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Abstract

This group of papers provides information on integration into ordinary schools for children who have disabilities or learning problems. The information points out the importance of a change in attitudes in both schools and society if integration is to be successful. The compilers of the information believe that the ultimate goal of integration is full inclusion of *all* children in the educational and social life of ordinary schools. **Keyword: School age**

INTEGRATION

the main arguments

Summary

- ▶ The main arguments behind support for the integration in ordinary schools of children with disabilities or those who experience difficulties in learning are given in this factsheet.
- ▶ It also points out the importance of a change in attitudes if integration in schools, as well as in society, is to be a reality.
- ▶ A brief reference to research findings supporting integration is given.

A process

Integration is the process of educating children with and without disabilities or difficulties in learning together in mainstream schools. At the start, this process involves a movement of children out of special schools into ordinary schools and a reduction in the exclusion of children with disabilities or difficulties from the ordinary schools. CSIE believes that the ultimate goal of integration is the full participation of *all* children in the educational and social life of ordinary schools.

Why integration?

Support for the principle of integration in education rests on the right of people with disabilities or difficulties in learning to the same opportunities for self-fulfilment as other people. These opportunities should arise within the community if barriers of ignorance, fear and prejudice are to be broken down, barriers which ultimately lead to discrimination and a refusal to accept all people as full members of society.

If all children are to share an equal opportunity to take an active part in society after school, then the right place to begin integration is before school, continuing throughout primary and secondary schooling. Young children quickly overcome their inhibitions and ignorance of disability or learning difficulty and relate to their disabled peers as *people* first.

Segregated schooling is a selection out of the mainstream on the grounds of attributes that are beyond an individual's control; children are brought together because of an apparently similar disability or difficulty in learning. We would not do this for a child who was female or who was black. Segregation is an exclusion, a devaluation, discriminating.

A separate system of special schools arose in the past because of general acceptance that it was all right to draw a line between 'normal' and 'abnormal'. A dual system of special and ordinary schools developed as an administrative solution in which special educational provision and special school

placement were synonymous. Decisions about meeting special educational needs have often been pre-empted by *where* the provision was available.

Increasing numbers of children with disabilities or difficulties have been successfully educated in ordinary school settings, however, and traditional patterns of placement by categories are now illegal. The focus now should be on each child's abilities and interests. An integrated timetable might look different for each of them. The consequences of categorisation in the past have included the adverse effect on children and families from 'labelling' and subsequent social stigma.

Isolating and marginalising people from local mainstream services can no longer be tolerated in any country that claims democratic principles. Education authorities in Britain and the people who work for them have for too long failed to admit that the real reasons for wishing to maintain segregated special school sectors include career and territorial investments as well as the convenience of keeping existing bureaucracies and beliefs about 'abnormality'. Segregation is an erosion of basic human rights.

Change in attitudes

Integration involves a change of attitudes. It is not just a question of placement, nor is it simply a question of a child fitting into an ordinary school's existing structure. Ordinary schools themselves have to change. Mainstream institutions are enhanced by developing their structures, curricula and social arrangements.

Barriers to integration are not thrown up by the nature and severity of an individual disability or difficulty in learning, but by prejudice. It has often been asked: 'Where do you draw the line?' 'What is the cut-off point for children with disabilities or difficulties to be educated in ordinary schools?' There should be none. Drawing lines is an arbitrary exercise and perpetuates artificial groups of children. The variety of effective integration arrangements up and down the country proves this simple point. And if it can happen in one

school, we have to ask why it cannot take place in another. The integration of children with disabilities or difficulties does not cost more. It is the running of two separate systems that is expensive. All pupils share the right to an appropriate supported mainstream education.

Research

Research into integration by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has shown that far from damaging the ordinary school, integration added to a school's strength and enhanced the provision for all children. The research concluded that 'much more successful integration could be taking place in ordinary schools than is the practice at present' (*Educating Pupils with Special Needs in the Ordinary School 1981*). It also found that:

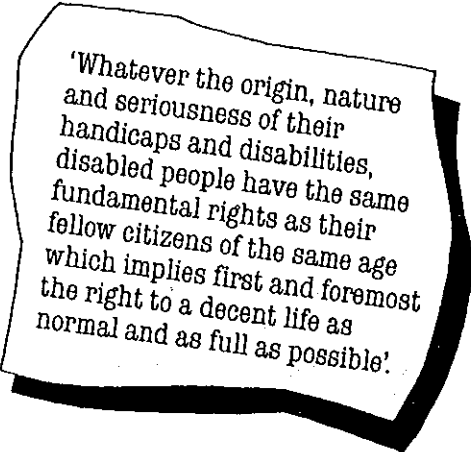
- ▶ Students with disabilities or difficulties in learning wanted to stay in ordinary schools rather than return to special schools.
- ▶ They benefited in terms of social and emotional development.
- ▶ There were gains in self-confidence and independence in addition to the ordinary school promoting a realistic acceptance of the individual's disability or difficulty.
- ▶ Parents did not want their children taken out of ordinary schools once they had been placed there.
- ▶ 97% of teachers dealing with children who had disabilities or difficulties in ordinary schools wanted them to stay.
- ▶ Parents of non-disabled children, like teachers, changed from having anxieties about integration to becoming strong advocates of the change, once it had taken place.

Further evidence from bodies such as CSIE, the Open University and the University of London shows that:

- ▶ Growing numbers of parents and children are requesting integrated rather than segregated educational placements.

▶ More professionals are enthusiastic to adapt old ways of working and keen to face the new challenges of whole school policies and curricula for all.

▶ Education authorities have shown themselves to be responsive and flexible to change; recent evidence in this country shows that a majority of LEAs are now placing more children with disabilities or difficulties in learning in mainstream schools rather than special schools.

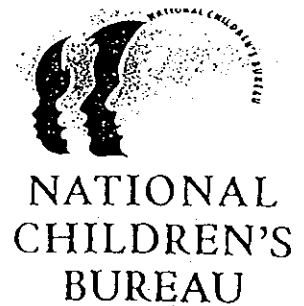


'Whatever the origin, nature and seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, disabled people have the same fundamental rights as their fellow citizens of the same age which implies first and foremost the right to a decent life as normal and as full as possible.'

UN Declaration of the Rights of Disabled People 1975.

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Director: Philippa Russell



**The powerful voice
of the child**

Press release

CONSORTIUM SAFEGUARDS INTERESTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Friday 18 September 1992

The Special Educational Consortium (SEC) was launched yesterday at a Consultative Forum attended by representatives of over 60 different organisations to defend the interests of children with special educational needs at a time of major changes in education policy and practice.

The Consortium identified a number of threats to the education of children with special educational needs in mainstream education. These include:

- * the extension of market forces which will reduce the number of children with SEN that are accepted into mainstream schools;
- * increased devolution of power from 117 LEAs to 27,000 schools in England and Wales which will reduce specialist support services;
- * the existence of two separate agencies (the Funding Agency and the LEAs) which could lead to chaos and confusion and lack of clear accountability for children with a range of special educational needs.

The SEC is calling for changes in Government proposals:

- * properly resourced integration for children with SEN and the support services which will enable it to happen;
- * increased voice for children with SEN and their parents in making decisions about their futures.

Paul Ennals, Chair of the Council for Disabled Children and Director of Education and Leisure at RNIB said, 'The Government claims that the White Paper extends choice for parents. We fear that this is an empty promise for parents of children with special educational needs, without clarification of the criteria for assessment and statementing. We need assurance that schools, the LEA and the Funding Agency will make appropriate provision for children with special needs.'

more/...

Susan Daniels, Director of the National Deaf Children's Society said, 'Provision for children with SEN is not just about specialist support. Mainstream schools need encouragement and incentive to ensure that all children receive a quality education.'

Professor Ron Davie, President of the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) said, 'It is vital for these often forgotten children that the Government signals strongly its commitment to a well planned and resourced service.'

Mark Vaughan, founder of the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE) said, 'The emphasis has to be on local schools changing their aims, policies and entry criteria to lead to much greater inclusion of children with SEN.'

ends

Notes to Editors

1. Threats to special educational needs provision stem from the Government's Education White Paper, **Choice and Diversity**, published on July 27. A Bill on these proposals will be a major piece of legislation in the next Parliament and is expected to be published for First Reading in November this year.
2. Membership of the Special Educational Consortium includes the National Children's Bureau, the Royal National Institute for the Blind, Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, Barnardo's, the Independent Panel of Special Education Advisers, Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE), and the Department of Education, Psychology and Special Educational Needs (EPSN) at the Institute of Education.
3. Further information from Philippa Russell, Alison Forbes or Nadya Kassam on 071 278 9441; Paul Ennals 071 388 1266; Susan Daniels 071 229 9272; Colin Low 071 482 5062; Paul Simpson 071 637 5400; Ron Davie 071 226 3761; Mark Vaughan 081 452 8642/1208.

P R E S S R E L E A S E

For Release: 00.01 hours, Friday September 25, 1992.

SPECIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN DENIED BASIC RIGHTS

Many hundreds of disabled children in England are being placed in separate special schools against the law, according to a new report published today (September 25, 1992).

An increasing number of local education authorities (LEAs) are failing to complete proper assessments and statements under the 1981 Education Act before segregating children, says the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE). The report has been written by WILL SWANN, senior lecturer in education at the Open University, who found that in 15 LEAs, between 15% and 50% of special school pupils were without a 1981 Act statement in January 1991.

CSIE said the 1981 Act requires children in special schools to have individual statements identifying their needs and detailing the necessary provision. The Centre added that for some of the cases in the survey, a statement might well have resulted in a place in the local ordinary school. And in all cases, disabled children had been denied the legal protection of a statement and their parents denied the full right of involvement in assessment and placement. "If there is no statement, then parents have not been given the right to comment and they lose their rights of appeal, as well as the statutory annual review of a statement" said CSIE. The Centre this week wrote to Mr John Patten, Secretary of State at the Department for Education to investigate the 15 authorities.

In five of the 15 LEAs, more than a third of special school children had no statement; **Hereford and Worcester LEA** comes out worst in this study with 50% of its special school children without a statement. Will Swann compiled the report for CSIE by analysing data from the DFE's statistics branch. CSIE said that while it would be unreasonable to expect all special school children to have a statement at any one time, figures like those in Hereford and Worcester were completely unacceptable.

"The Government has promised reforms and improvements to the 1981 Education Act's assessment and statementing process. If the LEAs identified in this survey still fail to draw up statements, then the Government's reforms will be of little help to parents and children who have already slipped through the system" said CSIE. The Centre estimates there to be 4,150 special school pupils without statements in the 15 LEAs.

* The new CSIE report is available free from the Centre,
415, Edgware Road, London NW2 6NB. (Please enclose a first class stamp).

For further information contact:

Or: **MARK VAUGHAN, CSIE** 081 452.8642 (Home no. 081 452.1208)
WILL SWANN, 0908 665593.

1982-92 Ten years working towards mainstream education for all children with disabilities or learning difficulties.

SUMMARY OF CSIE'S RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION
ON THE LATEST GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION REFORM,
INCLUDING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 1981 EDUCATION ACT.

September 1992

STRENGTHEN INTEGRATION DUTY

CSIE's main point is that although the proposed amendments to the 1981 Act are long-overdue procedural improvements, they will prove worthless for integration unless stronger action is taken to improve special educational provision in ordinary schools. The Centre has asked the Government to introduce the necessary legal reforms requiring schools, LEAs and the Funding Agency to phase out separate special education and introduce full inclusion policies and practices to support all children, whatever their needs may be, as part of the mainstream education service.

To support CSIE's recommended new full inclusion duty, the Centre has called for strengthening amendments to the 1981 Act's integration duty and to the duty, under the Act, for LEAs to make provision for statemented special educational needs. CSIE suggests that once support for the whole range of special needs is legally guaranteed in the mainstream, it would be safe to consider limiting the full legal accountability of the 1981 Act assessment and statementing process to cases of disagreement.

The following comments are made by CSIE regarding the Government's proposed amendments to the 1981 Act Assessment and Statementing Process:

Choice of School

CSIE believes that without a legal requirement to plan and provide for special educational support in ordinary schools, the proposed "right to express a preference" is a hollow promise and gives parents virtually nothing new. The proposal to allow parents to remove their child from special school without LEA's permission is welcomed but needs to be backed up by a requirement on LEAs to provide the necessary support in ordinary schools.

Time Limits for Assessments and Statements

Rather than a six month time-limit from the beginning of assessment to production of the draft statement, CSIE thinks that a time-limit of three months is a more appropriate target.

Appeals Tribunal

CSIE recommends that the proposed Appeals Tribunal should include disabled adults and parents of disabled children in addition to the qualified chairperson and special education professionals who are currently being considered. As well as appeals to the High Court against Tribunals' decisions, it should also be made clear that parents have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education under the 1944 Education Act.

The following additional amendments to the 1981 Act are recommended by CSIE:

Named Person

Changes in the procedures are needed for parents to be given the name of an independent person to go to for advice (the named person) at the beginning of the assessment and statementing process rather than at the close, as at present.

Parents Friend/Advocate

Parents should have the right to take along a supporter to meetings with professionals and officials.

Pre-School

Stronger government guidance is needed stating that a special school placement at pre-school level does not preclude an ordinary school placement from the start of statutory school age at five.

Annual Reviews

The Centre recommends a new duty on LEAs to inform parents when the annual review of a statement is to take place so they can contribute.

£50 Fine

The provision in the 1981 Act which makes parents liable to a £50 fine if they and their child fail to turn up for an examination under a Section 5 assessment sets the wrong tone completely and should be repealed.

* * * * *

CSIE's full response to the Government's Education White Paper "Choice and Diversity - A New Framework for Schools" and the Consultation Paper "Special Educational Needs - Access to the System" is available free from:

CSIE, 415, Edgware Road, London NW2 6NB tel 081-452-8642.
(Please send a first class stamp).

10 REASONS FOR INTEGRATION

Integration is a human right, it's good education and it makes good social sense.

HUMAN RIGHTS:

1. All children have the right to learn together.
2. Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded and sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
3. Children do not need to be protected from each other.
4. There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for their education. Children belong together - with advantages and benefits for everybody.

GOOD EDUCATION:

5. Research shows children do better, academically and socially in integrated settings.
6. There is no teaching or care in a segregated school which cannot take place in an ordinary school.
7. Given commitment and support, integration is a more efficient use of education resources.

GOOD SOCIAL SENSE:

8. Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.
9. All children need a mainstream education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life.
10. Only integration has the potential to reduce fear and promote friendship, respect, understanding, and co-operation.

**"TEN YEARS WORKING TOWARDS MAINSTREAM EDUCATION
FOR ALL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES OR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES."
CSIE 1982-92**

The INTEGRATION CHARTER

Ending segregation in education for all children and young people with disabilities or learning difficulties.

- 1) We fully support an end to all segregated education on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty, as a policy commitment and goal for this country.

- 2) We see the ending of segregation in education as a human rights issue which belongs within equal opportunities policies.

- 3) We believe that all children share equal value and status. We therefore believe that the exclusion of children from the mainstream because of disability or learning difficulty is a devaluation and is discriminating.

- 4) We envisage the gradual transfer of resources, expertise, staff and pupils from segregated schools to an appropriately-supported and diverse mainstream.

- 5) We believe that segregated education is a major cause of society's widespread prejudice against adults with disabilities or difficulties. De-segregating special education is therefore a crucial first step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating greater understanding and in developing a fairer society.

- 6) We believe that efforts to increase participation of people with disabilities or difficulties in learning in community life will be seriously jeopardised unless segregated education is reduced and ultimately ended.

- 7) For these reasons we call on Central and local Governments to do all in their power to work as quickly as possible towards the goal of a de-segregated education system.

Co-ordinating body:

Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE),
415 Edgware Road, London NW2 6NB (Registered Charity 327805)

The INTEGRATION CHARTER

Ending segregation in education for all children and young people with disabilities or learning difficulties.

INTEGRATION CHARTER - EXPLANATORY PAPER

Further information explaining the main issues, concerns and considerations on which the Integration Charter is based.

1) "We fully support an end to all segregated education on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty as a policy commitment and goal for this country".

Segregation in education is exclusion from the mainstream in separate settings without a time limit or an integration plan. It is also education under separate management from the mainstream.

This description applies to special schools and can also apply to special units in ordinary schools when they are run separately from the everyday life of the school, when the children are not members of the appropriate class for their age group and when there is no integration plan.

Time spent out of the ordinary classroom for appropriate individual or group work on a part-time basis is not segregation. Neither is removal from the ordinary classroom for therapy or because of disruption, provided it is time-limited, for a specified purpose and based on a goal-oriented plan aimed at returning the child to his or her ordinary class. Settings are within the child's mainstream school if possible and certainly within the mainstream system. Any form of time-out from the ordinary classroom does not affect a pupil's entitlement to full membership of the mainstream.

Parents who have children in separate special schools because local policies make that the only option can still support a goal to end segregation. Working towards a de-segregated education system is working towards a better education for all children. The benefits of integration apply to all children, disabled and non-disabled alike.

2) "We see the ending of segregation in education as a human rights issue which belongs within equal opportunities policies".

Segregation in education because of disability or learning difficulty is a contravention of human rights as is segregation because of race or gender. The difference is that while sexism and racism are widely recognised as discrimination and outlawed in many LEAs' equal opportunities policies, discrimination on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty is not.

The United Nations 1975 Declaration of the Rights of Disabled People states: "Whatever the origin, nature and seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, disabled people have the same fundamental rights as their fellow citizens of the same age".

The United Nations 1989 Draft Convention on the Rights of the Child says that the education of children with disabilities or difficulties in learning should be in a manner conducive to their receiving the "fullest possible social integration and individual development...".

In a 1954 United States Supreme Court Decision concerning racial segregation in education, Chief Justice Earl Warren said: "Purposeful segregation generates a feeling of inferiority as to a child's status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone...the sense of inferiority affects the motivation of the child to learn and has a tendency to retard their educational and mental development".

The London Borough of Newham's policy statement on special education is a good example of an education authority making the link between segregated education and equal opportunities. According to Newham's policy statement: "The Council believes that segregated special education is a major factor causing discrimination. We therefore believe that desegregating special education is the first step in tackling prejudice against people with disabilities and other difficulties. They have been omitted from previous Equal Opportunities initiatives, and it is now obvious that our aim of achieving comprehensive education in Newham will remain hindered while we continue to select approximately two per cent of school pupils for separate education".

3) "We believe that all children share equal value and status. We therefore believe that the exclusion of children from the mainstream because of disability or learning difficulty is a devaluation and is discriminating".

Pupils with severe learning difficulties are of no less value than pupils who gain Oxbridge entry and their achievements are no less worthy of respect. To select a pupil out of the mainstream because of disability or learning difficulty is a devaluation of their worth as a person and discriminating on the basis of an attribute for which they are not responsible.

The Charter does not accept that segregating children with disabilities or difficulties in special schools can be classed as positive discrimination on the grounds that the separation is for their benefit.

There is no compelling body of evidence to suggest that segregated special education has significant benefits for pupils compared with ordinary school placements with appropriate support. On the contrary, American research shows that children do better academically and socially in ordinary schools (Harvard Educational Review November 1987).

The benefits of integration are well demonstrated. Research by the National Foundation for Educational Research published in 1981 shows that far from damaging the ordinary school, integration adds to a school's strength and enhances the provision for all children. In this country and abroad there are examples of effective integration covering all types and degree of disability or difficulty in learning.

To argue that it is beneficial to place children in separate special schools because that is where the vast majority of appropriate provision is located, is misleading. The concentration of resources in the special sector may be a current reason for segregating children: it is not a justification.

4) "We envisage the gradual transfer of resources, expertise, staff and pupils from segregated schools to an appropriately supported and diverse mainstream".

Because of the paramount need to move appropriate support for children with disabilities or difficulties into the mainstream the Charter envisages ending segregation by a gradual transfer of resources from the segregated sector and the development of resources within the mainstream. The provision of appropriate support for children with disabilities or difficulties in ordinary schools is synonymous with integration. Integration without support is not integration: it is dumping.

According to the CIPFA Education Statistics Estimates more than £720 million pounds was being spent on special education in England and Wales in 1989-90. The Charter envisages a re-arrangement of budgets by LEAs to direct this level of funding as an absolute minimum to support students in ordinary schools.

In our vision of integration the mainstream will change and adapt to accommodate diverse needs. A diverse mainstream would accept and cater for differences, not submerge or isolate them.

We do not want to see the autonomy and strength of culturally strong groups like the blind community and the deaf community weakened through assimilation. Nor do we want to isolate teachers who have relevant specific skills.

Total Communication would be used in the education of deaf children in ordinary schools and as many adults and students as possible would be encouraged to have some facility with British Sign Language and finger spelling. The employment of adults with disabilities or difficulties as part of staff teams would be another important development in preserving autonomy and giving children appropriate role models. All teachers with their individual skills and interests, including those with specific skills, would be equally valuable in a diverse mainstream.

5) "We believe that segregated education is a major cause of society's widespread prejudice against adults with disabilities or difficulties. De-segregating special education is therefore a crucial first step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating greater understanding and in developing a fairer society".

Continued segregation of disabled and non-disabled students can only help foster stereotypes, while integration has the potential to get rid of stereotypes by enabling young people to learn about each other's common humanity as well as their uniqueness.

Adults who have been educated within the special school system often identify early segregation as the key factor in creating conditions which lead to prejudice and barriers encountered in later life.

According to a representative of the international People First self-advocacy group, it is systemic cruelty to expose disabled children to constant rejection and to teach non-disabled children to be prejudiced against people with special needs.

In his book "Achieving the Complete School" (1985), Douglas Biklen of Syracuse University, USA, discusses stigma and stereotyping (the negative valuation of a whole person based on a single attribute) in relation to disability. He points out that cross-cultural studies and other social researches show that societies and individuals manufacture stigma. It is learned behaviour. More importantly research suggests that the most effective way of combating stigma is through planned, personal interaction of those who have been "labelled" and those who have not.

6) "We believe that efforts to increase participation of people with disabilities or difficulties in community life will be seriously jeopardised unless segregated education is reduced and ultimately ended".

Continuing segregated special education seriously undermines the new community care policies which are being widely implemented

with the aim of creating more opportunities for people with disabilities or difficulties in learning to participate in ordinary life.

The physical barriers to greater participation are being overcome by replacing segregated institutions with appropriate support services in the community. But the barriers caused by peoples' fear and prejudice about disability and learning difficulty still remain.

Unless education is desegregated and efforts made to combat stereotyping and prejudice before it begins, it is unlikely that the new community care policies will be fully effective. Providing support services in the community can facilitate greater participation by people with disabilities or learning difficulties; friendship and acceptance by ordinary people is a vital ingredient in making it happen.

7) "For these reasons we call on Central and Local Governments to do all in their power to work as quickly as possible towards the goal of a de-segregated education system".

Working towards the goal of a de-segregated education system means making a commitment to do everything possible to provide appropriate support for all children in ordinary schools. It involves mainstream schools adapting and changing to accommodate diverse needs and receiving the financial and other resources they need to enable them to do this. It means working to overcome the problems and difficulties that will inevitably arise in the change process.

This goal needs to be adopted at three levels.

- * By Central Government and the Department of Education and Science through guidance and ultimately legislation to LEAs and schools.
- * By LEAs in policy documents which give the integration goal the same status as other equal opportunity policy commitments.
- * By individual schools through their governing bodies, teaching and other staff associations and parent organisations.

In May 1990 the Council of The European Communities and Education Ministers agreed: "Full integration into mainstream education should be considered as a first option in all appropriate cases. All education establishments should be in a position to respond to the needs of pupils and students with disabilities".

The INTEGRATION CHARTER

Ending segregation in education for all children and young people with disabilities or learning difficulties.

INTEGRATION CHARTER

List of supporters (as at January 1992).

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
Action for Dysphasic Adults (ADA)
Association for All Speech Impaired Children (AFASIC).
Association of Blind and Partially Sighted Teachers and Students (ABAPSTAS)
British Association for Early Childhood Education
Brittle Bone Society
Cambridge 81 Action
Campaign for the Advancement of State Education (CASE)
Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE)
ChildLine
CMH Thameside
The Chicken Shed Theatre Company
The Children's Legal Centre
The Children's Society
Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust
Daycare Trust (National Childcare Campaign)
Elfrida Rathbone Camden
Greater London Association for Disabled People (GLAD)
Hyperactive Children's Support Group
Independent Panel for Special Education Advice (IPSEA)
KIDS Centre (Working for Children with Special Needs)
LINC (Liaison of those involved in the needs of children)
London Borough's Disability Resource Team
Mainstream
Markfield Project
Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association (ME)
National Asthma Campaign
National Citizen Advocacy
National Foster Care Association
Network 81 - National Network of Parents
PASSPORT Parent Support Group, Cheshire
People First
PHAB (Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied)
Pre-school Playgroups Association (PPA)
School of Educ. & Health Studies, Bolton Institute of HE
Scottish Council on Disability
Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped
Socialist Educational Association
Spinal Injuries Association
Understanding Disabilities Educational Trust
VIA - Values Into Action (formerly CMH)
Young Arthritis Care

(43 organisations)

Over.../

Local Education Authorities

Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale
Derbyshire County Council
London Borough of Newham
Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale

MPs

Tony Banks
Gerry Bermingham
David Blunkett
Paul Boateng
Sir Bernard Braine DL
Dennis Canavan
David Hinchliffe
Barry Jones
Calum A. Macdonald
Austin Mitchell
Rhodri Morgan
Rt. Hon. Alfred Morris, QSO
Dr. Marjorie Mowlam
Joan Ruddock
Rev. Martin Smyth
Sir Gerard Vaughan

Peers

Lord Carter
Lord Ennals
Baroness Masham of Ilton
Lord Milverton
Lord Peston

Trade Unions

COHSE (Health Care Union)
General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union (GMB)
MSF - Manufacturing, Science and Finance
Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)

From Disability to Giftedness

By Mark Vaughan of the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE)
which has its 10th anniversary in 1992.

In 1992 the cruel truth about integration should now be recognised - there is little connection between the 1981 Education Act and the small reduction in segregated education this country has seen over the last ten years. Integration has happened largely outside the duty in law and any future progress towards including all disabled children in mainstream settings will have to come from a fundamental change in attitudes and a much stronger political will.

For example, there is a new **increase** in the segregation of primary-aged children in England between 1988-9, according to a recent analysis of Government data by the Open University for the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE). This threat to integration may well be the first results of the 1988 Education Reform Act coming into force at a primary school level.

During the ten years since the 1981 Education Act provided the opportunity to begin including all disabled children in ordinary schools with appropriate support and of creating a new diversity of educational and social experiences, there has been an alarming reluctance by most professionals and administrators to dismantle the segregated system they have known and worked with for so long. The cost to be paid is the denial of the talents, gifts, contributions and opportunities of all the people who are excluded from the mainstream, not to mention their relationships with those already in ordinary schools.

The necessary - and profound - shift in attitudes from seeing disability as a "deficit" making people less than human, to seeing disability as part of the ordinary range of normality, and to be celebrated as such, has been glaringly absent in the

majority of those involved in this area of education. I believe that those who run the human services in this country would consider absurd the idea of seeing disability as **positive**.

The substantial investment in a segregated system of education goes back a long time. This includes separate administration, buildings and land; separate initial training and career structures, as well as an emotional or even spiritual investment in the belief that segregation is "best" and that it "protects" a child with a disability or who experiences difficulty in learning.

These investments are rooted in a medical model which represents disability as disease rather than in a social model, which sees disability as the creation of society. The medical model cannot be a legitimate baseline from which to offer special educational provision in the 1990s. It is the medical model that says disabled people are not "fixable"; the social model places responsibility for disability, or "the problem", back onto society as a whole, but the able bodied world is reluctant to accept this.

That the first ever legal duty to integrate disabled children and those who experience difficulties in learning has led to such minimal progress towards integration is most disturbing. Any significant progress towards integration is largely a matter of political will. It was always a major omission from the 1981 Act that Local Education Authorities had no duty to draw up local policies for integration, and few have produced documents with a clear commitment.

With hindsight, it can be argued that the Act's integration clause was misconceived at a fundamental level. It is extremely difficult to legislate for people actively to *do* something. It is much easier to legislate for people *not* to do

something - such as telling an LEA or school that they cannot exclude disabled children. The legislation of the late eighties and early nineties reveals that we cannot expect explicit Central Government support for the development of fully inclusive education systems.

CSIE believes that Section 2 of the 1981 Act should, *at the very least*, be amended to put the onus on authorities and schools to justify segregation, rather than as at present, having to justify integration.

Most children with learning difficulties are assessed in the context of a possible *exclusion* from their local, ordinary school. Imagine for a moment how it would be if this option were changed to an assessment in the context of guaranteed membership of the local, ordinary school. Would assessments have to focus on the needs of schools, as well as of children, for additional support?

Why are we so apathetic? Most people think that integration - or inclusion - is a good idea yet we lack the commitment to make it become a reality. Part of the challenge, I believe, is to see disability as **giftedness**.

TIMELY REAPPRAISAL

It is an extremely appropriate moment to reflect on the progress in this country towards the integration of children with disabilities or those who experience difficulties in learning. Special educational provision has been in the news over the last year both inside and outside of Parliament. There has been:

- A House of Lords debate on the 1981 Act, initiated by Baroness Warnock in November 1991.
- BODP worker Colin Barnes' book: *"Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination: A case for anti-discrimination legislation"*.

- The first ever UK National Integration Week in May organised by CSIE.
- The publication in May this year of an analysis of the official statistics for England which show that 50 LEAs increased segregation of primary-aged pupils between 1988-91.
- A Bill in the House of Lords in June to amend the 1981 Act.
- The report in June by the Audit Commission/HMI on special educational provision in England and Wales.
- A House of Commons debate on this report in July.

We have been promised some Government-backed reforms of the detailed procedures under the 1981 Education Act. My own view is that the suggested amendments to the Act, which are likely to come in the form of changed regulations next year, will amount to a tinkering rather than a complete overhaul of a grossly inadequate system. The proposed reforms, which are mostly to do with the assessment and statementing process, will be little more than political sellotape over the "big hole" of a sinking ship. That is not to say that parents shouldn't have access to a stronger appeals machinery, they should. Likewise it is highly commendable that time-limits should be put on LEAs for completing the assessment and statementing process. But State law in Massachusetts, USA ensures that the same procedure is completed within two and a half months, not six, as

currently being proposed by the Government. And while we're about it, let's put time limits on the Government to respond to parental appeals.

AUDIT COMMISSION/HMI REPORT

The reforms of the 1981 Act are an attempt to meet some of the wide-ranging criticisms made by a variety of organisations and bodies, including the Audit Commission/HMI, whose report "Getting in on the Act. Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs: the National Picture" (HMSO), was published in June.

The Audit Commission/HMI's revelation of a catalogue of disasters since the 1981 Act was implemented, will come as no surprise to parents of disabled children. They have been experiencing the damaging delays in assessment and statementing processes for years. Workers at CSIE, the Advisory Centre for Education, the Children's Legal Centre, the Independent Panel for Special Education Advice and the Council for Disabled Children (formerly the Voluntary Council for Handicapped Children) can confirm. The growing number of calls that these agencies receive from parents and their advocates about the abominable treatment parents receive from some officers and professionals is very disturbing.

I believe one of the most critical findings in the report is that special schools no longer have the monopoly on special

educational provision. According to the Audit Commission/HMI report, the learning experience for pupils with disabilities or those who experience difficulties in learning in the schools studied was "...*virtually the same in both special and ordinary schools...*" (my italics), in spite of the extra resources enjoyed by segregated schools.

We must all now ask the question: "What's so special about special schools?". I feel that this report, which calls for ordinary schools to be "strengthened" so they can take more disabled children, raises strong doubts about the effectiveness and appropriateness of continuing segregated education for such pupils.

The Audit Commission/HMI also showed that special schools have hung on to their better staffing levels in spite of the movement of pupils to the mainstream over the last five years. An estimated £53m could have been released for integration in English and Welsh ordinary schools in 1991 alone, if special school staffing levels had been adjusted correctly.

It was revealed in the report that LEAs have not undertaken reviews of special school staffing levels because the issue "is too contentious", no doubt a threat to the vested interests involved.

We have to ask who is protecting whom when we read in the report that in a sample of 85 special schools, less than 2% of pupils moved over to ordinary schools each year and in 11 out of the 12 LEAs studied, the chief educational psychologist told the investigating team that there were pupils in the local special schools who could reasonably be educated in an ordinary school. The lack of movement of pupils from special to ordinary schools did "not reflect parental preference" said the Audit Commission/HMI, who found out that one third of parents of special school pupils wanted their child to leave the school.

Surely a more appropriate response in the 1990s would be to recognise inclusion in the mainstream as a basic, human rights issue?

The common assumption that it is more expensive to educate children in



PHOTOS BY SALLY & RICHARD GREENHILL

mainstream than in special schools was unfounded, according to the Audit Commission/HMI. What is expensive is the running of empty places in special schools. Further, 70% of ordinary school heads interviewed believed their schools would not be diminished educationally or socially by the acceptance of special needs pupils. So who is hanging on to the segregated sector and why?

The report's recommendation that parents should be given greater rights to move their child from a segregated setting to the mainstream is to be warmly welcomed, though at the time of writing there was no sign of a specific Government response to this important proposal.

I believe the Audit Commission/HMI report is a confirmation of what was already largely known or suspected, though it is useful to have it confirmed officially. Let us hope that its publication will open up the really important debate on the invalidity of continuing a segregated sector for a smaller and smaller proportion of our school population.

VALUED OR DEVALUED SETTINGS

There is a new diversity of provision in a small number of schools that form the vanguard of inclusive education in this country and they show the future might be something quite different. Some examples include Nottinghamshire's major review and change in policy that brought in quite different performance indicators to support integration; the education in mainstream of more and more deaf pupils in Leeds and the policy commitment in the London Borough of Newham to work towards inclusion of all pupils in ordinary schools with appropriate support and back-up. There are many more.

At CSIE we know of research that shows all children do better academically and socially in integrated placements and that, given commitment and support, fully inclusive education is a *more* efficient use of education resources. The point here is that a child's removal from a *valued* setting (ie in an ordinary school) can no longer be justified, because the arguments

for a much better educational and social experience in a special school cannot be sustained. I believe that removal from a valued setting amounts to a violation of basic human rights. Those who run the education system find it very difficult to view segregated placements in this light.

The "big hole" in the sinking ship to which I referred earlier is also about how society treats disabled young people and the track record so far has shown that for the able-bodied world, disabled people are strangers to them; the peer-group experience for nearly all concerned has been a segregated one. Fear of disability by non-disabled people is extensive.

Far from equipping disabled people with appropriate skills and opportunities to live a full and active adult life, I believe that this segregated experience conditions them to a devalued social role. Special school survivors speak about a feeling – possibly lifelong – of dependency and subordination, born out of a concentration on the disability, and on what they can *not* do. Being included in the mainstream of educational life means that the pupil's presence is important to the life and work of that school (or college). Conversely, it matters to the school community if that person is missing.

Until the inclusion of disabled children in ordinary schools is seen as a human rights issue and as a logical development of the civil rights movements in Western societies, then those children will not be accepted as valued members of their own local communities.

NEW CSIE STATISTICS

The CSIE statistics report by Will Swann at the Open University (published in May this year to launch the Centre's National Integration Week) shows that in January 1991 there were still over 87,000 children being educated in separate special schools in England. While there has been a small drop (3%) overall in the proportion of 5-15 year olds placed in special schools between 1988-91, there has been a 2% rise in the proportion of primary-aged children educated separately. Even with a weak



law, all placements in special schools should have continued to show slow reductions. It is alarming that we are now experiencing an actual increase in segregation at this level. Fifty English LEAs have increased the proportion of 5-10 year olds in special schools since 1988 and seven of them have done this by significant amounts:

% Increased Segregation 5-10 Year Olds (1988-91)

Wigan 43.4% Rotherham 40.9%
Sefton 39.6% Hillingdon 36.6%
Sunderland 34.8% Somerset 31.7%
West Sussex 18.9%

This third statistical report from CSIE and the Open University also reveals wide variations in integration practice between LEAs. It is still the case that for disabled children, their chances of being educated in the mainstream, depend on where they live.

Nationally, 1.47% of 5-15 year old pupils are in English special schools, but this hides some notable highs and lows of segregation.

Inner London boroughs are the most segregated LEAs in the country (a long-standing situation inherited from the former ILEA) with **Lambeth** having 3.06% of 5-15 year old pupils in special schools, **Hackney 2.77%**, **Kensington & Chelsea 2.72%** and **Wandsworth 2.66%**.

When it comes to looking only at secondary level segregation it is, once again, inner London boroughs with the highest proportion:

%Pupils Segregated (11 - 15 year olds) 1991

Lambeth 5.52%, Hackney 4.17%,
Kensington & Chelsea 4.07%
Wandsworth 3.71%, Hammersmith &

Fulham 3.68%, Southwark 3.4%, and Lewisham 3.19%.

The metropolitan district of **Barnsley** is the least segregated in the country with 0.55% of its 5-15 year old pupils in special schools; after this comes **Cumbria** with 0.58% and **Cornwall** with 0.59%. Nine further LEAs record less than 1% of pupils segregated: **Calderdale 0.75%, Leicestershire 0.82%, Leeds 0.91%, Bradford 0.92%, Norfolk 0.95%, Solihull 0.96%, and Barking, Humberside and Shropshire** each with 0.97%.

Can the finding of more primary-age segregation be explained? One possible answer is the impact of the standard assessment tests and the national curriculum which started in primary schools during the period of this statistical analysis. In effect, schools may be moving their more "difficult" pupils into special schools because they threaten a school's academic record or ambitions.

CONCLUSION

A 1981 Education Act strengthened through tighter assessment and statementing procedures is not going to bring about greater inclusion of disabled children in ordinary schools. Add to this the excluding market forces of the 1988 Act's national curriculum, local management of schools and opting out, and the future picture for integration looks bleak.

The emphasis both now and in the longer term has to be on local mainstream schools changing their aims, policies and entry criteria so that they are made more fully aware of the importance and benefits of establishing diverse support systems that lead to much greater inclusion of disabled pupils than at

present, and the offer of mainstream educational and social curricula opportunities for *all* pupils.

Mark Vaughan is Founder and Co-worker, CSIE. He has written on integration in education for a range of journals, newspapers and books.

CSIE'S 10 REASONS FOR INTEGRATION

**Integration is a human right
It's good education and it makes good social sense.**

HUMAN RIGHTS

1. All children have the right to learn together.
2. Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded and sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
3. Children do not need to be protected from each other.
4. There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for their education. Children belong together - with advantages and benefits for everybody.

GOOD EDUCATION

5. Research shows children do better, academically and socially in integrated settings.

6. There is no teaching or care in a segregated school which cannot take place in an ordinary school.
7. Given commitment and support, integration is a more efficient use of education resources.

GOOD SOCIAL SENSE

8. Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.
9. All children need a mainstream education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life in the "real world".
10. Only integration has the potential to reduce fear and promote friendship, respect, understanding and cooperation.