

THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

**A National Policy
for
Fully Integrated
Education**

formulated by

THE INTEGRATION ALLIANCE

(Disabled people and allies working for inclusive education)

A member of the British Council
of Organisations of Disabled People

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Introduction

THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Philosophy

Legislation

Funding

Training

Fostering a Positive Self Identity

LOCAL POLICIES

Policy for Under-fives

Removing Barriers in the Built Environment

An Integration Support Service

Designing a Local Strategy

DISABLED TEACHERS

PARENTS FOR INCLUSION

Disabled Parents

Non-disabled Parents

Appendix I Proposed Draft Education Act Insert

Appendix II Making Action Plans

Appendix III Disability Equality Training

Appendix IV Addresses for advice and support

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THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

A National Policy For Fully Integrated Education

Disabled people, people with learning difficulties and allies are demanding that the segregated and restrictive Special Education System be dismantled and replaced by ONE, FULLY SUPPORTED, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM BY THE YEAR 2000

We want:

ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PUPILS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR IN NEED OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: TO BE PROVIDED WITHIN A DIVERSE, MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SYSTEM.

THE FUNDING FOR SUCH RESOURCES TO BE GUARANTEED BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT:

Reasons:

- The long-term exclusion of any young people from the mainstream is socially and educationally harmful to both groups of people.
- Segregation of young people evidentially leads to segregation in adult life, and is recognised by disabled people as one of the fundamental causes of our inequality in society. Integration is therefore A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE.
- The breaking of relationships, which is an inevitable result of segregation, is the most serious form of social deprivation, and in itself damages young people's ability to learn.
- 'Special Needs' is not another term for 'Handicapped' or 'Disturbed', but means *"needs which are currently unmet in the mainstream"*: Those needs can be met by human and material resources in any educational establishment for a fairly equitable financial cost. Therefore the decision of whether to make these provisions in the mainstream, or in a separate school system, is one of philosophy and political will.

The Government Audit Commission states, in its research document on Special Education, that £1 billion per year is spent on special schools. We would advocate transferring these funds away from unnecessary school buildings, especially boarding provision, into the salaries of support staff in mainstream schools, and adaptations of mainstream school buildings. The release of specialist expertise currently locked up within the special school system would enrich the whole education service, and assist the estimated 18% of children with learning difficulties currently within the mainstream.

This will also support the philosophical base of the new Children Act, which seeks to support the family, and the community, as the best environment for all young people to grow and develop.

The 'consumers' of 'Special Education' are disabled people, people with learning difficulties, and people who have experienced emotional distress. As it is the lives of these people who will ultimately be deeply affected by the education they are offered, they should play a major part in the designing of policies which relate to their own education. (This is currently *not* the case).

Organisations which are controlled by such people, British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, People First, British Deaf Association, Association of Blind and Partially Sighted Students and Teachers, for example, should be recognised as the representative 'voice' of the 2% of pupils referred to in the Warnock Report. They should also be recognised as the representative 'voice' of members of the adult disabled community who are also excluded from, and discriminated against, within the mainstream education system, especially *disabled teachers and disabled parents*.

We acknowledge and support the unique position of the Deaf Community. See page 14.

Widespread and well documented abuse of the 1981 Education Act has led to an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering to children and their parents, especially when they opt for an integrated placement. Local variations in understanding, attitude, and availability of resources has led to gross inequalities for young people with 'Special Educational Needs' across Britain. There are many cases where children are receiving no education at all. (Refer to: 81 Network, Parents in Partnership, CSIE, IPSEE for examples). For this reason we feel that it is imperative that parent's and children's rights under the 1981 Education Act (Assessment and Statementing Procedure) should be safeguarded by removing

responsibility for funding from Local Government, and placing it upon Central Government. This should guarantee provision outlined in a "Statement of Need".

"The concept of parents as partners is evidentially rhetoric rather than reality. The Government sponsored disability survey conducted between 1985 and 1988 and published in 1989 showed that only 22% of parents of children with impairments had heard about the assessment and statementing process, and many of these children were being educated in Special Schools...

...Since the 1981 Education Act makes it illegal to provide special education without a formal statement, it is evident that the law is being ignored by many LEAs." Colin Barnes

THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Philosophy

The first step to achieving an Inclusive Education System is to understand the philosophy behind it. "Inclusion" is a more profound concept than "Integration". It fundamentally challenges the traditional approach to regard disability and disabled people as an 'after-thought' instead stating that disability is part of the common experience of humanity and should be a central issue in the planning of any human services. It is only with this shift in approach that disabled people and people with learning difficulties could enter the world as equals. For this reason we believe "Inclusion" to be a HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE.

This shift will not come about spontaneously, but will require leadership and commitment. It will particularly require training in the 'Social Model of Disability'.

"A little segregation is like pregnancy -there is no such thing as a little -if you have it, you have it all. Communities where each experiences belonging are created when children are in the presence of each other:'

Patrick Mackan C.R.

"Institutional discrimination against disabled people is ingrained throughout the present education system. The data shows that most of the educational provision for disabled children and students remains basically segregative, is dominated by traditionally medically influenced attitudes, and commands a low priority as a whole. As a result, rather than equipping disabled children and young people with the appropriate skills and opportunities to live a full and active adult life, it largely conditions them to accepting a much devalued social role and in so doing condemns them to a lifetime of dependence and subordination." Colin Barnes

"Some of the best teachers Kirsty could ever have are the other children in the ordinary school." Elizabeth Arrondelle.

Legislation

We believe that current legislation is inadequate to achieve an inclusive education system.

The 1981 Education Act, although intended as a tool for parents to achieve choice, is still based on the concept of a Special Education System, which labels children as having a learning difficulty if he/she has " a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in schools, within the area of the local authority concerned, for children of their age..." This concept is classic "blaming the victim" thinking which does not acknowledge the fact that disabled children have been segregated in the first place because there has been no facilities for them in the mainstream.

The definition of learning difficulty as belonging to a child who "has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age" also 'officially' marginalises children who are less than 'average.' The Act also fails to require ring-fenced resources for its implementation, leaving it up to the 'good-will' of the Local Education Authorities. Ten years experience has proved that depending on good-will is unreliable. We are arguing for:

1. AN IMMEDIATE REPEAL OF SECTION 2(3) OF THE 1981 ACT:

This section puts *conditions* which must be satisfied before an Education Authority is required to secure that a child with a 'Statement of Special Educational Need' has those needs met in an ordinary school:

"The conditions are that account has been taken, in accordance with section 7, of the views of the child's parents and that educating the child in an ordinary school is compatible with -

(a) his receiving the special educational provision that he requires;

(b) the provision of efficient education for the children with whom he will be educated; and

(c) the efficient use of resources."

and the introduction of

2. A NEW 1992 (Promotion of Inclusion) EDUCATION ACT:

This Act would retain much of the good thinking behind the 1981 Act, but with the fundamental difference that *every child who enters the state education system would be entitled to a Statement of Educational Need*. This would safeguard every child's right to have her or his personal needs assessed and met in order to benefit fully from her or his education. The Statement would be binding until the student leaves the education system and/or until the provision is taken over by another agency such as the Disabled Advisory Service (DAS). A first draft of this new act is appended.

"LEAs in England and Wales spend more than £820 million a year on special education. A vast amount of this is spent on segregated education rather than integration. The main problem is not simply a lack of resources but a lack of commitment to transfer resources from segregated provision to the mainstream sector ...The directive for change must come from Government." Colin Barnes

"It was clear that it (the Warnock Committee) had accepted unequivocally the orthodox view that disabled people would be excluded from the workplace. This has salient implications for the perpetuation of this myth." Colin Barnes

"It has been hard to discern anything that could be termed a national integration policy since 1981. No clear steps have been taken by the DES to reduce the numbers of pupils going to special schools.

In 1989 the numbers of children in segregated education stood at only 0.06% below that of 1977. Recent evidence from CSIE shows that since 1981, 15 English LEAs have *increased* the proportion of pupils in special schools, and three of them, Doncaster, Rotherham and St. Helens did so by *more than 25%*."

Swann 1991

"Although lip-service is paid to the notion of parental and children's rights, education for a child within the mainstream sector for a child with SEN is still not a right in the same way that it is for able-bodied children, or children who do not experience learning difficulties. Integration is provisional, and is acceptable only as long as it doesn't interfere with the smooth running of the mainstream sector. It is a privilege which can be awarded or withdrawn by LEAs at will:" Colin Barnes

Funding

It has been increasingly acknowledged that with the inadequate economic framework for integration set out in the 1981 Act, Local Education Authorities have been free to interpret their duties towards children whose needs are not currently met within the mainstream, in a variety of unsatisfactory ways, for example:

"There is no more money for Statements until next April..."

"There is money but no support teachers available..."

"Our stock of Victorian school buildings would be too costly to adapt, so we will continue to use out-borough boarding provision..."

"Speech therapy is really a matter for the Health Service..."

"We'll put your child on the waiting list..."

It has also led to some appalling examples of 'bad' integration where children have been inserted into unprepared and hostile mainstream schools without adequate support, where they have suffered immensely, or been left at home without a school placement for months, or kept in nurseries until six or seven years old whilst their 'papers' are being processed.

The political events of the last few years which have so affected Local Government finances, plus the implications for integration of the Education Reform Act, lead us to suggest that:

- Money for provision for children with statements should be guaranteed by central government.
- Formula funding and local management of schools should allow local education authorities to withhold sufficient monies centrally to be able to provide a fully resourced central support service to all schools and colleges in that authority.
- Any finances created by the closures of segregated schools should be invested by central government in a fund to offset some of the costly adaptations necessary to current educational buildings to make them accessible to all.
- Recognising that further or higher education constitutes an essential 'second chance' for many people with disabilities or learning difficulties. financial support for disabled students should be available regardless of age.

Training

- There should be a mandatory module on disability equality in all initial teacher training.
- This training should only be carried out by registered disability equality trainers using materials approved by disability rights organisations.

Most training in 'Special Needs' is historically based in the 'medical' model of disability, in that it is primarily about diagnosis and management. Mainstream teachers do very little even of this, as the whole area of disability and learning difficulties is seen as a specialism for those who are interested in 'abnormal' children, even though the majority of children with 'special needs' are contained within the mainstream classroom.

There is a huge and pressing need for Disability Equality Training for teachers, support workers, school governors, officers and members which would challenge this view of disability, redefining disability as a socially created phenomena which can be replaced by policies of inclusion.

This training should become a national training priority with substantial funding under the GEST (Grant for Educational Support and Training) Scheme.

*(For details of **DET** courses and Trainers, see Appendix III).*

"Discriminatory attitudes amongst teaching staff in the mainstream sector have been confirmed by HMI reports... Where negative staff attitudes were present the inspectors noticed how they were quickly picked up by non-impaired children. this had an adverse influence on their behaviour towards their disabled peers."

Colin Barnes.

"It is frequently stated that staff in special schools are better equipped to educate pupils with SEN. There is little evidence to support this view... Each of the reports (DES 1986, 1989a, 1989 b, 1989c) quoted has commented on the general lack of knowledge in core areas."

Colin Barnes

Fostering a Positive Self Identity

Because disabled people and people with learning difficulties have been segregated from society, we have not been able to represent ourselves through the media or through our own organisations until very recently. Therefore our experience, history, images, thinking itself is missing from most of the curricular material available to schools and colleges. It is also missing from most of the television, books, magazines, films, art-work, pop-music or drama to which young people are exposed. This invisibility, or silence, greatly affects the self-image of disabled young people, leaving them ashamed and embarrassed, and wishing to be accepted as 'normal'.

This negative self-image needs to be challenged. The history of disabled people, our power and strength, our heroines and heroes, our literature and music, our artists and poets, our visionaries and philosophers need to be celebrated, and the reality of our social oppression needs to be understood. Without this, relationships of equality cannot happen.

We therefore intend to develop a national resource called "DISABILITY EQUALITY IN EDUCATION." Within this unit disabled people will publish and promote materials for teachers and students such as "Disability Equality in the Classroom: A Human Rights Issue", (Mason and Rieser) and develop modules in accordance with the National Curriculum which would incorporate disability issues into all the subjects covered, and at all key stage levels.

We will also maintain and administer a register of trainers, and lecturers, workshop leaders, specialist courses and other such resources available to assist schools and colleges to make an inclusive school culture.

"People call us nasty names or treat us like kids because they are frightened. They don't know what we are like or what we can do... We are labelled, called mongol, makes me feel not wanted... Tell them not reading or writing doesn't mean you are stupid." Member of the participation Forum

Local Policies

The adoption of a national policy to create one, fully inclusive education system, would clearly require fresh policies from most Local Education Authorities, who would be responsible for its implementation. These policies must include:

A Policy for Under-fives which incorporates the philosophy of Inclusion.

This will mean support for the whole family, in the home and in mainstream settings with appropriate facilities.

All early interventions should proceed only when they *support the development of the child's relationship with her or his parents and brothers and sisters*. Play is how all young people begin their education, and every effort should be made to ensure that all under-fives play groups, clubs, toy libraries, playgrounds, opportunity groups etc, are sufficiently funded in order to provide a high enough level of staffing, physical access, and diversity of play equipment to allow every child to benefit.

Child Development Centres in hospital settings should only be used minimally, and never as a substitute for ordinary interaction with other children and adults. Assessments should be carried out in the child's natural surroundings.

Removing Barriers in the Built Environment.

Adaptions and additions to buildings to allow for the transfer of the local 'Special School' populations into well prepared host schools and colleges.

The implementation of a rolling programme of adaptions and new-build which would ensure access as a right for all potential users of any part of the education system, including professional development centres, training venues etc.

The halting of the current spate of closures and amalgamations of mainstream schools on the basis of falling school rolls and 'Surplus Spaces: but rather using this *fortunate opportunity* to keep class sizes under 25, assuming every class will include one child or more with a disability or learning difficulty, and retaining the physical space *essential* to the inclusion of these young people and physically disabled teachers.

An Integration Support Service.

The recruitment and training of a peripatetic Support Service, to include:

Support Teachers
Welfare Assistants,
Technical Advisors,
Speech Therapists,

Physiotherapists,
Meal-time Assistants,
Guides,
Specialist Teachers,
BSL Interpreters,
Readers,
Secretaries,
Head of Service,
Integration Consultants.

This team would work closely with the Schools Psychological Service, Child Guidance Team, Home liaison Officer, Home Tuition Service, Hospital Schools, Medical/Nursing Staff, Careers Guidance, School Transport Service, Specialist Advisors and *parents*. It would liaise closely with the Youth Service and The Employment and Training Agency.

We envisage also a growing partnership with the adult Disabled Community, many of whom are developing skills which will enable us to provide training and consultancy for "Inclusion".

Designing a local strategy

Putting together a timetabled package to achieve the following:

- The adoption of the MAPs process (*see Appendix 3*) would replace the format for current Assessment and Review. These processes take much too long, and focus entirely on a child's difficulties rather than building on their strengths. The resources identified to assist the child would still be a legal requirement under the duties of the 1981 Act.
- The preparation and training of mainstream staff.
- The preparation and re-training of Special School staff.
- Preparation and consultation with parents, school governors, *and the young people themselves*.
- Ongoing Inservice Training for teachers, including input into the curriculum of disability related issues.

- The closure of Special Schools and the transfer of staff, equipment and materials to appropriate mainstream schools and colleges, under the management of the Central Support Service.
- The retention or development of refuges for young people in crisis. which can offer intense one-to-one assistance *for short periods of time*, when distress is so overwhelming that school-work becomes irrelevant.
- A policy which acknowledges and supports the *unique* position of the Deaf community, a linguistic and cultural minority with the essential right to learn British Sign Language (or their native equivalent) as a first language, even if this is not the first language of their parents. Deaf Culture is an important part of our diverse, multi-cultural heritage, and should be recognised as such by the teaching of BSL as a Modern Language, available as a GCSE option for all young people.
- Every School and College to produce a Whole School Policy on Disability and Learning Difficulties, including their admissions policy, which must be published in their Prospectus.
- A structure for monitoring progress which would include the views of the pupils and students, parents, teachers and from Disability Equality Consultants, as well as from the H.M. Inspectorate.
- A policy which ensures access to all forms of local further and higher education for disabled adults, including transport and physical assistance, readers, signers and barrier-free learning and residential environments.
- Appraising the performance of teachers should include an assessment of the strategies they have developed for the inclusion of children with disabilities into the classroom, and within their peer group. Appraisal should *not* include comparative test results where these are inappropriate in relation to a particular child's learning difficulties.

"The oral method of teaching which has dominated since the Milan Conference of 1880, which banned non-oral means of 'educating' the deaf, has led to the systematic underachievement of deaf children in every country." Conrad 1979

DISABLED TEACHERS

With the removal of the discriminatory 'Fitness to Teach' criteria, for the employment, or retainment, of disabled teachers, there should be an adoption of an Equal Opportunities Code of Practice. This would include a requirement for employers to be familiar with the Disability Advisory Service (DAS), particularly in relation to the practical support of teachers in the classroom.

Efforts should be made to actively recruit disabled teachers for many reasons, including their unique ability to provide positive role models for young people.

All teacher training establishments should be barrier-free, and operate an equal opportunities policy towards disabled applicants, including a guarantee of interview.

"The threat of physical unfitness to teach hangs over many teachers who therefore keep quiet about their disabilities. For many who have become disabled during the course of their career, early retirement or the sack are very real threats. This is a huge waste of training and talent which could be overcome if there were less prejudice from colleagues, and a more positive and flexible approach from LEAs and the DES."

Richard Rieser

"Many girls at school (Chorley Wood College for Girls with Little or No Sight) had never been to a disco, or had a boyfriend, or even been shopping with someone of their own age. I think this experience has led me to believe passionately that children with disabilities should be taught in the mainstream."

Judy Watson

PARENTS FOR INCLUSION

Many families who believe in their child's right to an inclusive education system continue to struggle through the social oppression of segregation. This struggle has barely been acknowledged.

Disabled Parents

Disabled parents must be recognised as a significant but *invisible* group within society. The widespread policies of exclusion and segregation which affect disabled children and teachers within the education service, also affect disabled parents. They too are shut out by physical barriers such as stairs, or inaccessible

'print' information, or lack of BSL interpreters, and by barriers of attitude which treat disability issues with indifference.

Disabled parents need to be enabled to become fully involved in the school life of their children, including acting as voluntary or paid helpers, members of the PTA, or serving as parent-governors.

A disabled parent may also need practical support in areas such as accompanying his or her children to school, priority places in nurseries or after-school provision, or home-visits from the child's teacher if she or he is unable to travel. This is particularly important if the parent is single.

In the case of disabilities which are of a hereditary origin such as Sickle-cell Anaemia, Auditory Nerve Deafness, Brittle Bones, the whole family may be affected. This will bring about its particular needs, but will also ensure that the school has a great resource for learning about the particular condition and the kind of support that is required. In this situation the family should be treated as the *experts* in all assessments, reviews or Action Plans.

Non-disabled Parents

From the moment a child is born with a disability or learning difficulty, or from the time of recognition, a different philosophy, attitude, separate support services and ultimately segregation of the child, takes place.

From the start the parent's belief in the child is undermined by society's traditional view of disability. Often the parents themselves have no context in which to fit society's prejudgment of their child and their child's failure to conform. Indeed it is frequently the case that, without radical intervention, this attitude simply confirms the parents' own worst fears about disability and disabled people which they have acquired as young people educated in a segregated society.

Parents need the opportunity to think through the challenges raised by their decision to step outside the established discriminatory system. Those who want their disabled young people to be included in the community as part of an equal opportunities policy need to be supported by professionals who have received the essential training in Disability Equality. Parents can have real difficulties confronting their own 'learnt' responses to disability and they, too should have access to training.

"I feel more confident that I have the right to be able to go into my children's classrooms regularly to see their work, meet their friends and talk to their teacher.

The school is accepting their responsibility to think about the best ways to do this, so that my *own* children and those of other disabled parents are not set apart from their peers." Lois Keith

Parents are children's first models and earliest allies. If their thinking is not courageous and demanding, society will never change, and their children will rarely experience what must be every child's right -the unequivocal, undemanding, love and appreciation of their own parents.

APPENDIX 1

Proposed Draft Education Act

A facsimile Act is presented separately, inserted into the Policy document.

APPENDIX II

Making Action Plans (MAPS)

This should happen for every young person. There is a particularly urgent need for it to happen when the young person needs some individualised support, particularly on entering a new learning situation.

Gather together the young person, his/her parents/guardians, brothers/sisters, special friends, teachers, members of support team who will be in contact with the young person, plus an independent consultant or facilitator who will ask:

1. Who is this young person? (history strengths, likes etc).
2. What are your dreams (what do you hope to be doing when you are 25 years old? What are others' dreams for her/him?
3. What are your nightmares? (your worst fears about your future; other people's fears).
4. What are the young person's gifts? (what are they good at? What do they bring to the world?

5. What are their needs (in this situation)?
6. How shall we answer those needs? (how?, by whom?, by when?)

Several MAPS may need to be developed within a person's educational life.

APPENDIX III

Disability Equality Training

For a list of registered Disability Equality Trainers and courses available throughout the UK, contact:

The London Boroughs Disability Resource Team Bedford House
125-133 Camden High Street London NW1 7JR

Telephone: 071-4824896

From June 1992, with the support of Charities Projects (Comic Relief) we will be able to offer INSET courses to teachers, parents and school governors, consultancy and teaching material for schools and colleges who wish to explore the meaning of Inclusion as it relates to pupils, teachers and parents who are disabled or who have learning difficulties or emotional distress. Contact:

The Education Section Charity Projects
7 Great Russell Street London WC18 3NN

or

Disability Equality in Education c/o 78 Mildmay Grove London N 1 7P J

APPENDIX IV

Addresses for advice and support

81 Network
52 Magnaville Road
Bishops Stortford
Herts CM23 4DW

Tel: (0279) 503 244

Parents in Partnership (PIP)
Top Portacabin Clare House
5t George's Hospital Blackshaw Road
London SW17 Tel: 081-682 1473

**Centre for Studies
on Integrated Education (CSIE)**
415 Edgware Road
London NW2 6NB Tel: 081- 4528642

**Independent Panel
of Special Educational Experts (IPSEE)**
clo John Wright 12 Marsh Road Tillingham
Essex CM0 7SZ Tel: (0621) 779781

The British Council of Organisations
of Disabled People (BCODP)
De Bradelei House Chapel Street Belper
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Order more copies of this Policy at £1.00 (plus 50p p&p each) from:

The Integration Alliance
34a Dafforne Road Tooting
London SW17 8TZ

Tel: 081-682 0543

"Disabled people believe that our problems as adults will continue to be exacerbated by the non-disabled community, unless the education system accepts its responsibility towards us. We believe it to be our right to be part of the best, most flexible mainstream education system possible in order to prepare us for a useful adult life within the mainstream. We also believe it is the right for all non-disabled children to grow up informed, unafraid and close to disabled children and children with learning difficulties, and to be able to maintain those relationships without enforced segregation at any point. We therefore hope that teachers, parents, school governors and all those concerned will join with us to campaign for the material and human resources to be made available without delay."

Micheline Mason