



Literature Review of Pupils with Additional Support Needs

Executive Summary

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN OF THE REVIEW

Policy Background

This literature review has the following broad elements:

- A comparative review of definitions of children with special/additional support needs and definitions of types of placement.
- A review of approaches to pedagogy and curriculum for children with special/additional support needs.

In the following paragraphs, we provide an overview of the broad policy context and the methods we have used in undertaking this review.

Comparisons of definitions and placement patterns

Following the passage of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, the definition of additional support needs used in Scotland now encompasses all children who have difficulty in learning for whatever reason. This broader definition clearly has implications for understanding longitudinal data on the identification and placement of children with additional support needs.

Changing practice in Scotland also has implications for the way in which international comparisons are made. Research teams in Europe (e.g. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE, 2003b; 200c) and internationally (OECD, 2000; OECD, 2005) have sought to compare definitions across countries, to discuss policy differences and to gather comparable statistics. They have found comparisons difficult, as the definitions vary even within nations (the UK being an example of this) as well as varying considerably across countries.

Such comparative difficulties are summarised by Evans (2003). He notes that 'special educational needs' is limited in some countries to students with disabilities, while in others the category extends to social disadvantage, those with minority ethnic backgrounds and/or gifted children. Comparisons are further complicated by different definitions of particular categories within 'special educational needs', and the number of categories used to gather statistical data. As a response, the OECD reports required agreement across countries to re-allocate their national categories into three types:

- A includes those students whose disability clearly arises from organic impairment
- B refers to those students who have learning difficulties that may well be acquired for example through unsatisfactory experiences in and out of school and
- C to those who have difficulties because of social disadvantage.

Existing work comparing definitions, statistics and their policy and practice ramifications forms the starting point for this review. However, different countries are dealt with in different ways within specific reviews, and there is no single source which contains comparable material across the board.

It is also important to understand the way in which funding models impact on definitions and placements. For example, European research on the impact of special education funding models on patterns of inclusion suggests that in countries where funds are tied to individual children, there is more evidence of strategic behaviour by parents and teachers to secure resources (Meijer, 1999). Thus countries like England, France and Luxemburg, where children with greater 'needs' have greater funding, have more strategic behaviour by parents and teachers to secure resources and tend to spend more funds on litigation procedures.

Curriculum and pedagogy for children with special/additional support needs

In Scotland, attempts to establish a suitable curriculum for pupils with additional support needs have been marked by, on the one hand, a desire to ensure the entitlement of those pupils within a common curriculum framework whilst, on the other hand, ensuring appropriate and targeted support for individual pupils. Issues of commonality in the curriculum

framework, and of breadth and balance in the curricular experience of pupils with special educational needs, were addressed by the introduction in the early 1990s of the 5-14 Curriculum with its accompanying 5-14 Support for Learning pack. This material offered teachers advice both generic and specific to particular kinds of special educational needs, including pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and sensory impairments. Five strategies for customizing the curriculum were endorsed: differentiation, adaptation, enhancement, enrichment and elaboration. These strategies would enable teachers to plan a suitable curriculum for individual pupils whilst ensuring that pupils' learning was framed by the national curriculum guidelines. The curriculum planning mechanism was an individualised education programme (IEP).

The Warnock Report (DES, 1978) referred to 'educational programmes for individual children' (11.15: 209) and emphasised the importance of planning long- and short-term learning objectives for all children with special educational needs (SEN) in a range of curricular domains. More recently in Scotland, IEPs have become a mechanism for raising and monitoring standards, as well as a tool for ensuring the curriculum entitlement and progression of pupils with SEN. Following the framework set out in the paper *Setting Standards – Raising Standards in Schools* (SOED, 1998), it was decided to set targets for schools in relation to the 5 – 14 programme and SQA awards and in 1998 support packs were produced and circulated to all schools. The target-setting initiative was intended to include children with SEN and the paper *Raising Standards: Setting Targets for Pupils with Special Educational Needs* (SOEID, 1999) described how this was to be done. In November 1999, a support pack in relation to special educational needs was produced and circulated to all schools (*Raising Standards – Setting Targets Support Pack: Special Educational Needs*, SEED, 1999).

The support pack provided to schools clarified the purpose of target-setting as a means of improving planning, assisting with self-evaluation and focusing schools on key aspects of their provision (learning and teaching, programmes of study, organization and management, use of certification). Advice was given about which pupils should have IEPs with targets. It was expected that IEPs should be opened for all children in special schools and units and all children with Records of Needs in mainstream schools. In addition, children in mainstream schools who did not have a Record of Needs but who required 'significant, planned intervention', as set out in the *Manual of Good Practice* (SOEID, 1998) should have IEPs with targets. It was recommended that targets should be set in one or more of the following curricular areas: communication and language, numeracy, personal and social development and that all targets should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed.

Under the new additional support for learning legislation, IEPs will continue to be used for children with additional support needs, with some children and young people with complex needs requiring a range of additional support from different services having a coordinated support plan. All children with additional support needs will have a curriculum framed by the values, purposes and principles set out in *A Curriculum for Excellence* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/cerv-00.asp>), a framework which seeks to provide for the first time for all children and young people from 3 to 18. The details of the new curriculum have yet to be worked out, and this review will contribute by summarising information on best practice in relation to pedagogy and curriculum for children with additional support needs.

Research Aims

As stated in the project specification, the aim of the project is to review:

- (1) the definitions of special/additional support needs employed in different countries
- (2) the placement patterns of children with particular types of difficulties in different countries and
- (3) curriculum and pedagogy for children with special/additional support needs in different countries (note: it is very difficult to separate out curriculum and pedagogy, and this review will consider both).

Specific project objectives include the following:

- To provide an overview of definitions of additional/special educational needs in a range of countries including Europe, USA, New Zealand and Australia. The study will also explore how children with complex or profound needs are defined in a range of countries.
- To outline how data on additional support needs/special educational needs is collected by these countries
- To summarise each of the countries' policies and practices of working with pupils with additional/special support needs, especially those with complex difficulties, including placement patterns
- To provide a summary of research into effective teaching and learning techniques that are effective with those who have complex additional support needs, to encourage lateral and vertical progression.

Research Methods

The following methods were used:

Review of Scottish, UK and international policy and statistics

The research summarises findings from existing Scottish, UK and international policy and statistical reviews, focusing on countries with similarly developed systems of special educational needs, including Western Europe and North America.

Review of the Scottish, UK and international academic literature

A review of the Scottish, UK and international academic literature was undertaken to identify:

- (a) Factors influencing patterns of identification and placement of pupils with additional/special educational needs.
- (b) Curricular and pedagogical approaches employed in different national contexts
- (c) Evidence of the effectiveness of particular curricular/pedagogical approaches, including opportunities for progression.

Electronic databases (including the British Education Research Index, ERIC, Medline, Social Science Citation Index) were searched using appropriate keywords. The literature search was restricted to English language publications and work conducted over the past 5 years, although influential texts from previous years will also be considered. Key websites were consulted, such as the OECD, Eurydice and EADSNE, to identify all relevant information and publications. The 'grey' literature was also examined, including reports of evaluations and policy reviews conducted by practitioner or policy bodies which may not be in the public domain. In analysing the literature gathered, an initial classification was done of each relevant resource, by type (e.g. evaluative studies, narrative accounts, review articles, background papers etc.) and by topic.

Interviews with international experts

The researchers used their extensive international networks to identify individuals (administrators, policy makers and academics) in selected countries to interview in order to provide a commentary on the identified statistical, policy and practices issues in their particular countries. These interviews were used to test the hypotheses which the researchers have developed in relation to specific policy influences and drivers, and to verify the way in which stated policies and practices actually operate at grass roots level. In addition to the other constituent parts of the UK, countries where interviews were conducted included the USA, Belgium (Flanders), Sweden and Greece. These interviews took place by e-mail and telephone.

Interviews with Scottish experts

Thirteen interviews were conducted in Scotland with experts in particular 'types' of learning difficulty to explore the curricular and pedagogical adaptations which might be required for that particular group.

Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows: **Section 2** presents data drawn from international sources on categorisations of particular types of difficulty and disability in different countries, placement patterns and approaches to resource allocation. **Section 3** presents case studies of five countries, examining more closely the legal and policy context underpinning the identification and placement of children with particular difficulties, the relationship of the system of special needs education to the mainstream education system, the resourcing of additional provision and the nature of specialist input including the key professionals involved and their training. **Section 4** focuses on the provision for children with particular types of difficulty in Scotland. **Section 5** draws together findings from the different sections and draws some final conclusions.

SECTION 2: THE IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS: SOME INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Summary

- Data used in this section have been drawn from two different sources: the OECD and the EADSNE.
- Whereas EADSNE preserves national differences in understanding of SEN, OECD fits national data into a framework for the purposes of cross-national comparison. The OECD framework has been accused of being one-dimensional.
- Broadly, the OECD uses four categories: disabilities, difficulties, disadvantages and non-categorical systems.
- Whilst there is an on-going move away from the use of medical categories, almost all countries employ nine sub-categories.
- Differences in disabilities and difficulties are deemed to be due to social, cultural and administrative variation between countries. Differences in disadvantages relate to wider economic conditions.
- In most countries there is a legal framework for the identification of SEN. In Europe, this is often done through individual educational planning.
- Countries differ markedly with regard to whether they allocate additional resources to students with specific impairments. This is true even in relation to normative categories such as blindness.
- Internationally, a higher proportion of boys than girls receive additional support for special educational needs. The OECD suggests that this is due to a range of factors, ranging from boys' greater vulnerability to illness, genetic problems and behavioural difficulties, as well as the growing 'feminisation' of the teaching profession. The latter point is the subject of international debate.
- There are major differences between countries as to whether pupils with specific impairments are educated in mainstream or special settings.
- The identification of children with normative categories of disability (e.g. blindness, severe learning difficulties) is constant across all stages of education. The proportion of children with non-normative difficulties (e.g. emotional and behavioural difficulties) peaks at lower secondary level.
- The EADSNE report notes that inclusion is perceived to work well at primary level, but problems arise at secondary level due to school organisation, topic focus and growing distance between the child with special needs and his or her peers.

- For children with disabilities and difficulties, some countries prefer special placement whilst others favour mainstream. Most countries use a mix of provision.
- Children who are socially disadvantaged are normally placed in mainstream schools.
- EADSNE identifies three distinctive approaches to school placement:
 - (i) one-track – almost all pupils in mainstream
 - (ii) multi-track – multiplicity of approaches to inclusion, the most common approach
 - (iii) two-track approaches – mainstream and special schools run in parallel.
- Funding mechanisms have a major impact on pupil placement. Where funds are tied to the formal identification of particular impairments, resources may be used on expensive litigation. On the other hand, delegating resources to municipalities and schools may also be problematic, since funds may not be ring-fenced, producing pressures for parents to choose special schools where additional resources are guaranteed.
- In mainstream schools, a common model is for additional support to be given to the class teacher or the pupil by a specialist teacher.
- Parents tend to support education in inclusive settings where this is the established model, unless their children have severe disabilities, in which case they prefer special settings. In countries with highly segregated systems, parents often lobby for more inclusive provision.
- Teachers, particularly at secondary level, have reservations about the feasibility of inclusion for certain groups of pupil.

SECTION 3: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

Summary

- The five case study countries demonstrate contrasting approaches to the dilemma of inclusive versus specialist placement and curriculum provision, although in all countries there is a trend towards the development of more inclusive approaches.
- There is no clear view emerging from the literature as to which setting, mainstream or special, provides more positive outcomes for pupils.
- Comparisons of pupil outcomes in different settings using quantitative measures of attainment have been impossible because of the ways in which the progress of pupils with SEN has been recorded and judged.
- Under development in England and the US are systems which will bring pupils with SEN into an overall accountability and school improvement framework.
- There are strong parallels between the US and the UK systems of educating children with SEN, but also some fascinating differences. Policies are based on both education and disability legislation.
- Like England, the majority of children with SEN in the US are in mainstream schools, but some specialist provision in separate institutions is also available.
- It is mandatory for all children with SEN in the US to have IEPs. Unlike England, US IEPs are legally binding documents, and if dissatisfied with their substance or implementation, parents may bring a case to the federal appeal court.

- A high proportion of children in the US have IEPs (more than 11%). A significant proportion of education funding, drawn from federal, state and school district levels, is spent on the education of children with special educational needs.
- A categorical system is used in the US to draw boundaries around which pupils qualify for an IEP.
- There are moves to include children with special educational needs in accountability regimes in most states.
- Special education is highly developed in US universities and many teachers have specialist qualifications. This leads to more highly qualified professionals, but also promotes the idea that children with special educational needs require special pedagogies.
- In England and most other European countries, professional qualifications for teachers of children with special educational needs are less likely to be mandatory, apart from specialists in sensory impairment.
- England is attempting to move away from a formal system of identifying special educational needs through Statements of Needs. Whereas 3% of children have a Statement of Needs, a much higher proportion of children have their needs recognised through more informal identification systems.
- Sweden has strong similarities with the English system, in terms of placing the majority of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. It only collects data in relation to children in special settings, demonstrating a degree of antipathy towards social categorisation.
- In Sweden, funding is devolved to municipalities and thence to schools. This produces considerable local variation with regard to which pupils in mainstream settings attract additional funding, and encourages greater uses of special settings, where additional resourcing is guaranteed.
- Greece, like Sweden, places the majority of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools, although rigid curricula mean that little differentiation occurs. Funds are devolved to the local level, but provision for children with special educational needs is regarded as inadequate.
- Flanders is one of the few countries in Europe with a rigid two-track system, with virtually all resources for pupils with special educational needs allocated to the special sector. There are tentative moves towards more inclusive arrangements, partly driven by parental pressure, but these are frustrated by rigid adherence to a specified curriculum in mainstream schools and lack of support for children with additional needs.
- P scales have been developed to support the structured progression of pupils working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum.
- Use of P scales to assess individual pupil progress will enable the local and national collection of school data for accountability and school improvement purposes.
- Use of P scales as a curriculum planning tool for teachers is more established and has been judged to be helpful for teachers.
- The helpfulness of P scales increases when schools adapt and further refine them, although some difficulties remain.

- Effective pedagogies for inclusion are seen to rest not on curriculum prescription but on teachers' understandings of individual differences and on their skills in responding to those differences.
- Differentiation is seen as the principal mechanism underpinning effective inclusion, but it appears that teachers vary greatly in their skills in this area.
- Differentiation is conceptualised as being located in teacher approaches and as involving the same processes as formative assessment, such as, those endorsed by the AifL initiative in Scotland.

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS IN SCOTLAND

Summary

- In Scotland, there is an emphasis on a common curricular framework delivered to all pupils.
- Individualised Educational Programmes are generally regarded as the vehicle for specifying individual targets for pupils with additional support needs and for monitoring progress.
- Research has highlighted a number of issues to do with a possible narrowing of the curriculum, their ownership by subject teachers in secondary schools and the involvement of parents, pupils and external agencies.
- Standard Grade is regarded as too difficult for some pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with significant difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Some pupils with special educational needs follow Access courses which form part of the Higher Still programme. However, some mainstream teachers find it difficult to teach pupils studying Standard Grade and Access courses in the same class because of differences in course content.
- There are ongoing debates about the need for special pedagogies, and recent UK reviews have suggested that most children with special educational needs do not require qualitatively different teaching approaches. However, there is an abundant academic and practitioner literature setting out the specific approaches and adaptations which are effective for children with particular impairments, and voluntary organisations often lobby for specialised teaching methods.
- Children with autistic spectrum disorder appear to benefit from an ordered classroom environment where extraneous stimuli are limited and controlled and there is an emphasis on the development of social skills.
- For children with visual impairment, there is an emphasis on extending physical, intellectual and social capacities. For some children, specialised software may be necessary and others may benefit from learning Braille. A specialist qualification is required for teachers of children with visual and hearing impairment.
- There are fierce debates about the best means of educating deaf children, with some people maintaining that British Sign Language should be used much more extensively, whilst others support 'oralist' approaches. As more children have earlier cochlear implants, the latter may become more popular. It is argued that many deaf children do not make adequate progress in school due to lack of knowledge of appropriate teaching methods, particularly in mainstream settings.
- Very particular approaches are needed in the education of deafblind children, focusing on the development of attachment and security and the fostering of access to the external world through touch.

- For children with severe and complex learning difficulties, behaviourist approaches have tended to be replaced by Intensive Interaction teaching methods, which emphasise the importance of social and communication skills. Specialist computer software is also used extensively, although some argue that there is a need for greater clarity about the learning objectives to be achieved.
- Teachers in mainstream schools find the education of children with social emotional and behavioural difficulties extremely challenging. Approaches which modify the classroom environment to provide intensive support, including the use of classroom assistants, have been developed. At secondary level, there is an increasing emphasis on the use of a single curriculum framework allowing for different routes for progression. This is an area which will be further developed through the Curriculum for Excellence.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

International comparisons of special educational needs provision

Despite the acknowledged difficulties in gathering data which are sufficiently robust to allow international comparisons, reviews undertaken by OECD and EADSNE reveal fascinating patterns in developments in the field of special educational needs. There appears to be an international move away from medicalised categories and towards inclusion. However, the difficulties of managing inclusion effectively are acknowledged, with primary schools having greater success than secondary schools. Most countries appear to favour eclectic forms of provision, with parallel developments in inclusive education, special classes or units in mainstream schools and special schools. World-wide, boys appear to have more difficulties in coping with mainstream education than girls, and across the world attract a greater proportion of additional resources. There are intriguing differences between countries, with very different local practices in relation to inclusion and decisions on additional resourcing. In relation to a category such as blindness, for example, some countries prefer mainstream over special placements and vice versa. Similarly, a blind child might or might not attract additional resourcing depending on where they are being educated. Most children experiencing social disadvantage, often associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties, are almost always educated in mainstream schools.

Funding regimes are critical in influencing the shape of provision for children with special educational needs, incentivising placement in either special or mainstream settings. The use of categories for accessing additional funds has both upsides and downsides. On the one hand, strict qualification criteria may equalise provision and produce a degree of fairness, although there will always be borderline cases who will be deprived of funding. On the other hand, the application of qualification criteria is likely to lead to disputes over definitions, boundaries and forms of assessment, with litigation absorbing funds which might be better used for educational purposes. By the same token, delegating funds to local level may also be problematic, since it is likely to lead to unequal use of funds in different areas and, because of audit difficulties, may be used for purposes other than support for children with special needs. Delegating funds to local level may be intended to support inclusion, but may have the opposite effect in practice, making special schools more attractive because of guaranteed levels of funding.

Comparisons of case study countries

The five case study countries exemplify different approaches to special needs provision. Using the EADSNE typology, whilst the US, England and Sweden run multi-track systems, Greece is much closer to a one-track system, with very little investment in its special sector, whilst Flanders features many characteristics of a two-track system, with strong insulation between special and mainstream schools, including separate curricula. The US clearly has the strongest rights-based provision, with strict qualification criteria for additional provision. Whilst children with IEPs in the US benefit from relatively generous additional funding, until

recently many were disadvantaged by being excluded from participation in state prescribed curricula and assessment systems. The US worries that it identifies disproportionately high numbers of African American students, particularly boys, as having special educational needs. It is therefore evident that the additional protection of the IEP in the US might have some features of the gilded cage.

There are strong parallels between the US and the UK systems of educating children with SEN, but also some fascinating differences. In both countries, a high proportion of children are identified as having special educational needs, the majority of whom are in mainstream schools. In both countries, some specialist provision in separate institutions is also available. It is mandatory for all children with SEN in the US to have IEPs. These are legally binding documents, and if dissatisfied with their substance or implementation, parents may bring a case to the federal appeal court. A significant proportion of education funding, drawn from federal, state and school district levels, is spent on the education of children with special educational needs. A categorical system is used in the US to draw boundaries around which children qualify for an IEP, and this varies from one state to another. In England, there have also been disagreements about which children should receive a Statement of Needs, and there are also variations by local authority. In England, the Government is trying to encourage less reliance on the Statement of Needs, and many local authorities are making much less use of them. In the US, there is no parallel move away from the use of IEPs.

The extent to which children with special educational needs should be treated differently from other children within the education system is debated in both the US and England. For example, there are moves within the US to include children with special educational needs in state specified curricula and assessment regimes, and in England there has always been some degree of uncertainty about which children should have the national curriculum and assessment 'disapplied'. There are also differences between the US and England with regard to the need for specialists in curriculum and pedagogy. Compared with the US, which has a very highly developed system of training for special educators, the system in England and in many other European countries is far more ad hoc, with only teachers of visual and hearing impairment routinely requiring special qualifications. The US system produces highly qualified professionals, but also promotes the idea that children with special educational needs require special pedagogies.

In terms of future trends, it is evident that both England and Sweden are experiencing something of a backlash against inclusion. In both countries, the trend is to delegate funding to schools, thus making the connection between additional funding and the needs of individual pupils less clear-cut. If parents believe that children will only receive additional resourcing in special settings, then they may regard such placements as preferable to mainstream schools, where they may have to struggle for additional resources. In all countries, it is evident that changes in the broader education system impacts on provision for children with special education needs. For example, in the US, England and Sweden, there are moves to include children with special educational needs in measures of school performance, but at the same time mainstream schools worry that including these children in league tables will have a negative impact on their performance, thus dampening enthusiasm for inclusion.

Curriculum and pedagogy for children with additional support needs in Scotland

Individualised Educational Programmes are generally regarded as the vehicle for specifying individual targets for pupils with additional support needs and for monitoring progress. Unlike the US, IEPs in Scotland do not specify the additional resources which will be delivered and are not associated with particular routes of legal redress. Research has highlighted a number of issues in their implementation, including a possible narrowing of the curriculum, a lack of ownership by subject teachers in secondary schools and low levels of involvement by parents, pupils and external agencies.

A number of tensions emerge in relation to the curriculum and pedagogy for children with special educational needs in Scotland. First, there is a possibility of conflict between ensuring equal access to a common curriculum and the development of alternative curricula. Since the

early 1980s, there has been an emphasis on the entitlement of children with special educational needs to access the mainstream curriculum, and yet teachers appear to have difficulty in making the curriculum accessible through effective differentiation. There also appears to be some difficulty in finding the right course for some children with special educational needs, with suggestions that there is a lack of smooth articulation between Standard Grade and Higher Still. There is a growing demand at secondary level for alternative curricula to stem the growth of disaffection, particularly for children with social emotional and behavioural difficulties. Such alternative programmes of study might emphasise personal and social development and include vocational and experiential elements. The Curriculum for Excellence appears to offer possibilities for the further development of flexible, rather than alternative, curricular programmes within the overall curricular framework.

A further tension concerns the extent to which children with special educational needs require specialist teaching methods related to the nature of their impairment. One school of thought maintains that most children can be taught effectively through the development of generic approaches to effective teaching, which will benefit all learners. Reflecting this view, special education departments in universities, which used to exist in colleges of education, have been merged with larger departments of educational studies. By way of contrast, the US system of teacher education is premised on the importance of separate and distinctive teaching methods for children with particular types of impairment, unlike the approaches to teacher education in the UK and many other European countries, which emphasise the similarity of, rather than the difference between, the learning needs of disabled children and others. The review of literature on specialist pedagogies presented above suggests that many still argue for distinctive approaches for children with particular types of impairment, and discrete rather than generic approaches are often sought by voluntary organisations campaigning for particular groups.

Defining and monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs/additional support needs

Different practices are used to monitor the progress of children with SEN. Some groups of pupils in some countries are excluded from national systems of assessment and certification. Elsewhere, as in Scotland, there has been adherence to the principle of including all pupils in the national systems but difficulty in implementing approaches which combine a formative assessment function with the summative and comparative outcomes needed for school improvement and accountability purposes. The use of individual target-setting within IEPs has been used to serve both purposes. For the first formative purpose, there is evidence that this strategy has helped in clarifying successive 'next steps' in learning for pupils, parents and teachers. However, the second summative purpose of target-setting has been more problematic. Target-setting for this purpose conflicted with formative and learner-orientated approaches to progress and also failed to provide attainment data which enabled comparisons of pupil progress in similar and different educational settings. In England, P scales have been developed to assist in this function and will be utilised in this way for the first time in 2006. Whatever, the result in terms of providing hard data to enable comparisons, the P scales have been noted as providing useful supports for teachers in mapping out progress for individual pupils.

In the literature, effective pedagogies for inclusion are seen to rest not on curriculum prescription but on teachers' understandings of individual differences and on their skills in responding to those differences. This is differentiation in the broadest sense whereby it is located in the range of professional skills used by teachers in the classroom, and not simply in the apparatus of the curriculum. However, teacher skills in differentiation vary considerably. In Scotland, pupil progress has been supported by individualised planning and the use of target-setting. Some teachers have had problems in breaking down the curriculum into sequential segments to be articulated for pupils, parents and teachers as long- and short-term targets. These difficulties would account for the use of P scales in some schools and units in Scotland. The literature conveys that inclusive classrooms rely upon skilled and adaptive teachers mediating the curriculum for different learners. However, it would seem that some

teachers lack the confidence or the skills to work in these ways and like the support of detailed curriculum specification.

Practices in careful planning and target-setting parallel mainstream developments occurring through the Assessment is for Learning (AifL) initiative which, amongst other things, emphasises the need for clearly specified, communicated and progressive learning outcomes. Thus, existing understandings of how to support the progression of pupils with SEN can be located in a national mainstream initiative - longstanding good practice in SEN accords with the range of assessment strategies now current for all pupils.

Outcomes of schooling

In all countries considered there was a trend towards the development of more inclusive approaches to the education of pupils with SEN. However, there was no clear view emerging from the literature as to whether mainstream or special education provided more positive outcomes for pupils. The lack of good evidence here is attributable to the difficulties in gathering comparable data about the outcomes of schooling for pupils with SEN.

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