed, an indication that the child had special educational needs simply because such differentiation and adaptations were necessary.

The revised SEN Codes of Practice in England and Wales (DfES 2001, WAG 2002) made this more explicit in the statement that:

*“all schools will through their cycle of observation, assessment, planning and review make provision for increase curriculum differentiation, curricular adaptations, and pastoral or disciplinary procedures dependent on the individual child’s strengths and weakness. A variety of approaches should be employed to maximise the achievement of all pupils. These kinds of arrangements apply to all children and are not part of special educational provision”* (DfES 2001, pp 47, WAG, 2002, pp 46).

Many actions that under the original Code of Practice (DfE 1994) would have been considered to be Stage 1 now became part of:

*“the school’s usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies”* (DfES 2001, pp 52).

For teachers this may feel like an increase in responsibility, though it should be remembered that Stage 1 of the original Code of Practice (DfE 1994) still rested responsibility for meeting the child’s needs largely with the class teacher through differentiation. The significance perhaps is that whereas the labelling of such approaches as ‘Stage 1’ carried the connotation that this was something ‘over and above’ standard teaching, within the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement and the revised Code of Practice (DfES 2001) it is very much part of the teacher’s core duty.

### **Is there an inclusion or SEN pedagogy?**

The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement and the revisions to the Code of Practice in England are logical within a system that is striving to be inclusive. The challenge for the classroom teacher is to make inclusion as envisaged a reality. In the 2005 TTA Newly Qualified Teacher Survey (TTA 2005) only 45% of respondents rated their teacher training as good or very good with regard to how well it prepared them for working with children with special educational needs. However, figures are rather better for questions which relate to the fundamental components of good teaching such as:

- helping them plan their teaching to achieve progression in pupils’ learning (70%);
- preparing them to teach pupils of different abilities (60%);

- helping them to use teaching methods that promote pupils' learning (78%);
- helping them to understand how to monitor, assess, record and report pupils (64%).

(Source: TTA (2005) Results of the newly qualified teacher survey 2005 London: TTA)

The figures need to be interpreted cautiously because responses may be affected by a number of factors but one implication could be that these newly qualified teachers feel well prepared in relation to those elements that comprise good teaching but have a perception that there is an additional 'special' element that is significantly different to the components of good teaching that could have led them to feel better prepared in relation to pupils with SEN. This raises the issue of the need for specialist knowledge and whether teaching for pupils who have difficulties with learning is additional teaching of the same kind as for those without difficulties or is teaching which is different in kind (Corbett and Norwich 2005).

The DfES commissioned research in the form of *Teaching Strategies and Approaches for Pupils with Special Educational Needs* (Davis and Florian 2004) which considered whether there is or should be a specific SEN pedagogy. The report was clear in its statement that:

*"The teaching approaches and strategies identified during this review were not sufficiently differentiated from those which are used to teach all children to justify a distinctive SEN pedagogy. This does not diminish the importance of special education knowledge but highlights it as an essential component of pedagogy...questions about whether there is a separate special education pedagogy are unhelpful given the current policy context, and that the more important agenda is about how to develop a pedagogy that is inclusive of all learners"* (Davis and Florian 2004, pp 6).

This can be taken to mean that good teaching is good teaching for all and that the promotion of high-quality teaching for all will be sufficient in order for children with SEN to learn (DfES 2004a). However, the acknowledgement of the importance of special education knowledge as an essential component of pedagogy (Davis and Florian 2004) still leaves open for debate exactly what this might be and how and at what stage of their careers teachers develop it.

Much guidance issued since *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997) has emphasised a move away from individual need towards improving the quality of teaching in order to improve the learning of all children including those with special educational needs. Blamires (2001 cited in O'Brien (ed) 2001) offers a challenge to the shared needs view in his comment:

*"Is it valid to assume that a barrier to learning encountered by a child can always be applicable to the rest of the class or is it that an individual response may in fact be necessary and desirable?"* (Blamires 2001, in O'Brien (ed) 2001, pp 105).

At the heart of the argument over specialised pedagogy is how we think about children with special educational needs. Nind (2005, in Nind et al 2005) describes two contrasting positions, typified by Thomas and Loxley's advocacy of shared need:

*"Children who are slow to learn – for whatever reason – need the same in order to learn as any other child...our humanity tells us they need: interest, confidence, freedom from worry, a warm and patient teacher"* (Thomas and Loxley 2001, pp 26).

and Aird's (2001) assertion of difference:

*"The needs of disabled children are radically different from those of the average child. These needs must be given proper status"* (Aird 2001, pp 10).

There is, therefore, an ongoing tension between the characteristics that all learners share and the characteristics that distinguish them (Nind 2005 cited in Nind et al 2005). The tradition in the field of special education and the processes that relate to children identified as having special educational needs are rooted in identifying individual difference.

Some writers have attempted to acknowledge shared needs but also recognise the needs of particular groups and individuals. O'Brien (1998) has argued that there are needs that are Common to all children no matter what their physical, emotional, social, developmental or cognitive difficulty might be or in what setting they are taught. These needs include feeling a sense of belonging, being

recognised as a communicator, being respected as a person, being challenged as a learner and being afforded learning with dignity. Distinct needs are those that children share with some but not all others. Individual needs are, by definition, needs that other pupils do not have – they are unique to a specific person. A similar model has also been put forward by Norwich (1996). This is developed in Lewis and Norwich (2005). These models seem to offer a method of planning that accepts that whilst there are differences between learners there are some needs and characteristics that they share.

Dyson and Millward (2002, in Farrell and Ainscow (eds) 2002) suggest that whilst there are some children with special educational needs whose pattern of difficulties and characteristics are complex and atypical, the majority of children's SEN manifested themselves in a limited number of forms that were well-understood by both researchers and practitioners and backed by a well-established repertoire of strategies existed for addressing them. The equating of inclusive teaching with the notion that good teaching is good teaching for all is something of a double edged sword; on the one hand it empowers teachers by acknowledging that pupils' learning, the thing that teachers have always been concerned with, is the important element, on the other it may create a burden in terms of the level of planning involved in order to aspire to the ideal of quality first inclusive teaching (DfES 2002, 2005a).

### Inclusive Teaching

Primary National Strategy documents (e.g. DFES 2002, 2005a) in England have used the term 'wave one' to describe the inclusion of all children in a high quality lesson. This is also referred to as quality first teaching. Quality first inclusive teaching can be viewed as the enactment of the three principles from the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement. Including *All Children in the Literacy Hour and Daily Mathematics Lesson* (DfES 2002) includes an inclusive teaching observation checklist which aims to clarify what inclusive teaching will actually look like in the context of the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson. A variation of this, which is not linked just to numeracy and literacy, appeared later *Learning and Teaching for Children with Special Educational Needs in the Primary Years* (DfES 2004a). The checklists serve to define what quality first inclusive teaching entails.

The positive dimension to the focus on quality first inclusive teaching is that, by encompassing more children within this notion, it potentially limits the amount of *additional* or *different* action (DfES 2001) that it is necessary to take. For the class teacher, their experience is likely to be affected by the school's awareness of, and response to, DfES guidance. The revised *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DfES 2001) introduced a more flexible approach to the use of IEPs and this has been reaffirmed by Primary National Strategy guidance (DfES 2005a) which has stated:

*"It is now government policy that IEPs are only one method by which schools can plan for pupils with SEN. They are not statutory and are merely one way of planning and recording the additional or different provision for a child with SEN and recording outcomes for individual pupils. Where schools have arrangements to plan individually for all pupils and record their progress – as will become more common with personalised learning – then IEPs may be unnecessary"* (DfES 2005a, pp 214).

The adoption of this advice on IEPs and engagement with the waves model (see *fig 1*) advocated in Primary National Strategy documents (DfES 2002, DfES 2005a) as an approach to planning provision may well have the effect of reducing the number of pupils requiring interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies (DfES 2001) and this is likely to reduce the teachers' workload. However where teachers are being required to retain and manage high numbers of IEPs as well as engage with the mapping of provision using the Waves model this would seem to be unnecessary work. School interpretation of the guidance is therefore a crucial factor influencing the teacher's experience.

The inclusive teaching checklist and the description of quality first inclusive teaching can be seen as attempting to establish conditions conducive to the learning of all pupils. Florian and Rouse (2001 cited in Nind et al (eds) 2005) looking at secondary school made the observation:

*"the evidence from our research is that teachers who create inclusive classrooms often do not distinguish between 'special' and other pupils. They often hesitated too when answering questions about SEN pupils because they had to remind themselves who these pupils were. This is not because these teachers were not interested in meeting their learning needs but because they had adopted a problem solving approach to inclusion"* Florian and Rouse (2001, in Nind et al (eds) 2005).

The quote implies that these teachers are not dwelling on individual differences in terms of labels or diagnoses but are, in fact, focusing on learning and when learning does not happen they are problem solving to ensure that it does. This does not dismiss the need for specialist knowledge or techniques but rather sets these in the context of tools that are drawn on to solve the problem and facilitate learning. Such an approach seems to offer potential when coupled with the idea of setting the general conditions, or climate for learning, such that it is conducive to the learning and inclusion of all pupils.

The guidance issued through the Primary National Strategy in England gives a strong indication of the DfES' view on how inclusion can be operationalised within the classroom. Though emerging from relatively humble beginnings within the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the concept of quality first inclusive teaching when viewed in the broader context of policy has greater significance in identifying how inclusive teaching is viewed by policy makers in England. Quality first inclusive teaching is consistent with an assumption present from *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997) onwards that the effective curriculum is, broadly, a common curriculum for all pupils (Norwich 2001). It reflects a recasting of the notion of individualisation in relation to children with SEN. Instead of directing energies into case by case approaches to particular configurations of learning characteristics, the focus is shifted to the identification of broad strategies for responding to commonly occurring difficulties (Dyson and Millward 2002 cited in Farrell and Ainscow (eds) 2002).

However, it is important to recognise that quality first inclusive teaching and the waves model of which it is part, was linked originally with the standards raising priorities of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were target driven, aiming originally for 80% of 11 year olds gaining at least level 4 in English and 75% gaining the same in mathematics in the end of key stage national tests in 2002. This strong emphasis on targets has reduced somewhat in the light of *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES 2003a). As Florian and Rouse (2001, in Nind et al (eds) 2005) have argued it is the tensions between the two agendas of standards and needs and the pressure exerted on teachers to meet curriculum targets, that play a part in shaping attitudes of not only school staff but parents and pupils too, towards special needs.

The rest of the waves model gives a stronger indication of its origins in standards raising based on national test results. Wave two is described as:

*"Small-group intervention (NNS Springboard, NLS Early Literacy Support, Additional Literacy Support and Further Literacy Support programmes, Booster classes, equivalent LEA or school-based programmes) for children who can be expected to 'catch up' with their peers as a result of the intervention – that is, who do not have special educational needs related specifically to learning difficulties in literacy or mathematics. Wave Two interventions are not primarily SEN interventions. Where intervention programmes are delivered without modification within the designated year group, there is no requirement that the children involved should be placed on School Action. Children included in Wave Two interventions may on occasion already be at School Action or School Action Plus. This will be where they have special educational needs such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, communication and interaction difficulties, or sensory or physical impairment, for which they are receiving other forms of support"* (DfES 2002, pp 3).

Wave three is described as:

*"Specific targeted approaches for individual children identified as requiring SEN intervention. Children at Wave Three may have particular needs related specifically to mathematics or literacy, or needs associated with other barriers to their learning. Provision at Wave Three is likely to draw on specialist advice.*

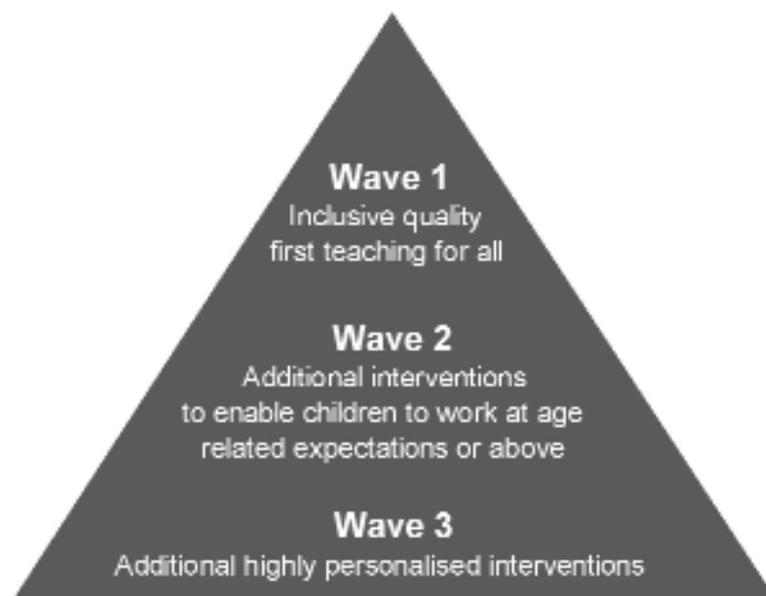
*It may involve the adjustment of learning objectives and teaching styles, and/or individual support. It aims to reduce gaps in attainment and facilitate greater access to Waves One or Two. Children receiving Wave Three support will always be placed on School Action, and on School Action Plus if an external agency is involved in assessment, planning and review"* (DfES 2002, pp 3).

In this early document, the definitions are rather convoluted in their explanation of how the waves model relates to the Code of Practice (DfES 2001) graduated response of School Action and School Action Plus. By 2005 the language had become more succinct, with a triangle being used to

represent the model and an applicability suggested beyond just literacy and numeracy.

(Fig 1 DFES 2005a, pp 201)

The waves model is also present within Secondary (formerly Key Stage 3) National Strategy materials but it has, so far, remained linked to the management of the variety of DfES produced intervention



programmes available. The language is strongly rooted in notions of catch up:

- *Wave 1 is about offering all catch-up pupils, as part of everyday lessons, inclusive and well-differentiated experience in the classroom, giving them plenty of support and opportunity to catch up with age-related expectations;*
- *Wave 2 is about offering some groups of pupils short term help to accelerate key points of learning they have missed or which are insecure.*
- *Wave 3 is about offering focused support to individual pupils when small group interventions fail to work*

(DfES 2003b, pp 8).

Within the Primary National Strategy, the waves model is strongly associated with the concept of provision mapping. Recording provision for each wave has been present as an idea in NLS and NNS from some of the earliest publications (e.g. DfEE 2000b). However, its branding as provision mapping within *Leading on Inclusion* (DfES 2005a) has given it greater prominence. Gross and White (2003) advocated this approach within their book *Special Educational Needs and School Improvement*. Gross (2000) had previously used the term provision mapping in an earlier article *Paper Promises? Making the Code Work for You* which had explored the bureaucratic burden created by SEN processes and questioned the efficacy of highly individualised approaches and encouraged a focus on teaching and learning. In *Special Educational Need and School Improvement* Gross and White (2003) are explicit in their introduction about their aim of helping:

*"...mainstream schools raise attainment and promote the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), by applying to SEN the tools for school improvement which have proved successful in raising standards for the broad majority of pupils"* (Gross and White 2003, pp 4).

By applying these familiar school improvement strategic approaches to SEN, there is a sense in which, as the book suggests, SEN is demystified. There is also a focus on outcomes of support rather than simply providing support, and this links with a need identified by OFSTED (2004).

Provision mapping makes use of the waves model to identify the provision made for pupils within the school and to co-ordinate different funding streams that support interventions for pupils. It also fits more readily with an inclusive philosophy by placing the emphasis on the provision the school

needs to make to ensure progress rather than focusing on deficit. In a sense it is developing the themes from the revised Code of Practice that, in its adoption of the terms School Action and School Action Plus, also put its emphasis on the interventions necessary to ensure 'adequate progress' (DfES 2001).

The waves model and the associated provision mapping is gaining favour, not least because it may impact on the bureaucracy that is still associated with SEN. The *Implementation Review Unit* (DfES 2005b) commented,

*"We share the widespread and longstanding view that the processes and paperwork associated with meeting legal commitments towards children with special educational needs are both more burdensome and less effective than they should and could be"* (DfES 2005b, pp 17).

The IRU endorsed the Primary National Strategy's guidance on provision mapping as an alternative to IEPs. This could be indicative of a move, certainly away from the dominance of the IEP in planning for children with special educational needs, and possibly from the use of the categories of School Action and School Action Plus.

An issue to consider is whether a move away from individual educational plans and increasing emphasis on provision made via wave two or wave three interventions will mean some children's needs are not given the proper status (Aird 2001) and they receive generic interventions rather than the more individualised approaches that might be associated with the identification and assessment procedures within the SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001). Whilst this is a justified concern, it is also important to make an honest appraisal in relation to the majority of pupils identified with SEN as to whether, despite individualised approaches to identification, assessment, planning and recording, the resulting interventions are in fact very similar for many of these pupils. Gross and White (2003) make the observation, based on OFSTED/Audit Commission (2002) findings, that the majority of SEN effort in schools and local authorities goes on the complex systems for identifying need and proving (or disproving) the case for additional help. It is difficult to break this association and move away from the perverse incentive (Moore 1999) of needing to prove lack of progress in order to obtain the provision to meet the need.

### **Inclusion, SEN and the School Improvement**

The premise that good teaching is good teaching for all fits readily with a school improvement agenda and would seem to build a bridge between the apparent competing demands of standards raising and inclusion. The school improvement agenda, with its focus on environmental factors in the form of school processes and characteristics (Lunt and Norwich 1999), links with the views of Booth and Ainscow (2002) for example that there are barriers that may be found in all aspects of school, including in the interaction between students and their teachers. Ainscow (1997) sees the effectiveness of SEN provision as inextricably linked with the school's effectiveness in optimising the learning of all pupils. Taking this perspective, the focus logically becomes whole school improvement involving teachers reflecting critically on the established procedures for optimising the educational progress of all pupils.

The school improvement/effectiveness focus emerged as a welcome antidote to the widespread acceptance based on earlier work by Coleman (1966) and Jencks (1972) in the United States that schools made little difference in terms of the attainment of pupils (Rutter et al (1979). Rutter and his colleagues (1979) produced research challenging this in their study *Fifteen Thousand Hours* (Rutter et al 1979) and demonstrating that schools can and do make a difference and that some schools make more of a difference than others. The importance of the school factors influencing behaviour was acknowledged within the *Elton Report* (DES 1989).

School effectiveness and school improvement literature has grown in its influence in the debates on special needs in the early nineties (Florian and Rouse 2001 cited in Nind et al (eds) 2005) and this is perhaps due to how readily it fits with the inclusion agenda in demanding:

*"a re-conceptualisation of the specials needs task so that it might emerge from being only concerned with students' cognitive, emotional or pathological problems to being seen as a part of the process of school improvement"* (Florian and Rouse 2001, in Nind et al (eds) 2005).

The process of applying school improvement approaches to special educational needs can be seen as indicative of broader policy shift since 1997 commented upon by Armstrong (2005):

*“The ‘enlightenment’ of educational policy was grounded in the school-effectiveness and school improvement movements. The language of individual pupil needs was ostensibly rejected and replaced by a policy focused upon failing schools and the actions required to transform institutional failure into success and by this means into individual achievement”* (Armstrong 2005, pp 137).

A degree of caution needs to be exercised, however, to ensure that this closer aligning helps us to a recognition that human strengths and weaknesses can only be understood in the context in which they occur (Florian and Rouse 2001, in Nind et al (eds) 2005), and does not lead to a relocation of ‘blame’ to the school or teacher.

### Evaluating Inclusive Practice in Schools

The Code of Practice (DfES 2001) was clear that all teachers were teachers of children with special educational needs and this was confirmed by *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004b) which stated that all teachers should expect to teach children with special educational needs. The National Curriculum Inclusion statement, the Code of Practice (DfES 2001) and, more recently, the notion of quality first inclusive teaching have all served to emphasise this. A key question is whether this represents an increased expectation that brings significant implications for teacher workload. MacBeath et al (2006) note that increasing the range of needs and abilities within the ‘mainstream’ classroom without addressing curriculum, testing and ‘standards-driven’ accountability, has had a major impact on the nature and balance of teachers’ work.

Despite the emphasis on inclusive teaching, OFSTED were critical in their 2004 report noting that the teaching seen of pupils with SEN was of varying quality, with a high proportion of lessons having shortcomings, commenting:

- *Despite the helpful contributions by the national strategies, work to improve the literacy of pupils with SEN remains of inconsistent quality, with too little exposure to challenging activities.*
- *Support by teaching assistants can be vital, but the organisation of it can mean pupils having insufficient opportunity to develop their understanding, skills and independence.*
- *The teaching outside mainstream classes of pupils with the most significant learning and behavioural difficulties often focused well on their needs, but risked disconnecting them from the work of the class.*
- *Only a third of secondary schools were effective in meeting the needs of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Learning mentors played a valuable role.*
- *High staff turnover is a barrier to inclusion in some schools.*

(OFSTED 2004, pp 15)

These comments were specifically concerned with teaching but there were more general criticisms of other elements that could be construed as part of inclusive teaching:

- *A minority of mainstream schools meet special needs very well, and others are becoming better at doing so.*
- *Expectations of achievement are often neither well enough defined, nor pitched high enough. Progress in learning remains slower than it should be for a significant number of pupils.*
- *Few schools evaluate their provision for pupils with SEN systematically so that they can establish how effective the provision is and whether it represents value for money. The availability and use of data on outcomes for pupils with SEN continue to be limited.*
- *Not enough use is made by mainstream schools of the potential for adapting the curriculum and teaching methods so that pupils have suitable opportunities to improve key skills.*
- *Effective partnership work between mainstream schools and special schools on curriculum and teaching is the exception rather than the rule.*

- Over half the schools visited had no disability access plans and, of those plans that did exist, the majority focused only on accommodation.

(OFSTED 2004, pp 5)

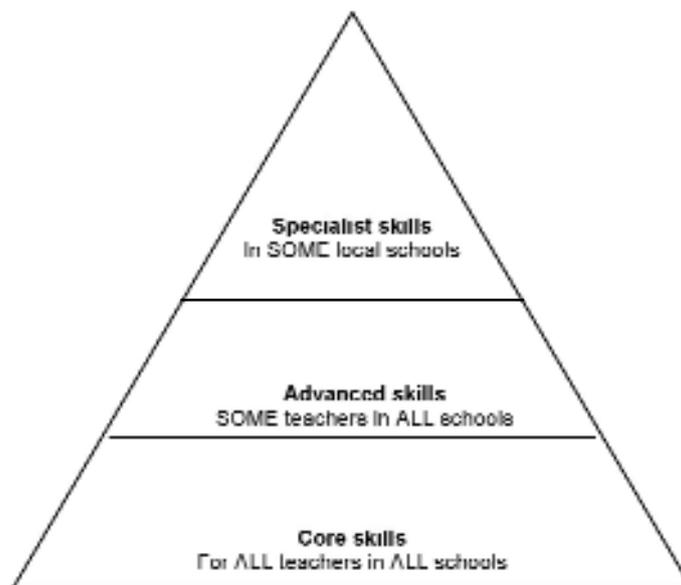
This presents a somewhat bleak picture. OFSTED was to offer a more positive perspective two years later, commenting:

*“The most important factor in determining the best outcomes for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is not the type but the quality of the provision. Effective provision was distributed equally in the mainstream and special schools visited, but there was more good and outstanding provision in resourced mainstream schools than elsewhere. Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) were the least successful of all settings visited”* (OFSTED 2006, pp 2).

This effectively focused attention away from whether inclusion per se was effective or not and on to the effectiveness of provision. The phrase ‘best outcomes’ is significant as it confirms the importance of evaluating inclusion based on outcomes for the child, not just based on whether practice appears inclusive or whether inclusion is subscribed to at the level of principles or incorporated in policy.

### Implications for Training

In keeping with the view that all teachers are teachers of children with SEN, DfES (2004b) presented within *Removing Barriers to Achievement* a three-tier training model (fig 1) based on three levels of skill: Core, Advanced and Specialist.



(Fig 2 DfES 2004b, pp 56)

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* sees the route to improving core skills as being the development of initial teacher education to ensure that a good grounding is provided in the skills necessary for teaching in “today’s diverse classrooms” (DfES 2004b, pp 56). These core skills, the document suggested, include:

- planning and teaching for inclusion and access to the curriculum;
- behaviour management and awareness of the emotional and mental health needs of pupils (to build their self esteem as learners);
- assessment for learning (learning skills);
- an understanding of where professional advice may be needed.

(DfES 2004b, pp 56-57)

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* emphasises the role of higher education institutions in ensuring that initial teacher training provides this good grounding.

The advanced skills teachers programme is seen as the vehicle for creating “a new cadre of staff with particular expertise in SEN and dealing with pupils with emotional, mental and behavioural difficulties” (DfES 2004b, pp 58). The choice of phrase is interesting, deviating from the standard current terminology of *behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (or development)* and referring to *mental* difficulties.

The Specialist Skills level within the diagram (fig 2) refers to the development of specialist expertise within each community of schools to support the inclusion of children with increasingly complex needs. It is anticipated that this would involve higher education institutions supporting the development of specialist qualifications, covering both theory and practice, for those wishing to specialise in SEN in mainstream or special sectors. The areas cited as examples of the fields these qualifications might relate to are behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or severe learning difficulties.

The preparation of teachers through their initial teacher education to teach children with special educational needs has been an enduring issue. In the mid-nineties, just as international and national emphasis was turning to the adoption of more inclusive approaches, many new teachers were expressing apprehension about their ability to teach pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and identified that their preparation for inclusion was inadequate at best (Dwyfor Davies and Garner 1997; Garner 1996; Schumm and Vaughn 1995 and Scruggs and Mastropieri 1996). Despite policy developments that emerged from this period demonstrating commitment to the philosophy of inclusion this lack of preparation has remained a consistent factor, with researchers finding that inclusion is inadequately addressed and often neglected in teacher training (Barton 2003; Booth, Nes and Stromstad 2003, Garner 2001 and in O’Brien (ed) 2001; Bishop and Jones 2002 and Thomas and Loxley, 2001).

There is a strong argument that training holds the key to developing inclusive practice. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) suggest that resistance to inclusion is less when practitioners have acquired special education qualifications in pre-service or in-service programmes. Garner (2001 cited in O’Brien (ed) 2001) has suggested that the concept of inclusion is unworkable at a practical level because of a persistent shortfall in requisite skills, experiences and values of teachers in mainstream schools.

*National Standards for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators* (TTA 1998) and *Specialist (SEN) Teachers* (TTA 1999) and reference within *Meeting Special Educational Needs: A Programme of Action* (DfEE 1998) to the significance of the SEN professional reflected increased attention on the need to identify and develop the skills of teachers working with children with SEN. Garner (2000) describes these efforts as worthy but largely inconsequential as there was neither an accompanying emphasis on SEN/inclusion issues within initial teacher education, nor a raft of induction opportunities for NQTs to debate inclusive policy and practice.

Garner (2000) has questioned the reliance on school experience as the means by which trainees develop knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to SEN and inclusion. He argues that there will inevitably be a major variation as the concept of inclusion, as indeed SEN itself, is received with various degrees of understanding and commitment across the teaching profession and varies in emphasis from school to school.

A potential dilemma for initial teacher training providers is whether input in relation to SEN and inclusion should exist as distinct inputs or should permeate all other parts of the teacher training course. Garner (2000) argues that the widespread adoption of ‘permeation’ has resulted in a dilution of SEN inputs into ITE courses. As Garner suggests, the logic behind such an approach is that it provides an inclusive message, whereas distinct sessions perhaps with a specialist in the field brought in, potentially sends a message that inclusion or working with children with special educational needs is the preserve of the specialist and something quite distinct from subject teaching. Permeation has the particular disadvantage of being difficult to monitor (Mittler 1992).

Winter (2006), commenting on ITE in Northern Ireland, cites the work of Kearns and Shevlin (2006) which identified three main patterns of course structure in the BEd programme with similar ones in PGCE programmes. Generally these were:

- a single course or series of SEN/inclusion units delivered by specialists;
- permeated or infused SEN made explicit in some instances but implicit in others;
- combinations of these two approaches.

Like Mittler (1992), Kearns and Shevlin (2006) point out that there are difficulties associated with the monitoring of permeated input. In Winter's (2006) small survey, 89% of respondents felt that their initial teacher training programmes had not prepared them to teach in inclusive settings. The Irish teachers surveyed in Winter's (2006) work endorse a combination of permeated and stand alone courses as a preferred method of SEN delivery.

Garner (2000) recommends that it should be compulsory for all students to receive a current core input on SEN and inclusion together with mandatory and structured opportunities to experience special/inclusive practice. This need for a mandatory special education module was also recommended more recently by the inspectorate in Northern Ireland in its review of ITE provision (DE 2005) In an earlier work, Garner (1994) argued that exposure to children with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties was an important component in breaking down prejudice and misunderstanding. Garner (2000) calls for ITE provision in SEN/inclusion to be planned and delivered at least in part by, or in consultation with, tutors who have specific experience and qualifications in the field of SEN.

An important issue to explore in further research is the ready acceptance that more is necessarily better with regard to training. Focusing on classroom behaviour problems, Giallo and Little (2003) have explored the complex relationship between trainee and qualified teachers' feelings of preparedness, classroom experiences and self-efficacy. It is perhaps this set of relationships that need to be explored further in order to determine whether the issue is a need for *more* training or *different* training. Currently the Irish Inspectorate's favouring of a stand alone course and the preference of the teachers in Winter's survey for the maintaining of this component alongside permeated elements may be indicative of a desire to be able to point to the specific input and to be able to highlight exactly where trainees received preparation in relation to SEN. This potentially builds confidence as the individual is able to pinpoint clearly that they have had that particular piece of preparation. Whether this leads to any more than a superficial sense of preparedness or impacts on performance in the classroom would need to be investigated. There is also the other complex dimension that the individual personality of the teacher will be a factor. If the individual has a stronger sense of self-efficacy s/he may be able to capitalise more on input, whether permeated or stand alone, because of a stronger belief in his/her ability to apply this in practice and achieve the desired outcome. Giallo and Little (2003), drawing on the work of Bandura (1986) and Gibson and Dembo (1984) define self-efficacy as:

*"an individual's judgement of his/her ability to execute successfully a behaviour required to produce certain outcomes...Such beliefs are thought to be an important moderator between an individual's knowledge and skills and his/her behaviour"* (Giallo and Little 2003, pp 22).

Simply providing more in-service or pre-service training in relation to SEN and inclusion based on a 'more is better' principle may be of limited benefit without a greater understanding of the interaction between teachers' feelings of preparedness, classroom experiences and self-efficacy. In considering the type of training that would be beneficial it is also necessary to take into account a number of issues explored within section 1.3 *Teachers' Attitudes and Inclusion*. This too points to a need not just to look at quantity of training or how technical skills can be imparted.

The type of training provided will be shaped by the views of the provider based on their conceptualisations of special educational needs and inclusion. This links back to arguments from the start of this section regarding the characteristics that all learners share and the characteristics that distinguish them (Nind 2005 cited in Nind et al 2005) and how these can be balanced in training. An acceptance of the shared characteristics view potentially leads to an emphasis on the sorts of strategies and approaches incorporated in the inclusive teaching checklists (DfES 2002, 2004a), whereas distinguishing characteristics potentially leads to an emphasis on areas of need from the Code of Practice. For the recipients of the training, their underlying beliefs on this issue are likely to influence how valuable they feel the training is. For trainees, therefore, there may be a need to commit time within training courses to exploring and challenging these beliefs.

As well as the content of any training, there are pedagogical issues to consider. Hopkins (2001), citing the earlier work of Joyce and Showers (1995) suggests that there are a number of key components which, when used in combination, have much greater power than when they are used alone. These are:

- presentation of theory or description of skill or strategy;
- modelling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching;
- practice in simulated and classroom settings;
- structured and open-ended feedback (provision of information about performance);
- coaching for application (hands-on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom).

(Hopkins 2001, pp 97).

In England this training pedagogy has been endorsed within the Key Stage 3 National Strategy document *Sustaining Improvement* (DfES 2003c). Despite the recognition of this approach, much of what teachers receive in the way of guidance takes the form only of a presentation of theory or description of a skill or strategy. The recent document special educational needs *in mainstream schools: A guide to beginning teachers* (TDA 2006) for example, is a concise document giving information in an easily accessible form but it is still essentially telling the new teacher what they need to do. Within some National Strategy documents (e.g. DfES 2004a) video extracts are now included which incorporate elements of modelling or demonstration, though when presented as an exemplar without exploration of the contextual and historical factors involved in the evolution of this practice these run the risk of being readily dismissed as unworkable or leave schools feeling inadequate as the ideal presented may seem too high to aspire to. An important area for further research is the impact of the copious quantity of guidance materials already produced. It may be that there is an issue regarding the type of training and training pedagogy employed rather than a problem of lack of availability.

Pirrie et al (2005), considering the complexity of inclusion in their review of mainstreaming in Scotland, suggest that:

*"...examples of good practice are of limited hermeneutic and predictive value if they are presented as blueprints for success. It is not so much the end-product that is of interest, but the process through which it evolved, and the lessons learned along the way"* (Pirrie et al 2005, pp 17).

Numerous materials produced by the DfES in England have adopted this approach, setting out vignettes of good practice sometimes accompanied by video extracts (e.g. DfES 2004a). It needs to be questioned therefore how successful this has been in changing practice.

Avramidis et al (2000) emphasised the importance of thinking beyond low (INSET) level technical responses to need, towards longer-term reflective practitioner training (Bayliss 1998) and suggested that substantial training, such as university-based courses, fostering critical thinking was more likely to result in a critical understanding of 'inclusion' and in the acquisition of generic teaching skills. Such training, Avramidis et al (2000) argued, was:

*"more likely to provide the practitioners with both a vision and knowledge skills to operationalise that vision; skills which allow them to modify their everyday practice in ways which are ultimately inclusive"* (Avramidis et al 2000, pp 209).

There are clearly issues about the type of training that would make the difference to teachers' confidence and competence. The findings from Avramidis et al (2000) highlight:

*"the importance and effectiveness of substantial self-reflective training which results in the acquisition of generic teaching skills necessary for meeting the needs of all the children as opposed to short-term technical responses to specific needs"* (Avramidis et al. 2000, pp 208).

Taking Avramidis et al's (2000) views, a simple competency-based model involving solely the acquisition of specific strategies and approaches would seem to be of only limited use. However, there needs to be recognition that a university-based course, as suggested by Avramidis et al (2000), will typically carry some accreditation that will involve the teacher in additional work at an academic level appropriate to the level at which the course is accredited. If such study were to become the

mainstay for training serving teachers in relation to special educational needs and inclusion, rather than an option pursued by an interested few, it would require a major mind shift and adequate resourcing to allow teachers the time to engage with and complete the work involved. There is also the additional consideration of a potential mismatch between the type of training research (e.g. Avramidis et al (2000)) suggests teachers would benefit from, and teachers' own perceptions of what would help them most. It may be that teachers generally believe that they need 'technical responses to specific needs' (Avramidis et al 2000) based on the belief in the importance and existence of a specialist SEN pedagogy. Consequently, it may be difficult to engender faith in the type of training Avramidis et al (2000) suggest would be more appropriate.

## Conclusion

The commitment to inclusion has led, as this section has indicated, to education policy being updated to reflect a more inclusive approach. This has brought an increased expectation that teachers develop their standard practice to include a wider range of learners. For example, in England, the training model presented in *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES 2004) attempts to provide a framework for training through its three-tier model. An issue still remains, however, of how teachers are best supported to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. It is unclear to what extent curriculum guidance documents that are intended to support teachers and which refer, specifically, to inclusion issues, are accessed by teachers, whether teachers have the time to read them and internalise the ideas and most importantly whether practice is enhanced. In England, a number of National Strategy documents (e.g. DfES 2005a) are structured to encourage dissemination by key members of staff through staff development activities and an important area for investigation would be whether this is happening. From the perspective of moves within the four nations to examine issues of teacher workload, another relevant question may be *when* this is happening.

When considering training and guidance in relation to special educational needs and inclusion it is necessary to make a distinction between what practitioners want, need and can utilise. Busy practitioners may *want* the simple competency-based model where specific strategies and approaches are presented for a particular type of need. However, if the body of literature that suggests that there is not a specific SEN or inclusion pedagogy is correct, it is questionable whether this type of training is really what teachers *need*, even though it may be what they consider they want. Increasingly, the dominant perspective is that strengthening teaching and learning for all is the route to securing better outcomes for individuals, hence the DfES (2002, 2004a) emphasis on the development of quality first inclusive teaching. Nevertheless, there are undoubtedly some types of need (e.g. autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia) where there are well-established techniques familiar to specialists in these fields that can be imparted through training. Arguably, this represents specialist knowledge rather than specialist pedagogy, which is a distinction made by Davis and Florian (2004). When considering specialist knowledge in terms of strategies and approaches advocated in relation to a particular type of need, however, it is necessary to consider whether these can actually be utilised in the setting for which they are suggested. Highly individualised strategies may be completely impractical to implement in a mainstream school because of the class size and the availability of human and other resources. It is imperative that those involved in providing advice, support and guidance to mainstream schools have regard for what is practical, based on an awareness of the context in which any recommended strategies or interventions will be applied.

Trainee teachers in England are told that many of the strategies suggested for pupils with particular needs will be useful to most, if not all pupils (TDA 2006). Whether the converse is true and strategies suggested for all pupils will be beneficial for those identified with particular needs is unclear. The emphasis on developing "*quality first inclusive teaching*" (e.g. DfES 2005a) would suggest that this is the belief. This may also be the most practical approach. If teachers can develop their teaching so that their standard practice reaches a broader range of pupils it has the potential to minimise the number of individualised additional and/or different approaches they need to plan for and manage. The priority may be to focus training in this area. This is rooted in the shared need perspective (e.g. Thomas and Loxley 2001), which might cause concern for some who "*assert the reality of individual differences and disabilities*" (Norwich 2002, pp 495) and, like Aird (2001), argue that these should be given proper status. Arguably there has been a tendency to over-individualise problems in

education (Norwich 2002) and this stronger focus on the needs pupils share is an antidote to this. However, the dominant influence of the social model of disability that underpins the concept of inclusion carries the risk of “over-socialising problems” (Norwich 2002, pp 495) and failing to recognise relevant individual factors. There may therefore be utility in structuring training that reflects both the bio-psycho-social model (see section 1.2 *What are Special Educational Needs?*) as a way of understanding needs in the context of a policy of inclusion and O’Brien’s (1998) common-distinct-individual needs model as a way of planning teaching.

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## 2.2 BEHAVIOUR, SEN AND INCLUSION

### Key Findings

- Official data suggests that behaviour represents a considerably greater problem at secondary schools.
- Some of the problematic behaviour in secondary schools is likely to be attributable to factors peculiar to the secondary education system.
- The label SEBD is problematic because it is largely socially constructed, it covers a diverse pupil population and encompasses everything from withdrawn behaviours through to severe 'acting out' behaviours.
- The Primary National Strategy SEAL materials were informed by research (Weare and Gray 2003), have been piloted and subsequently evaluated. This is a desirable model for implementing new initiatives.
- Though teachers generally endorse the principles of the inclusion they express concern about the inclusion of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Training has a role to play in supporting teachers in dealing with behaviour but a 'more is better' approach in terms of either the amount of training or the range of strategies offered in it is unlikely to contribute significantly to either competence or confidence.
- The distinction between low level behaviour and more challenging behaviour is often made. This may give insufficient recognition to the fact that the majority of more challenging behaviour will be as the result of an escalation from a more minor problem and therefore may be reduced by greater awareness of proactive, preventative measures applied at the low level disruption stage.
- The distinction between normal naughtiness (DfE 1994a) and SEBD may be unhelpful as though expressed in terms of a continuum it may imply a threshold past which the child requires highly specialised approaches. This may have a de-skilling effect on teachers.
- Accepting that the causes of behaviour rarely reside solely in the individual pupil is potentially challenging as it can create the impression that blame is being attributed to the teacher or school.
- There is a continued tension between the needs of the one and the needs of the many within debates on inclusion; the debate is probably nowhere more sharply focused than in the area of the inclusion of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- DfES materials on behaviour and attendance have a lot to offer schools but schools need to have the willingness and time to engage with these.

### Introduction

Based on inspections of English schools OFSTED (2004) made the point that overall, the issue of admissions of pupils with social and behavioural difficulties was proving the hardest test of the inclusion framework and the one over which conflicts between meeting individual needs and 'efficient education for other children' (DfES 2001a) were the most problematic to reconcile. Significantly this group of pupils was also one of those cited by Baroness Warnock (2005) when raising concerns about the policy of inclusion.

There seems little doubt that this is the group of pupils that consistently cause concern in relation to the inclusion agenda. Clough and Lindsay's (1991) investigation of the attitudes of teachers towards integration and to different kinds of support revealed that, despite some evidence that attitudes had shifted in favour of integrating children with SEN in the preceding 10 years or so, teachers identified children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) as the most difficult to integrate.

A similar view was reported by Avramidis et al (2000), with their respondents seeing pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) as causing significantly greater concern and stress than pupils with other difficulties. Croll and Moses (2000), reporting from their interviews with education officers and headteachers of both special and mainstream schools in the UK, found that:

*“Most generally, children with moderate learning difficulties and children with sensory or mobility problems were regarded as most appropriately integrated in mainstream settings, while children with severe and complex difficulties and children with emotional and behavioural problems were most frequently regarded as exceptions to the principle of inclusion”* (Croll and Moses 2000, pp 5).

Reflecting the belief that the inclusion of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties presents schools with special challenges, the green paper *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE 1997) devoted a section to pupils with this type of need. It put forward the proposals that by 2002 there would be:

- a national programme in place to help primary schools tackle EBD at a very early stage;
- enhanced opportunities for all staff to improve their skills in teaching children with EBD;
- a national programme to offer support to EBD special schools experiencing problems;
- expanded support for schemes designed to renew the motivation of older pupils with EBD.

There was also a requirement for LEAs in England to produce Behaviour Support Plans from April 1998 detailing their arrangements for the education of children with behavioural difficulties, including those with special educational needs.

Early intervention, the need for training and the increasing levels of disaffection at secondary school are enduring themes in attempts to address behaviour in schools. Behaviour also consistently emerges in TDA satisfaction surveys as an area newly qualified teachers feel least prepared for by their training.

It is clear, therefore, that pupil behaviour is a major source of concern for policy makers in terms of the challenge it poses in the context of an inclusion agenda and a source of considerable anxiety to teachers.

### **Low-level disruption: the behaviour that concerns teachers most?**

The *Elton Report* (DES 1989) put forward the view from its findings that incidents of serious misbehaviour, and especially extreme acts of violence, remain very rare and it is persistent, low level disruption that troubles teachers most. Whilst this statement was reassuring in terms of the national picture at the time, it is important to note that more than one in 10 secondary teachers and more than one in 20 primary teachers mentioned that they had ‘verbal abuse’ directed at them by students during the week of the Elton Report’s survey. The Teacher Support Network website reported in 2002 on research conducted in 2000 by Opinion Leader Research which indicated that an estimated 85,000 teachers had experienced aggression from pupils in a two year period.

Reporting on the Incidents of Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour against Local Authority School Staff in 2001/2002, the Scottish Executive stated that:

- *The total number of incidents reported against local authority school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) was 5,412.*
- *Thirty-seven per cent of these incidents occurred within the primary sector, 30 per cent in the secondary sector, 32 per cent in the special sector and, two per cent in pre-school centres of education.*
- *Two thirds of the incidents reported involved teaching staff. There were 64 incidents against teaching staff per 1,000 teachers.*

(Scottish Education Executive Department 2003, pp 1.)

The NASUWT conducted three surveys over the period from May 2001 to January 2003 looking at verbal abuse in schools in South West, Eastern and North West regions of England.

The South West survey found:

- verbal abuse was a characteristic of primary, secondary and special schools;
- the highest levels of abuse were perpetrated by pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 with a peak in Years 9 to 11;
- abuse occurred throughout the school day, with particular hotspots as pupils approached the lunchtime break and the end of the school day;
- the range of verbal abuse included intimidation, personal and other insults, threats of violence, and assault;
- the survey report estimated that the level of physical abuse against teachers in schools in the South West region stood at 273 cases against primary teachers and 1,001 cases directed against secondary school teachers.

Confirming many of the findings of the South West region survey, the Eastern Region survey reported:

- verbal assaults constituted 69% of all cases reported by teachers;
- the remainder of cases included physical assault, sexist, racist and homophobic assaults on teachers;
- the range of physical attacks on teachers included being bitten, scratched, kicked, punched and spat at;
- teachers reported having had property damaged and items of furniture thrown at them;
- whilst almost all assaults were reported by teachers to a member of their school senior management team, the survey revealed that in one-quarter of all cases no action had been taken, and that in almost half of all cases teachers had expressed disappointment with the action taken by the senior management team.

Portraying a similar picture, the North West survey reported:

- in just 10 working days 964 reports of abuse were received;
- twelve per cent of the reports were from primary schools;
- sixty-four per cent of the reports were from secondary schools;
- twenty-five per cent of the reports were from special schools;
- 126 cases of physical abuse were identified, including racist and sexist abuse of teachers.

NASUWT (2004).

The NASUWT also commissioned a research study into violence and indiscipline in schools (Wright and Keetley 2003). The study incorporated an international element drawing on research from the United States, Ireland, France and Spain. This revealed similar issues relating to the scale and nature of violence and indiscipline within schools to those research studies conducted in the UK. From an examination of literature the report arrives at a set of risk factors for indiscipline and violence which are:

- *External and internal to schools:*
  - a) *External: social structure (class boundaries), racism, migration, and sociodemographic composition of the school community and school setting;*
  - b) *Internal: hierarchical and authoritarian educational system, compulsory homogeneous curriculum, school size, number of students per school and class, school policies, staff cohesion, style of management/leadership, curriculum and teaching material content;*
- *Sociodemographic characteristics of students and staff: Poverty, social deprivation, ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, urban areas versus rural areas, age, and gender;*
- *Personal Characteristics/Psychological health of students and staff: Ethnicity, age, gender,*

*Special Needs, self-esteem and position within school - pupil, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, management staff.*

(Wright and Keetley 2003, pp 45.)

As Wright and Keetley (2003) point out, these factors are interrelated and one or several of these could be more important according to the community circumstances, the school and individual, but all need to be considered as potential positive or negative factors for indiscipline or violence in schools.

The consistent official line in England and Wales continues to be that in most schools most pupils work hard and behave well (OFSTED 2005, DfES 2005a, Estyn 2006) and low-level disruption is the most common form of misbehaviour. A similar message is presented in Scotland, with HMIE stating:

*"In Scotland's schools the majority of children and young people are engaged in quality learning and teaching which is taking place in a positive and purposeful environment"* (Scottish Executive, 2001, pp 110).

OFSTED (2005) confirmed the findings of the *Elton Report* (DES 1989) that the most common form of poor behaviour in schools continues to be low-level disruption of lessons caused by minor discipline problems that involve pupils talking out of turn, avoiding work themselves and hindering the work of others, being rowdy and making inappropriate remarks. OFSTED (2005) is not dismissive of the effects of low-level disruption, acknowledging that whilst these behaviours continue to feature in most schools and are usually dealt with effectively by teachers, the cumulative effect can be frustrating and stressful for both teachers and the generality of pupils. Acts of extreme violence, OFSTED (2005) continues, are very rare and mostly directed towards other pupils rather than staff. The statistics from the Teacher Support Network, the Scottish Education Executive Department and NASUWT research do not necessarily contradict these perspectives, but it is important to remember that at a personal level for the individual who is recorded in these statistics the proportion they represent is likely to be of little consequence or comfort.

### **Better Behaviour, Better Learning (Scottish Executive 2001)**

Concerns regarding behaviour in schools are not unique to England. In Scotland concerns have also been expressed in the media and elsewhere about standards of discipline in schools. The concerns have focused on the amount of low-level disruption in classrooms, corridors and playgrounds, as well as the perception that staff were facing a growing incidence of more serious confrontations with particularly challenging individual pupils. Mirroring the government response in England, Scotland too produced a series of national publications in the 1990s offering advice and guidance on behaviour. Examples included:

- *Action on discipline in the primary school and action on discipline in the secondary school* (Scottish Office Education Department and Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1993).
- *Schooling with care: developing provision for children and young people presenting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties* (Scottish Office 1994).
- *Exclusions and in-school alternatives: Interchange number 47* (Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, 1997).
- *Promoting Positive Behaviour* (Scottish Office 1999).

In December 2000, Scottish Education Minister Jack McConnell convened a task force to look at the problem of behaviour in Scottish schools. Representatives from all of Scotland's 32 local authorities pledged their support to the group and exchanged ideas about how to address the problem. The task force was rooted in the principle of early intervention with the intention being to target primary school pupils in an effort to improve behaviour among the next generation of secondary school pupils. The outcome was the report, *Better Behaviour, Better Learning* (Scottish Executive 2001). This document made 36 recommendations, half of which were for schools with the remainder shared between local authorities and the Scottish Executive.

The progress of these recommendations has subsequently been reviewed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in the document *A Climate for Learning* (HMIE 2005). Inspectors

from HMIE collated information on discipline from primary and secondary school inspections during the period April 2002 to March 2004 and by surveying schools and local authorities.

The report presented a positive but still mixed picture with evidence of positive changes at school and local authority level since *Better Behaviour, Better Learning* but acknowledged that discipline continued to be an issue for staff, pupils and local authorities. *A Climate for Learning* reported that in nearly half of secondary schools, and in more than two thirds of the primary schools inspected, HMIE found the quality of climate and relationships to be a major strength. Emphasising a similar message to English reports, the Scottish document observed that in these schools there was a positive environment for learning and almost all pupils behaved well. Relationships between pupils and teachers were friendly and purposeful, and characterised by mutual respect. *A Climate for Learning* (HMIE 2005) made the point that in almost all of these schools some pupils occasionally behaved inappropriately and there were sometimes incidents of seriously disruptive behaviour. In the main, however, teachers and promoted staff dealt with any such incidents firmly and fairly, drawing on a combination of the strategies for promoting positive behaviour recommended in the *Better Behaviour, Better Learning* report.

### Primary and Secondary Differences

The differences in behaviour between primary and secondary schools reported in *A Climate for Learning* reflected a similar pattern to those presented in the English document *Managing Challenging Behaviour* (OFSTED 2005) and the Welsh document *Behaviour in Wales: Good Practice in Managing Challenging Behaviour* (Estyn 2006). In roughly one in 12 secondary schools overall, HMIE found important weaknesses in the quality of relationships and behaviour by some pupils which was disrupting the learning of others. This was evident in only one in 30 primary schools. In exploring the possible underlying cause HMIE pointed towards broader issues within the schools, suggesting that in almost all cases in both sectors the relatively widespread discipline problems coincided with a lack of a clear and consistent lead at all levels on how to deliver an appropriate classroom experience for these pupils. Relationships between senior managers and teachers were often strained. Teachers were uncertain how to promote positive behaviour or had little confidence in so doing. In many cases, they had adopted only a limited range of teaching strategies so that pupils, even well-behaved ones, were not well motivated in lessons.

Of all the English schools inspected by OFSTED in 2003/04, behaviour was at least satisfactory in over 90%. It was good or better in 68% of secondary schools, 80% of special schools and PRUs and 90% of primary schools (OFSTED 2005).

Though OFSTED's (2005) analysis of inspection judgements since 1996/97 shows that behaviour in primary schools has gradually improved, the proportion of secondary schools in which behaviour overall has been judged good or better has declined since 1996/97 from over three quarters to over two thirds. Over the same period, the proportion where behaviour was unsatisfactory, at just under one in ten schools, had not reduced (OFSTED 2005).

OFSTED's (2005) figures show that incidents of poor behaviour increase with age, rising steeply from the age of nine. In secondary schools behaviour appears to worsen during Key Stage 3. In 2002/03 the percentage of lessons in which behaviour was unsatisfactory rose from less than 5% in Year 7 to over 8% in Years 8 and 9. Perhaps not surprisingly exclusion figures mirror this rise. Parsons' (1999) work shows a rise to a peak in Year 10, whilst the more recent figures have shown the most common point for both boys and girls to be excluded is at ages 13 and 14. Over 45 per cent of all permanent and fixed-period exclusions were of pupils of this age. The increase in exclusions through Key Stage 3 to a peak in Year 9 or 10 would suggest that there is a decline, both in attitude towards school and motivation, with increasing numbers of pupils disengaging and becoming disaffected.

A key question is the extent to which the worsening of behaviour reflected is as a result of factors related to the nature of the secondary education system. The *Tomlinson Report* (DfES 2004d) which made recommendations for radical reform of curriculum and assessment arrangements for 14 to 19 year olds noted that disengagement peaks during Key Stage 4 and is manifested in truancy, exclusion and bad behaviour. The report acknowledged that some of the causes of disengagement are cultural, social and economic and not easily addressed through changes to curriculum and

qualifications. However, the report also noted that there were educational causes of disengagement. Tomlinson was clear that the current system was not serving young people or the country well, stating in the covering letter to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills:

*“Too many young people leave education lacking basic and personal skills; our vocational provision is too fragmented; the burden of external assessment on learners, teachers and lecturers is too great; and our system is not providing the stretch and challenge needed, particularly for high attainers. The results are a low staying-on rate post-16; employers having to spend large sums of money to teach the ‘basics’; HE struggling to differentiate between top performers; and young people’s motivation and engagement with education reducing as they move through the system”* (DfES 2004d, pp 1).

The *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES 2005f) reflected a number of Tomlinson’s recommendations but rejected the proposal that A levels and GCSEs be incorporated as components within a unified diploma, which integrated vocational and academic routes.

Research based on an analysis of a database of 30,000 secondary pupils compiled by Keele University (1994) concluded that while 60% or so of pupils in early secondary schooling were making reasonable progress, the rest split into three groups:

- 20-30% were bored – the *disappointed*;
- 10-15% who were beginning to truant regularly and behave badly – the *disaffected*; and
- 2-5% who had given up school altogether – the *disappeared*.

(Barber 1994.)

Such findings coupled with concerns about apparent dips in pupils’ performance and rates of progress at the start of secondary education (Galton et al 2003), growing disaffection of pupils in the early years of secondary education and the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 (OFSTED 2002) may go some way to explaining the emphasis within the Behaviour and Attendance strand of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy<sup>9</sup> on both strengthening teaching and learning and on policy and systems level work (DfES 2003a) that seeks initially to improve the nature of the learning environment pupils are in.

Another cause for concern occurs at the other end of the age range with OFSTED (2005) noting that 20% of poor behaviour in primary schools involves pupils aged 4 to 6 years. OFSTED (2005) attributes the problem to this group coming to school ill-prepared socially and emotionally.

#### ***Learning Behaviour: The Report of the Practitioners’ Group on School Behaviour and Discipline (DfES 2005a)***

*Learning Behaviour: The Report of the Practitioners’ Group on School Behaviour and Discipline* (DfES 2005a) was similar in many ways to the Scottish document, *Better Behaviour, Better Learning*, and sought to review the current situation in schools and make recommendations for the way forward. The practitioners’ group had a remit to report on:

- how effective practice in promoting positive behaviour and preventing misbehaviour can be embedded in all schools, drawing on the approaches currently used by successful schools, including specific consideration of:
  - how we can build up effective collaboration between schools;
  - whether teachers need further support through initial teacher training or professional development in managing behaviour;
  - whether there is merit in a national code of behaviour setting out the responsibilities of schools, pupils and parents in promoting good behaviour;
- whether there are any further developments in policy or new powers for headteachers which

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<sup>9</sup> *Now Secondary National Strategy*

would help in enforcing school discipline, including specific consideration of the process for exclusion appeal panels;

- how parents can be more effectively engaged in supporting schools in promoting good behaviour and respect.

In responding to this remit the practitioners' group came up with some 147 recommendations. In the document the word 'inclusion' was rarely used. Though regarding the demand placed on schools by pupils identified as having a behavioural, emotional or social difficulty, the group reported:

*"We acknowledge that many mainstream schools work successfully with some of these pupils. However, there are some pupils whose behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) are so severe that they cannot remain in a mainstream school. These pupils are at high risk of exclusion. To avoid this situation, mainstream schools need a clear indication of the circumstances in which such pupils might need to be referred to a more specialist placement, such as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or special school"* (DfES 2005a, pp 55).

*Learning Behaviour: The Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline* (DfES 2005a) notes issues around behaviour and pupils with SEN as an area needing separate and further consideration and makes the recommendation that the DfES should look separately at how to improve the quality of provision for those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). This further serves to reinforce the arguably unhelpful view that there are pupils who exhibit sporadic naughtiness (DfE 1994a), possibly to quite a high level in terms of frequency and intensity, who can be covered by 'mainstream' guidance but that there is an indefinable point, the location of which has a lot to do with context and tolerance levels of the establishment (Cooper 1993, Fogell and Long 1997), at which this behaviour becomes a behavioural, emotional and social difficulty and altogether a more specialised business.

### **Defining Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)**

Davis and Florian (2004) found that within literature 'social emotional and behavioural difficulties' (SEBD) is commonly used in preference to 'behavioural, emotional and social development' (BESD) which is used in the Code of Practice (DfES 2001b). OFSTED (2005) uses 'emotional, behavioural and social difficulties' (EBSO).

Although the phrases 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' (EBD) and the more recent variations SEBD, BESD and EBSO appear in literature, policy and guidance they are not without problems. Thomas (2005) suggests there has been insufficient discussion of the provenance, status, robustness, legitimacy or meaning of the term EBD and argues that there has been a clinicalising of unacceptable behaviour that transforms an institutional need for order into a child's emotional need.

The DfE wrestled with a definition in 1994, putting forward a continuum of need, stating:

*"Children with EBD are on a continuum. Their problems are clearer and greater than sporadic naughtiness or moodiness and yet not so great as to be classed as mental illness"* (DfE 1994a, pp 4).

However, there was an important caveat that highlights the problem of the label EBD:

*"Perceptions of whether a child's behaviour constitutes an emotional and behavioural difficulty are likely to differ according to the context in which it occurs as well as the individual teacher's management skills, tolerance levels, temperament and expectations"* (DfE 1994a, pp 9).

This raised the issue of the relative nature of EBD; in one school with one teacher a child might be considered to have EBD whereas in another school with another teacher the difficulties are less pronounced or even non-existent. The DfE continued:

*"Schools vary widely in the extent to which they successfully help children overcome their difficulties and the extent to which they either create, minimise or exacerbate the levels of disruption or distress associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties...(the school) may, through appropriate action, be able to keep the difficulty within manageable limits or even prevent it developing in the first place"* (DfE 1994a, pp 8).

In these comments the DfE (1994a) seemed to be struggling to form an understanding of the degree to which emotional and behavioural difficulties are socially constructed, on the one hand using language that located the need firmly within the child (i.e. their difficulties) but at the same time presenting a message that in some cases schools themselves determined whether a child had an emotional and behavioural difficulty or not. From the 1960s onwards there had been a move away from defining the difficulties entirely in terms of individual pathology and an increasing dominance of the view that EBD is a socially constructed deviance (Cooper 1993).

Thomas and Loxley (2001) contest that the ascription of 'need' is unhelpful and needs closer examination. They argue that the route taken is nearly always to assume that the child needs something, and the assumptions about need proceed to imputations of intent, weakness and problem in the wrongdoer. EBD, Thomas and Loxley (2001) contest, is a clear example of a category created from:

*"an intermingling, on the one side of certain systems of knowledge (like psychology and medicine) and, on the other, of the need for institutional order"* (Thomas and Loxley 2001, pp 50).

The relationship between EBD and the need of the school for institutional order seems to be supported by Cornwall's (2004 in Haworth) observation that a lot of the language used to describe children with EBD is based on the effect they have in the classroom, the effect they have on others and the effect they have on the traditional school system of managing learning. This is reflected in phrases such as *disruptive, disturbing and presenting challenging behaviours*. In contrast with other forms of SEN the nature of the difficulty that the child is experiencing tends to be recognised and categorised in relation to their learning needs or relative attainment.

In trying to define who might exhibit EBD, Circular 9/94 produced an extensive list of behaviours that might be exhibited by a child who had an emotional and behavioural difficulty. It stated:

*"Their behaviour may be evident at the personal level (for example through low self-image, anxiety, depression or withdrawal; or through resentment, vindictiveness or defiance); at the verbal level (for example the child may be silent or may threaten, or interrupt, argues or swear a great deal); at the non-verbal level (for example through clinginess, or truancy, failure to observe rules, disruptiveness, aggression or violence); or at the work skills level (for example through an inability or unwillingness to work without direct supervision, to concentrate, to complete task or to follow instructions)"* (DfE1994a, pp 7-8).

The DfE (1994a) acknowledges earlier in the document that it could be argued every child has an emotional and behavioural difficulty of some kind at some point in their development. The extensive nature of this list would seem to support rather than refute that argument, though DfE (1994a) qualifies it with the statement that:

*"Whether or not a child has emotional or behavioural difficulties will depend on the nature, frequency, persistence, severity or abnormality and cumulative effect of the behaviour, in context, compared to normal expectations of a child of the age concerned"* (DfE 1994a, pp 8).

Emotional and behavioural difficulties is therefore a relative concept as its meaning varies between observers and across time and place (Fogell and Long 1997). Behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurs, and the use of labels or categories to distinguish between children with different kinds of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is contentious (Davis and Florian 2004).

The revised Code of Practice (DfES 2001b) developed the definition further and talks in terms of:

*"Children and young people who demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs"* (DfES 2001b, pp 87).

Scotland's *Better Behaviour – Better Learning* openly acknowledges that there is no agreement on what counts as a social, emotional or behavioural difficulty – but acknowledges that such difficulties undoubtedly exist. The document continued:

*“It is neither possible nor desirable to put labels on children – the problems faced by children experiencing such difficulties will be unique to them. However, pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties undoubtedly take up a great deal of time and energy in schools. They clearly have special educational needs, and as such, should receive support strategies similar to those commonly employed for learning difficulties, including the option of opening a Record of Needs, if necessary.*

*Children with behavioural difficulties are often the least liked and least understood of all children with special educational needs. Whether a child ‘acts out’ (demonstrates bad behaviour openly) or ‘acts in’ (is withdrawn), they may have barriers to learning which require to be addressed. Children ‘acting out’ may be aggressive, threatening, disruptive and demanding of attention – they can also prevent other children learning. Children ‘acting in’ may have emotional difficulties which can result in unresponsive or even self-damaging behaviour. They can appear to be anxious, depressed, withdrawn, passive or unmotivated; and their apparent irrational refusal to respond and cooperate may cause frustration for teachers and other children.*

*Children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties may:*

- *be unhappy, unwilling and/or unable to work;*
- *receive less praise for their work and have fewer positive child/adult interactions;*
- *have learning difficulties or be under-achieving;*
- *have poor social skills and fewer friends;*
- *have low self-esteem;*
- *be emotionally volatile;*
- *are easily hurt”*

*(Scottish Executive 2001, pp 13).*

The descriptions applied (DfE 1994a, DfES 2001b, Scottish Executive 2001) demonstrate that pupils who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are not a homogeneous group. Cornwall (2004 in Haworth 2004) goes as far as to suggest that any kind of classification is rendered almost meaningless due to the great range of diversity encompassed by the term emotional and behavioural difficulties. Though, as has been indicated previously, teachers may feel greatest concern about the group of pupils defined as having SEBD, because of the diversity within this category it is likely that there are some pupils that they feel either more or less positive about. One can speculate that it may be those who have the greatest potential to impact negatively on the learning or safety of others about which there is the greatest concern.

In presenting an argument exploring the paucity of the EBD label due to its conflation of administrative need with quasi-medical category Thomas and Loxley (2001) point to the transition from naughty-therefore-impose-sanctions to disturbed-therefore-meet-needs. This distinction between naughty-therefore-impose-sanctions and disturbed-therefore-meet-needs has important connotations for pupils, teachers and schools. In practical terms there may be a dilemma for a school in determining when behaviour should be responded to as a special educational need and so addressed through the *Code of Practice* (DfES 2001b), when it is a social inclusion issue and dealt with through pastoral systems and when it is a common or garden misbehaviour dealt with through the disciplinary systems. Because of the significance of the label of SEBD in routing children through different school systems and processes defining the term takes on significance. Linked to this, there is for the child and the teacher the issue of the progression, which could almost be described as a graduation process, from ‘just’ exhibiting sporadic naughtiness (DfE 1994a) and experiencing a certain set of processes through to having a social, emotional and behavioural difficulty, with its connotations of requiring specialised knowledge. Thomas (2005 in Clough et al 2005) tracks a progression whereby,

*“...when children fail to conform and fail to respond to the school’s usual ‘gentle punishments’ a manoeuvre occurs in which the need is passed from school to the child. Unable to understand the stubbornness of the individuals, concerned and fearful of the consequences for order, those responsible*

*for order in the school then, following the precepts learned in teacher education and reinforced by the service-system provided by the local education authority, reconceptualise the students as having emotional and behavioural difficulties” (Thomas 2005, pp 66-67 in Clough et al 2005).*

Whilst a little polemic, what Thomas (2005 in Clough et al 2005) identifies is the process whereby schools create a myth of a specialist pedagogy.

The question of whether there is a specific SEN pedagogy is important in relation to the inclusion of all learners with SEN, but is perhaps of a particular significance in relation to SEBD, where it appears that teachers feel most uncertain in their practice. OFSTED (2005) commented that the most effective teaching for learners with the most difficult behaviour is little different to the most successful teaching for others. This view needs some qualification. Davis and Florian (2004), in their scoping study propose that whilst there is not enough evidence to suggest a distinct SEN pedagogy, this does not diminish the importance of special education knowledge but highlights it as an essential component of pedagogy. They noted that within the research literature they reviewed three principal theoretical perspectives emerged:

- *behavioural models, which use principles of reinforcement and punishment to reduce maladaptive or inappropriate behaviours and increase adaptive behaviours;*
- *cognitive-behavioural models, which are an elaboration of learning theory to take account of the capacity of individuals to understand and reflect on their behaviour (in particular focusing on the way internalised speech serves to regulate behaviour);*
- *systemic models, (incorporating eco-systemic) which take account of the organisational context within which inappropriate behaviour occurs and attempt to change behaviour by modifying the context (e.g. arranging the classroom environment to minimise distractions).*

(Davis and Florian 2004, pp 23.)

In considering the key teaching strategies and approaches associated with each area of need within the Code of Practice (DfES 2001b) Davis and Florian (2004) identified that with regard to social and emotional difficulties:

- *The use of peers is a valuable resource either as part of a behaviour management programme (e.g. peer-monitoring) or peer-oriented intervention (e.g. buddy system).*
- *Approaches that encourage children to regulate their behaviour by teaching them self-monitoring, self-instruction and self-reinforcement skills are effective in producing adaptive behaviour change (i.e. increased on-task behaviour, reductions in anti-social behaviour).*
- *Approaches using positive reinforcement (where appropriate behaviour is immediately rewarded), behaviour reduction strategies (such as reprimands and redirection), and response cost (a form of punishment in which something important is taken away) appear to be effective in increasing on-task behaviour.*
- *Combinations of approaches (e.g. cognitive-behavioural with family therapy) are more effective in facilitating positive social, emotional and behavioural outcomes than single approaches alone.*
- *The research suggests that effectiveness is enhanced when parents are actively involved as partners in their child's education.*

(Davis and Florian 2004, pp 5)

Walker et al (1995) suggest that in practice, intervention for pupils with behavioural difficulties is rarely evidence-based. It is possible that teachers may adopt strategies either on the basis of ideology, common sense, or school-based experience, but rarely on evaluated effectiveness (Olsen and Cooper 2001). Powell and Tod (2004) argue that this may lead to ‘trial and error’ use of existing strategies rather than the development of approaches based on appropriate assessment, a coherent framework and a supporting knowledge base.

This would seem to make a powerful case for more training that covers theory and practice of working with children who exhibit problematic behaviour or experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, this is not necessarily as straightforward as providing *more* input

on behaviour. Powell and Tod (2004) note that the perception among teachers and the media that behaviour management is about the control of unruly pupils contributes to trainee teachers feeling inadequately prepared, given that they cannot realistically anticipate and prepare for the entire range of pupil responses they will experience in the classroom. As a consequence, trainees and teachers continue to seek more and more strategies in the hope that they will be better able to cope with anticipated classroom disruption. The quantity of material on behaviour through government reports (e.g. DES 1989, DfE 1994b, DfES 2005a), guidance materials (e.g. DfES 2003a, DfES 2004e) and texts by a range of writers (e.g. Rogers 2002, Hook and Vass 2002 and Cowley 2001) would suggest that there is little new left to discover about behaviour management: the key principles are well known and have been for some time.

Powell and Tod's (2004) argument suggests that faith in the acquisition of more strategies may be misplaced and that what teachers need to secure is a mix of confidence and competence. These concepts are linked as Giallo and Little (2003) have argued, with the acquisition of skills, which could be considered to represent competence, contributing to feelings of confidence. Giallo and Little's (2003) definition of confidence is complex, however, and explained in terms of self-efficacy, which they describe as an individual's judgement of his/her ability to execute successfully a behaviour required to produce certain outcomes (Bandura 1986 and Gibson and Dembo 1984). They then distinguish between efficacy *expectations* and *outcome expectations* under the umbrella term of self efficacy. Efficacy expectations are the beliefs pertaining to the individual's personal capacity to perform a behaviour, task or skill, while outcome expectancy is the general belief that a behaviour will result in a particular outcome (Bandura 1986; Gibson and Dembo 1984; Guskey and Passaro 1994). Following this line of argument, the actions of a teacher in responding to a pupil's misbehaviour would be influenced not only by the belief that a particular action will lead to desirable outcomes, but also by the teacher's belief in his/her own ability to perform that action. Training or resource materials that provide teachers with a set of strategies without taking account of these personal characteristics that influence their implementation are likely to be of limited value.

Powell and Tod's (2004) synthesis of material leads them to suggest that learning and behaviour should be linked via the term 'learning behaviour' in order to reduce perceptions that 'promoting learning' and 'managing behaviour' are separate issues (McNally et al 2004). The term *Learning Behaviour* establishes a focus on the purpose and outcomes of behaviour management rather than a concern solely with establishing control (Powell and Tod 2004).

The phrases 'learning behaviour' and 'behaviour for learning', which is also used by Powell and Tod (2004), seem to be coming in to more common usage, appearing in National Strategy materials (DfES 2003a), providing the name for the TDA sponsored website ([www.behaviour4learning.ac.uk](http://www.behaviour4learning.ac.uk)) and forming part of the title of the Steer Committee's report (DfES 2005a). However, though the terminology is gaining popularity, usage is not necessarily underpinned by the conceptual framework within Powell and Tod's (2004) research.

### **Aetiology of Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**

Not only is the definition of SEBD broad, there is the issue of causes and origins. McGuinness (1993) puts forward a useful model for viewing the influences on behaviour, referring to sociogenic and psychogenic factors as well as the pathogenic potential of the school. His model echoes the risk factors relating to indiscipline and violence identified by Wright and Keeley (2003) in their research for the NASUWT. McGuinness' model emphasises that there is an environmental component in the form of the ethos, curriculum and teaching methods of the school that does contribute positively or negatively, but also acknowledges the national/social influences and family/domestic influences (sociogenic) and those factors which we might term 'within child' such as self-image, self-esteem, abilities, and interests (psychogenic). The model allows for the interaction between these factors in terms of identifying 'cause' and, by implication, when considering interventions and sits well with *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2004a). The pathogenic potential of the school may not be a concept that sits so well with teachers, however, it does confront the issue that elements of the school can contribute to the problem. This is not a new theme, having been reported by Rutter et al (1979) and within the *Elton Report* (DES 1989) and acknowledged within Circular 9/94 (DfE 1994a) as explored earlier.

Within *Excellence for All Children*, (the DfEE recognised the wide variation of needs and causes, acknowledging that:

*“The roots of EBD are complex. They include family disadvantage or breakdown, poor parenting skills and poor experiences at school. Emotional difficulties may lead to poor behaviour, and should therefore be addressed as early as possible...In some instances EBD may stem from other special educational needs”* (DfEE 1997, pp 78).

The terminology used linked into broader issues of social exclusion, which was a priority for the new Labour Government.

### Developing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills

Arguments regarding the usefulness and appropriateness of social emotional and behavioural difficulties as a phrase have centred on whether it medicalises what is essentially a problem for the school (Thomas 2005 and Thomas and Loxley 2001) and overlooks the pathogenic potential of the organisation (McGuinness 1993). Adopting a more developmental approach to behaviour would seem to offer something of a solution to at least part of this argument, particularly if set in the context of all children needing to develop certain social, emotional and behavioural skills but recognising that they will do so at differing rates.

In 2001 QCA/DfES sought to support school improvement in England by offering guidance on setting improvement targets for pupils' emotional and behavioural development through *Supporting School Improvement: Emotional and behavioural development* (QCA/DfES 2001). It was based on the Government's commitment to setting targets to drive school improvement. The document framed behaviour in positive terms, focusing on desirable behaviours, split into categories of learning behaviour, conduct behaviour and emotional behaviour. The behaviour scales were developed by a team of researchers from the University of Birmingham. It was notable that the focus was on the behaviours that needed to be developed rather than on deficit. Cornwall's (2004 in Haworth 2004) has criticised them for being simplistic behavioural descriptions, viewing it as evidence of DfES and QCA difficulties in trying to define what 'access to' and differentiation mean for pupils defined as experiencing SEBD.

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials (DfES 2005b), launched through the Primary National Strategy in England, offer a whole-curriculum framework for explicitly promoting social, emotional and behavioural skills, with built-in progression for each year group within a school. The resource materials are intended to facilitate a systematic and spiral approach to learning. The argument for the spiral curriculum approach presented by DfES (2005b) is that most social, emotional and behavioural skills are developmental and change over time. These skills cannot therefore be taught as a one-off. There is a need to revisit and develop the concepts, understanding and skills over time, building on what has been learned previously (DfES 2005b). The approach advocated by DfES appears to have some research backing. Weare and Gray (2003), referring to programmes examined as part of their research, state:

*“There is clear evidence on the principles that underlie these programmes, for example teaching behaviours and skills explicitly and in participative and empowering ways, using a step by step approach, generalising to real life and making use of using co-operative group work and peer education as well as whole class approaches. It is recommended that the DfES encourages the use of explicit programmes and provides curriculum guidance that outlines these key principles. Ideally this would include some recommended materials, examples of lesson plans and schemes of work, and ideas for curriculum development”* (Weare and Gray 2003, pp 7).

DfES (2005b) defined the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning as:

- self awareness;
- managing feelings;
- motivation;
- empathy;
- social skills.

These reflect those identified by Goleman (1998), with the exception that within the DfES (2005b) list 'managing feelings' replaces 'self regulation'. Goleman's (1995) book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* popularised emotional intelligence, but Salovey and Mayer (1990) had proposed the first formal definition and model of the construct in 1990 (Petrides et al 2004). Origins of emotional intelligence can be traced back to Thorndike's (1920) social intelligence and Gardner's (1983) intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences (Petrides et al 2004).

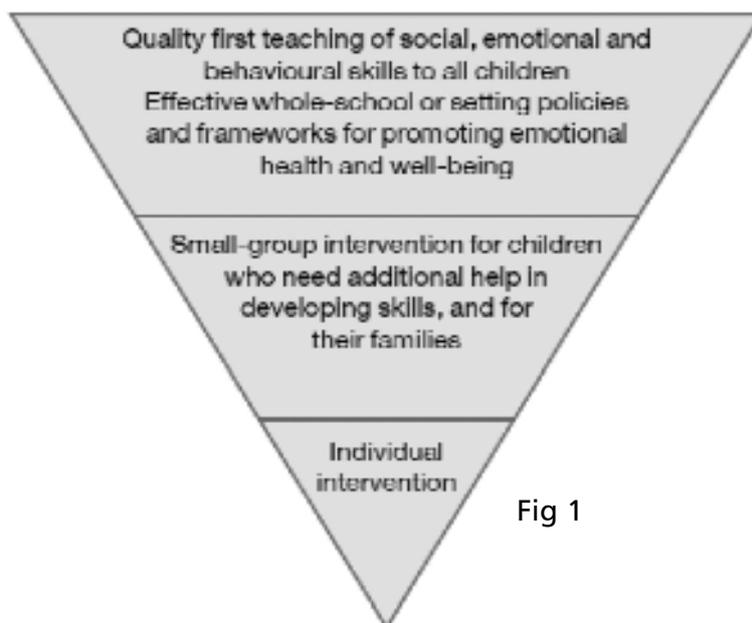
The use of the term 'social and emotional aspects of learning' (SEAL) avoids some of the disadvantages associated with the term 'emotional intelligence' noted by Weare and Gray, which include:

- *The term 'intelligence' tends to focus the attention on measurement rather than on teaching and learning.*
- *The term 'intelligence' tends to suggest a capacity that is innate and fixed, not teachable.*
- *In the strict sense 'emotional and social intelligence' could be value neutral, for example it is theoretically possible to be highly emotionally intelligent in the sense of having 'the capacity to perceive, integrate, understand and manage emotions' but still do undesirable things.*

(Weare and Gray 2003, pp16.)

The model (see fig 1) advocated for using the SEAL materials is based on the 'waves' model that features in other DfES guidance materials (e.g. DfES 2002, 2005c). The SEAL materials were piloted within the Primary Behaviour and Attendance pilot and were evaluated as part of an overall evaluation of this. The results of the evaluation were positive. The research team reported:

*"All staff perceived a positive impact on the children's behaviour and well-being. Classrooms and playgrounds were calmer. Children's confidence, social, communication, negotiating skills, and attitudes were perceived to have improved. Fifty per cent of teachers believed that listening skills had improved and 44% concentration on work. The interview data revealed positive perceptions of the impact on the children's work. Overall 90% of teachers indicated that the SEAL Programme had been at least relatively successful"* (Hallam et al 2006, pp 7).



The evaluation contains many positive indicators but, as Cornwall and Walter (2006) note, emotional literacy and conceptions of emotional intelligence are unlikely to be the answer to all problems.

Though there is reference to the production of social emotional and behavioural skills materials within KS3 National Strategy Behaviour and Attendance strand these have not yet appeared. Some materials are currently being piloted with a view to these becoming nationally available in September 2007. Ellis and Tod (2005) speculate on the reasons for this, suggesting that it could

relate to an expectation that the majority of pupils either have or should have these skills before they reach secondary school, a DfES perception of a greater problem with behaviour in secondary schools requiring a greater focus on whole school, systemic issues or the different nature of the organisations in terms of how change can be effected. There have, however, been materials produced through the KS3 National Strategy Behaviour and Attendance strand focusing on developing emotional health and well-being. *Developing emotional health and well-being: a whole school approach to improving behaviour and attendance* (DfES 2005d) offers some advice on curricular opportunities to develop emotional health and wellbeing of pupils but its primary focus is developing the school as an emotionally healthy organisation through the development of the adults' knowledge, skills and understanding.

### Exclusions in England

The social inclusion dimension of the inclusion debate is of particular significance in relation to pupil behaviour. Significant numbers of pupils of secondary school age in particular continue to be excluded from education through the disciplinary process of exclusion.

According to the DfES statistics site there were 9,880 permanent exclusions from primary, secondary and all special schools in 2003/04 and 344,510 fixed-period exclusions. Most exclusions were from secondary schools, making up 84% of the total in the case of both fixed-term and permanent exclusions. There is a correlation between these figures and OFSTED's (2005) judgements that behaviour was good or better in 90% of primary schools but only good or better in 68% of secondary schools. There is clearly a secondary/primary divide in both standards of behaviour and exclusion figures.

Significant from an inclusion perspective is the types of pupils who are being excluded the most. Based on the 2003/04 figures:

- *Pupils with statements of SEN are almost 4 times more likely to be excluded from school than the rest of the school population.*
- *Pupils with SEN (both with and without statements) are more likely to be excluded than those pupils with no SEN.*
- *Forty-four in every 10,000 pupils with statements of SEN and 46 in every 10,000 pupils with SEN without statements were permanently excluded from school. This compares with 6 in every 10,000 pupils with no SEN.*
- *Around 7 in every 100 pupils of Black or Mixed ethnic origin were excluded for a fixed period in 2003/04. This compares with almost 5 in every 100 pupils of White ethnic origin and just over 2 in every 100 Asian pupils.*
- *Around 25 in every 10,000 pupils of Mixed ethnic origin were permanently excluded from school. This was similar to the exclusion rate for Black pupils (29 in every 10,000) which was around twice that for White pupils.*
- *Permanent exclusion rates were highest for the Traveller of Irish Heritage (66 in every 10,000 pupils) and Gypsy/Roma (62 in every 10,000 pupils) groups. The overall rate for all pupils (of compulsory school age and above) was 14 in every 10,000 pupils. NB DfES recommend caution in interpreting data for Traveller of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma children due to the small numbers recorded.*

(DfES 2007)

The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs being excluded was of concern to the Practitioners' Group (DfES 2005a) who commented:

*"We see a close link between poor behaviour and previous failure to deal with a pupil's special needs properly. In our experience schools with high standards of behaviour are often those that have good SEN structures and strategies"* (DfES 2005a, pp 55).

The Practitioners' Group (DfES 2005a) recommended that the DfES should identify and disseminate good practice in managing the behaviour of pupils with special educational needs more effectively, reducing the need to resort to exclusion.

Although still interpretable as an indictment of an education system that champions a philosophy of inclusion, exclusion figures have reduced from the 1996/97 peak of just over 12,000. The rise in exclusions in the mid-nineties has been traced in parallel with the increasing pressures placed on teachers and the decreasing opportunities for curriculum flexibility (Hacker and Rowe 1997 and Rustique-Forrester 2000), supporting Mittler's (2000) view that the figure did not represent a sudden increase in disruptive behaviour. An increase in pupils considered to have emotional and behavioural difficulties was detected by Croll and Moses (2003), reporting on two major surveys of schools and teachers, the first conducted in 1981 and the second conducted in the same schools in 1998. The picture presented was not straightforward, however. In 1981 7.7% of pupils were described as having emotional or behavioural difficulties. These children made up 41.1% of all those with special educational needs. In 1998 9.3% of pupils were described as having emotional or behavioural difficulties. Though this was an increase of 20.8% from the 1981 baseline, it was an increase of less than half the increase in learning difficulties. Although this was an increase overall, because of the much greater increase in learning difficulties, children with emotional and behavioural difficulties make up a smaller proportion of all those with special educational needs than in 1981 (Croll and Moses 2003).

*Social Inclusion: Pupil Support* (DfEE 1999), borne out of new Labour's social inclusion priorities, sought to provide guidance to help schools reduce the risk of disaffection among pupils. The document focused on what it considered to be vulnerable groups. A significant new piece of documentation introduced by *Social Inclusion: Pupil Support* was the *Pastoral Support Programme* (PSP). The PSP was defined as being necessary for pupils who do not respond to school actions to combat disaffection. The guidance recommended that a PSP should automatically be set up for pupils who had received several fixed-term exclusions that may lead to a permanent exclusion or who have been otherwise identified as being at risk of failure at school through disaffection (DfEE 1999). The process envisaged was one of LEA and multi-agency involvement. The tenet of *Social Inclusion: Pupil Support* is that schools should do everything possible to avoid exclusion and as such it can be seen as an attempt to address the rise in exclusions through the nineties. The DfEE (1999) was very clear in its statements that:

*"(Fixed term) exclusions should be for the shortest time necessary"* (DfEE 1999, pp 32).

And,

*"A decision to exclude a child is a serious one. It is the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences when a wide range of other strategies have been tried and have failed, including the use of a Pastoral Support Programme"* (DfEE 1999, pp 32).

The role of the governing body was also clarified with a requirement for the Discipline Committee to meet to consider not just permanent exclusion, but any exclusions that separately or in total resulted in the child missing five school days in a term or denied the pupil the right to the chance to take a public examination. Circular 10/99 was unequivocal in its statement in bold type that:

*"Where the head teacher has not used exclusion in line with this guidance the Discipline Committee should normally direct re-instatement"* (DfEE 1999, pp 54).

Some cases of reinstatement by governing bodies and independent appeal committees gave rise to concerns that the balance of rights had shifted too far in the direction of the pupil. Some of the more extreme examples attracted national attention with, for example, *The Guardian* (1999)<sup>10</sup>, reporting the case of one LEA that refused to allow the exclusion of a boy who tried to burn down his school, on the grounds that a pastoral support plan was not yet in place. The Conservative Policy Unit publication *No Child Left Behind* (Conservative Party 2002) included a catalogue of tales of pupil reinstatement, including one Year 10 pupil who was excluded for punching a teacher in the head but reinstated after an appeals panel ruled that the assault 'was not bad enough' and two

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<sup>10</sup> <http://education.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,,117857,00.html> accessed 28/4/06

boys reinstated despite allegedly threatening 40 times to kill their teacher and to 'shoot him in the back of the head'.

Circular 10/99 has been updated and split between *Circular 10/99: The Secretary of State's Guidance on Pupil Behaviour and Attendance* (DfES 2004b) and *Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupils Referral Units* (DfES 2004c). As its title suggests, the latter dealt with exclusion procedures. It addressed some of the concerns over reinstatement through its guidance to Independent Appeal panels, stating:

*"In deciding on whether or not to direct reinstatement, the panel must balance the interests of the excluded pupil against the interests of all the other members of the school community"* (DfES 2004c, pp 51).

And

*"While the law states that the panel must not decide to reinstate a pupil solely on the basis of technical defects in procedure prior to the appeal, procedural issues would be relevant if there were evidence that the process was so flawed that important factors were not considered or justice was clearly not done"* (DfES 2004c, pp 51).

The new guidance also highlighted the need for members of governing bodies reviewing exclusions and members of independent appeal panels to receive appropriate training (DfEs 2004c).

The original Circular 10/99 in its 1999 incarnation is rooted in the need to support. The splitting into two parts (DfES 2004b, DfES 2004c) demonstrate the coexistence of a desire to support the interests of the social inclusion agenda but also to have recourse to a process that can remove troublesome children and young people from schools.

The vacillation in policy between a desire to offer support and the desire to sanction indicates perhaps that the naughty-therefore-impose-sanctions and disturbed-therefore-meet-needs dilemma (Thomas and Loxley 2001) also taxes policy makers. Significantly, the language of zero tolerance is used in the White Paper (DfES 2005e) in relation to both serious and low level discipline and behaviour issues.

Macrae et al (2003) consider teachers to be in the front line when dealing with 'difficult' children but comment that neither the causes nor the effects of school exclusion can be understood solely in educational terms. Schools, Macrae et al (2003) claim, often find themselves having to deal with problems that are the responsibility of families or other public agencies and teachers frequently have neither the training nor the time to deal with social issues affecting children at risk of school exclusion. The *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2004a) agenda in England and Wales, like *Getting it Right for Every Child in Scotland* (SEED 2006), will raise issues for schools in relation to the extent of their responsibility in these areas.

### **National Strategies in England to improve Behaviour and Attendance**

The KS3 Behaviour and Attendance strand was launched in 2003 as part of the KS3 National Strategy. It was disseminated through Core Day training events by KS3 Behaviour and Attendance Consultants. A cascade model was used, with the emphasis being on those attending training making use of the materials in their own schools to lead training and develop policy and practice. This cascade approach was enhanced by consultant support to schools, though there were variations between LEAs with regard to how this was deployed (Ellis and Tod 2005).

The KS3 National Strategy Behaviour and Attendance strand was introduced in response to enduring and emergent concerns. These include:

- raising standards is heavily dependent on staff recruitment and retention;
- recruitment and retention is influenced by standards of behaviour;
- support and training for improving standards of behaviour in schools is in great demand by both staff and pupils;
- standards of behaviour are unsatisfactory in 1 in 12 secondary schools;

- levels of unauthorised absence remain unchanged, with a clear link between poor attendance and poor attainment;
- pupils frequently report that disruptive behaviour prevents higher attainment in class;
- school managers are too frequently preoccupied with dealing with poor behaviour and are unable to focus on longer-term school improvement issues;
- pupils who are most at risk of poor behaviour and irregular attendance need to be supported to engage in all aspects of school life.

(DfES 2003b, pp 4)

The KS3 Behaviour and Attendance strand was primarily designed to address the generic behaviour problems that underpin these concerns and therefore had its sights set on the low level, relatively high frequency disruptive behaviours identified by the *Elton Report* (DES 1989). Its emphasis was very much on improving behaviour and attendance through strengthening teaching and learning to support the general priorities of the overall Key Stage 3 strategy to raise attainment in core subject areas. The strand therefore could be seen as seeking to 'rescue' those pupils who engage in minor off task, disruptive behaviour or who do not go to certain lessons or skip occasional days for reasons such as boredom, lack of challenge and poor pupil-teacher relationships rather than those that might be identified as experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or chronic truancy problems.

The KS3 Behaviour and Attendance strand has focused, in its initial documentation, on school improvement and continued professional development (CPD), emphasising the importance of school self-evaluation through auditing and the development of targeted staff development activities.

Since September 2003 four sets of Core Day materials have been released. *Core Day 1* (DfES 2003a) launched the strand with a focus on whole school policy and practice and introduced the audit (DfES 2003c) as a tool to support school self evaluation in relation to behaviour and attendance. *Core Day 2* focused on *Developing effective practice across the school* (DfES 2004e), and *Core Day 3* (DfES 2004f) emphasised the need to use data to inform action planning and to monitor and evaluate practice by focusing on a theme of monitoring whole school practice to promote positive behaviour and attendance. *Core Day 4* focused on developing emotional health and wellbeing as part of a whole school approach to improving behaviour and attendance (DfES 2005d). A number of CD-ROMs, collectively known as the 'Toolkit' have been produced to support schools in professional development activities in relation to each of the ten audit areas contained in *Auditing Behaviour and Attendance in Secondary and Middle Schools* (DfES 2003c) which was provided as part of the *Core Day 1* materials.

### Primary National Strategy Behaviour and Attendance materials

Twenty-five local authorities were involved in a pilot of the Primary Behaviour and Attendance materials that commenced in September 2003 and finished in August 2005. The pilot aimed to:

- enable schools in the pilot local authorities (LAs) to access high-quality professional development on behaviour and attendance issues, that was sustained and collaborative;
- develop and test out models of LA support where behaviour and attendance were key school improvement issues;
- trial curriculum materials which develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills and materials for school self-review and training in improving behaviour (SEAL);
- implement and evaluate small group interventions for children needing additional focused help with their social, emotional and behavioural skills;
- promote the development of a common approach across the 25 participating LAs and the Department's Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) LAs.

(Hallam et al 2006, pp 3.)

There were four strands to the pilot. These were:

- **the CPD strand:**

this was a universal element providing professional development opportunities to all schools in the pilot authorities;

- **the school improvement strand:**

this was a targeted element providing focused support to schools where behaviour and attendance had been identified as key issues;

- **the curriculum materials or SEAL strand:**

this was a universal element providing curriculum work focusing on the social and emotional aspects of learning for all children in pilot schools;

- **the small group interventions strand:**

This was a targeted element providing group work for children needing extra help in this area, and their parents/carers.

The local authorities selected for the pilot were those which were not eligible for other funded programmes, with above-average levels of social deprivation, often bordering Excellence in Cities (EiC) areas with significant numbers of schools where behaviour was likely to be a key issue (Hallam et al 2006).

The pilot has been evaluated by Hallam et al (2006) who reported that it was successful in attaining its aims. The evaluation across schools participating in the pilot provided evidence of improvement in attendance at school, behaviour while at school, and in attainment particularly at KS2.

The Practitioners' Group (DfES 2005a) considered that both the Primary and Secondary National Strategies were making a positive contribution. The Group (DfES 2005a) recommended that these existing initiatives to improve pupil behaviour and school discipline should be allowed adequate time to be implemented properly and that existing advice on effective practice should be more fully and widely promoted and implemented.

## Conclusion

Pupil behaviour is perhaps one of the most difficult areas in relation to inclusion and is made more difficult by its emotive nature. It challenges professionals to reflect on their own beliefs about the causes and means of dealing with behaviour, their responsibilities and the parameters of their role and the wider responsibilities of schools in terms of promoting social inclusion.

Resoundingly, the literature places the emphasis on preventative approaches in the form of whole school policy, positive approaches to behaviour management and strengthening of teaching and learning. *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2004a) has encouraged a more holistic approach which has provided justification through policy for a focus on emotional health and wellbeing, including the development of social, emotional and behavioural skills. Such approaches are part of a 'long game' and may provide limited comfort to teachers who report experiencing verbal or physical abuse.

As this section has explored, the application of the SEBD label is not straightforward. It may have benefits in defining the child as having a 'need' or 'problem' and therefore provide a degree of protection through the SEN processes within the Code of Practice (DfES 2001b), whereas a pupil without the label might find him or herself progressing more rapidly through the disciplinary process towards exclusion. The label may have a more negative impact, however, leaving the class teacher, who may be very proficient at managing teaching and learning, feeling deskilled by its connotations that the response required is altogether more specialised than they can provide. At worst the child may become demonised through the label, leading teachers to believe, and on occasions state, that they cannot teach a child with SEBD. There is a need to recognise that the diverse range of pupils encompassed by the SEBD label means that simple, broad brush stroke notions that pupils with SEBD cannot or should not be included in mainstream schools are fundamentally flawed.

A final consideration is the meaning of inclusion for pupils with SEBD. If a pupil exhibits challenging behaviour the tendency may be to accept this as an inevitable feature of the inclusion of a pupil with SEBD. At the point when this behaviour occurs the pupil is *not* experiencing successful inclusion. It is important that teachers and others in schools grasp this and recognise that when inclusion of pupils with SEBD is debated it does not mean *accepting* high levels of misbehaviour. In this context the difference between inclusive and non-inclusive schools is that the former responds by focusing on problem solving and the development of more effective ways of working whereas the latter dwells on the challenge to authority. Neither school *accepts* the behaviour. In the inclusive school, therefore, the focus is on problem *behaviour* rather than *problem pupil* (Fogell and Long 1997). This shift in thinking potentially engenders a range of more positive, creative responses but does not deny the very real problem that the behaviour presents.

There are four key areas for further research:

- What types of training and support make a positive contribution to teacher experiences in their classrooms?

As this section of the report has indicated the answer is unlikely to lie in the quantity of training but the type of training. This is a theme explored in more detail in Section 2.1 *Classroom Practice: Guidance and Training for SEN and Inclusion*.

- What types of the systems and resources are in place in schools where teachers report more positively on their experiences in relation to pupil behaviour?
- What types of systems and resources are provided from outside schools by the local authority and other services and agencies in schools where teachers report more positively on their experiences in relation to pupil behaviour?
- At a national level, both Scotland and England have produced significant, high profile documents (Scottish Executive 2001, DfES 2005) reviewing behaviour in schools and making recommendations for action at a variety of levels. There is therefore scope to explore teachers' perceptions in these two nations of the impact of these documents on their experiences in the classroom. From the literature it appears that Northern Ireland and Wales have not so far engaged in such high profile reviews of behaviour and so a useful comparison would be to explore the policy context in these nations in more depth and how this has impacted on teachers' experiences.

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## 3. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### 3.1 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND THEIR SCHOOLS

This section of the report moves beyond the findings from this literature review in order to speculate on how SEN and inclusion are being experienced by teachers in their day-to-day professional practice.

#### Inclusion

This literature review supports the view that inclusion is a multifaceted construct that is strongly influenced by the political and societal context in which it is housed. As such, inclusion within education has been defined in relation to:

- an ideology and/or aspiration: usually linked to a human rights agenda;
- a place: usually mainstream versus special school;
- a policy: normally from central or local government;
- professional practice: i.e. 'inclusive teaching'?
- personal experience: how an individual and their parent/carer experiences inclusion.

Although intended, there is not inevitably a coherent relationship between these differing perspectives and definitions. Having an inclusive school policy may not necessarily lead to an individual pupil feeling included unless the school involved seeks to assess the efficacy of their inclusion policy from a range of perspectives and over a period of time. Cole points out:

*"If there is no consensus about what inclusion means then it is to be expected that the aims and motivations of various parties may differ and even conflict"* (Cole 2006, pp 31).

In spite of SEN and inclusion agendas being driven by national policies, teachers are inevitably experiencing the effects of interpretations of these policies at local authority and school level.

Whilst there is this lack of consensus about the meaning of inclusion, public and professional interpretation of inclusion has tended to focus on the placement of children with SEN and disability in mainstream settings. Although welcoming inclusion on to the educational agenda *in principle* teachers are required to implement it within school cultures characterised by increasing accountability, a continual drive to improve standards, greater responsibility to address wider societal concerns particularly anti-social behaviour and social cohesion, and an emphasis on increased parental choice. This quasi-market in education characterised by 'measurable outcomes' has created a potentially hostile climate for the development of policies and practices for inclusion (Fulcher 1999). 'Measurable outcomes' initially were rooted in attainment (e.g. literacy, numeracy) but there is now a trend for these outcomes to reflect individual progress in relation to cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

A pragmatic view of inclusion sets it within available local provision and expectations whereas an ideological view sets inclusion within the wider global context of aspirations for individuals and communities. A focus on the pragmatic allows teachers to develop provision and practice appropriate to perceived need and expectations and also provides a framework for school self-evaluation and continued professional development. The risk factor is that inclusion becomes locally or even institutionally interpreted leading to inconsistencies in pupil experiences and outcomes within and between LAs or individual schools.

A focus on the ideological encourages a more aspirational stance and encourages schools to adopt a challenging, ongoing self-improvement approach located within a wider inclusion agenda that seeks to tackle all forms of exclusionary pressure and discrimination (Booth and Ainscow 2002) and extends beyond those pupils defined as experiencing 'special educational needs'. The risk of this approach is that unless teachers are supported and trained to accept that inclusion is a process and that ongoing change is integral to their role they run the risk of experience feelings of confusion, inadequacy and guilt.

Traditionally teachers prioritise the needs of all their pupils. Teachers generally endorse the *principle* of inclusion and the 'right' of individual children to be educated alongside their neighbourhood peers. As inclusion has become further entrenched in educational policy and practice there is an emerging view that this 'right' to be included in mainstream needs to be balanced by the 'right' for SEN pupils to have an education that can meet their needs. As inclusive practice develops these two rights are likely to become more closely aligned for more pupils.

## Implications

Schools and their teachers might usefully explore the core questions that underpin their work:

- what is the 'purpose' of inclusion for the children we teach? With the sub question 'do some purposes (e.g. academic) take greater priority than others (i.e. personal, social, wellbeing)?'
- how will we measure progress towards that purpose?
- how do we agree a 'purpose' with the individual child, parent, LA, etc. so that consistency and coherence of provision is experienced?

Given the confusions inherent within definitions and policies for inclusion it would seem that schools need to keep a clear 'purpose' for school learning for pupils with SEN rather than focus on a location, a particular policy, a label, a resource (e.g. LSA, HLTA) or a specialist pedagogy. Schools, headteachers and SENCOs have a key role to play in securing within their schools a consensus of the core aims and outcomes involved in the teaching and learning of pupils with SEN. Additionally, an agreement of purpose with the pupil and their parents/carers, linked to transition planning, may help to reduce the variability that is observed in practice between Early Years, primary, secondary and Post-16 settings.

Given the complexity of interpretations of inclusion at national, local and institutional levels it is likely that individual schools will be exhibiting a range of differing organisational strategies which will, in turn, impact on teacher workload and implementation of workforce reform.

## Special Educational Needs

Preceding sections of this report have noted that the development of national policies of inclusion bring difficulty in terms of defining and interpreting the meaning of special educational needs. The strong association of SEN with the inclusion agenda has triggered a reconceptualisation of SEN in response to the social model of disability that underpins inclusion. This has been reflected in the language used in the context of inclusion with, for example, 'removing barriers' increasingly replacing 'meeting needs'. The term SEN itself has been subject to some vulnerability, being viewed by some writers as anachronistic and discriminatory.

The field of SEN has typically been concerned with particular definable groups or individuals for whom 'additional or different provision' is prescribed. This group has traditionally attracted its own processes, funding streams, methods of accountability and, in many cases, staffing e.g. SENCOs and teaching assistants.

The coexistence of a medical model alongside a social model leads to variations in identification between schools and LAs. This has resulted in the potential for the categorisation of a child as having SEN in one school but not necessarily in another. Alignment with the medical model encourages a focus on individual difference and the required additional or different provision. A social model on the other hand encourages a more systemic approach focusing on the extent to which the school has in place resources and practices to meet individual diversity. This variability in identification becomes particularly problematic in relation to children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) where factors such as school ethos and teacher experience are variables. In policy contexts in which funding is linked to identification of individuals with SEN it may be more difficult for schools to move away from a traditional focus on individual deficit and labelling.

It is understandable that the identification of SEN is problematic and variable. Special education has, after all, a long history of seeking to identify and measure difference in relation to population norms for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. This does not fit well with an

inclusive philosophy. This approach is still evident within the thinking and practices of both health and educational settings. The placing of an emphasis on raising standards in schools has tended to mirror the medical model by focusing on population norms and expectations and, in the case of the National Strategies in England, providing 'catch up' interventions to close the gap.

Though the policy rhetoric in relation to inclusion focuses on valuing diversity, of concern is that teachers are having to balance this with continued emphasis on comparison with the 'norm' either to address the attainment gap or identify SEN. This has been experienced by teachers through the paradox that they are deemed to have 'failed' if SEN pupils are not achieving to the expected age-related level and yet the term SEN is rooted in 'having greater difficulties in learning than their peers'.

The processes associated with SEN have a long association with high levels of bureaucracy (e.g. DfES 2005a, Gross 2000 and OFSTED 1997). The extent to which government strategies, such as whole school planning, have helped to reduce workload has yet to be subject to empirical investigation. Alongside the bureaucracy reduction agenda is the process of workforce remodelling, which effectively increases the number of adults actively involved in school-based and community provision for pupils with SEN, and the Every Child Matters agenda. The increased liaison and joint planning time that characterise collaborative multi-agency provision may result in an increase in workload and bureaucracy.

### Implications

An inheritance from special education is the belief that the identification of SEN will enhance the chances of individual children receiving appropriate 'specialist' teaching linked to their identified need. There is limited evidence for a specialist pedagogy for pupils with SEN (Davis and Florian 2004) linked to a labelled category of need, but knowledge of SEN and the involvement of a specialist teacher are reported to contribute to good progress for some pupils with SEN. This seems to support the view that the social model of disability, which has been a *necessary* trigger for a focus on inclusive provision for all pupils, is not *sufficient* in itself. Clearly there are biological and psychological variables in addition to social variables that contribute to individual differences. Teachers and parents will know that there are some children for whom 'catch up' programmes are not appropriate, and others for whom early identification and intervention will not lead to age appropriate outcomes in the longer term. Such an acceptance by teachers does not detract from the important consensus view that all children can, and should make progress.

### Competing Policy Agendas

Inclusion has been transposed onto educational systems that often house competing and opposing systems such as school performance tables, a prescribed curriculum and age-assessed attainment. Educational policies in relation to SEN, inclusion, and standards raising have pragmatically tended to develop in parallel, rather than as coherent synergised directives that serve to inform planning and practice in schools. As this literature review has previously suggested the heritage and end goals of each of these three agendas is different.

Many teachers may not be aware of the source of this tension but experience it as a general pressure arising from the plethora of national and local initiatives and policy directives.

As noted previously in this review, within any one school or LA, one agenda may be prioritised over another. Senior managers, for example, may be very concerned with performance tables and externally assessed levels of attainment of groups of pupils. This would be quite reasonable given external criteria for ascribing labels of 'successful' schools and the associated career aspirations of teachers. The SENCO may be more focused on delivering policies for SEN that seek to include pupils and recognise the broader achievements of pupils with SEN from their starting point. The class teacher may be focused on the day-to-day provision of quality teaching for the whole class whilst maintaining a responsibility for the learning needs of individual pupils who experience SEN.

Teachers may experience the tensions between the three agendas as a choice to be made rather than a balance to be struck. Fragmented approaches to the three agendas could be experienced by individual pupils and their parents as exclusionary.

The existence of these three agendas could lead to confusion as to the interpretation of inclusion.

Interpretation at school level may lead to a very different school ethos. Prioritising standards raising may result in schools inevitably having a concern for those pupils who 'fall below' national age-related expectations. This interpretation would result in schools' strategies for inclusion being directed towards compensatory and catch up approaches. The efficacy of their inclusion policy would be judged in relation to the extent to which the gap between 'mainstream' and SEN attainment has been narrowed. In contrast, an approach that focuses on diversity values achievement in terms of personal progress rather than attainment compared to national expectations.

### Implications

Arguably, the greatest disservice to teachers would be to suggest that the complexities arising from the coexistence of these agendas within schools do not exist or can be easily ameliorated through training or the issuing of 'good practice' guidance. Schools could usefully examine the extent to which standards raising narrowly defined in terms of improvements in literacy and numeracy is operationalised in a manner that is compatible with a policy of inclusion and the achievement of holistic outcomes for all pupils, including those with SEN. Given their different heritage and end goals, the blending and balancing of standards raising, SEN and inclusion agendas is not an easy process but it is necessary if the inclusion of pupils with SEN is to be successfully embedded in whole school development.

### Training

Issues of training may on the surface appear to be easy to resolve but may in reality be the most complex. A core issue, as highlighted within this literature review, is the varying and changing interpretations of inclusion and SEN. It follows that LA provision of training and schools' and individual requests for training are going to be influenced by these interpretations. If an interpretation of SEN is one in which individual difference is paramount then the demand for and provision of training is likely to prioritise individualised specialist approaches linked to categories of need. If, however, the social model that underpins inclusion is prioritised then there is likely to be an emphasis on improving teaching and learning opportunities for all children with an emphasis on whole class approaches and 'removing barriers'. In reality it is unhelpful if these two perspectives are viewed or presented as oppositional. A more productive way forward would be a focus on a bio/psycho/social approach and an emphasis on securing improved holistic outcomes for individuals.

At surface level increased inclusion would be expected to bring demand for training in SEN pedagogies and approaches for all teachers, not just those concerned with SEN. In this context training in relation to those children who pose particular difficulties for inclusion in group settings, such as those with autistic spectrum disorders, SEBD and Speech and Language Difficulties is likely to be sought by schools and their teachers. To some extent this need is being addressed through national training materials provided both through paper-based and electronic guidance. This kind of model of 'additional or different' training for SEN presupposes that the teacher's main role in imparting subject knowledge remains unchanged. However, that is far from the case, as policies such as *Every Child Matters* (2004) and *Getting it Right for Every Child* (Scottish Executive 2006) suggest. The reality is that an enhancement in SEN expertise would not in itself suffice in preparing teachers for the sea change in policy and practice within schools. These changes are primarily concerned with interprofessionalism and personalisation and, as such, demand a different focus within training. In formulating policy for any prescribed training it is necessary to look at both building teachers' capacity to operate using the systems and process currently in place but also equipping them for the changing role of teaching profession. If teachers are to act as learning co-ordinators with responsibility for cultivating generic capabilities such as learning how to learn, problem-solving and critical thinking (Kirk and Broadhead 2007) and embed their individual mastery of pedagogic skills and approaches in collaborative and relational professional action (Kirk and Broadhead 2007) it requires a significantly different emphasis in training.

Issues of training are located within a changing landscape as schools move from a focus on SEN towards an increasing focus on inclusion. Within this process an important trend is recognition of how local knowledge is constructed when teaching specific pupils in schools. It is therefore

important for teachers to engage in school-based research as a contribution to a wider knowledge base and critical understanding about meeting pupils' special educational needs. Additionally, ongoing research in the field of neuroscience is seen by the public and many professionals as a fertile and useful area for improving understanding and provision for children who experience special educational needs. This changing landscape against which interpretations of SEN and inclusion exist is itself an issue and influence for the provision and efficacy of training.

Training issues linked to SEN but more widely rooted within a wider social inclusion agenda include the management of behaviour and the early identification of individuals and groups vulnerable to social exclusion. This is a challenging area for training in that it demands a focus on how cognitive, affective, physical and social developmental elements interact to produce differences in learning and behaviour. For example, if teachers 'understand' how language and communication contribute to behavioural difficulties (Peacey 2005) they will feel better able to plan to reduce behavioural problems.

Teachers and their schools are necessarily caught up in issues of feasibility and confidence in relation to the inclusion agenda in which they have the responsibility of teaching all children, including those with SEN. Schools and their teachers may be asking themselves '*What am I expected to know and do in relation to SEN and inclusion?*' and '*What can I feasibly do?*'

Whilst in relation to the first of these questions there are expectations within professional standards and the requirements of external inspection there is less consensus about the second question. This is likely to depend on school factors such as the nature, ethos, location and resources, individual teacher factors such as experience, values and attitudes and individual child factors.

In reality, schools will be experiencing the need to deliver Government initiatives, against which they will be evaluated; support new teachers to strengthen their core practices for SEN and inclusion; and support existing staff to engage in ongoing professional development. There is a need to gather empirical data on the take up and impact of training on the classroom experience of teachers and outcomes for pupils.

## Implications

This literature review suggests that if training is to be effective it needs to address the two previously identified questions: '*What am I expected to know and do in relation to SEN and inclusion?*' and '*What can I feasibly do?*'

In addressing the first of these questions Calderhead (2001) comments that, "*there has been a trend for government agencies to claim that it is well known which teaching approaches and strategies 'work' and to make clear prescriptions for teachers' practice – these prescriptions are delivered through 'teacher training'*" (Calderhead 2001 pp 780) and an ever increasing number of guidance materials. While this provides a necessary aspect of training and could assure greater parity of provision for all pupils with SEN, it is unlikely to be sufficient for teachers to rely entirely on prescribed approaches and strategies as they progress through their careers. This is supported by Haggarty (2002), through the work of Darling-Hammond (2001), who states that teaching necessitates responding to the complex needs of individual learners and therefore involves making multiple decisions in non-routine situations. Teaching conceived of in this way emphasises the appropriateness of teaching decisions which are informed by theoretical ideas, contextual demands and values. Teaching is viewed as an intellectually challenging task in which teachers continually examine and refine their practice and requires '*teacher education*' as opposed to '*training*'.

A central issue is what the teacher needs to know generically and specifically. There are undoubtedly bodies of knowledge related to particular types of special educational needs which, providing they are used to predict and overcome potential barriers rather than lower expectations, are useful to the teacher and are likely to contribute to better learning experiences for the pupil. However, these are generic forms of knowledge and run the risk of implying that pupils with a particular type of need form a homogeneous group. In addition to generic forms of knowledge it is therefore necessary also to develop in teachers, through training, the skills which allow them to creatively and responsively modify their everyday practice in ways in relation to a specific individual with this type of need. Appropriate professional development for SEN and inclusion requires a balance between the two approaches and the provision of a range of training and experiential opportunities.

An additional consideration in relation to training is that individuals with SEN are typically taught in group settings. This introduces issues of feasibility. Though many of the strategies and approaches to secure the learning of pupils with particular types of needs are well researched and well known, the difficulty is that frequently these rely on one-to-one or small group teaching. Teachers could therefore be trained in such approaches but not be able to practically implement them in the context within which they are working. Training therefore needs to take account of not only what teachers need to know and understand in relation to SEN and inclusion but also what they can feasibly do.

The meeting of demand from teachers for particular training in relation to SEN and inclusion should be cautiously considered given the complexity of the issues that underpin the SEN and inclusion agenda. What individual teachers perceive they *want* may in practice be different to what they *need*. Empirical research is needed to explore examples of where training has been delivered and has been considered by recipients as being successful. Importantly such research should also examine the context, both current and historical, as the practice of simply identifying good practice and importing it without this understanding is unlikely to be successful.

This literature review endorses the view expressed by Kershner (2007) that training and professional development needs to address:

- the fundamental importance of understanding child development in context, as a basis for understanding the identification of SEN;
- the value of knowing that you do not know everything and believing that change is possible;
- the need to communicate understanding and resolve differences between people who have useful knowledge;
- the need to recognise the school as a site for the development of teaching expertise and the creation of knowledge.

Importantly, the third of Kershner's points recognises that there are differing perspectives in relation to SEN and inclusion both within Education and amongst colleagues from different professional backgrounds. This provides an opportunity rather than a barrier. The list also illustrates the obvious point that training and professional development for SEN involve the provision not only of specific course content. There also need to be opportunities to develop and critically evaluate one's own classroom practices, together with experiences that allow learning from the practices both within and between schools, including special schools.

It is vital that debates regarding the contribution of training to the development of more inclusive practice go beyond simple notions that more training is necessarily better, to a consideration of the type, content and timing within teachers' careers of the training.

## Behaviour

Understandably teachers have been concerned about issues of behaviour that have arisen in a parallel time frame to the inclusion agenda. Not only is behaviour seen to be a barrier to inclusion for teachers but it is also seen to be an indicator of the efficacy of inclusion as a policy directive. The extent to which these perceptions are validated by evidence is limited. However, there is no doubt that such is the power of this perception that behaviour remains a major issue for the inclusion agenda. The consistent official line is that in most schools most pupils work hard and behave well (OFSTED 2005, DfES 2005b, Estyn 2006 and Scottish Executive 2001) and low level disruption is the most common form of misbehaviour.

That teachers view more favourably the inclusion in mainstream school of children with some forms of need more than others, such as SEBD, is discussed in *Section 1.3 Teachers' Attitudes and Inclusion*. Inclusion in many ways is dependent on one's ability to learn and respond in group settings and is underpinned by relationships. For pupils with SEBD this is typically the area of greatest difficulty and so it is little wonder that these pupils pose a major challenge for the inclusion agenda. It is important to recognise, however, that the SEBD label encompasses a wide range of pupils and it would be too simplistic to say that inclusion, if we mean by this placement full time in a mainstream school, 'does not work', for these pupils as a whole.

The policy of inclusion has also created the potential where pupils with special educational needs may be demonstrating behaviour that is appropriate to their level of development, but is judged inappropriate in the context of the age-related expectations of behaviour within the class. For example, developmentally a thirteen year old pupil may not be able to sustain attention for the periods of time typically the teacher would expect from a thirteen year old. Unless the teacher is able to draw on a developmental perspective and differentiate their teaching accordingly the pupil may be cast as a behavioural problem, to which the teacher responds with behavioural strategies. However, teacher awareness may not be the only issue. Whilst the teacher might view such behaviour as developmentally appropriate to that child and be aware of the type of a teaching response that is appropriate, a flexible response may be viewed as undermining school efforts to improve standards of behaviour.

Teachers are more likely to experience difficulties in including pupils whose behaviour does not lend itself to the development of reciprocal relationships<sup>11</sup> that underpin learning in group settings. These pupils include those with speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Much is known about the social, emotional and cognitive factors that influence pupil behaviour. There is also consensus that many behaviour issues can, and should, be addressed through preventative measures that promote early intervention, the strengthening of teaching and learning, and the promotion of whole school responses. There is a need to recognise that whilst it is right and proper to focus attention and resources both on understanding and tackling the root causes of behaviour as the means of securing longer term change, there is also a need for teachers to be able to effectively deal with behavioural issues in the immediacy of the classroom context. The popularity of texts and training packages in relation to behaviour management confirm this need.

Pupil behaviour is undoubtedly a complex issue. As outlined earlier (*Section 2.2 Behaviour, SEN and Inclusion*) the DfE (1994), referring to English schools, viewed emotional and behavioural difficulties as lying on a continuum stretching from the sporadic naughtiness or moodiness that might be expected from any child through to mental illness that would affect a relatively small number of children. The problem with the English document was that it implied that it was the pupil who was on the continuum rather than the behaviour and that this position was largely fixed. This reflected a historical response to behaviour judged as challenging to social order which has been to assume that the problem lies almost entirely within the individual and to resort to medical and/or psychological approaches to assessment and 'treatment', often outside the mainstream educational context (Wearmouth et al 2005). The resulting perception may be that there is a threshold past which the child requires highly specialised approaches that are beyond the reach of the mainstream class teacher.

If the focus is kept on pupil behaviour, the use of a continuum as a way of conceptualising this does have some utility. Pupil behaviour can usefully be viewed as a broad continuum from low level disruption through to the high levels of anti social behaviour and extreme violence/aggression that are the focus of most public concern. Pupils' positioning on the continuum may change as behaviour fluctuates, varying over time and influenced by many interacting factors, including the school ethos. Rapid escalation can occur due to events in the pupil's life in or out of school and demand a high level of support quickly. Behaviour therefore does not always follow conveniently the staged approach typically advocated in relation to special education needs. There is also a fundamental question over whether and when behaviour should be viewed as a special educational need. This can lead to differences in response between schools with some pupils being routed through disciplinary measures, some being routed through pastoral systems and others falling under SEN processes.

The concept of 'critical mass' is likely to be a factor affecting teachers' experience of behaviour in the classroom. The sorts of strategies and approaches necessary to manage behaviour of individuals where the majority of pupils are motivated, work hard and behave well may be different to those required in settings where a significant proportion may exhibit problematic behaviour. Many

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<sup>11</sup> In this context the use of 'reciprocal' serves to stress that inclusion is a two-way process underpinned by the quality of the relationship between the pupil and the teacher.

popular behaviour management strategies for responding to misbehaviour when it actually occurs focus heavily on the teacher's use of language (e.g. Rogers 2006). These often rely on being able to identify specific individuals in a particular situation and then addressing them with a positively framed correction. The implied premise is that how a teacher responds to individuals influences overall class behaviour. Many teachers can see the value of this, and recognise that, used consistently, such an approach does have the capacity to change the ethos of the class. However, where a significant proportion of pupils misbehave and do so simultaneously, it may be very difficult to identify the appropriate individual or require so many individual positive corrections to be made that lesson pace is lost. There may also be an issue that many such strategies require the pupil's receptive language to be sufficiently well developed to understand the positive correction directed at them.

In schools where poor behaviour is more widespread, it is necessary to consider whether weaknesses in other areas such as leadership and management or learning and teaching are contributing to this. This may mean that whilst the problem manifests itself behaviourally the solution may not lie in becoming better in managing behaviour. This is potentially challenging for teachers as many of the measures to address these wider issues take time to make a direct improvement on behaviour within the classroom.

There is an emergent view that 'behaviour' and 'learning' should not be regarded as separate agendas within schools and that social, cognitive and emotional factors influence the development of both. The reduction of emphasis on child development and the psychology of learning in favour of an emphasis on subject knowledge in teacher training may be a factor that needs to be explored. An understanding of child development is necessary as increasingly in a policy context of inclusion teachers will encounter pupils who have not yet acquired or developed the social, emotional and behavioural skills to behave in a manner that might typically be expected of a child of their age.

It is difficult to identify what teachers 'should' know about behaviour, SEN and inclusion. While skills in delivering a range of good practice behaviour management strategies are clearly a necessary part of a teacher's professional toolkit, teachers are likely to be disappointed if they expect any set of strategies to enable them to anticipate and prepare for the entire range of pupil responses they will experience in the classroom. There is a need to balance increased confidence and competence in behaviour management through more training with the availability both of proactive, preventative approaches and creative initiatives and interventions for those children and young people who present the greatest challenges.

It would seem paramount that all teachers secure an enhanced understanding of the links between SEN and behaviour. This is particularly relevant in the area of language and communication and emotional difficulties. The links between language and learning and language and behaviour that may be evident in some pupils with SEN could be studied to enhance schools' existing behaviour policies. Joint agency working between Health and Education has much to offer such a development.

## Conclusion

This literature review has been concerned with exploring issues relating to SEN and inclusion and considering possible implications for teacher workload in schools. In essence what has emerged is that inclusion, initially interpreted by many as being concerned with the increased integration of pupils with SEN into mainstream schools, is gradually developing through public, political and professional debate into the wider social context of issues relating to social disintegration and fragmentation. It follows that in any one educational context there is likely to be culture that reflects:

- an enduring concern with the academic component of schooling through an ongoing emphasis on standards and quality;
- the inheritance of a 'special education' system with its associated categories of difference, difficulty and need;
- a gradually emerging emphasis on inclusion in relation to SEN and disability;
- moves towards changing the way schools operate through remodelling, multi-agency working and personalisation in order to improve the wider social, emotional and physical outcomes for individuals.

In looking at such a culture it is clear for schools and their teachers that inclusion is a complex issue, that teachers will always be working in a changing system, and that pupil behaviour, initial teacher training and continued professional development, and teacher workload are likely to remain of primary concern to the profession.

Indeed many of the issues identified in this report, if consciously considered by the busy professional, have the potential to contribute to teacher workload and stress. However, promoting enhanced holistic outcomes and social inclusion *through*, rather than for classroom and subject teaching is not a new idea to teachers who traditionally have not seen their role as restricted solely to securing prescribed standards for academic attainment. It could be that, as suggested from literature cited earlier in this review, the majority of teachers the majority of the time do not distinguish between 'special' and other pupils (Florian and Rouse 2001 cited in Nind et al 2005) and respond intuitively (Ainscow 1997).

Interestingly, teachers' response to initiatives and complexity as observed from the *Curran Report* was one of carrying on with their teaching:

*"We took the opportunity to talk to teachers about their concerns. We were very impressed by the dedication of the staff we met and noted how involved they were in the day to day activities of teaching their pupils. Many had little knowledge of issues being discussed at general educational policy level. They were simply too busy and we were told on many occasions about their concerns over workload and the impact this had on their work/life balance during term time. Resolving excess workload was ranked by many of those we spoke to as being more important than salary improvements"* (DENI 2004, pp 28).

The real concern for most practitioners is likely to be those elements that impact directly on day-to-day practice at a very practical level, such as in England changing from writing Individual Education Plans to completing Provision Maps (DfES 2005c), experiencing greater pressure from Senior Leadership to achieve two or more levels progress across Key Stage 2 with all pupils (OFSTED 2004b), teaching assistants previously assigned to general in-class support being taken to run 'catch up' programmes or the arrival of a pupil with severe or complex needs. Such occurrences reflect developments and priorities at national level but teachers may experience these simply in the form of something else to do, think about or incorporate into their practice. It may be these aspects that teachers perceive as the threat to reductions in workload and improvements in wellbeing rather than the wider issues of policy. This report, however, has served to show that the lack of coherence that teachers may sometimes feel exists within policy and initiatives as received by them (often after interpretation by others such as the local authorities and School Leadership Team), reflects tensions and contradictions between strands of policy at national level.

The way in which teachers cope with multiple demands remains an important area for further study in the wake of policy and planning to reduce teacher workload, increase job satisfaction and strengthen the focus on teaching and learning. However, if classroom/subject teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to engage with policy issues, there is a very real risk to their standing and status which could see them cast in the role of passive recipients and deliverers of policy. It is important that teachers are able to engage in informed debate with both national and local policy makers and to actively contribute, through their school-based research and scholarship, to the evidence base for effective practice in SEN and inclusion. An NASUWT report (2005) has commented:

*"Information access and communications are critical to addressing problems of workload and stress. Teachers and headteachers working in ignorance often found themselves experiencing high levels of stress, and in these cases workload pressures appeared most acute. Not knowing about current developments and issues serve to undermine teachers' ability to implement the reform agenda"* (NASUWT 2005, pp 19).

This literature review is intended to precede an empirical study as to how teachers are experiencing the educational agenda for inclusion, both in its narrower sense relating to SEN and disability, and also in the wider sense of improving individual outcomes, reducing social exclusion, and promoting social cohesion.

In speculating what this experience might be it is logical to conclude from this review that this will be very varied. We have seen that the interpretation of inclusion varies at the ideological, political, professional and personal levels. This level of interpretation, when translated into practice, places teacher attitude and values, school make-up and ethos, staff confidence and competence, and national and local policy directives, as variables that necessarily will impact on teachers' and pupils' experience of inclusion in their schools.

Given the focus and findings from this review we suggest that one possible focus for investigating this level of interpretation is to consider the three following research questions areas:

- how are teachers/schools balancing the interpretation of SEN and inclusion?
- what is the nature of training and professional development teachers are experiencing in relation to their aspirations, and imposed expectations for the development of effective inclusive practice in their schools?
- what are teachers finding that it is feasible to contribute to the development of the inclusion agenda through their leadership, management and teaching in their schools?

In further considering these questions this literature review tentatively suggests that areas within those questions might be:

Area for research investigation	Identified areas from this review
<p><b>BALANCE</b></p> <p>How are teachers balancing the interpretations of SEN and inclusion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How does the school balance SEN/disability interpretations of SEN and priorities, informed by a range of policy documents and processes, with a wider inclusion agenda which encompasses inequalities experienced through gender, race, social background, etc.</li> <li>● To what extent are outcomes as measured by national testing and whole school outcomes (e.g. literacy, numeracy/GCSE, etc.) balanced with a focus on more holistic individual outcomes?</li> <li>● How are local needs and provision balanced with national priorities? Does this raise issues for national parity of provision and outcomes for individual pupils with SEN?</li> <li>● Are there situations where the right to be included in mainstream school conflicts with the right to an appropriate education – and how are these resolved?</li> <li>● How does the school value diversity in the context of an education system rooted in normatively referenced expectations?</li> <li>● How does the school balance development of specialist teaching approaches, related to SEN categories of need, with an emphasis on 'quality first inclusive teaching'?</li> <li>● How is a balance achieved between individual and whole group teaching for pupils with SEN?</li> <li>● How is a balance achieved between teaching subject knowledge to secure attainment and providing opportunities through subject teaching to develop transferable generic capabilities associated with achievement?</li> <li>● To what extent is preventative working balanced with the provision of resources for pupils with identified special educational needs?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the school balance the responsibilities of all teachers to teach pupils with SEN with the allocation of designated responsibility to particular staff such as the SENCO and teaching assistants?</li> <li>• To what extent is a balance achieved between addressing behavioural issues through the strengthening of class teaching and the allocation of support responsibilities to senior managers, SEN and pastoral staff?</li> <li>• How is a balance achieved between the school's willingness to embrace new initiatives and the provision of continuity and coherence for pupils and staff?</li> </ul>
<p><b>FEASIBILITY</b></p> <p>As well as knowing what they ought to do, what are teachers finding that it is feasible to do well? How are teachers prioritising and coping with the reality that inclusion is a changing and developing process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are policies for inclusion compatible with activities aiming to raise standards, promote parental choice and address issues of diversity?</li> <li>• To what extent can inclusion be gauged via measurable outcomes?</li> <li>• Do SEN procedures and labels support or hinder the development of more inclusive practice?</li> <li>• To what extent does LA variation in interpretation impact upon outcomes?</li> <li>• How much additional liaison time for multi-professional working is the SEN/inclusion agenda creating?</li> <li>• How do teacher attitudes and school ethos/type support or hinder effective working?</li> <li>• How effective is the training offered/undertaken in improving the quality of classroom teaching and individual outcomes?</li> <li>• How does context/phase (e.g. primary or secondary) influence planning and provision for SEN/inclusion?</li> <li>• To what extent can teachers address wider social concerns for social inclusion as well as providing 'education'?</li> <li>• To what extent do teachers have opportunities to access, trial and evaluate the increasing number of paper and web-based training and guidance materials?</li> <li>• To what extent are SEN pedagogies or additional or extra provision deliverable within mainstream settings?</li> <li>• Is it feasible to promote and address early identification for pupils with SEN (particularly those with SEBD) within existing resource allocation?</li> </ul>
<p><b>PROFESSIONALISM and RIGOUR</b></p> <p>What training and support are teachers being offered, what do they seek, and how does that impact upon their day-to-day practice and pupil outcome? What contribution do teachers make/are teachers expected to make to the knowledge and evidence base in relation to the effective teaching of pupils with SEN and effective practices for the inclusion of groups and individuals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do teachers have the opportunity to access/engage in debates about inclusion, its ideology and interpretation at various levels?</li> <li>• Does the school and individual teachers within it have a clear purpose(s) for school-based activities to promote inclusion; how is progress monitored against that purpose?</li> <li>• How much do teachers know about and use an evidence base for inclusion?</li> <li>• To what extent are teachers/schools contributing to a practitioner evidence base for SEN/inclusion?</li> <li>• Does knowledge about a specific type of special educational need help teachers to secure better outcomes for pupils with that need?</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How should training for SEN/inclusion change as teachers progress through their careers from initial teacher education?</li> <li>• What are the training/CPD differences for SEN and inclusion for early years, primary, secondary and post-16 staff?</li> <li>• To what extent are teachers confident in using assessment and evaluation methodologies to examine multifaceted complex issues in order to secure and assess progress for pupils with SEN?</li> </ul> |
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While agendas may come and go, the need for teachers to seek a balance between competing demands, make professional judgements based on feasibility and retain their professionalism and rigour is likely to remain constant. How, and if, the issues identified through his synthesis of literature are experienced by teachers in their schools remains a subject for further empirical research.

Over the course of this literature review period an emphasis on the ideology and feasibility of including more children with SEN in mainstream schools has been subsumed within a wider agenda for change that seeks to address concerns relating to social cohesion and issues of societal fragmentation. If teachers are to retain and enhance their professional standing it is important that they engage with and understand the changing landscape within which they are working. It is hoped that this literature review contributes to this engagement and understanding.

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