

INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Sue Buckley and Gillian Bird

The first part of a two part series on successful inclusion in mainstream education.
 The next part will appear in the next issue of *Down Syndrome News and Update*.

Getting the culture right

Why inclusion?

Why should you, as a headteacher, school governor, teacher or parent, be concerned about how well your school is meeting the needs of children with significant special educational needs?

Firstly, because the evidence is that the individual schools who are the most successful at including and educating these children are also the best schools for all the other children in them (1).

Secondly, where whole education systems have shifted to be fully inclusive and to provide for all children within mainstream schools, they report that the quality of education has improved over time for all children (2).

The implication of these statements is that if we want our schools to provide the best possible education for all our children we need to explore what makes the inclusion of children with significant special educational needs successful. We also need to ask why mainstream school systems improve when changing to successfully meet the challenge of educating these children.

The first part of the article provides guidelines to good practice in developing the inclusive school, considering the importance of the role of the Headteacher and managers in developing school philosophy, values and culture, school organisation, staff training and the management of resources. We then consider the role of the teacher in developing inclusive classrooms and finally the role of all the pupils in developing peer support.

Developing inclusive schools

For us, the opportunity to go to a school in the community in which you live, with the other children who live in your neighbourhood, regardless of disability or special educational need is a human rights issue. We do not expect

all readers to agree with us but we do hope that this article will challenge some of the current assumptions about the roles of schools in our society and that it will provoke discussion with your staff and colleagues.

In this article we will explore these issues, sharing the experiences that we have gained from developing inclusive placements for children with Down syndrome in the UK over the last ten years - children who would otherwise have been placed in special schools. During this time we have learned a great deal about the school factors which lead to success or failure. With other colleagues in The Sarah Duffen Centre and in the Department of Psychology, University of Portsmouth, we have also been studying the cognitive, social and behavioural progress of these children in inclusive placements in some detail. This work has relevance to a wide range of children and will be reviewed in part 2 of this article.

We are psychologists specialising in working with children with moderate to severe learning difficulties and between us we have some 45 years of experience. However, until we became involved in the implementation of the 1981 Act in the late 80's, all our experience had been in special education settings.

Promoting mainstreaming

The last ten years have been the most rewarding and exciting of our careers. We have been most impressed by the ways in which children with Down syndrome and significant special needs have been welcomed in the majority of mainstream schools and by the skills, enthusiasm and professionalism of the majority of mainstream teachers with whom we have worked. We have seen successful placements and great progress for the majority of the children during most of their school years. Some have had good and bad experiences as they have moved up the school and we will return to the reasons for this later in the article.

We have been involved in the direct support of many individual children from the start of their school careers through to secondary school. We have also provided INSET training around the country and offered advice on individual placements at particular points in time. Much of the content of this article draws on our extensive opportunities to learn alongside the teachers who are successfully including and educating children with significant learning difficulties or disabilities in their classrooms (3).

At the start of our involvement with mainstreaming, we made links with research groups and education programmes in other countries in order to learn from their experience. We are confident that our experience is valid as success or failure in our placements has been the result of the same criteria reported by others in places where they are further down the road towards fully inclusive education systems.

We use the term mainstreaming deliberately to describe our early experience. When we began to ask schools to accept a child with severe learning difficulties in their school, we were asking them to take a child with the support of an untrained Learning Support Assistant (LSA) into the regular classroom environment with little or no preparation. The teacher had to try to meet this child's needs without time to think about changing the classroom environment or teaching styles or to learn new skills. This is what our American colleagues in Madison, Wisconsin call the "dump and hope" phase! In Madison they closed their last segregated special school site in 1976 (4) so they have more than twenty years of experience to draw on.

Moving to inclusion

Inclusion is more than mainstreaming. It is the result of rethinking the role of education and usually requires a change in school and classroom culture and organisation.

Over time we have seen a shift in the UK towards the development of inclusive school cultures but this is still mostly because individual schools have developed their skills and changed their beliefs about the role of schools. It is rarely the result of planning for an inclusive system by Local Educational Authorities. In these inclusive schools there is more awareness of the individual needs of all children, more flexibility in the curriculum and a valuing of diversity. This shift has been particularly noticeable over the last few years, since the establishment of SENCO's and the implementation of the Code of Practice,

following the special needs legislation in the 1993 Education Act.

There are very few UK Education Authorities that have actually embraced an inclusive philosophy and actively managed change. The London Borough of Newham is one example where an inclusive policy is in place. It has received much of its impetus from effective lobbying by parents of children with disabilities and special educational needs. The Wisconsin changes were also driven by parent pressure in the early years. In both the Newham and the Wisconsin situations, change has progressed in the same way. Both replaced segregated special schools with special units or special resources on some mainstream sites. Both found that these could be phased out over time as all teachers increased their range of skills and all schools became more confident at meeting a variety of needs. The specialist skills of the teachers who used to work only on segregated sites become available to all children in the system and to colleagues and this helps the process of change as well as benefiting many more children.

Whole school issues and the role of the headteacher

School philosophy and culture

The schools that we would rate as the most successful have established an inclusive culture. They have thought about and explicitly embraced a philosophy that values all children equally and celebrates the diversity of the human population. They believe that the role of education is broad and would accept Lou Brown's definition that it is the task of schools "to prepare children to live, work and play in an inclusive society". (Lou Brown is the Professor of Special Education, University of Wisconsin, Madison(3)).

Schools as agents of change

A school has the opportunity to establish a community that demonstrates the values that we might wish to see expressed in the wider society outside school.

We can use the example of disability to explore this argument further. It is common for adults with disabilities to observe that their lives are far more restricted by the attitudes of the non-disabled majority towards them than by the limits actually imposed by their disability. One reason for this may be the lack of contact with people with disabilities that most of the non-disabled population have as a result of mainly segregated schooling and

segregated services for children and adults with disabilities. This has led to a society where the majority of individuals do not understand the needs of people with disabilities nor feel at ease in relating to or working with them.

The decisions that are made about the design of our schools, work places, transport and communication facilities take little account of the needs of those with physical or sensory impairments. Access to the daily opportunities that the rest of us take for granted is therefore denied to most children and adults with disabilities. Until recently, all children with identifiable disabilities experienced this lack of access from earliest childhood, when they were denied the opportunity to benefit from the same educational experiences as other children. This resulted in two main disadvantages - a restricted access to the curriculum and no opportunity to be part of the ordinary social world of childhood. In other words, most children with disabilities experienced both social and educational deprivation during childhood, leading to social isolation, under achievement and impoverished lives as adults.

If all children are able to grow and learn together, the child with special needs has the optimal opportunity to reach his or her potential, to make friends and to become fully integrated into mainstream society.

The other children have the opportunity to learn to understand the effects of disability and to learn how to care for and support children with a variety of needs. They will learn that all children with disabilities are children first, with the same psychological, emotional and social needs as all other children. Like the rest of us, significant relationships with others are central to their well-being as children and adults and the opportunity to establish and maintain friendships during childhood is important preparation for successfully developing these relationships in adult life. The non-disabled students will become better friends, neighbours, workmates and bosses for people with disabilities in their adult lives.

This may require schools to recognise that social development should be an explicit part of the curriculum, giving children the opportunity to think about friendships, loneliness and social isolation (5).

The experience of communities who have had fully inclusive education systems for a generation is that these gains do occur. Attitudes do change throughout the community and opportunities become more

equal. More young adults with significant disabilities are able to work, live independently, establish their own families and enjoy the same leisure facilities as everyone else. More of the young adults who, though not disabled, were in the less able third of the mainstream school population in terms of academic progress, also do better in these inclusive school systems. The skills developed by all teachers as they are required to meet the educational needs of those with the most significant difficulties benefit many others who have always been in the mainstream but not always had their needs met. Teachers learn how to address social and behavioural needs more effectively and to extend access to the curriculum to a wider range of children.

However, these benefits will only be the outcome if inclusion is done well.

The individual educational needs of all children must be met as well as they would be in separate facilities. Mixing with children with significant disabilities can result in other children becoming less tolerant and sympathetic if the experience is unpleasant for any reason, so how do we move forward successfully?

Strategies for success

Valuing diversity and building self-esteem

The successful schools see all their pupils as individuals and value them equally. They encourage their students to recognise that we are all individuals and to recognise that we all have strengths and weaknesses.

Healthy adjustment in adult life is likely to come from a realistic appraisal of oneself, therefore setting goals that are achievable and appropriate and which lead to a positive self concept - feeling good about oneself. Building positive self-esteem in all pupils should be a primary goal for all teachers (6). This is no easy task. It means helping all students to identify their strengths and their limitations so that they choose to develop their strengths. It means that those schools with authoritarian cultures need to change, and that ridicule and humiliation of children should have no part in the school culture or in any teacher's repertoire. One of us (SB) has had the opportunity to travel extensively and experience the atmosphere in schools where building self-esteem is a primary goal. We do experience this in some of our UK schools, but not to the extent that is common in parts of

North America and Canada.

Our experience in the UK is that the culture and philosophy in schools can be very different, even in neighbouring schools. We can illustrate this with a real example. The student's name has been changed to preserve confidentiality in this and later case examples.

Several years ago one of us (SB) received a phone-call from a distressed parent, asking if one of us could attend a review meeting with her and her husband, as she feared that the school no longer wanted her daughter as a pupil. Her daughter Sally was 13 years old and had Down syndrome. She had received all her education to that time in mainstream school with full time non-teaching support provided. She was nearing the end of her second year in secondary education and the school were expressing considerable concern about her progress both educationally and socially.

SB arranged to arrive at the school in time to meet Sally and to talk with the staff before the review meeting. It was quickly apparent that the staff had no positive commitment to meeting this student's needs. The Head of Learning Support made clear to SB that she and her staff did not have the time to differentiate work for Sally, seeing this an inappropriate use of their time. They were also concerned that she was becoming increasingly socially isolated. They did not want advice from us on how they could change this state of affairs and make the placement successful. This would of course mean accepting that the school might be failing Sally. Their perception of the situation was that Sally should not be in their school. All the difficulties they were experiencing were the result of her disability and she should be in a special school. They even expressed negative views about her in her presence and seemed to have no sensitivity to the probable effect of their attitudes towards her on her progress or happiness within the school.

The review meeting was a formal affair involving the Headteacher, Head of Learning Support and five other professionals from local and county LEA's and chaired by the Deputy Head. The Head was visibly annoyed by SB's presence and did his best to prevent her from contributing to the discussion. The meeting had clearly been called with one aim - to agree to remove Sally from the school and put her where this Head made plain he thought that she belonged - in a school for children with severe learning difficulties. He seemed to have little understanding of the social influences on any child's performance and progress. He saw Sally's present difficulties in his school as

entirely her problem, the result of her disability. He certainly did not want any advice. For him, the last straw was when SB secured the agreement of the LEA to continue to the same level of LSA support for Sally if we found her another mainstream placement as this clearly implied that she believed this school was failing Sally.

With Sally's parents, SB approached another mainstream school near her home. This school expressed a willingness to accept her and a visit was arranged. The contrast in the two school's philosophies and cultures was extreme. The Headteacher of the new school greeted SB warmly and informed her that he would be delighted to accept Sally in his school. He explained that this was a community school - in name and in philosophy. He wanted all the children in the neighbourhood to be welcome in his school and had been developing his learning support resources accordingly, since coming to the school as Head four years earlier. He then took SB to meet the Head of Learner Support. She explained that she had no previous experience of teaching a child with Down syndrome but that she had given some thought to our request and was looking forward to supporting Sally in the school. She added that she had considered what she would have wanted if Sally had been her daughter and knew that she would have wanted an education with mainstream peers within her own community for her.

At this point SB knew that this placement was going to be a success. She was then asked about Sally's achievements in literacy and numeracy and was told that there were other students of her age working at the same level so she could join their groups. The Head then asked SB what year group Sally should join. SB said that she was unsure as Sally was probably less socially and emotionally mature than other girls of her age. The Head laughed and said that some girls of her age were more like 18 year olds in social and emotional development, others more like 9 year olds - he felt sure she would be fine in her correct year group!

At this time, we had little experience of secondary schools and this case made us feel that we were on a steep learning curve! SB was quite shaken by the contrast in the attitudes and beliefs of the two headteachers and their staff. One school had told her that Sally could never fit in, as she was so different from their other pupils. Another school just down the road had no problem seeing Sally as happily fitting in to their school community and pointing out that her needs were not different from those of some of the other mainstream

pupils in the school, either academically or socially. Could the populations of children in the two schools really be that different or was it the way the staff perceived their children that was different?

The evidence on the school intakes supported the latter view. We cannot help worrying about the educational experience of many of the other children in the first school, not just those less academically able, but also those with social and emotional needs. In both these schools it seemed that the Headteacher was determining the culture and values of the whole school, for good or ill.

We would ask all Heads and managers to reflect on their own personal attitudes to disability and to children with special needs. It is likely that your personal attitudes and your emotional reactions to disability will be influencing the decisions that you are making and will be apparent to your staff and to your pupils. You might also reflect on what educational and social opportunities you would want for your own child, if you had a child with a disability.

Staff attitudes

In our experience, the single most important predictor of success for placements is staff attitude. If the staff believe that the child is appropriately placed in their school, the placement will be a success. We have seen very disabled children, with significant dependency needs, flourish in schools where they are wanted. We have seen children with obvious disabilities but academic progress within the norms for their age, fail in schools that do not want them - or should we say failed by schools that do not want them.

The evidence in favour of the importance of staff attitude is particularly striking when a pupil flourishes in one school but has a miserable time in the next school.

We have had this experience with several children whom we know well. One young friend of ours, Gerry, is now 11 years old. Gerry has Down syndrome. He went to the same mainstream nursery as his brother and then into the infant school where he made extremely good progress. The school had given much thought to meeting his needs and the staff were rightly proud of his achievements.

In Gerry's last year in this school, his class teacher was sharing her experiences at a training day at our Centre. She described how, as Gerry's strengths were his literacy skills and

his computer skills, he was spending some time each week helping children in the reception class and in Year 1, listening to them read and showing them how to use the computer. This teacher had deliberately constructed opportunities to build Gerry's self-confidence and self-esteem. These situations also showed the other children that, despite his disability, Gerry had strengths and could help others as well as benefit from their help at other times. His literacy skills were within the range of his classmates.

Imagine our concern when he moves to the junior school with these peers the very next term and the new class teacher phones us expressing the view that he has no place in their school - he should be in a school for children with severe learning difficulties! Before long Gerry was showing his distress by bedwetting, something he had not done since the age of three years. We were able to improve this situation somewhat but it continued to be less than satisfactory by our standards.

At this time, we were supporting another lad with Down syndrome of the same age and with a very similar profile of abilities and special needs in a nearby school. The contrast was dramatic. This junior school had two children with Down syndrome on the school roll and all the staff were immensely proud of the progress of both of them. We would observe that the two schools had different atmospheres and different attitudes to all their children, confirming what we had read and have stated at the start of this article.

The schools that are best for all children are the best for those with very special needs.

Some headteachers might reflect further on the significance of this as it implies that schools who are not good at meeting the needs of special students may not be the best schools for all the other children in them either.

We could give more examples of this kind, where a child has made very different progress after a school move and has been perceived and described very differently by Headteachers and teachers in the two schools.

The message from this section is threefold. Firstly, successful schools clearly recognise the wide range of educational needs present in any year group in any school population and they acknowledge that it is their job to meet this wide range of educational needs. Secondly, successful schools develop a culture that is caring and supportive of all in the school

community, aiming to value diversity and to build positive self-esteem for all its pupils. Thirdly, successful schools appreciate the effect of being valued and feeling liked by staff and other pupils on the progress of all children.

School organisation and the use of resources

If schools are to succeed in meeting this wide range of needs successfully, there needs to be flexibility within the classroom, within the year group and across year groups.

Flexibility in the classroom is easier to achieve in the primary years when small group working is often the norm within the class. This enables children to work at their own pace within the class. A statemented child in the class with the support of an LSA can provide a bonus for other children in the class. This was one of the things that we learned as soon as we began to place children with Down syndrome in infant schools with a full-time LSA. The LSA could often work with a group of children, all of whom benefited from the extra help.

After a year, we suggested to our LEA that it would be cheaper to give every reception class an additional LSA than bother to try assessing children for Statements before they were in school. There are only a finite number of different special educational needs and we argued that all schools should be able to meet the needs of the four and five year olds in their community, with an LSA in the class and appropriate peripatetic advisory or teaching input. We also argued that assessing the child's educational needs once they were in a school environment might lead to more valid and useful Statements. Our advice was not taken!

We are not in favour of special classes or units as we feel these are not usually necessary and carry the risk of segregating children again. They also do not recognise that all children are children first, regardless of disability or other special needs. There is no reason why any child cannot be a member of an ordinary class, in the correct year group, even if his or her educational programme has to be provided on an individual or small group basis.

This is the model that we see working well in many secondary schools. All children are members of ordinary classes and ordinary tutor groups even when they have considerable special educational needs. Their educational programme is then worked out for them as an individual, just as it for the other pupils as they make their choices of subjects that they wish to study. It then becomes no more stigmatising

or isolating to have a lesson in the Learning Support Centre than it does to study Spanish rather than physics. Nor is it any more difficult to staff an expert Learning Support Centre than an English or Mathematics Department.

In Wisconsin, regular schools not only have expert special educators on their staff but also speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists as well. This means that their expertise is available to all children in the community, in a much more accessible way than in the UK at present.

While we try to support children's learning within the classroom in the early years, to ensure maximum social integration and access to the curriculum, there should be no rigid rules about this. Every school, especially every junior school, would benefit from a learning resource centre, where children can have the benefit of individual or small group work.

One of the best examples of planning such a centre that we have come across was in a secondary school, where the learning resource centre had been deliberately sited right in the centre of the school. In addition to providing for those with special educational needs, it housed the school's best computer resources so that it really was a learning resource for all pupils. This meant that any pupil could use the centre without embarrassment and that one was as likely to find a gifted child working there as a child needing special additional teaching or adapted resources.

The role of Learning Support Assistants

The success of many of the placements that we have supported has been due in large part to the skill and commitment of the LSA assigned to support the child. However, many of the schools that we have worked with do not know how to support and make full use of their LSAs. While recognising that the work of LSAs is critical to the access to mainstream school for many children in the UK at the present time, we are building a system on the cheap as most are poorly paid, have minimal training and no career progression open to them.

This situation highlights the lack of real policy commitment to or planning for inclusion in this country. Some other countries, Italy for example, provide extra training for qualified teachers so that they can become facilitators for inclusion. This recognises the importance of changing the whole philosophy and culture in

many schools and in classrooms, if they are to become truly inclusive communities. Is there a message here for our SENCO's and their training?

Many of our children would not have made the academic progress that they have without the one-to-one teaching provided by their LSA. However, striking the right balance between supporting the child and encouraging independence is not easy. Too much one-to-one support for learning can make the child dependent on adult support. The child needs to learn as part of a group and to work independently. Too much adult support can also make the child seem more different to the other children than is necessary and prevent them offering support to the special child in ways that may come quite naturally to the children.

In some schools, LSA's have a very difficult time. They have no professional training or status and are sometimes not treated well. We have been to schools asking for advice for a child, where the LSA was not allowed to talk with us, the clear message being that she could not have any useful views and must not be allowed to get above her station! More commonly, we find LSA's who are given too much responsibility for the education of the child they are supporting either because the school feels no commitment to the child or because they do not know how to plan an educational programme for them. The class teacher must recognise that he or she has the responsibility for the education of a statemented child and that they have the same right to be a full member of the class as any other child.

Another difficulty an LSA can encounter is the responsibility of knowing that a child is not receiving an appropriate educational programme in the school but not having the status to do anything to change the situation. They may also be the main link between school and family, party to the concerns of both sides but without the power to solve any conflicts of opinion. This can be very stressful for the LSA.

These are matters for the Headteacher to be alert to and in many schools the status of the LSA's has improved. Many are highly valued and well supported by their SENCO's. Training programmes for LSA's are improving.

Working with parents

Many parents of children with special educational needs have become experts. They

will be experts in their knowledge of the effects of the child's disability on their development and experts in teaching their own child. Parents of children with identifiable disabilities often join parent support groups and quickly access a wide range of information on their child's condition.

Parents are likely to have been actively recruited into early intervention programmes by the time their child was one year old. In these programmes they will have been treated as equal partners by the professionals and expected to be their child's main educator. Most early intervention programmes recognise that home is the most significant learning environment for any child's development and that parents can be the child's best teachers, so they actively pass on their skills and knowledge to parents. Parents choose learning goals and set priorities based on their view of the child's needs and their awareness of the whole family's needs and resources.

This parent-professional partnership approach has been very successful in pre-school years but parents often find that schools do not know how to form the same effective partnerships. Teachers in the mainstream are not always good at forming a positive relationship with parents of children with special needs. Teachers do not always recognise the contribution that parents can make in helping the teacher to realise the child's full potential, if only teacher and parent could work together.

Most parents know that their child will benefit if they continue to teach them or help them to consolidate skills out of school hours, but they need to know the teacher's current goals for the child. They may also need materials or ideas for activities to be provided from school, though often parents could supply materials for use in the classroom. We know many who create wonderful learning materials and games at home that children in the class would all benefit from. Bringing in such games can raise the self-esteem of the special child, as they are used and enjoyed by others in their class.

Many parents have valuable specialist knowledge of their child and their condition to share with their child's teacher if given the opportunity. We often meet frustrated parents who cannot offer the information they know the teacher would find useful because the teacher will not accept it. It seems that many teachers do not know how to establish a partnership with parents. Too often, we come across situations where the teacher seems to feel threatened and to fear loss of face if he or

she admits that parents could know some things that she does not. This is an important issue which may need to be addressed by training and staff development in many schools.

Peer support

In our experience, many schools fail to realise that the biggest resource that they have available to them to support children with special educational needs is the other children in the school.

If a child needs more help, the first reaction is to send for another adult, either an assistant or external specialist. The use of strategies such as peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, co-operative group learning and team projects is not as widely developed in the UK as in North America. All children benefit from these activities as they all learn how to teach and to co-operate with others. These are very valuable skills to take to the adult work place (7).

Explicit use of peers to prevent social isolation and to build circles of friends increases all children's sensitivity to how others feel if ignored or actively rejected. Many academically able children do not make friends easily, so all children in the school will benefit when involved in projects to help friendships. Most teachers would benefit from some training in the techniques of developing peer support systems for teaching and for social support.

Behaviour

Effective behaviour management is another area where some staff training would be beneficial in the majority of schools we visit. While children with learning difficulties may be particularly at risk for developing behaviour problems as a result of frustration or failure, any child can present such difficulties. In the past few years, a variety of good written resources to support good behaviour management have become available.

Like developing the school culture and values, this is a whole school issue. All staff need to have consistent, positive behaviour management strategies, not just the special needs staff.

Staff training

We have mentioned staff training a number of times already. Staff development is clearly the responsibility of the Headteacher and in most schools, teachers are able to access a variety of training opportunities. However, if you want to change the school culture and become an

inclusive school, creating the optimal learning environment for all, then some whole school training will be necessary. *You must have your whole school staff signed up to creating the social culture you are aiming at (8).*

In our experience, training sessions for the whole staff team are extremely valuable in giving an opportunity to debate these issues and make them explicit in everyone's thinking. You will be very fortunate if all your staff have positive attitudes towards a truly inclusive culture, but it is useful for the whole staff team to be aware of the attitudes and prejudices of colleagues. It can also be salutary for those with negative views to realise that they are in a minority. In addition to a programme of training for your whole staff aimed at developing an inclusive culture throughout the school, for the benefit of all your pupils, it is important to consider the preparation of staff and other pupils for the arrival of a pupil with a particular disability.

We find that a session on Down syndrome, for example, for the whole staff team, before the child arrives at school, is very helpful in preparing the way for successful placement. We can answer questions about the condition, often clearing away myths, and we can explain how and why this placement will really benefit this child. It is not appropriate to expect the special needs staff to educate the rest of the staff team or to expect them to succeed in an atmosphere where a majority of staff do not think that they have any responsibility for children with special needs in the school.

Preparation of pupils is also important if a child with obvious special needs is coming into a school with no other similarly disabled pupils. We would suggest both a whole school approach and a class approach. The whole school approach might use an assembly to make clear to all children the welcome and support expected for the child, and therefore reinforcing explicit awareness of the school's values. The class approach can include discussion of explicit strategies for welcome and for peer support for the child as well as giving children an opportunity to be informed about the specific disability so that they can understand the child's needs and respond sensitively.

Financial Resources

We have deliberately left the issue of costs until the end of the article as, while we recognise that additional support for children with special needs costs money, our value system would lead us to argue that children

with special needs have the same right to share in the community's resources as all other children. They have a right to be part of the ordinary world of childhood in their community - and that means a right to go to school with the children in their neighbourhood.

On a national, or on an area education authority scale, it does not cost more to put the resources into mainstream rather than special segregated school. In fact many would argue that it is a fairer use of specialist resources (since, when specialist teachers and therapists are moved to mainstream sites, their expertise is available to many more children). But this requires a full commitment to inclusion and a total reorganisation of the education system. It certainly costs more to include statemented children while still maintaining special schools.

We would argue that the challenge for an education authority or a school is to make the best use of its resources in an equitable way for all its pupils. Lack of money should never be an excuse for not allowing access to a statemented child - this amounts to discrimination on the basis of disability (as do the other clauses allowing exclusion in our legislation!).

Conclusions

In this article, we have emphasised the effect of social opportunities on the development of all children and the role of the school in providing a social world that promotes the values we would like to see expressed in our society at large. We have argued that such a school will provide the environment for all children to flourish, socially, emotionally and academically.

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The Authors:

Sue Buckley is Professor of Developmental Disability at the Department of Psychology at the University of Portsmouth, UK. She is also Director of The Centre for Disability Studies at The University of Portsmouth and Director of Research and Information Services and at The Down Syndrome Educational Trust. She also serves as a Non-Executive Director of the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire District Health Authority and on the boards of the European Down Syndrome Association and the International Down Syndrome Federation.

Gillian Bird is Director of Consultancy and Education Services at The Down Syndrome Educational Trust and has been supporting children with Down syndrome in mainstream school placements for the past 10 years.

Both Sue Buckley and Gillian Bird regularly provide consultancy and training for schools and LEA's through The Down Syndrome Educational Trust.