



Everybody in! The inclusion agenda to support parent and pupil participation in the UK

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In the UK, our vision is of a society in which ALL children and young people (and their families) are valued and their rights respected.

‘Let’s start by celebrating all our children – Then we will find the solutions!’



‘Our mission is to advance the well-being of all children and young people and their families across every aspect of their lives and to help them become active and successful citizens’.



Every Child Matters sets out five outcomes for all children

- * ***Being healthy***
- * ***Staying safe***
- * ***Enjoying and Achieving***
- * ***Making a positive contribution***
- * ***Economic well-being***



Pupils with SEN (Special Educational Needs/Disabilities) – Some background information

- **1,656,000** pupils with SEN [*DCSF, 2009*]
- **2.7%** pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs (ie a statutory multi-agency assessment of their SEN). Majority of pupils with SEN have in-house assessment and extra provision is made via '*school action plus*' or '*school action plus*', with an *Individual Education Plan (IEP)* specifying support to be provided. Parents should be informed and involved.
- Of **26,520** pupils *formally* assessed for SEN in 2008, **62.2%** placed in mainstream schools; **23.5%** in special schools and **6.8%** in resourced provision in mainstream schools.



Parental choice....

- In principle, parents have the right to express a preference for a particular type of school. There is a **presumption of inclusion** but wide variations at local level.
- England still has a number of special schools (special provision most popular with parents of children with particular disabilities or learning difficulties, eg on autistic spectrum).
- Improvement in inclusive opportunities at pre-school and primary school stages. But some children at risk of move to special school at secondary stage.



Key principles for inclusion

[Council for Disabled Children, 2009]

- ‘Inclusion is a journey with a clear sense of direction and purpose. It offers equality of opportunity for all children and all young people. Inclusion begins outside school with good access to early years services, support for families and a respect for difference. Inclusion for children with disabilities and special educational needs starts in the family. We believe that that the active participation of pupils and their parents in decisions about education and learning mark the way to an inclusive future. Children with disabilities and SEN are our future citizens too!’



Inclusion – meeting the challenge

- **The Early Support Programme:** providing early information and support for parents of young children with disabilities or health conditions. The programme introduces **Key Workers** and **Family Files** to ensure that the family have all necessary information and support through a local multidisciplinary team. The programme is being extended to cover the first year at school.
- **Aiming High for Disabled Children:** a Government funded programme to improve the life chances of disabled children across all agencies. The programme introduces a **Core Offer** for parents, guaranteeing reliable information; transparent assessment and feedback. Strong emphasis on participation and citizenship.



Equalities on the national agenda

- **Disabled pupils are protected from discrimination and less favourable treatment through duties under the Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005**
- **Schools and local councils must not discriminate against pupils for a reason relating to their disability and they should promote the inclusion of disabled children in their administrative arrangements and in all aspects of school life.**
- **Schools have duties to produce Disability Accessibility Plans, with three year action plans and consultation with parents, pupils and other interested parties.**



Disability equality cont....

- **Accessibility Plans** must show how schools propose to:
 - **Improve the physical environment**
 - **Make improvements in provision of information**
 - **Increase access to the curriculum**
- **National Survey by the Disability Rights Commission (2007)** found variable responses from schools, but many parents used the legislation to get 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled pupils and to improve inclusion and accessibility.
- **The debate on disability equality in schools** has improved the range of support offered to pupils but *attitudes* of staff towards inclusion vary greatly. The greatest challenge is usually around behavioural disabilities. Pupils with SEN/disability are at greater risk of school exclusion than their peers.

Inclusion – a culture change in meeting SENCO and disability in education



- Growing commitment to inclusive education but challenges on the way, including:
 - **Developing the workforce** (new training strategy expected from the Training and Development Agency for Schools shortly)
 - **Working together** (recognition that inclusion may depend on contributions from child health services and other parts of the public sector in order to manage risk and improve accessibility).
 - **Risk management** (health and safety issues frequently barrier to inclusion, largely because schools are increasingly anxious about litigation. Worrying evidence that disabled pupils are often excluded from social, cultural, sporting and other activities and school trips because of fears about 'risk').
 - **Improving accessibility** (as noted above, clear legal duties but schools may be reluctant to make necessary improvements.)

Supporting parent participation in England



- **Parent Partnership Schemes** in every local authority – independent sources of information, advice and advocacy. Linked to a National Network of Parent Partnership Services (NPPN)
- **Independent Parental Supporters** provided through the Parent Partnership Schemes. Trained independent parent advisers able to support parents in assessment and in any disagreement with the local authority.
- **SEN and Disability Tribunal** can hear cases regarding disagreement between parents, pupils and schools and the local authority.

Parents as partners in policy making

- Growing interest in role of parents (and pupils) as partners in individual assessment and in policy making at school and local authority level.
- Government's *Aiming High for Disabled Children* has set up *Parent Forums* in every local authority to encourage real debate and shared decision making about provision in area.
- Government has set up the *Lamb Inquiry* to find better ways of assessing children with SEN and disabilities. Parents complain of bureaucracy and stress involved in finding the right support for their child.



Keeping parents involved

- **Inspection of schools and children's services carried by OFSTED** (a national agency). New requirements coming to actively involve parents in inspection and review.
- **Better information for parents (and pupils):** *21st Century Schools White Paper (July 2009)* sets out new guarantees for parents and pupils, including:
 - ***Home School Agreements***
 - **New powers for parents unhappy with quality of their child's education**
 - ***Schools Report Card* introduced in 2011, will provide better information for parents and communities (including information on children with SEN)**
 - **From September 2009, new scheme being tested to provide support to parents and carers on-line.**

Making pupil and parent participation work! Some key issues....



- **How can we improve the quality of the information and advice given to parents and pupils?**
- **How can we make parents and pupils active partners in the governance of schools?**
- **What is the best way of giving parents and pupils a collective voice in improving access and inclusion (eg through Forums or Councils)?**
- **In the UK, we have Parent Partnership Services. Are there other ways of helping families around assessment?**
- **How can we manage 'risk' and the anxieties around inclusion?**
- **And, last but not least, what do the pupils think?**

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