

# Learning better together

Working towards inclusive education in New Zealand schools



Dr Jude MacArthur

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IN YOUR COMMUNITY





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# Foreword

IHC was fortunate to be able to commission education researcher Dr Jude MacArthur to write this book on inclusive education. The result is a comprehensive and scholarly presentation of the theory and practice of inclusive education today, in New Zealand and overseas.

For the first time in New Zealand, *Learning better together* puts together a coherent picture of what we as disabled students, advocates, parents, teachers, principals, community leaders, ministry officials, policymakers and politicians can aspire to in schools. *Learning better together* gives us the tools we need to make sure that nobody gets left out at school. IHC believes that inclusive schools will lead to inclusive communities where disabled people belong, are supported and contribute.

But inclusive education is not always well understood. This book breaks ground in clarifying the debate about how inclusive education can work in practice. It looks at the failure of remedial treatment for 'difference' or 'deviance' and outlines a way of seeing disability that allows for higher expectations and greater achievements.

It gives specific guidance to schools on how to achieve better learning for all students in classrooms, and is a wake-up call to policymakers in New Zealand who are being left behind by developments overseas. It also gives a voice to disabled students who have contributed to research on improving inclusion in schools.

IHC is grateful for this analysis that makes a strong case for more inclusive education in New Zealand. We invite everyone who is interested to take the time to learn more about how disabled students can aspire and achieve.

Donald Thompson  
IHC New Zealand Inc  
National President



## About the author

Dr Jude MacArthur is an independent researcher based in Dunedin, working in the area of education and disability. Her research interests include the school experiences and identity of disabled children and young people, and the implications for schools.

Dr MacArthur's working life began in the classroom as a primary teacher, followed by 14 years at the University of Otago where her work as lecturer in education focused on inclusive education and disability issues. From 2000 to 2006 she was a senior researcher at the Donald Beasley Institute in Dunedin, where she worked on several research projects for the Ministry of Education. She recently participated as an advisor in the Curriculum Exemplars and Learners with Special Education Needs project for the Ministry of Education and University of Canterbury.

Dr MacArthur is currently working on a research project funded by the Marsden Fund, and undertaken with Michael Gaffney (Children's Issues Centre, Dunedin), Dr Berni Kelly (Queen's University, Belfast) and Sarah Sharp (formerly of the Donald Beasley Institute, Dunedin), called Disabled and Non-Disabled Children's Construction of Identity – the Influence of School Experiences.

Dr MacArthur can be contacted at: [teamaloo@xtra.co.nz](mailto:teamaloo@xtra.co.nz)

# Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge IHC and, particularly, Director of Advocacy Trish Grant for recognising that research supports the development of inclusive education in New Zealand schools. In funding this book and the associated DVD, IHC is contributing to a better understanding about what inclusion is, and why our school system needs to change so that all students participate and learn in regular schools.

Special thanks to Professor Keith Ballard for his thorough and incisive review of this publication. Keith's knowledge and experience made a significant contribution to the quality and credibility of this work.

Special thanks also to Mere Berryman, Manager of Poutama Pounamu (Ministry of Education, GSE), for her generous and valuable feedback on Chapter 4, 'Maori and inclusion in Aotearoa New Zealand'.

Chapter 9, 'Support and ideas for the development of inclusive schools', draws in part on research reported in a literature review completed in 2005 for the New Zealand Ministry of Education's research programme, Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education for Students with High and Very High Needs. This material has been updated here with the addition of research published since 2004. I wish to thank the Ministry of Education for agreeing to the use of this material. It is emphasised that while the literature review was commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Education, this funding in no way implies endorsement or agreement by the ministry. The literature review was completed by a team of researchers. Special thanks to Dr Berni Kelly (Queen's University, Belfast); Dr Nancy Higgins (Donald Beasley Institute, Dunedin); Dr Hazel Phillips (Victoria University, Wellington); Dr Trevor McDonald (Education Associates, San Diego); Dr Missy Morton and Susan Jackman (University of Canterbury).

Thanks also to the New Zealand Royal Society's Marsden Fund for their generous funding of the research project Disabled and Non-Disabled Children's Construction of Identity – the Influence of School Experiences (research team: Dr Jude MacArthur, Michael Gaffney, Dr Berni Kelly and Sarah Sharp). This project provided us with a unique opportunity to explore in depth the school

experiences of disabled students as they made the transition from primary to secondary school; to understand what school is like from their point of view; and to appreciate the perspectives and experiences of their families and their teachers. Some of the data from this project is included in this publication, and the publication overall is informed by the many hours spent observing in classrooms and school grounds, and by our analysis of the day-to-day reality of school life.

Jude MacArthur



# Executive summary

Inclusive education stands in contrast to 'special' education, where disabled students are educated in separate schools or classes, or treated very differently in the classroom to regular students.

With inclusive education, all children are entitled to a place in their local school, they participate fully, and they achieve.

Inclusive education means that barriers to each student's learning are identified, and resources and support are in place to overcome any barriers. Inclusive values such as equity, participation, community, compassion, respect for diversity and entitlement to education are a vital foundation in inclusive schools.

Research shows that disabled students in the regular classroom do better than their peers in special education in mathematics and literacy, friendships, communication and behaviour. These higher achievements continue into adult life.

Research suggests that all students do better in inclusive classrooms. Everyone benefits from the changes in teaching and learning needed for teachers to work successfully with a mixed group of students.

Inclusive education has been widely researched internationally over the past few decades, and a number of countries are moving in this direction.

While more disabled students are attending regular schools in New Zealand, no steps have been taken here to develop an inclusive education system. References to inclusive education have been dropped from recent Ministry of Education policy statements.

Changes are needed in New Zealand's education policy and leadership, school organisation and classroom practice, and teacher education in order to achieve the benefits of inclusive education.

# Introduction

## An end to segregation

IHC commissioned research into inclusive education because much has been written on the subject, but the pieces of the puzzle had not been put together in a New Zealand context.

IHC is delighted with the result. This book, *Inclusive Education*, and an associated DVD illustrate inclusive education in practice in New Zealand today.

Inclusive education is essential if disabled children are to achieve their basic human right to a decent education – and live meaningful, productive and successful lives in New Zealand.

This research outlines the thinking behind inclusive education, how it works in the classroom, and what parents can aspire to for their disabled children. It guides schools and teachers on how to make inclusive education happen in their classrooms.

For policymakers and governmental organisations, it spotlights the central issues in the debate about segregation versus inclusive education and calls on them to make inclusive education a priority for all New Zealand children.

Unfortunately, while some New Zealand schools are creating inclusive environments for disabled students, inclusive education is not a priority at senior levels in education. Without leadership, most parents have to fight hard to make sure their children, who are in regular schools, get support, have friends and learn well.

Disabled children and young people say they want to be at school with their peers from their communities, but sometimes they are bullied and left out of things at school. Teachers face a quandary when they don't have the knowledge or resources to teach a diverse group of students, including those who are disabled.

To achieve inclusive education for all children, change is essential – we need better education policies, more positive values and practices in schools, and we need to listen to what disabled students themselves say.

IHC believes that despite the difficulties, the only way forward is through inclusive education. Its time has come. Inclusive education offers hope for greater achievement by greater numbers of students.

All children can prosper in a responsive, safe and supportive learning environment.

Ralph Jones  
Chief Executive  
IHC New Zealand Inc



# 1

# Improving the school experiences of disabled children

Inclusive education (or ‘inclusion’) is an international response to the view that *all* children have the right to educational opportunity. It involves significant changes in thinking and action in education, from the level of education policy through to classroom practice, so that teachers can reach out to every child in their classroom.

Inclusion is concerned with the education of all children and young people, and particularly with those who are socially and/or academically excluded at school (Ainscow, 1999). For example, some children and young people in economically poor countries do not have access to education at all, while in other countries students may leave school without qualifications, be placed in ‘special’ segregated places away from their peers, or choose to leave school because school seems irrelevant to their lives.

The difficulties faced by these students and others provide us with an incentive to look at how schools can be changed and teaching approaches improved ‘in ways that will lead them to respond differently to student diversity – seeing individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for experimentation in order to develop more effective practices’ (Ainscow, 2008, p241).

Disabled children and young people are at the centre of what education researcher Roger Slee (2005) describes as ‘the battleground of schooling for disabled students’ (p154). Disabled students have a history of being excluded in education in a variety of ways. Historically, parents and others internationally have fought for children’s basic rights to receive an education when governments provided no access at all. Segregated places, such as special schools, units and classes, were government responses to parent requests for education for their children. These initial battles need to be understood and appreciated as part of the history of gaining access to education for disabled students.

However, research in education and disability over the past three decades has highlighted some major problems with special education thinking and provision, including:

- the association of disability with negative understandings about ‘deviance’ and ‘difference’

- the separation of disabled people from the community
- social and academic disadvantage as common experiences of disabled people. (MacArthur, Kelly, Higgins, Phillips, McDonald, Morton and Jackman, 2005; Rustemier, 2004.)

These points are explored in more detail throughout this book. Various accounts from disabled people themselves, including disabled researchers, outline their experience of segregated schooling and special education, and the struggles that they, their families and advocates have put up with in order to have a place in the community, in neighbourhood schools and in early childhood settings (Ballard, 1994, 1999, 2004a; Ballard and McDonald, 1999; Brown, 1999a, 1999b; Higgins, 2001; Higgins and Ballard, 2000; Kearney, 2009; MacArthur, 2004; MacArthur, Dight and Purdue, 2002; MacArthur, Purdue and Ballard, 2003; Purdue, 2004; Purdue, Ballard and MacArthur, 2001, for some New Zealand accounts; and Slee, 2005, for references to other international accounts).

These concerns are not limited to segregated settings, and the research also describes disabled students in regular schools and classrooms who experience real challenges as they negotiate a difficult school day (Ballard, 1994, 1999; Kaverman, 1998; MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007; MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007, for some New Zealand examples). It is these concerns that have led to questions about the rights of disabled children and young people to a decent education in their local school, and to the development internationally of ‘inclusive education’.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, IHC supports many families who want their disabled sons and daughters to be included and taught in their local school. Too many of these families have experienced discrimination – their children have been denied access to a good quality education. Inclusive education is central to IHC’s philosophy, emphasising as it does the rights of all disabled people to live and fully participate in the community across their lifespan.

Education shapes and defines our communities and is the key to an ordinary and satisfying life for disabled people. Inclusive schools contribute to inclusive communities. In inclusive communities, the barriers to community participation experienced by disabled people and their families are reduced because such communities expect, understand and respond to diversity in positive and supportive ways.

Questions about how to address the limitations of 'special education' and promote change in schools to include and support the education of all students were addressed at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994. This was attended by 94 governments, non-governmental organisations and UN agencies (UNESCO Institute for Education, 1994). The Salamanca Statement that emerged from this meeting promoted inclusive education as a necessary part of achieving an inclusive society. It described inclusive schools as a vital ingredient to combat discrimination and build inclusive societies where there is 'education for all' (p.iv). The agreement provided an important starting point for the next 10 years of efforts by many countries to move educational policy and practice in a more inclusive direction (Ainscow, 2008).

However, inclusive education is not always well understood and there are many different viewpoints about what it is and what it looks like in practice. Partly this confusion comes from the fact that inclusion can be defined in a number of ways, depending on the nature of the school and community in which it is being developed (Ainscow, 2008).

But confusion also arises because ideas about inclusion are not always informed by education research. For example, inclusion has been inappropriately described as the placement of students with disabilities into regular schools without any requirement for change in schools or education systems. It has even been associated with the education of disabled children in separate places using 'special education' approaches to teaching (Connor and Ferri, 2007; Slee, 2001, 2005). These inaccurate viewpoints make it difficult for interested groups to communicate clearly, and for those wanting an inclusive education system to advocate for change (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006; Higgins, MacArthur and Morton, 2008; Higgins, MacArthur and Rietveld, 2006).

## The aim of this book

This book aims to provide readers with clarity by presenting a current perspective on inclusion as it is described in the research literature in education. The meaning and features of inclusion are explored as they relate to policy, school culture and school change, and teaching practice in classrooms.

To understand the development of inclusive thinking in education, it is also important to understand segregation and exclusion in education. This book also considers the impact of segregated schooling versus inclusive approaches on disabled students' learning and social experiences.

Disabled children and young people can also be excluded in regular schools, when, for example, they are ignored by their teachers and by peers; when the effects of their impairments are not understood; when they are bullied; or when there are insufficient resources and supports for their teachers to teach them well. Some of the recent research on disabled students' school experiences is also reviewed, to show how student knowledge and ideas may support schools to change so they are understanding of, and responsive to, diversity.

## Language

The term 'student' is used in this book to refer to children and young people participating in the school system. Consistent with the stated preference of the international disabled persons' movement, and the social model of disability, the term 'disabled student' is used, rather than 'students with disabilities'. In placing the word disabled first, the term disabled person or disabled student emphasises the point that people with impairments are disabled – and discriminated against when they live in an unresponsive society where they are treated unequally, or when they are taught in schools that do not acknowledge and respond to diversity in its student group.

The terms 'special' and 'regular' education are used to refer to two different types of education settings for disabled students. 'Special education' usually refers to separate places for disabled students to learn and includes special schools, units and classes. The term special education also refers to a particular way of thinking about disabled students that suggests that they are 'different' and in need of specialist approaches at school. These approaches (such as high levels of 1:1 teacher aide support, and frequent withdrawal for specialist teaching approaches and therapies) separate out disabled students from their peers, and can be found in any New Zealand school. The term 'regular education' refers to ordinary schools and



classrooms attended by most children. These are the schools and classrooms that need to become inclusive settings.

## Research

This is a research-based book. Inclusive education is explored through an appreciation of research in the fields of education and disability. The research that supports a particular finding, statement, conclusion or argument is included in brackets in the text, and references to this work are listed at the end. This is a small book that covers a range of topics. Interested readers who want to explore any ideas and issues in depth are referred to the reference list and bibliography.





# 2

## Medical and social models of disability

How we think about disability is very important in any discussion about the inclusion of disabled people in the community and in regular schools (Ash, Bellew, Davies, Newman and Richardson, 2005). It's therefore useful to look at two models that are often used to show how thinking about disability has been shaped – the 'medical model' and the 'social model' of disability (Reiser and Mason, 1992).

### The medical model

The medical model of disability associates disability with damage and disease. People who think in terms of the medical model see disability as a problem in the disabled person that comes from their impairment (that is, their difficulty in seeing or hearing well, being unable to move easily, or needing more time to learn and understand). In the medical-model approach to disability, disabled people are thought of as 'deviant' because they are considered to be different (in negative ways) from what the rest of society considers 'normal'.

In a society where medical-model thinking is common, the aim is to eliminate or reduce these differences through remedial treatments. So, disabled people are 'objects' to be 'treated' and changed in accord with the standards commonly accepted by society. Failure to change becomes primarily the problem of disabled people themselves (Ash et al, 2005, p236).

People working in the education system who use medical-model thinking view the challenges faced by disabled students as coming from their impairments (often described as their 'deficits' or 'problems'), rather than from inadequacies in the classroom or school. The purpose of education for disabled students is therefore considered to be remediation – 'fixing' or changing students to make them 'more normal'.

This kind of thinking has meant that all over the world disabled children and young people have been categorised and labelled according to the type or 'severity' of their disability, and separated out from nondisabled students so they can have 'specialised' teaching.

This approach has removed disabled children from regular education in neighbourhood schools, and has meant that these regular schools have not been required to change in order to meet the needs of all the children and young people in their local community. The medical model says that the child is impaired. The education system has created special education for these impaired children.

The growth of special education and of special education language and practices that separate out disabled students comes mainly from a deep-seated, medical-model way of thinking (McDonnell, 2002). New Zealand researcher Keith Ballard (2004a) has talked about the power of such language to exclude disabled children. Words that have become familiar in relation to disabled students are those such as 'special education', 'special needs', 'problem', 'difficulty', 'intervention', 'therapy', 'disorder', 'diagnosis', 'placement' (as Slee, 2005, points out, nondisabled students are enrolled in schools, but disabled students are 'placed'). With these come a string of impairment-related labels often used to define disabled children (as in 'He is autistic').

These words carry a message that students are different, unable and in need of specialist care. In education, they are words that can determine who is 'in' and who is 'out' (Slee, 2001).

Such language can be powerful in labelling and stigmatising disabled people as not human, as 'not like me', and therefore eligible to be excluded (Ballard, 2004b). It is not surprising, then, that some teachers have low expectations for disabled students' learning, and may consider themselves unable or untrained to teach disabled students in their classrooms. Because such language carries a message that exclusion in education is appropriate for disabled students, Ballard (2004a) argues that it must be resisted and rejected. Instead, language used in education to describe students and their learning should recognise that disabled students are active and competent children and young people with the same rights as others.

Deficit-focused ideas about any students are very powerful, and can strongly influence what teachers and other staff do at every level in any school (Ainscow et al, 2006; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, and Teddy, 2007).

Ainscow and his colleagues (2006) point out that the way in which teaching methods are designed, selected and used in classrooms comes from the way teachers and others view the children and young people they work with. If teachers believe that disabled students are in need of fixing, or are 'deficient' in some way, they will not be effective teachers.

Work towards inclusive education therefore requires a complete shift away from ideas about 'special education'. As long as 'special' education is seen as the way to teach disabled children and young people, attention is taken away from the more important question that many of their parents, caregivers and whanau in New Zealand are asking: Why do regular schools so often fail to teach disabled students successfully? (Ainscow, 2008; Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006; Ballard, 2004a; Slee, 2001, 2005.)

## The social model

The social model of disability offers an alternative to medical-model thinking and practice. The social model of disability is now widely used internationally, and emphasises the idea that 'disability' is constructed by a society that is overly concerned with 'normality'.

From a social model point of view, the experience of disability does not come from impairment, that is, from bodily experiences, such as difficulty moving one's body, or experiencing challenges with vision or hearing. Instead, the experience of disability comes from living in a society that views some people as abnormal and then fails to respond to or support them.

Disabled people who live in a society that views them in this way face a number of barriers to their full participation in the community, because they are considered different and unable to fit in with the rest of 'us'. Because society is not prepared to change, disabled people are oppressed and discriminated against.

The social model suggests that it is not disabled people who should have to change to fit society's ideas about 'normality', rather it is society that needs to change, to get rid of ideas about normal and abnormal, and to be more respectful towards and inclusive of diversity (Ash et al, 2005).

In education, the social model supports the development of inclusive education by turning attention to the ways in which regular schools can support disabled students to learn and have positive social relationships. Researchers who support a social model of disability '...argue that inclusive education encourages personal and social relationships and attitudes based on a view that disability is part of, not outside, the ordinary range of human diversity' (Ash et al, 2005, p236). This idea has helped researchers to appreciate that an important foundation for inclusion is the commitment to a set of inclusive values (such as equity, participation and respect for diversity) in schools and communities (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006).

The social model also helps us to appreciate that students in regular schools who have impairments will experience disability when they are excluded from the peer group, bullied by peers, ignored in the classroom, or do not have access to the human and material resources needed to support their participation and learning. Teachers who take a medical-model approach will attribute students' learning challenges or their failure to make friends at school to their impairment, and few, if any, attempts will be made to change the school, classroom or teaching approaches.

While teachers may need to consider the effects of a student's impairment on their learning and social experiences, the social model draws attention to the need to identify barriers to learning and participation at school, such as bullying or being ignored or a lack of resources, and to consider how these barriers can be reduced or eliminated. These key ideas about inclusive values and barriers to learning and participation are central in thinking about inclusive education and are explored more fully in the following chapter.



# 3

## What inclusion means

Inclusion is not something that can be easily defined. In fact, researchers working with schools to support the development of inclusive approaches to teaching and learning, say that it is neither possible nor desirable to try to come up with a fixed definition, because inclusion means different things to different groups in different contexts. However, it is still possible to explain in broad terms what inclusion is about.

British researchers, Mel Ainscow, Tony Booth and Alan Dyson (2006) have worked with 25 primary and secondary schools in the United Kingdom, as part of their research on improving schools and developing inclusion. Readers interested in a more detailed understanding of how cultures, policies and practices are developed in schools working towards inclusion are referred to their excellent book, or to a summary of the authors' research findings ([www.tlrp.org](http://www.tlrp.org)). Their work is central to this section because it allows us to think about the meaning of inclusion through the day-to-day experiences of teachers and other staff in schools.

Ainscow et al (2006) describe the inclusive school as one that has not reached a perfect state, but rather is on the move. Inclusion is thought of as a process of improving schools. Those involved in education strive to overcome barriers to learning and participation at all levels of the education system – educational policy, school organisation and structure, and teaching ideas and practices. School systems that are working towards inclusion therefore focus on change in order to improve all students' education experiences (Booth, 2002; Education Queensland, 2001). Inclusion is a deliberate approach in education that involves particular values, and applies to all learners, to all barriers and to all forms of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement (Ainscow et al, 2006).

### Presence, participation and achievement

Inclusion requires that all students are accepted and take a full and active part in school life as valued members of ordinary classrooms in regular schools (Ballard, 2004a; Sree 2001).

This idea has led to an emphasis on students' presence, participation and achievement in education.

Schools operate in different contexts and face different issues that are of particular significance in different places and at different times. Because of this, schools will work towards inclusion in different ways, but what is common is that teachers and other staff work together towards a common goal.

#### Presence

Presence refers to the place of children and young people in their local regular school. Being present in ordinary classrooms alongside peers in a regular school is a critical feature of inclusion. Students can only develop a sense of belonging in their local community and learn to be part of that community by being present in their local community and school.

#### Participation

Participation refers to the extent to which students actually take part and benefit from their involvement in the life of the school through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Ainscow (2008) describes one school that collected evidence of student participation by interviewing students themselves about their involvement in the school. The school used the student experiences and ideas as the stimulus for staff development focused on improving student participation.

Ideas about students' participation at school can also be linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989). Children's participation rights are based on recognition of children as full human beings with rights, dignity and identities that should be respected.

Most importantly, children have the right to be consulted and taken account of, to physical integrity, to access to information, to freedom of speech and opinion, and to participate in and challenge decisions made on their behalf (Smith, 1997). Teachers might consider the extent to which these rights are respected.

Do all children in their school have opportunities to use these rights to exercise power and decision-making responsibilities?

In the case of disabled students, teachers may want to consider whether teachers' values lead them to respect or ignore their students' views in the teaching process. For example, from talking with some New Zealand students, MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney (2007) found that disabled children's rights to fully participate at school could be at risk. Because the students were seen as both children and disabled, they were unlikely to be seen as competent to contribute to decision-making processes that affected them.

In New Zealand and elsewhere, inclusion has often been seen as concerned only with the education of disabled students. However, Ainscow et al (2006), among others, suggest that this is not a helpful way to think about inclusion as it limits those who need attention. New Zealand researcher Keith Ballard (2009) says that a focus on disability is important because disabled children so often experience exclusion and low expectations. Nonetheless, the idea of inclusion would make no sense if only one group of students were attended to. Inclusion, therefore, must attend to any barrier to participation and as a matter of social justice must challenge barriers experienced by any child in any school.

## Achievement

Schools have an important role to play in recognising and compensating for unequal situations and inequality of opportunity for any of their students, particularly where they are vulnerable to being devalued and excluded (Slee, 2005). This could include students who are from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds; students with disabilities; students who move schools often or do not attend school regularly; students who live in poverty; and students who are gay or lesbian. Ainscow et al (2006) emphasise that inclusion and exclusion are linked, and that developments towards inclusion must also involve the active combating of exclusion for these students.

A focus on achievement for all students means that schools are alert to the experiences of all their students, and are responsive when inequality of resources or experience is an issue of concern. For disabled students, teachers may, for example, need to learn about disability issues and seek input from disability advocates on human rights and social justice.

Schools may also need to ensure that the assessment tools they use to evaluate their students' progress are relevant and responsive to the students themselves, and acknowledge learning in positive ways (Higgins, 2005). At the time of writing this book, the New Zealand Ministry of Education was developing a set of curriculum exemplars for some disabled students that are credit based (that is, students are viewed as capable, and assessment focuses on positive changes in students). The assessment process involves teachers using a descriptive narrative approach that encourages them to be sensitive to their students' progress in relation to both achievement objectives and key competencies.

## A commitment to key values

Researchers interested in inclusion have consistently emphasised that inclusion is strongly based on a commitment to key values and principles that apply to all students – and to all the policies, plans and approaches used to teach (Ainscow, et al, Ballard, 2004a; Booth, Nes and Stromstadt, 2003). The main focus needs to be on values, rather than on trying to identify particular 'inclusive' teaching practices. This is because values shape what teachers think and do: the way they view their students; their community; their school and its purpose; their work in the classroom; and the overall aims of education within the community and society as a whole.

The development of inclusion involves making these values explicit, understanding what they mean, and learning how to relate what is done in education to them. Through this process, schools and wider school systems develop the policies, practices, systems and structures that bring these values to life and give them meaning.

On the basis of their work with schools in the United Kingdom, Ainscow and colleagues (2006) describe a set of values that are the basis for action and future directions when schools are working towards inclusion. However, they emphasise that this is not a static list.

These values are constantly being questioned, discussed and developed, and their exact meaning and what they look like in practice is open to negotiation within and between schools.



Some of these values, such as sustainability and the valuing of international communities, have obvious global significance. They encourage schools to think about how they too contribute to the creation and maintenance of healthy communities, both locally and beyond the boundaries of their own country. Their developing list includes the following:

- Equity – understanding what ‘equality of opportunity’ and ‘inequality’ means.
- Participation – being with and collaborating with others; active engagement and involvement in making decisions; recognising and valuing a variety of identities so people are accepted for who they are.
- Community – the social role of education in creating and maintaining communities is valued; communities and educational institutions can mutually sustain each other; citizenship and global citizenship (which goes beyond the family and nation state); cultivating feelings of public service.
- Compassion
- Respect for diversity
- Sustainability – the fundamental aim of education is to prepare children and young people for sustainable ways of life within sustainable communities and environments. Inclusion should therefore be concerned with understanding global warming and responses to it.
- Entitlement – the recognition and conviction that children and young people have rights to a broad education, appropriate support and to attendance at their local school.

As described in Chapter 4, ‘Maori and inclusion, the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand’, and a recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi as a social justice concern, mean that cultural values that are particularly significant to Maori will also have a central place in our schools (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Phillips, 2005).

*The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p10) also identifies a set of key values that are to be encouraged, modelled and explored in schools. Schools are asked to encourage students

to have respect for oneself, others and human rights and to value:

- **excellence**, by aiming high and by persevering in the face of difficulties
- **innovation, inquiry and curiosity**, by thinking critically, creatively and reflectively
- **diversity**, as found in our different cultures, languages and heritages
- **equity**, through fairness and social justice
- **community and participation** for the common good
- **ecological sustainability**, which includes care for the environment
- **integrity**, which includes being honest, responsible and accountable, and acting ethically.

The curriculum notes that the ways in which these values are expressed in each school will be guided by dialogue between the school and its community, and that values will be evident in a school’s philosophy, structures, curriculum, classroom and relationships, and through everyday actions and interactions within a school.

Values can be expanded into clusters that encourage children to explore their wider meaning. For example, ‘community and participation for the common good’ is associated with values and notions such as peace, citizenship and manaakitanga (kindness, hospitality). Other values might also have a place, for example, teachers might want to consider the place in their school and local community of values such as freedom, achievement and spirituality (Ainscow et al, 2006).

## Identifying barriers to learning and participation

As described earlier, teachers who take a medical-model approach look for problems in their students (such as their impairment in the case of disabled students), and explain their students’ failure at school in terms of their perceived ‘problems’.

An alternative view of students who are marginalised from and within schools is to see them as *active and capable learners*. When students encounter difficulties with their learning, teachers who think in this way will look at the school and classroom environment, and consider the barriers to learning that students may be encountering. For example, teachers may consider whether students feel safe to put their hand up in class and participate in class discussions, or whether they fear being bullied because of the way they speak. They may consider whether a student can write quickly enough, or whether they need a laptop to do their class work. Or they may look at the structures and attitudes in the school that relate to disability, such as withdrawal for specialist support or therapy, and ask whether separating children encourages a view that they are problems to be fixed by experts, or whether the practices reinforce a child's belonging in the group of all children at school.

When inclusion involves identifying the barriers that students face to their learning and participation at school, resources are provided to schools so that teachers can support students. In this way, support is seen as any and all activities that increase the capacity of schools to respond to diversity in the student group (Ainscow et al, 2006).

In the above examples, a teacher may address the issue of a disabled student's reluctance to speak in class by seeking support from a colleague to work out how to create a social environment in the classroom in which diversity is expected and supported, and where bullying does not happen. Equally an up-to-date laptop may prove to be an efficient way to support a student to get through their work in class time, as well as being a 'cool' device that attracts the involvement of other students in class.

If the barriers come from structures that separate students or from negative attitudes about disability and diversity, the school may need to confront and explore these by asking disabled students for their views on the various support arrangements in the school. Responses to these questions could be used to consider more inclusive approaches that keep disabled students with their peers.

Identifying barriers in this way does not deny that a student's impairment can influence their learning. Teachers who are alert to barriers will also consider the impact of students' impairments,

for example, how a student with autism may feel in a busy and noisy classroom, or what can be done to ensure a student with mobility difficulties has sufficient time to move between classes.

## Involving the community

Strong links with the local community are a central concern of inclusive schools (Ainscow et al, 2006; Slee, 2005). Ainscow and colleagues remind us that schools and their local communities have a relationship where they support each other – schools provide educational opportunities, but so do communities, and schools can support communities in this role. The close relationship between a local school and its community means that the development of schools is also concerned with aspirations for the development of decent neighbourhoods for all. Inclusion is therefore concerned with 'good' local schools that encourage the participation of all within their communities (Ainscow et al, 2006).

Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand can develop a range of ways to involve parents, caregivers and other community members in the daily life of the school, and in so doing establish strong and collaborative relationships between families, school staff and others. School boards of trustees are required to undertake regular consultation with their school community about the values that are significant and important.

School communities, boards of trustees, and local community agencies and groups with an interest in education can also be part of schools' ongoing discussions as they begin working towards inclusion. Where schools are particularly concerned about improving their teaching in relation to disabled students, interested others could include disabled adults (Slee, 2005), young disabled school leavers, and parents and caregivers of disabled children.

## What inclusion is not

It is important to note that the term 'inclusion' can be hijacked and used in inappropriate and inaccurate ways (Slee and Allan, 2005).



This misuse has led to considerable confusion about what inclusion really is and, in some sectors, has resulted in inclusion being viewed as nothing more than a well-intentioned but pie-in-the-sky fad (Connor and Ferri, 2007). Our understandings about inclusion are improved through an exploration of what inclusion is not.

### **Inclusion is not the re-labelling of 'special education'**

Inclusion cannot occur in segregated settings, such as special schools, units and classes. Education researchers Roger Slee and Julie Alan (2005) note that inclusion has been misinterpreted to the point where claims have been made that inclusion occurs when a special school is relocated onto the grounds of a regular school so that students can share some activities. They note also that, in Australia, some faculties of education in universities have employed special educators to train new teachers to be 'inclusive'. Similarly, the *New Zealand Education Gazette*, which is read by a large number of teachers, has described as 'inclusive' a segregated special school located on the site of Templeton Hospital on the outskirts of Christchurch city (Feltham, 2004).

Ideas about making regular schools 'more special' to support inclusion go back a long way, and have influenced the development of special units attached to regular schools.

However, these views (that claim to be 'new concepts of inclusion') simply perpetuate the myth that segregated education in 'special' places such as special schools, units and classes are necessary for some students. This point has been widely criticised in the research literature.

Special education has been described, not just as a place, but as a deep-seated way of thinking about disabled students that leads to their exclusion from the fabric of everyday life, and a denial of their rights to a decent education in their local school (Adams, Swain and Clark, 2000; Ballard, 2004a; McDonnell, 2002; Slee, 2001).

As discussed later in this book, the research also shows that, despite the promise of more 'specialised' teaching approaches, segregated 'special education' approaches have actually disadvantaged disabled children, both academically and socially

(MacArthur, Kelly and Higgins, 2005). It is for all of these reasons that Roger Slee (2001), an international researcher, teacher educator and also past Deputy Director of Education Queensland, has argued that we need to leave behind all 'special education' thinking and practice wherever it occurs, and develop education in regular schools which carefully attends to the diverse needs of all students.

### **Inclusion is not the same as simply being in a regular school**

Inclusive education can only be developed in regular schools, but it is important to appreciate that inclusion does not occur simply because a disabled student attends their local school. Special education and medical-model thinking can be found in some regular schools, and students can face considerable barriers to their learning and participation (Ainscow et al, 2006; Kearney, 2009; MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007). Some examples of these barriers are provided in Chapter 9. Inclusion involves fundamental changes in regular education so that regular schools can teach all children well.

### **Inclusion is not 'ideology'**

Often those people who want an inclusive education system are criticised for being motivated by ideology rather than evidence. Yet this view is readily challenged because inclusive education is actually a complex, extensively researched, and legitimate approach to teaching and learning, school organisation, and policy development. Internationally, there are entire school districts that have rejected segregation, and deliberately and specifically identify themselves as inclusive (see, for example, Hill, 2002, in relation to New Brunswick, Canada; Carrington and Robinson, 2002; and Slee, 2005, in relation to Queensland, Australia).

The term ideological is sometimes used to deny the status and worth of another's position while elevating one's own position on segregation to a superior vantage point. Thomas and Loxley (2007) say that labelling arguments about inclusion as ideological is a way of discrediting others' viewpoints by implying that their position is somehow partisan ranting, politically contentious, sloppy or simply false. This approach to the idea of inclusive education is unhelpful.

It puts an end to open discussion about the rights of all children and young people to a quality education that enhances their present life in the community, and prepares them well for an adult life in the future. It also puts an end to important discussions about how regular schools can move, change and develop in positive ways to improve all students' learning and participation.



# 4

## Maori and inclusion in Aotearoa New Zealand

In New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi, as the founding document of New Zealand, needs to be taken into account. The Treaty is concerned with matters of social justice through the concepts of partnership, participation and equality (Bishop and Glynn, 1999). *The New Zealand Curriculum* recognises the Treaty of Waitangi as a key principle in the foundations of curriculum decision-making.

The curriculum:

... acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Maori me ona tikanga (Maori language, customs and practices).

Nonetheless, Maori students are much more likely to experience exclusion at school than their non-Maori peers (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006). Researchers have noted that Maori children have been over represented in 'special' education, excluding them from learning opportunities in their local schools and communities (Bevan-Brown, 2003; McFarlane, 2005; Phillips, 2005). One possible explanation for such exclusion is that some schools and teachers have failed to affirm Maori students' cultural identity in their teaching (Bevan-Brown, 2006; McFarlane, 2005). Researchers have also described how teachers and other school staff can interpret Maori students' school experiences as 'deficits', and have low expectations for their learning that result in a self-fulfilling prophecy of student failure (Bevan-Brown, 2006; Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai and Richardson, 2003; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Teddy, 2007).

Bevan-Brown (2006) argues that Maori students who have disabilities may be further disadvantaged when financial constraints lead schools to reject support from Maori services, and by a competitive environment in schools that conflicts with Maori values and beliefs. Furthermore, reviews by Massey University of the Special Education 2000 policy revealed that teachers working with Maori students who had disabilities did not generally consider Maori culture to be relevant to their teaching (Massey University, 2001).

The work reviewed here is only a very small part of the research available in this area. However, it highlights the need for education professionals to change the way they work to be responsive to

Maori understandings of disability and education within a wider context of colonisation (Bevan-Brown, 2003, 2007; Bishop and Glynn, 1999; McFarlane, 2005; Phillips, 2005). A study of five 'sites of practice' in which Maori students with particular learning and behavioural needs were supported by a collaborative team approach that included their whanau, Maori and Pakeha SES staff (Specialist Education Services, now known as GSE, Group Special Education) and other education professionals, illustrates how commonly held values can be the foundation for successful education practice (Berryman, Glynn, Walker, Rewiti, O'Brien, Boasa-Dean, Glynn, Langdon and Weiss, 2002). Across the five sites some common general features of successful practice were found. These included:

- the achievement of effective and balanced working partnerships between parents/whanau and educational professionals, in which each party acknowledges and supports the expertise of the other
- the negotiation of collaborative and culturally competent approaches to understanding and resolving problems
- the demonstration of willingness by professionals and parents to listen to new ideas, and to work beyond their experience and/or cultural comfort zone.

But, in addition to these features, the authors identified a set of 12 Maori cultural values and characteristics that were strongly evident – nga turanga takitahi me nga mana whakahaere, kanohi ki te kanohi, wairuatanga, whanaungatanga, kotahitanga, manaakitanga, mahi tahi, mana tangata, ako, wananga, aroha ki te tangata and mana motuhake (Berryman, M., Glynn, T., Walker, R., Rewiti, M., O'Brien, K., Boasa-Dean, T., Glynn, V., Langdon, Y. and Weiss, S., 2002. SES sites for effective special education practice for Maori, 2001. Wellington: Draft report to the SES Board and Executive Team)<sup>1</sup>.

It was the weaving together of these important cultural values and practices that formed the basis of effective partnerships, and it was the sincerity and commitment by Pakeha to understand these values that made for effective collaborative work with Maori.

<sup>1</sup> For translations, see Appendix B, page 64

Recent work by Russell Bishop and colleagues at Waikato University also illustrates the meaning of inclusion as it applies to schools for all children (Bishop et al, 2003; Bishop et al, 2007). The Te Kotahitanga Project investigated the experiences of Year 9 and 10 Maori students in regular school classrooms. Teachers' deficit-oriented views of Maori children in their classes had created a downward spiralling, self-fulfilling prophecy of Maori student under-achievement and failure. A professional development approach was implemented that focused on culturally responsive teaching relations in the classroom, based on Maori children's perspectives of their educational experiences.

The self-determination of Maori students was placed at the centre of classroom relationships and interactions, thereby changing teachers' relations and interactions with their students. The research team showed that when classroom relationships and interactions were attended to, the learning, behaviour and attendance of Maori students improved along with improvements in the schools' relationships with parents, whanau and community. Teachers involved in the project also noted that while the project focused on Maori students, the teaching practices explored in the research project improved the teaching and learning experience in general for all students.



# 5

## Education policy and inclusive education

*It will be helpful to those at the local level who are encouraging schools to collaborate, if national policy initiatives continue to emphasise the principle of collaboration as being a fundamental element of efforts to develop an inclusive education system.* – Ainscow et al, 2006, p185

School districts around the world that have moved towards inclusion have generally done so on the basis of a policy commitment. Policy drives and supports the necessary changes to teacher education and professional development, resources and supports for schools, school culture and teaching practice. In New Brunswick, Canada, for example, a shift to inclusive education came from a change of government policy that saw the closure of institutions for people with intellectual disabilities and a move to community-based services. Segregated education settings also closed and new models of support were set up in regular schools so that all children could be taught in ordinary classrooms (Porter and Richler, 1991; Hill, 2002).

Similarly, Queensland, Australia, embarked on a collaborative journey to ensure that a quality education was available to all students, beginning with a community discussion document about the entire education system entitled *The next decade: A discussion about the future of Queensland State Schools* (Education Queensland, 1999). School reform proceeded with wide community consultation and through a long-term research study that looked for productive and inclusive approaches to assessment, teaching and learning, and leadership (Education Queensland 2001; Hulme, 2002). A Staff College for Inclusive Education was established to highlight local inclusive activity and support different ways of thinking about inclusion. The college drew support from international researchers working in the area of inclusion, as opposed to 'traditional special education gurus' (Slee, 2005, p154). The establishment of a Taskforce on Students with Disabilities was established to advise the Minister for Education:

The taskforce was a way of bringing a range of constituents to the table in order to host a discussion that had previously been conducted from behind barricades. Relations between government, teacher unions, parents and disability advocacy groups were dysfunctional. This taskforce enabled a range of views to be put and received in a climate of growing understanding and respect. Moreover, the voices of those

who hitherto were not invited to the table, particularly parents and disabled people, was legitimized' (Slee, 2005, p155).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, no nationwide steps have been taken to specifically develop an inclusive education system. Instead, educational support for disabled students is provided under the policy framework of Special Education 2000. The policy was launched in 1996 with the promise that New Zealand would have a world-class inclusive education system for disabled children and young people (Ministry of Education, 1996), and there have been several references to inclusive education in Ministry of Education documents since that time (Higgins, MacArthur and Morton, 2007). In 2005, for example, the ministry described inclusion as supporting all children in their local school and reducing barriers to learning and participation:

Inclusion in education is valuing all students and staff. It involves supporting all children and young people to participate in the cultures, curricula and communities of their local school. Barriers to learning and participation for all children, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, disability or any other factor are actively reduced, so that children feel a sense of belonging and community in their educational context (Ministry of Education, 2005).

Following on from this, one of the ministry's three focused paths in its *Statement of Intent 2007–2012* was to lead and support change so that 'the education system values, respects and is successful for all children and young people, in particular Maori, Pasifika, and students with special education needs' (Ministry of Education, 2007b, p30).

In its New Zealand Disability Strategy Implementation Work Plan, 1 July 2003–30 June 2004, the ministry included under the plan's 'Inclusive Service Provision', a promise to identify barriers to participation in learning and implement support; and to develop a plan for training boards of trustees, to raise their awareness of obligations under the New Zealand Disability Strategy. Desired outcomes in the work plan included a statement that 'Children and young people with special education needs participate in appropriate and inclusive education settings that meet individual educational needs' (Ministry of Education, 2003, p7).

These and other references to inclusive education show that the ministry has, at times, had some interest in the area. However, at the time of writing this book, there seems to have been a retreat from thinking about inclusion, as there is no longer any specific reference to inclusive education as an area of focus on the ministry's website (Higgins et al, 2007). The commitment to inclusion in the *Statement of Intent 2007–2012* has been dropped from the ministry's latest Statement of Intent in 2008, and the promise of an inclusive education system has yet to be fulfilled. The ministry's 'special' education policy now aims to:

...improve learning outcomes for all children and young people with special educational needs at their local school, early childhood centre, or wherever they are educated (Ministry of Education, 2008, italics added).

The policy therefore continues to be based on ideas about 'special education', and views a range of options, including segregated special schools, units and classes, to be appropriate. Furthermore, under the Ministry of Education's Special Education Guidelines (2007c), this range of options is supposed to be thoroughly discussed with parents of disabled children when decisions are being made about their school placement. However, the research suggests that parents are more likely to make decisions about where their sons and daughters with disabilities are taught with little support, and/or with confusing guidance from the Ministry of Education (Higgins, MacArthur and Rietveld, 2006; Massey University, 2001).

The lack of a clear commitment to inclusion by the Ministry of Education is disappointing because research that looked at the implementation of the ministry's Special Education 2000 policy shows that disabled students may not be receiving a fair and equitable education. For example, schools have been described as generally under-resourced to support students with moderate needs, and as struggling to meet the needs of students who were on the margins of the verification process. The Special Education Grant was also considered to be inadequate, particularly in 'magnet' schools that were welcoming to disabled students (Bourke and O'Neil, 2001; Wylie, 2000).

Schools described how they could not always see the differences between students who were verified as having moderate and high needs, and those who were not, and felt that there was a lack of support for children who missed out on being verified, and for their teachers (McAlpine, 1999). Where schools were able to access support from Group Special Education, the support was valued. However, accessing such professional support was generally found to be difficult, and parents and caregivers described having adversarial relationships with professionals because of their need to push for support (Brown, 1999a; Massey University College of Education, 2002).

Equally, schools and parents have described problems getting access to the therapies, with little time available for consultation that would help teachers to develop their teaching (Clark, MacArthur, McDonald, Simmons-Carlsson and Caswell, 2007). Wylie (2000) identified a need for professional development for teachers that responds to schools' particular needs, a finding that has been repeated in more recent research in schools (MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007). Wylie also described a general lack of teacher preparation to work in classrooms that include a diverse group of students, and recommended that all teacher training institutions be required to incorporate inclusive education papers within their core training programme.

Further evidence that disabled and other students' rights to a quality education may be at risk comes from the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2004). The commission notes the presence of discrimination, bullying and harassment in New Zealand schools, particularly over race, disability, sexual orientation and gender, and describes overall disparate standards of education, particularly for disabled children and those from isolated schools or poor communities.

New Zealand researchers have argued that supportive national policies based on a commitment to inclusive education can provide teachers and schools with the leadership, guidance, supports, resources and professional development needed to work towards inclusion in their own schools (Higgins, MacArthur and Rietveld, 2006; Higgins, MacArthur and Morton, 2007; Kearney, 2009; Kearney and Kane, 2006).



Equally, unsupportive policies can restrict or even undermine schools in their attempts to improve. In their work with schools in the United Kingdom, for example, Ainscow and colleagues (2006) found that government policies, such as imposed national literacy and numeracy standards, requirements that schools meet specific achievement targets, combined with a competitive environment with narrow criteria for determining student success, placed barriers in the way of schools working towards inclusion. When achievement at school is measured only in terms of success against national standards, some disabled students (and other marginalised students) face insurmountable barriers, and the provision of extra support and resources simply leads to the reinforcement of their failure (Lloyd, 2008).

Teachers can also be stretched in an environment that demands school accountability and transparency through the collection of large amounts of statistical information on children's progress. While such information can be the lifeblood of continuous improvement, care is needed to ensure that the evidence collected is valuable and useful in the process of positive school change, or, as Ainscow (2008) puts it, 'we must learn to measure what we value, rather than, what is often the case, valuing what we can measure' (p253).

As an example, he describes a school district in England that has developed its own Inclusion Standard. The standard is an instrument for evaluating the progress of schools towards inclusion, and its main source of evidence is students' views on their school experience. Rather than requiring a review of the quality of leadership in the school, it focuses on the presence, participation, and achievements of all students, because this is what good school leadership aims for. Rather than asking whether students who are at risk of marginalisation have opportunities to participate, schools look at whether or not students actually take part and benefit from their involvement. Schools ask the students themselves to comment on their school experience and these comments become the stimulus for school and staff development. This school district intends to have all of its schools involved in the use of the Inclusion Standard, and is looking at ways to develop local policy that supports schools in the district to work together to develop more inclusive school practices.

The continued acceptance of a special education policy, and a range of options that includes segregation, shows that existing policy in Aotearoa New Zealand is at odds with international thinking about inclusion, which advocates special education being dismantled to make way for inclusive education systems that enrich learning for all children (Munoz, 2007). Ainscow (2008) argues, then, that while schools can work away on their own inclusive processes, these processes are much more likely to be effective when they are part of a wider strategy at government level.

Ainscow and colleagues' work in 2006 also shows that schools working towards inclusion benefit from working collaboratively with other schools. This arrangement allows teachers and other staff to discuss issues related to teaching and learning; to share ideas; observe other teachers in their classrooms and learn from each other. Yet for these schools, this approach did not necessarily fit with a wider government agenda that encouraged competition between schools. The authors of this project concluded that supportive government policy is an important ingredient in the mix when schools are developing inclusive approaches:

It will be helpful to those at the local level who are encouraging schools to collaborate, if national policy initiatives continue to emphasise the principle of collaboration as being a fundamental element of efforts to develop an inclusive education system (p185).





# 6

## School culture and the Index for Inclusion

*Becoming more inclusive is a matter of thinking and talking; reviewing and refining practice; and making attempts to develop a more inclusive culture.* – Ainscow et al, 2006, p139

### Developing an inclusive school culture

The research on school change indicates that progress towards inclusion is strongly influenced by cultural factors in schools (Ainscow, 2008; Ainscow et al, 2006; Zollers, Ramanthan and Yu, 1999). School cultures involve the assumptions and beliefs that are shared by staff to define how they view themselves and their school (Ainscow, 2008). The shared values teachers hold in a school about diversity and disability, and the extent to which they are prepared as a staff to teach all students, will determine the extent to which all students can participate and learn.

In the case of disabled students, Ballard (2004a) suggests that some schools do not view 'difference' as part of 'the ordinary' and this idea is used to exclude disabled students from learning opportunities. In schools where there is a culture of 'difference as not normal', disabled students are seen as needing 'special' treatment in 'special' places. Through this process of making some students 'not like us', schools themselves actually define who belongs and who does not. Often these values reflect those of the wider society in which schools are operating. Alison Kearney's (2009) research provides vivid examples of such exclusion in New Zealand schools, with teachers using ideas about 'difference' to class disabled students as less deserving (than their non-disabled peers) of quality teaching and learning experiences.

In their study of British disabled students' experiences, Davis and Watson (2001) have described similar processes at work. Some teachers did not value diversity, and viewed their students in terms of what they were unable to do.

The attempts by teachers to 'correct' their students' 'problems' were so aversive to some students that the students themselves worked hard to hide their disability in order to appear 'normal'. These examples show how schools can blame students for failing to fit

with their existing culture and systems, while not being required to change in any way to respond to the diverse needs and experiences of their students

Ainscow (2008) suggests a different way of thinking, by arguing that the presence of students who do not fit with a school's current approach to learning can provide an incentive for schools to explore a new collaborative culture where teachers share ideas and support each other in their teaching. Such collaborative processes provide teachers with opportunities to explore their values and beliefs, and the connections between these values and the curricular and extra-curricular activities of the school and wider community. It is this process that contributes to a growing commitment by schools to inclusion.

Several studies have described schools that have developed inclusive school cultures that foster respect by teachers towards student diversity, and that have dismantled separate special education structures. These schools reorganised to keep students together, and channelled their energies into support so that ordinary classroom teachers could learn about student diversity. For example, additional support was provided in the ordinary classroom, rather than through the withdrawal of students from class. School leaders were committed to inclusive values and to a democratic management style that encouraged several staff to take on leadership positions (Carrington and Elkins, 2002; Dyson and Milward, 2000; Walther-Thomas and DiPaola, 2003; Zollers et al, 1999). Strong links with families and the wider community of which the school was a part were also evident, with a focus on shared values (Dyson and Milward, 2000; Zollers et al, 1999).

### The Index for Inclusion

The Index for Inclusion is a practical resource that guides schools through a process of inclusive school development. The Index is based on the key idea that schools can change by developing cultures in which all students are respected, and participate, learn and achieve (Booth, 2002). Details about the Index are available from The Centre for Inclusive Education ([www.csie.org.uk](http://www.csie.org.uk)). The Index has also been adapted for use in early childhood education.

Developed by British researchers Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow (2002), and published by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, the Index is a set of materials designed to build on the knowledge and experience that teachers and other staff already have in their schools, and to challenge all schools to move forward from their current position. Consistent with the social model of disability, the Index does away with the idea that it is a student's 'special needs' that lead to educational difficulty, and instead uses the idea that some children can experience barriers to their learning and participation at school. Schools are supported to recognise and reduce barriers to learning by gathering information about their own school cultures, policies and practices (including the values that underpin all of these). Everything that makes up school life is scrutinised in this process, with schools bringing together the views of students, parents/caregivers, staff, governors (boards of trustees in a New Zealand context) and others, in order to set new priorities for school development (Booth 2002).

Specifically, the Index has three dimensions. The first dimension is 'creating inclusive cultures' (p67). The other two dimensions are: 'producing inclusive policies' (p67) and 'evolving inclusive practices' (p67). These three dimensions evolve further into 24 indicators or aspirations, each with questions for clarification to which schools respond. Schools can add or change questions to suit their individual circumstances. They may also choose to focus only on certain indicators. Once a school decides to use the index, it works through four interacting phases.

These are:

1. Finding out about the school
2. Producing an inclusive school development plan
3. Implementing priorities
4. Reviewing the index process (p70).

The Index can be used by clusters of schools, or with the help of outside facilitators, and is flexible in that it can be used as part of school planning or, for example, to simply raise teachers' awareness about inclusion (Booth, 2002). It has been piloted in six British primary and secondary schools, and modified for an evaluation in an action

research project in 17 schools (Booth, 2002). This research found that the Index helped schools to identify issues that were otherwise overlooked, and supported them to develop inclusive practice.

The value of the Index is clear in its uptake internationally. The British Government has placed it in every school in England, and the Welsh Assembly has done the same in Wales. It has been translated into 21 languages and is used in 45 countries to date. Consistent with its vision to create inclusive schools throughout the whole state, Education Queensland in Australia has obtained the rights to use the Index in all of its schools (Robinson, 2003). A study by Carrington and Robinson (2002) documenting the use of the Index and its effect on a primary school in Queensland showed that teachers became more willing to think about and discuss their teaching practice with their colleagues, felt less isolated as teachers, and were able to share their success stories with each other. The researchers also noted that the school's collaborative professional development activities contributed to a growth in collegiality, respect and trust between teachers. The New Zealand Ministry of Education has also trialled the Index in six schools (Ministry of Education, 2003), although there is no further reference to this research on the ministry's website at the time of writing this book.



# 7

# Inclusive classroom practices

This chapter looks at what the research tells us about how teachers can develop more inclusive teaching and learning practices in their classrooms.

## Professional development

On the basis of work with British schools moving towards inclusion, Ainscow (2008) concluded that teachers are most likely to make positive developments in their own practice when they are able to look carefully at ways that teaching can be done differently, and at the difference between what they currently do and what they would like to achieve in their classroom. Having opportunities to share experiences with other teachers and to observe other teachers at work (in their own and in other schools) is an important part of this process.

Principals and other senior staff in schools have a key role to play in encouraging their colleagues to think about their teaching approaches, to learn from the surprises, and to develop a continuously inquiring approach to their classroom work that stimulates positive action. Learning from evidence is also considered to be important, for example, by reviewing video recordings of their classroom work and looking at evidence from interviews with students about the teaching and learning arrangements used at school.

## Communities of practice

The development of a 'community of practice' in schools, where teachers and others involved in education (including researchers) work together on a shared learning enterprise and common topic, has also been described as an effective way for teachers to learn in a collaborative group (Ainscow, 2008; Ainscow et al, 2006; Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop et al, 2007; Buysee, Sparkman and Wesley, 2003; MacArthur and Higgins, 2007; Slee, 2005).

In a New Zealand study, for example, education researchers MacArthur and Higgins (2007) participated in a community of

practice with teachers using an action research approach to explore school values and teaching approaches that support the learning and social experiences of children who move frequently between schools. Similarly, Higgins, Mitchell and Sanderson (2005) worked with teachers to develop a joint drama project (*Macbeth*) that brought together disabled students in a secondary school's learning support centre with their peers in the mainstream. The project helped to challenge and turn around students' and teachers' previously negative perceptions about disabled students in the school.

In another New Zealand study, teachers and researchers looked at the links between teachers' actions and their assumptions about their students, including who belongs in a regular school and who does not. The researchers (Alton-Lee, Rietveld, Klenner, Dalton, Diggins and Town, 2000) describe an approach to the inclusion of a disabled student at a primary school where teachers were supported to think about the 'personal tragedy' model of disability they were promoting through the social studies curriculum. As a result of this work with six-year-old students, a disabled student who had been isolated and taunted by his peers became an older peer coach and an authority on a number of topics. The study showed how, given the opportunity, teachers can explore their teaching practices and the reasons behind them in ways that allow them to move on and develop better ways of working in their classrooms. As a result of this project, a disabled student who had been excluded, became a member of a class community that was now working on ways to be inclusive of diversity.

## Quality teaching for diverse students

New Zealand researcher Adrienne Alton-Lee's (2003) best-evidence synthesis on Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling deserves particular mention here as it provides teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand with a resource and framework for understanding and developing teaching practices in their own schools that facilitate learning in heterogeneous groups of students. Alton-Lee describes 10 research-based characteristics of quality teaching, including the point that pedagogical practices in classrooms with diverse students

should enable classes and other learning groupings to work as caring, inclusive and cohesive learning communities.

Caring and supportive relationships are vital to disabled students' learning and well-being at school, and Alton-Lee's work emphasises that learning takes place within the social context of relationships with teachers and peers. Students' learning and social experiences are closely interrelated, and the work of teachers and schools must give full attention to both students' learning and their social experiences – in the classroom, in the wider school and beyond the school gates (MacArthur and Gaffney, 2001; MacArthur and Kelly, 2004).



# 8

## Human rights and social justice

Inclusive education can also be understood through an exploration of the reasons for its development in the first place. As discussed earlier, inclusion has developed partly out of a concern for 'special' education practices that have been deficit oriented, isolated students from their peers and communities, and failed to deliver the quality learning and social experiences that were promised from a specialist approach. However, arguments relating to human rights and social justice have also been very important in advancing an inclusive approach to education in our schools.

One of the foundation principles for inclusive education is that it is a fundamental human right to be a valued and included member of one's local community. Schools are places where children and young people spend much of their time, and schools need to reflect students' rights to a fully supported inclusive education that is concerned with access to all aspects of society, participation, citizenship, civil rights, social justice, empowerment and self-determination (Ballard, 2004a, 2007; Connor and Ferri, 2007; Gordon and Morton, 2008; Higgins, MacArthur and Kelly, in press). For disabled children and young people, this means enjoying the ordinary experiences of childhood and youth alongside their families, whanau and friends; and that their education enhances their transition into a full and satisfying adult life in the community.

Access to quality education is also a basic human right. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2004) describes education as 'critical to the development of human potential, to the enjoyment of the full range of human rights and to respect for the rights of others. Education also acts as a protector of children's rights. The right to education straddles civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights' (p68).

At an international level, a range of human rights covenants and conventions provide support for inclusive education.

In 2007, Verner Munoz, the United Nations Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, emphasised that inclusive education fitted with article 15, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; with articles 23 and 29 of the United Nations Convention on the

Rights of the Child (UNCRC); with the 1994 Salamanca Statement; and with the 2007 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Munoz argues that special education needs to be dismantled to make way for one inclusive education system, because special education paradigms reinforce prejudice and discrimination towards disabled people, while they 'push out (from the mainstream) students who do not measure up to performance goals' (p7).

The New Zealand Disability Strategy (Dalziel, 2001), the UNCRC, and the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006) all provide a useful rights-based context for thinking about how and why New Zealand schools can work towards inclusion. More than this, they provide a guidance imperative for education policymakers in Aotearoa New Zealand to adopt a much stronger position on children's rights. The disability strategy and the UNCRPD are both based on a social model of disability and focus on the elimination of barriers in society – including in education – to ensure that disabled children, young people and adults learn and live in a society that is inclusive.

### The New Zealand Disability Strategy: making a world of difference – whakanui oranga

The New Zealand Disability Strategy aims for an inclusive society by eliminating barriers to people with impairments participating in and contributing to society. The strategy states that New Zealand will be inclusive when we live in 'a society that highly values our lives and continually enhances our full participation' (Dalziel, 2001, p7). In the area of education, the strategy aims to 'ensure that no child is denied access to their local regular school because of their impairment' (Dalziel, 2001, p16).

It provides a framework to ensure that government departments and agencies involve and consider people with disabilities in all aspects of their work. Schools are part of this wider process under objectives 3, 4, 13, and their associated actions (Dalziel, 2001):

Objective 3: Provide the best education for disabled people.

Action 3.3: Ensure that teachers and other educators understand the learning needs of disabled people.

Action 3.6: Improve schools' responsiveness to and accountability for the needs of disabled students (p16).

Objective 4: Provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people.

Action 4.8: Encourage the development of a range of employment options recognising the diverse needs of disabled people (p17).

Objective 13: Enable disabled children and youth to lead full and active lives; affirm the right to a good future and to participate in education, relationships, leisure, work, and political processes; facilitate their active participation in the community (Dalziel, 2001, p13).

Action 13.1: Ensure all agencies that support children, youth and families work collaboratively to ensure that services are accessible, appropriate and welcoming to disabled children, youth and their families (p27).

The Ministry of Education is required to provide the Minister of Disability Issues with an annual work plan to establish progress towards meeting the objectives and actions of the Disability Strategy.

## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UNCRC is written for all children, and as such is entirely relevant to disabled children. New Zealand is a signatory to this important convention that establishes the rights of all children in New Zealand and elsewhere, although the convention is not often discussed in relation to the rights of children with disabilities in this country. It is critical that the convention becomes more visible as the articles highlight important ideas about children's rights

to non-discrimination, equal opportunity and full participation in community settings, including schools (Bray and Gates, 2000). The following articles are particularly relevant to the place and full participation of disabled children and young people in their local regular school:

- Article 2 emphasises the principle of *non-discrimination* and that all children should enjoy their rights. Children with disabilities should be given the same possibility to lead a good life as everyone else.
- Article 3 supports the *best interests of the child* as a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. This article means that the interests of parents or the state should not be the primary consideration. In education, this article is a reminder that educational decisions should be made with full consideration given to the child's rights to receive a high quality education.
- Article 12 concerns *respecting the views of the child*. This article refers to the right of children to be heard and to have their views taken seriously.
- Article 23 applies specifically to disabled children and states that disabled children shall enjoy 'a full and decent life in conditions which ensure *dignity*, promote *self-reliance*, and facilitate the child's *active participation* in the community'. This includes rights to access education. Article 23 also establishes the disabled child's *right to special care*, free of charge wherever possible, and raises questions about the *availability of resources to support full participation*.

New Zealand's track record in relation to the convention is not strong, with Action for Children and Youth in Aotearoa (ACYA, 2003) reporting on the lack of implementation of the convention with regard to the rights of disabled children and young people in New Zealand. ACYA related these shortcomings to the lack of responsibility between agencies, and to inadequate services and supports that mean parents are forced to struggle with systems (including education systems) and advocate for their children, rather than receiving supports as of right.



## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On 30 March 2007, New Zealand joined with 80 other States to sign the UNCRPD. The convention represents a worldwide commitment to improve the opportunities for disabled people to have an ordinary life on the same basis as other people. It sets out the rights of disabled people and a code of implementation for governments. The convention says that governments should ensure that disabled people have opportunities, choices and rights on the same basis as non-disabled people; should not experience any discrimination on the basis of their impairments; and should be able to enjoy the full range of human rights that other people enjoy.

Instead of disability being a health or social welfare matter, the convention promotes a view of disability as a human rights issue. It is based on the social model of disability and acknowledges that societal barriers and prejudices are themselves disabling, and that the participation of disabled people in society will be achieved by removing these barriers.

Specific reference is made to inclusive education as a goal in working towards inclusiveness in the community (one of the main themes in the convention). Rather than separating disabled people from the rest of the community, governments need to acknowledge that disabled people, like other people, usually flourish best within the community, rather than outside it, and have a contribution to make.

This focus on inclusiveness extends into education with the convention establishing the right of disabled people to education in article 24:

States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realising this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels...

In realising this right, States Parties shall ensure that:

- a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability
- b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live
- c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided
- d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education
- e) Effective individualised support measures are provided in environments that maximise academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

At the time of writing, New Zealand had yet to ratify the convention. States that do ratify need to ensure their current and future legislation and policies are consistent with its articles and treat disabled people on the same basis as other people. When the convention becomes international law, it can be referred to by courts in their decision-making.

A new disability committee has been created by the convention to monitor implementation by states. Each state that ratifies the convention will need to report to this committee regularly, in a similar way to their reports on other conventions.

## Social justice

Social justice in schools is concerned with fairness, and with valuing and supporting all children, irrespective of their individual

circumstances (Ainscow, 1999; Ballard, 2004a; Barton, 1997). A social justice position gives recognition to the fact that children enter school with unequal situations and inequality of opportunity, and that schools need to compensate for this. Social justice positions also emphasise recognition of and positive regard for diversity, and the importance of people being able to develop positive self and group identities (such as gay or lesbian, or disabled). In relation to disabled students in education, Higgins, MacArthur and Kelly (*in press*) suggest that ideas about social justice can be taken further in education, and argue that teachers can express a concern for social justice through their teaching by:

1. supporting disabled students to be active in the shaping of their own school experiences (student agency)
2. supporting disabled students to demonstrate their competence and ability
3. transforming and affirming ideas about diversity in the classroom so that disabled students develop a positive sense of themselves as disabled children and young people.

This last point is important because it emphasises that teachers can actively support disabled students by creating classroom environments where diversity is recognised and responded to in positive ways by students and teachers.



# 9

## Support for the development of inclusive schools

Support for inclusion comes from a wide range of education research that looks at the experiences of disabled students at school, and how they transition to adult life. Most of the research in this area has focused on the experiences of students in regular schools; some of the research is comparative (that is, it compares the learning and social experiences of students in regular versus segregated, special education settings), and some recent research has begun to look at disabled students' own views on their experiences of school. This last group of studies is particularly valuable because it highlights some of the challenges still facing disabled students as they negotiate their school day, and as such it provides teachers and schools with useful information with which to develop more inclusive practices.

It is important to note that there is an imbalance in the research literature, as most studies have been carried out in regular schools. Very few recent studies examine disabled students' experiences in special schools. This could be because researchers are mainly interested in the teaching approaches that support students' learning and social relationships in regular schools. But it is also possible that special education settings are simply (and uncritically) accepted as being effective, and that it is therefore up to regular education settings to 'prove' that in comparison they are just as good or better than segregated options. Keeping these points in mind, the research does reveal some highly consistent messages about disabled students learning and social experiences in regular and special education settings.

This chapter considers the research on disabled students' learning and social experiences in regular and special education settings. Some of the research summarised here comes from previous work completed for a literature review as part of the New Zealand Ministry of Education's research programme Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education for Students with Moderate and High Needs (MacArthur, Kelly, Higgins, Phillips, McDonald, Morton and Jackman, 2005). Additional research published since 2003 has been added to this work.

A similar analysis of the research on disabled students' school

experiences was undertaken in 2004 by Dr Sharon Rustemier for The Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE), in the United Kingdom. This work is summarised in the CSIE statement 'Reasons Against Segregated Schooling' (see Appendix A). CSIE also launched the Index for Inclusion. Rustemier found a growing body of research and personal testimonies from disabled people that supported the phasing out of segregation in education and the development of fully supported inclusive education. She noted the consistency of such a shift with key ideas about non-discrimination, equal opportunity and participation found in the UNCRC, and described such a move in education as a human rights imperative. Segregated schooling has never proved to be superior to mainstream education, and she found no compelling evidence that segregated 'special' education programmes have had significant benefits for students. Instead, segregation was found to be associated with negative student experiences, including reduced learning, impoverished social experiences and poor preparation for adult and community life.

### Comparisons of disabled students' learning in special and regular education settings

Some research compares the learning of disabled students in regular classrooms with students in special education settings (special education settings include approaches that withdraw disabled students from regular classrooms). This comparative research has looked at students' academic learning in mathematics, reading and other areas of the curriculum, and at student behaviour.

Disabled students have been found to do better academically and, in terms of their behaviour, in regular classrooms (Buckley, 2008; Buckley, Bird, Sachs and Archer, 2006; Giangreco, 1997; Ritter, 1999; Rea et al, 2002; Waldron and McLeskey, 1998; Turner, Alborz and Gayle, 2008). Rea and colleagues (2002) found that in regular classes instruction focused more on the regular education curriculum, whereas teachers using withdrawal approaches, whereby students are taken out of the classroom for specialist teaching, had a remedial focus.

Some research is of particular note. In a North American study of primary and secondary schools, Fisher and Meyer (2002) compared the development of two groups of students with intellectual disabilities (20 in regular education and 20 in special education settings) over two years. Their research showed that students with 'moderate and severe intellectual disabilities' in regular classrooms made greater gains in their social behaviour and in their overall development than students in special education settings. Fisher and Meyer point out that it is commonly assumed that students will achieve better results in special education settings because of the specialist approaches they offer, such as intensive teaching, higher ratios of adults to children, and specially trained staff. However, their research now challenges this idea, and indicates instead that the regular classroom is the preferred place for disabled students to learn.

A long-term study by a group of British researchers provides further evidence for improved learning by students with Down syndrome who attended regular classrooms (Buckley, 2008; Buckley, Bird, Sachs and Archer, 2006). Buckley and colleagues report on data collected from a study in 1999 looking at the academic and social lives of 46 teenagers (28 students attended special schools, and 18 attended regular schools where they were taught in regular classrooms). The young people in the two groups were placed in mainstream or special schools on the basis of where they lived; they were from similar social and family backgrounds and were likely to be of similar potential abilities when they started school.

The study looked at students' progress in speech and language, literacy, socialisation, daily living skills and behaviour. A follow-up with these students as teenagers found that all had progressed with age on all the measures except for communication. Communication continued to improve through teenage years for the children in regular classrooms, but not for those in special schools. There were no significant differences in overall outcomes for daily living skills or socialisation. However, there were much larger and significant gains in expressive language and literacy skills for the teenagers who were taught in regular classrooms. These students also had fewer behavioural challenges than their peers in special schools.

The authors went on to compare the data from this study with similar data published by two of the authors in an earlier study in 1987. The results of this comparison showed no improvements in school achievements in special (segregated) education over a 13-year period in the United Kingdom (1986–1999). Buckley and colleagues conclude that their findings provide uncompromising support for inclusion and that none of their studies have provided evidence for any educational advantages of special education, only disadvantages.

Similar findings come from another British study by Turner, Alborz and Gayle (2008) that followed a group of 71 children with Down syndrome born between 1973 and 1980. Data collected when the children were aged nine, 13 and 21 years showed that school placement had a significant effect on students' academic achievement. Children with Down syndrome who were educated in regular classrooms had higher achievements in reading, writing and mathematics than those taught in segregated special education settings. These advantages continued on into adult life (Buckley, 2008).

How do researchers explain students' improved learning in regular classrooms as compared with segregated, special education settings? Some say that teachers in regular schools have higher expectations for student learning; that students have access to appropriate role models; and there are increased opportunities for academic engagement and achievement (Alderson and Goodey, 1998; Alderson and Goodey, 1999; Andrews et al, 2000; Alton-Lee, 2003; Rea et al, 2002; Walther-Thomas et al, 2000).

Students also have expanded opportunities to learn because they have access to the general curriculum and to wider-ranging learning and social environments (Fisher and Meyer, 1999; Grenot-Scheyer et al, 2001; Jorgensen, 1998; Kavermann, 1998; Palmer et al, 2001). Buckley and colleagues (2008) conclude from their research with Down syndrome students in the United Kingdom that it is not possible to provide top-level learning environments in special schools and classrooms, however hard the teachers work. They argue that learning within a typically developing peer group may be essential for optimal progress for two main reasons.



First, the typical spoken language of the peer group provides a stimulating language learning environment. Second, the classroom learning environment and curriculum mean that the pace of learning has been much faster for those in regular classes – they have been in all academic lessons with individual support for their learning.

Some researchers have also described the benefits for all students, and for teachers, when disabled students are in regular classes. For example, all students can benefit from the additional resources provided in the regular classroom. A recent North American study found that non-disabled students in primary classes where a teacher aide worked with their class teacher made greater improvements in their reading than their peers who were in classes with no teacher aide (Ghandi, 2007). Students learn that diversity is part of life, and that teamwork and co-operation are required in schools for all students to learn well (Freedman and Alkin, 2000; Grenot-Scheyer et al, 1998; Kavermann, 1998; Tapasack and Walther-Thomas, 1999; Staub, 1998). With the right level of support and leadership, teachers develop their teaching skills and their confidence for working with a diverse group of students, and learn how to work collaboratively with other professionals (Kavermann, 1998; Salend and Garrick-Duhaney, 1999; Tapasack and Walther-Thomas, 1999).

To ensure that disabled students participate fully and achieve the full benefits of inclusive education, several of the comparative studies described here emphasise that schools must be provided with the guidance and support they need to understand inclusion, and to work towards it. This means ensuring that schools have the resources, supports and professional development opportunities that allow them to continuously question and improve their own approaches to teaching and learning. It also means that teacher education programmes must prepare pre-service teachers to work in inclusive schools that include a diverse range of children.

## The transition of students from school to adult life

How well disabled students make the transition to post-school life is also a measure of the extent to which schools have supported

disabled students' learning, and prepared them for life in the community as an adult. Research on students' experiences as young adults in the community points to the benefits of learning in regular schools and classrooms. These settings are described as providing a natural environment with broad social experiences and a relevant curriculum to develop the skills needed to live and work in the community (DiGiacomo, 2002; Sax et al, 2001; Wehman and Revell, 1997).

In contrast, special education settings are described as isolating students with disabilities from their communities and from their non-disabled peers (Wehman and Revell, 1997). New Zealand's national statistics show high levels of post-school unemployment for young disabled adults, and therefore it is necessary to ensure that disabled students have access to relevant vocational curricula and to work experience. Planning for the transition to adult life needs to begin early and be integrated into the curriculum and classroom teaching (Bray, 2003; Mirfin-Veitch, 2003; Robinson et al, 2000).

## Comparisons of disabled students' social experiences in special and regular education settings

A new New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education 2007a) was introduced to schools in 2008. This curriculum has its foundations in social relationships, with an overall vision for young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners. Connectness refers to students' ability to 'relate well to others' (p8). The values to be encouraged include 'equity through fairness and social justice', and 'community and participation for the common good' (p10).

The social foundations of learning are widely recognised internationally, and children who experience difficulties making and maintaining friendships may face barriers to their learning (Alton-Lee and Nuthall, 1992; Deater-Deckard, 2001; George and Browne, 2000; Heiman, 2000; Meyer et al, 1998; Morris, 2002). Adrienne Alton-Lee has described children's and young people's learning as being supported 'when structures for caring, opportunities for collaborative learning and appreciation for diversity are established in classrooms' (Alton-Lee, 2003, p23).

On the basis of a large study of disabled children's day-to-day life in Britain, researchers John Davis and Nick Watson (2001) have also pointed out that children's rights are supported at school when children experience positive relationships with their peers and teachers, although disabled researcher Jenny Morris (2002) has questioned whether this point is recognised in education policy and practice. All of these points indicate that teachers need to be concerned about the friendships and other social relationships of all students, consider the extent to which students' social experiences support their learning, and take these issues into account in their planning and teaching.

Only a small number of overseas studies have compared the social experiences of students in regular classrooms with students taught in special education settings. The research shows that children in regular classrooms are advantaged socially over their peers in segregated settings. Students in regular classes have more opportunities for planned and spontaneous social interaction and social development, and larger friendship networks than their peers in special education settings (Freedman and Alkin, 2000; Dew-Hughes and Blandford, 1999; Fisher and Meyer, 2002; Naaken and Pijl, 2002). They are more socially competent, mature and accepted (Dew-Hughes and Blandford, 1999); initiate more, and have higher quality social interactions with their peers (Kennedy et al, 1997; LeRoy and Simpson, 1996). Dew-Hughes and Blandford also found that students in special schools were described by their teachers as socially immature and were at risk because their teachers believed this was innate.

The comparative study by Fisher and Meyer (2002) described earlier found that students with 'moderate and severe intellectual disabilities' in regular classes had higher levels of social competence than students in special education settings at follow-up, although only the differences on developmental scores were large enough to be statistically significant. The researchers concluded that regular schools are:

... at least as good, if not somewhat better than self-contained placements for the development of traditional domains of children's development and social competence measured by these two assessments (p171).

The studies described above suggest that it is the quality of teaching approaches in regular classrooms that results in improved social experiences for disabled students. In particular, where specific changes have been made to teaching approaches in regular classes in order to include diverse groups of students, disabled students have benefited socially.

### Disabled students' social experiences in regular schools

Much of the research looking at disabled children's social relationships at school is concerned with students' experiences in regular schools. While the comparative research does show that students are better off in regular schools, research that has been done in regular schools nonetheless shows that disabled students experience some difficulties in this area. Disabled students are described as being vulnerable to isolation and bullying (see, for example, Connors and Stalker, 2003 for a UK perspective; and MacArthur, et al, 2005; MacArthur and Gaffney, 2001; and Rietveld, 1999, for a New Zealand perspective). Some studies have found that students in regular education are more likely to interact with adults than with peers (Davis and Watson, 2001; Dew-Hughes and Blandford, 1999; Hall and McGregor, 2000).

Importantly, this research also shows that what schools and teachers do to support students with disabilities makes a difference to their lives (MacArthur et al, 2005). Some New Zealand and international literature does describe reciprocal friendships between people with and without disabilities in schools and in other community settings, and this research sheds some light on the features of classrooms and schools that support positive social experiences and friendships for disabled students (Evans and Meyer, 2001; Grenot-Sheyer, Fisher and Staub, 2001; Lyle, 2002; Meyer, 2001; Meyer, Minondo, Fisher, Larson, Dunmore, Black and D'Aquanni, 1998; Rosetti and Tashi, 2001; Watson et al, 2000). These researchers have suggested that there needs to be a change of focus from 'fixing' disabled students (by teaching them 'social skills', for example) to thinking about how the wider school environment can support all students to develop friendships and positive relationships with each other.



Rietveld's (1999) New Zealand research takes up this challenge. Her work in classrooms with new entrants who have Down syndrome showed that some students with disabilities were treated as objects by their non-disabled peers or as recipients of charity. She argued that teachers need to ensure relationships are equal by supporting students to engage in direct and reciprocal interactions; by ensuring all students have access to materials; by establishing in the classroom an acceptance of diversity; and by encouraging students to explore a range of relationships. Three studies have highlighted the close proximity of teacher aides as a particular barrier to students interacting with each other (Lyle, 2002; MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007; Phillips, 1997).

The research also describes disabled students as actively trying to improve their own situation at school by seeking friendships and resisting barriers to friendship that peers and adults sometimes place in the way (Davis and Watson, 2001; Howard, Cohn and Orsmond, 2006; MacArthur, 2002; MacArthur and Gaffney, 2001; MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007; MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007).

Lyle (2002) explored the close friendships of two girls with high and very high needs in two regular New Zealand primary schools.

This study also describes the active role of children, supported by teachers and parents, in establishing and maintaining valued friendships, and stresses the importance of building a school environment and culture in which relationships are valued by teachers and others, and where students are supported to have time together unattended by adults.

All of these studies underline the importance of listening to student perspectives, with primary and secondary students identifying several barriers to friendship development at school, including:

- students with disabilities sitting in a different part of the classroom
- doing different work; being grouped together on the basis of disability, rather than in groups with other students
- not participating in school trips

- eating lunch and spending break times in separate places
- rarely having time with peers that is free from adult supervision.

The vulnerability of disabled students to bullying needs to be mentioned as estimates suggest that these students are more than twice as likely to be bullied than their non-disabled peers (Marini, Fairbairn and Zuber, 2001). New Zealand research by MacArthur and Gaffney (2001) showed that adults were not always aware of bullying despite disabled students citing it as the thing they hated most about school, a point also made in a later study (MacArthur and Kelly, 2004; MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007).

Students and parents in these studies felt that teachers gave minimal support to help them deal with bullying, suggesting that, in working towards inclusion, teachers need to consider the possibility of unequal relationships in their school – between students, but also between students and teachers. This research suggests that teachers need to be alert to the possibility of bullying and take seriously students' experiences as they report them. Schools may also need support to develop an inclusive culture in which bullying does not occur, and deal with ideas about difference and diversity in positive and respectful ways (MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007).

## Disabled students' perspectives on their learning and social experiences in regular schools

Some research is concerned specifically with students' views on their school experiences and on school structures and teaching approaches that help or hinder their learning and social relationships. Students' unique perspectives indicate that working towards inclusion also involves listening and responding to their views (Davis and Watson, 2001; Connors and Stalker, 2003; Humphry and Lewis, 2008; Lewis, Parsons and Robertson, 2006; MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007; MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007). Giving students opportunities to express their views on matters that affect them is a right under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and teachers can use this valuable source of information to develop more inclusive approaches in their classrooms and schools.

## The effects of impairment and disability

In a New Zealand study that followed nine disabled students as they transitioned from primary to secondary school, students described a number of areas where they felt schools needed to change to be inclusive of diversity (MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007; MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007). Students said that teachers needed to have a better understanding about the effects of impairment on their school life in order to help them with their learning. Joanne, for example, was often told off for being late for class at her secondary school. She found it necessary to write a letter to her teachers to explain about the aspects of her impairment that meant she was sometimes late, or unable to complete her class work. In an interesting reversal of roles she took on the task of educating her teachers, and concluded with the comment that she hoped her letter had helped them to understand, but if teachers needed further information they should 'feel free to ask'.

Students in this study also described the effects of disability – being bullied, feeling socially isolated, and being excluded from class and cultural activities. Emma said she felt 'scared' to speak in her Year 9 class because her voice sounded different, and, even though she had ideas to contribute, she did not want to participate in discussions because she would be teased.

Luke was sent out of his Year 9 class on several occasions because he was 'wound up', but often these events were preceded by bullying out in the hallway or school grounds. He used his school's official systems to challenge bullying when it happened and said that, while these could be effective, he was not always believed. Adam described how some teachers did not always understand his impairment, and he was very upset that one of his teachers would shout at him whenever he did something incorrectly. Another teacher in his school supported his attempts to improve his situation by suggesting he attend a meeting where the issue could be addressed. Adam said he was pleased with the results of this meeting, which had given him an opportunity to air his views and had resulted in the teacher '...getting a word from it, and

now she's behaving'. While Adam's teacher worked with him to resolve the problem, other students in the study were more likely to face challenges on their own, and felt there were few if any opportunities to express their views.

## Students' views on their learning and social experiences

Typically, disabled students report having difficulties with friendships at school, and often describe being isolated and lonely. Students in these studies were also active themselves in social and learning processes. They had ideas about how to develop friendships or address issues such as bullying, and about how to improve their own learning. In a recent UK study, for example, disabled students talked in great depth about their school and community experiences, sometimes surprising school staff with the complexity and fullness of their views (Lewis, Parsons and Robertson, 2006). Success in these areas was most likely when teachers listened to their students and supported them in these processes (MacArthur, 2002; MacArthur et al, 2005). Listening to student views is the first step, and acting on them is an essential second step that requires the investment of time, resources and expertise (Lewis, Parsons and Robertson, 2006).

The Educable (2000) study was carried out by a group of young disabled people who interviewed over 50 disabled students in four special schools in Northern Ireland. The researchers also included seven young people with intellectual disabilities under the age of 25 who had been educated in special schools.

Students interviewed said that teachers had low expectations for their learning. They were not encouraged to undertake serious study, and they described teachers as disrespectful towards disabled students and as undermining their ability to achieve post-school aspirations. They wanted to have broader social networks that went beyond their families, to develop knowledge, and gain useful qualifications for their post-school lives. Students asked for opportunities to share their own views on their personal strengths and weaknesses, and offer an opinion on the amount of assistance they required to achieve their post-school aspirations.



The researchers stated:

No one expects us to do well in exams and go on to have a career or even a decent job. Changing this means challenging a mindset that sees the disability not the person and that fails to recognise that while it might take a young person with a disability longer to achieve goals we can still do it (Educable, 2000, p56).

All participants in the study agreed that:

... in an ideal world, where all class sizes would be smaller and all schools accessible, there should be no such thing as segregated schooling (p55).

In Ballard and McDonald's (1999) New Zealand study, Marilyn, a woman in her thirties who had a significant physical disability, also talked about the impact of both high and low teacher expectations on her academic learning at secondary school. Supportive teachers did not see her primarily as someone with a disability, while in contrast an unsupportive science teacher limited her opportunities by expecting her to 'just watch and learn' (p100), rather than be actively involved. She felt that this teacher expected people with physical disabilities to be incompetent in science areas, an attitude that she described as, 'really sad because, especially when you have an alternative way of looking at things, you would make a great scientist' (p100).

In other studies that explore students' experiences primarily in regular schools, teacher aides are often singled out, with students describing too much adult control over their lives and too much close support that prevents peers from becoming involved. Students asked for more privacy, and for adults to be more considerate of the way in which their presence influences their relationships with non-disabled peers (Connors and Stalker, 2003; Davis and Watson, 2001; Lewis et al, 2006; Lovitt, Plavins and Cushing, 1999; MacArthur and Gaffney, 2001; MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007; MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007).

Students have also said that they dislike the way special education support requires them to associate with others on the basis of disability, and separates them from their peers in regular classes (Davis and Watson, 2001; Lovitt et al, 1999; Kavermann, 1998; Klingner et al, 1998; MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney, 2007; MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007; Padeliadu and Zigmund, 1996; Pugach and Wesson, 1995; Vaughn and Klinger, 1998). While some students acknowledge the supportive environment of these classes, most stress that these approaches to learning are stigmatising; limit their opportunities for learning; cause them to miss out on challenging, academic, and social activities; and limit opportunities for friendship (MacArthur et al, 2005). For example, Joanne and Emma (aged 13) disliked being grouped together in their regular secondary school class, and complained that teachers thought of them as one person, even mixing their names up. Joanne said:

When we go into groups sometimes people don't want me, and sometimes people don't want Emma, so we have to be put together and I think that is stupid ... sometimes me and Emma get left out and stuff, and so then the teacher thinks, 'All right, I will put Emma and Joanne in this group so they can work together'. And I am like, 'But no thank you, can I go in this group?' (MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007, p28).

Students in these studies describe a number of other barriers that interfere with their attempts to make friends, including poor access to student-centred spaces such as playing fields, being ignored by other students and being bullied.

Bullying is a common concern for students in both special and regular education settings, and in Macarthur and Gaffney's (2001) New Zealand study, disabled students reported that in most cases teachers either did not witness bullying or failed to respond to reports of bullying. Students at primary and secondary school expressed a desire to have friends, but experienced a range of barriers in this area of their school life, including aspects of impairment (such as low vision) that made it difficult to get to

know others; poor understanding by adults at school about how disabled children experience school; little support for non-disabled peers to understand and get to know children with disabilities; and teacher attitudes and classroom practices that identified disabled students as different in negative ways. Some schools in this study, and in a later study (MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly, and Gaffney, 2007), did prioritise and provide support for students' friendships by building a school culture in which diversity was valued and unequal power relations between students were rejected. Some parents identified these schools as places where bullying simply would not happen.

Some research records the preferences of disabled students to have friends who also have a disability (MacArthur and Gaffney, 2001; Matheson, Olsen and Weisner, 2007; D'Haem, 2008). Matheson et al (2007) note that these friendships often end when students transition to adult life, and suggest that schools and families may need to find opportunities for school-based friendships to continue out of school and into adulthood. British researchers Buckley et al (2006) noted that the only benefit of segregated education in their long-term study seemed to be contact with a peer group of similar disability, but they concluded that 'considering the significant disadvantages of special education, that need is better met out of school, and in better planned inclusion' (p61).

### **Students' experiences of 'difference'**

Students' negative experiences at school in these studies were often associated with their impairments, and it is not surprising, therefore, that students generally view impairment as a negative aspect of their self-identity. In his first year at secondary school, Luke refused to participate in Special Olympics, saying that, 'People will think I'm retarded' (MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007, p28). In Humphrey and Lewis's UK study (2008), students with autism described themselves in negative terms with the options of being 'being different' or 'not normal' underlying their descriptions of themselves. When talking about how he felt about having autism, one pupil replied, 'Sometimes it's like, "make me normal"' (p31).

Like the students in the study by MacArthur et al, these students constructed a view of themselves and their impairments through their relationships with and feedback from others. Disabled students experience a multitude of relationships at school in which they are defined by their impairment, despite their express wish to be a student like everyone else. One student in Humphrey and Lewis' study even said that he regretted that school staff had ever been told that he had Asperger syndrome:

I'd prefer they didn't know because everyone treats me differently, and I don't like being treated differently. But I don't like being treated differently as if I'm retarded but... That's how some look at it is that I'm retarded and I really don't like that, it really bugs me (p31).

Students dislike any arrangements at school that make them feel different in negative ways, such as large, noisy and outdated computer equipment; withdrawal from class for specialist support; and teacher aides who sit too close and don't provide them with the space needed to be part of the class. Joanne, 13, explained that while she felt equal with her peers, structures like ability grouping and withdrawal from her regular class for specialist support could threaten this view of herself and make her feel different:

Joanne: I feel like I am an equal, and that sets me down a bit like thinking, 'Oh well, I have to go in this group because I am different'.

Interviewer: Would you rather just be in the other class?

Joanne: Yeah, just in the normal homeroom and like in the other reading group.

Interviewer: Do you get any chances to say that to your teachers?

Joanne: No, not really.

(MacArthur, Sharp, Gaffney and Kelly, 2007, p28.)



The research described in this section shows that disabled students express a strong desire to be viewed and treated as part of the group of all students at school, and not to be treated in negative ways that make them feel 'different'. They want their teachers to get to know them, to give them opportunities to express their views, have their views listened to, and to take these into consideration in the classroom so that they can learn, be part of the peer group, and participate fully. MacArthur, Sharp, Kelly and Gaffney (2007) suggest that teachers need the kind of flexible professional development opportunities offered by the Index for Inclusion.

In particular, teachers need time to talk with their students and their families and whanau; to share ideas and experiences with other teachers; and to consult with colleagues who can provide information and support in relation to the effects of students' impairments. The often problematic relationships that disabled students describe with their teachers and peers at school are further proof that schools need to change. Davis and Watson (2001) agree, and point out that the fostering of respectful, equitable and supportive relationships is a vital starting point. Children's rights are exercised through accepting relationships with others, so 'anything which enables the establishment and maintenance of empowering relationships, will also act to support the rights of children' (p223).

### In summary

Disabled students talk about having difficulties with:

- friendships and feeling lonely, especially at break times
- teachers who have low expectations for their learning and do not encourage serious study
- too much adult control over their life at school
- too much close support from teacher aides
- not enough privacy
- being grouped together on the basis of disability for 'special' teaching.

Students also describe barriers to making friends:

- not being able to get to the places where other students gather
- being bullied
- teachers not understanding how things like impaired vision or difficulties with mobility can make it hard to find friends
- not enough support by teachers for non-disabled students to understand and get to know disabled students
- teacher attitudes and teaching approaches that make disabled students appear 'different' in negative ways.

Students ask to be part of the group of all children and young people at school, and they want their teachers to:

- get to know them
- give them opportunities to talk about what school is like for them
- listen to their views
- take their views into consideration when they are planning and teaching so they can learn
- support them to make school a better place for them
- allow them to be part of the whole peer group and to be fully involved.

For these things to happen, teachers need time:

- to talk with their students and their families and whanau
- to share ideas and experiences with other teachers
- to consult with colleagues who can inform them about the effects of students' impairments on their learning
- develop respectful and equal relationships in their school.

## Concluding comments

The findings from comparative research studies do not bear out the assumptions associated with 'special education' that separate settings will provide more individualised instruction, specialist resources and deliver a better educational and social experience for students with disabilities. The provision of separate schools and classes in New Zealand for students with disabilities was originally based on what were considered to be valid understandings about the need for a different approach to teaching and learning, in settings where students would be well cared for and supported. Indeed, concerns about the exclusion of disabled students are responsible for putting 'special' education into motion.

It is also appreciated that students have been educated in these settings with the very best intentions of those working in policy and in schools, and many parents have been encouraged to understand that special education will deliver the best opportunities for their children to learn. However, there is now overwhelming evidence of the shortcomings of segregation, and dissatisfaction in many quarters about the way things are for disabled children and young people in education.

The research that is located in regular schools, and particularly research that looks at disabled students' own views of their school life, holds much promise.

This work highlights areas where students feel their teachers are providing them with good support, but it also identifies the challenges – areas where students feel they are being treated unfairly; where their learning is not well supported; and where they are struggling with friends and other social relationships. These perspectives provide a valuable knowledge base for teachers and schools to explore better ways of working in classrooms so that disabled students belong, have friends and learn well.



# 10 Moving forward

## Actions in schools to promote inclusion

A systematic literature review, carried out by Dyson, Howes and Roberts (2002) in the United Kingdom, looked at the effectiveness of action by schools to promote inclusion. The review led to a number of recommendations for policy and practice in the development of inclusive schools, which Ainscow (2008) has summarised.

In relation to policy and leadership the reviewers suggested that:

1. Attention should be paid to the development of inclusive cultures and to the building of some degree of consensus around inclusive values in the school community.
2. Principals and other school leaders should be selected and trained in light of their commitment to inclusive values and their capacity to lead in a particular manner.
3. The external policy environment should be compatible with inclusive developments if it is to support rather than undermine efforts by schools.

In relation to school organisation and classroom practice, the authors recommended the following general principles:

4. The removal of structural barriers between different groups of students and staff.
5. The dismantling of separate programmes, services and specialisms.
6. The development of teaching approaches that allow students to learn together rather than separately.
7. The building of close relations with parents and communities based on a shared commitment to inclusive values.

## Teacher education

This book has made only slight mention of teacher education, but this is not a statement on its importance. Clearly, the survival and further

development of inclusive education is reliant on the emergence of new teachers who understand inclusion and its foundations in values, social justice and human rights. In their book entitled *Developing Inclusive Teacher Education*, Booth, Nes and Stromstadt (2003) note that student teachers learn from the cultures and policies of the institutions they study in, and that many students enter teaching with little knowledge about inclusion, and little preparation to challenge the barriers to inclusive development that they will face when they start teaching. As in schools, these authors suggest that tertiary institutions also need to change to overcome barriers to inclusive teacher education.

Student teachers may need to:

- look out for language and other barriers to inclusion in the curriculum
- be alert to education policies that conflict with inclusion
- be prepared to discuss inclusion in terms of the ideas, culture, values and attitudes promoted in their own teacher education institutions
- replace deficit-oriented ideas about disabled and other children with those that focus on barriers to learning and participation in school
- learn about the process of inclusive school development within their own school.

## Leadership

Inclusion is increasingly being seen as a key challenge for leaders in education as our schools more closely reflect the diversity of our communities, and leadership in schools will involve building the capacity of schools to problem-solve together and respond to an increasingly wide range of issues (Ainscow, 2008; Cavanagh, 2008; Glynn, 2008; Slee, 2005). This implies a need for new approaches to school leadership that allow schools to develop a common purpose (why we are here). In this regard, interactive approaches that include students and teachers may be the way ahead, with principals taking on the role of 'leader of leaders' in their schools (p252).





# 11

## Conclusion

Change has been a long time coming. Many of the issues about segregation and 'special' education described in this book have been raised in the research literature of the past three decades. There is now an overwhelming body of research that supports an end to segregation and 'special' education thinking. And while the field of 'special education' has provided much debate, it has led to little action toward social change for disabled people (Connor and Ferri, 2007).

In contrast, inclusive education has been scrutinised, conceptualised, described and explored in the research literature to a point where there has been a remarkable maturing of ideas. In particular, the research that explores inclusion through the day-to-day practices of teachers and other school staff, and research that gives priority to the views and experiences of disabled students, provides a rich foundation from which to move forward.

There are some sticking points (Slee, 2005, p159) with the research recognising that regular schools still have some way to go before all children are welcome and included as fully participating members. Some of the barriers remaining come from policies that do not yet commit to inclusion and hamper the progress of teachers and schools working on an inclusion agenda.

Other barriers come from values, school structures and practices that still associate diversity with negative interpretations about deviance and difference. Yet others come from a failure to listen to the views of disabled students as they negotiate their school life. However, as Slee (2005) points out, 'Many of our neighbourhood schools are not good places even for those children whose right to a desk therein is never questioned' (p157). Clearly, the solution to the sticking points is not to return to the flawed system of special education, or to keep channelling more and more children who are considered as 'not fitting' regular schools into segregated places. Sticking points are an impetus to do better for all children and young people in our regular neighbourhood schools.

The research presented here shows that new approaches are needed so that all teachers view disabled and other marginalised students in positive ways that enhance their sense of self-identity, their learning and belonging at school and in the community.

This is the task of a democratic society that has a strong foundation in human rights.

Moving to inclusion involves playing a new game in education in which schools and school systems focus on building barrier-free, flexible, responsive, safe and supportive learning environments, and where all students participate fully (Cavanagh, 2008; Lloyd, 2008). Ainscow (2008) argues that what is needed to move forward is an emphasis on social learning within particular school and community contexts.

Positive changes for students will only come from changes in the behaviour of adults as they collaborate within their own school and with other schools, and use evidence to share good practices and stimulate the development of their own teaching. A vital starting point for change is to look at the values held by adults working at all levels of our education system, and the taken-for-granted assumptions about students' capabilities that lie behind existing policies and practices.

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# Resources for parents, teachers and interested others

## International conventions

### The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The convention text can be found at:

[www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml](http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml)

Information about the convention can be found at:

[www.un.org/disabilities/convention/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/index.shtml)

Information on the convention and other disability-related information can be found on the website of United Nations Enable:  
[www.un.org/disabilities/index.asp](http://www.un.org/disabilities/index.asp)

A child-friendly version of the convention can be found at:

[www.unicef.org/Child\\_friendly\\_CRPD.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/Child_friendly_CRPD.pdf)

### The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UNICEF website provides an accessible and useful description of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: what it is, its legal implications and what it means in practice to ensure that children's rights are understood and met – [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)

Topics covered include:

- The human rights framework
- Protecting and realising children's rights
- Understanding the convention
- Optional protocols to the convention
- Using the convention and protocols for children.

## Ministry of Education publications

Relevant New Zealand Ministry of Education publications and resources can be found at:

[www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsAndResources.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsAndResources.aspx)

These include:

### Meeting Special Education Needs at School

[www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsAndResources/MeetingSpecialEducationNeedsAtSchool.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsAndResources/MeetingSpecialEducationNeedsAtSchool.aspx)

A resource about special education for school boards of trustees. Sections include roles and responsibilities, provision of resources, support services, policy and legislation.

### Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education

[www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/ResearchAndStatistics/EnhancingEffectivePracticeInSpecialEducation.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/ResearchAndStatistics/EnhancingEffectivePracticeInSpecialEducation.aspx)

A three-year research project that focused on developing teacher knowledge and identifying effective teaching practice for students with special education needs. The Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education (EEPiSE) project was part of a broader ministry policy focus on effective teaching to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Specifically, the project aimed to develop teacher knowledge and share ideas on how to support learners who require significant adaptation to the curriculum content in regular schools, school-based classes for students with special education needs, kura kaupapa Māori and special schools.

### Autism Spectrum Disorders Resource for Teachers

[www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsAndResources/AutismSpectrumDisordersResourceForTeachers.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsAndResources/AutismSpectrumDisordersResourceForTeachers.aspx)

## Relevant websites

The following websites focus on inclusive education and/or disability issues. They offer ideas, research, information on guidance and legislation, links with relevant organisations, and/or other materials and resources that parents and New Zealand schools may find useful.



## New Zealand websites

### **IHC Code for New Zealand Schools**

The code has been written by IHC for the education community. Inclusion is central to IHC's philosophy and is seen as a requirement if people are to lead satisfying lives in the community. The code can be used by schools to enhance understanding between parents and schools; as a source of concise information about inclusion; for discussion within the wider community; and as a tool to advocate for the rights, inclusion and welfare of all people with an intellectual disability to support them to lead satisfying lives in the community.

[www.ihc.org.nz/Default.aspx?tabid=1587](http://www.ihc.org.nz/Default.aspx?tabid=1587)

### **The Inclusive Education Action Group (IEAG)**

The IEAG is a group of people committed to ensuring that all disabled children, young people and adults participate fully in their local, regular educational setting. We recognise that disabled people are often denied the right to participate in education alongside other people of their age. Through our work we aim to promote knowledge, attitudes, policies and practices that facilitate inclusive education so that all disabled children, youth and adults will have equal opportunities to learn and flourish. Interested readers are invited to become a member of IEAG.

[www.ieag.org.nz](http://www.ieag.org.nz)

### **Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa Inc.**

ACYA is a coalition of non-governmental organisations, families and individuals whose purpose is to promote the well-being of children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand through:

- education and advocacy on the rights of children and young people
- encouraging the Government to act on the recommendations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[www.acya.org.nz](http://www.acya.org.nz)

## International websites

### **Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education**

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) is an independent centre, set up in Bristol, England, in 1982, actively supporting inclusive education as a human right of every child. It is funded by donations from charitable trusts and foundations, with additional income from sale of publications and small grants for research or other projects. CSIE's work is driven by a commitment to overcome barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people. Their activities include lobbying and campaigning, research, training, consultancy and dissemination of information.

CSIE publishes The Index for Inclusion.

#### *The Index for Inclusion*

This site provides an overview of the Index for Inclusion referred to in this book, and covers the following:

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Using the materials
- Sample indicators and questions
- The two authors introduce the index
- Translations of the Index.

Professor Tony Booth, Index author, and CSIE have recently launched a revision of the schools version of the Index. The new, revised edition is expected to be available early in 2010. The aim is to further develop this popular resource so that it reflects the current educational context and becomes even more easily accessible and user-friendly for busy school staff.

[www.csie.org.uk/publications/inclusion-index-explained.shtml](http://www.csie.org.uk/publications/inclusion-index-explained.shtml)

The Index can also be ordered on-line through the CSIE website  
[www.csie.org.uk](http://www.csie.org.uk)

### **The Center on Human Policy, New York State**

The CHP is a Syracuse University-based policy, research and advocacy organisation involved in the national movement to insure the rights of people with disabilities. Since its founding, the centre has been involved in the study and promotion of open settings (inclusive community opportunities) for people with disabilities. The centre's staff and associates include educators, human services professionals, people with disabilities, graduate students and family members of children and youth with disabilities. The centre has an Advocacy Board composed of people with disabilities, parents and interested citizens that serves as an independent voice on behalf of the rights of people with disabilities in the community. The centre is involved with a broad range of local, statewide, national and international activities, including policy studies, research, information and referral, advocacy, training and consultation, and information dissemination.

[thechp.syr.edu](http://thechp.syr.edu)  
[disabilitystudies.syr.edu/resources/otherdisabilityresources.aspx#inclusive\\_education](http://disabilitystudies.syr.edu/resources/otherdisabilityresources.aspx#inclusive_education)

### ***Inclusion Europe (The European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families)***

Inclusion Europe is a non-profit organisation that campaigns for the rights and interests of people with intellectual disabilities and their families throughout Europe. Respect, solidarity and inclusion are the fundamental values shared by all members of this movement of and for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

It fights for:

- human rights for people with intellectual disabilities
- inclusion in society
- non-discrimination.

Activities:

Inclusion Europe co-ordinates activities in many European countries, including conferences, working groups and exchange meetings.

It responds to European policy proposals and provides information about the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. Inclusion Europe advises the European Commission and members of the European Parliament on disability issues.  
[www.inclusion-europe.org](http://www.inclusion-europe.org)

### ***The Inclusive Schools Network: supporting inclusive education worldwide***

The Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) is a web-based resource for families, schools and communities that promotes inclusive educational practices. This resource has grown out of Inclusive Schools Week™, an internationally recognised annual event sponsored by Education Development Center, Inc. ISN's mission is 'to encourage, embolden and empower people to design and implement effective inclusive schools, by sharing insights and best practices and by providing opportunities for connection'. ISN provides year-round opportunities for families and educators around the world to network and build their knowledge of inclusive education.

[www.inclusiveschools.org](http://www.inclusiveschools.org)

### ***The National Centre on Secondary Education and Transition – creating opportunities for youth with disabilities to achieve successful futures***

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) co-ordinates national resources, offers technical assistance, and disseminates information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities in order to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures. NCSET is headquartered at the Institute on Community Integration in the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development.  
[www.ncset.org](http://www.ncset.org)

### ***My school, my family, my life: Telling it like it is. Disability Rights Commission and the University of Birmingham***

This is the report of a study detailing the experiences of disabled children, young people and their families in Great Britain in 2006.



The report draws on the main findings and recommendations from four linked projects (2004–6), funded and published by the Disability Rights Commission, and carried out by a team from the University of Birmingham, into the experiences of disabled children, young people and their families. These case studies were gathered in England, Scotland and Wales from a range of mainstream primary and secondary schools, specialist units within mainstream schools, colleges of further education and special schools. The ages of the children and young people ranged from nine to 19 and they had a range of impairments. A central aim of the research was to identify the key concerns and priorities for disabled children and young people in Great Britain in relation to their experiences of education (particularly transitions between phases of schooling and post-school).

Following from this, the work aimed to identify the barriers faced by young disabled people in education including evidence of prejudice and discrimination. Importantly, it also sought to identify ways of overcoming these barriers, to explore examples of good practice and to investigate factors associated with positive experiences of educational institutions.

[www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/ViewResource.aspx?  
resID=268633](http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/ViewResource.aspx?resID=268633)

### **UNICEF – child-friendly schools**

UNICEF has developed a framework for rights-based, child-friendly educational systems and schools that are characterised as ‘inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities – and children’ (Shaeffer, 1999). Within this framework:

- The school is a significant personal and social environment in the lives of its students. A child-friendly school ensures every child an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling.
- Teachers are the single most important factor in creating an effective and inclusive classroom.

- Children are natural learners, but this capacity to learn can be undermined and sometimes destroyed. A child-friendly school recognises, encourages and supports children’s growing capacities as learners by providing a school culture, teaching behaviours and curriculum content that are focused on learning and the learner.
- The ability of a school to be and to call itself child-friendly is directly linked to the support, participation and collaboration it receives from families.
- Child-friendly schools aim to develop a learning environment in which children are motivated and able to learn. Staff members are friendly and welcoming to children and attend to all their health and safety needs.

A rights-based, child-friendly school has two basic characteristics:

- It is a child-seeking school – actively identifying excluded children to get them enrolled in school and included in learning; treating children as subjects with rights and the state as duty-bearers with obligations to fulfil these rights; and demonstrating, promoting, and helping to monitor the rights and well-being of all children in the community.
- It is a child-centred school – acting in the best interests of the child, leading to the realisation of the child’s full potential, and concerned both about the ‘whole’ child (including her health, nutritional status, and well-being) and about what happens to children – in their families and communities – before they enter school and after they leave it.

[www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_7260.html#A%20Framework%20for%20Rights-Based,%20Child-Friendly%20schools](http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html#A%20Framework%20for%20Rights-Based,%20Child-Friendly%20schools)

# Appendix A

## Reasons from the CSIE against segregated schooling

### Reasons against segregated schooling

The arguments against segregated 'special' schooling and evidence of the damage it causes continue to accumulate. Segregation hurts individuals and society. It is a major barrier to inclusive schooling and inclusive communities. There is a growing body of research findings, personal testimony and expertise which support the human rights imperative to phase out segregation in education and fulfil children's entitlement to fully support an inclusive education based on non-discriminatory equal opportunity and participation as agreed under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and following the social model of disability.

- Segregated schooling has never been proven to be superior to mainstream.
- There is no compelling body of evidence that segregated 'special' education programmes have significant benefits for students.
- Research shows that segregated 'special' schooling has been associated with:
  - impoverished social experiences, abilities and outcomes
  - reduced academic experiences in terms of curriculum provision, outcomes, examination opportunities and accreditation
  - lower student aspirations and teacher expectations
  - high absence rates
  - difficulty integrating into the mainstream
  - poverty in adulthood
  - poor preparation for adult life.
- Negative consequences for segregated pupils identified in the research also include:
  - deprivation, abuse, lack of autonomy and choice,
  - dependency
  - lack of self-esteem and a sense of alienation, isolation, fewer friends, more restrictive interpersonal relationships, bullying and limited life styles.
- The discrimination inherent in segregated schooling offends the humanity of the child and is capable of undermining or even destroying the capacity of the child to benefit from educational opportunities.
- The existence of segregated 'special' schools stifles creativity of mainstream schools about how to respond to diversity and who owns their responsibilities to include all learners. It undermines efforts to develop inclusive education by draining resources from mainstream, which in turn sets back the development of inclusive communities.

- The existence of 'special' schools contributes to insecurity and fear of rejection by learners in the mainstream.
- Ending segregated 'special' schools is one of the Government's learning disability policy, *Valuing People*, which set a target for closing the remaining 21 long-stay segregated mental health hospitals by 2009.
- Segregated schooling upkeeps the human tendency to negatively label and isolate those perceived as different. It gives legal reinforcement and consolidation to a deeply embedded, self fulfilling, social process of devaluing and distancing others on the basis of appearance and ability in order to consolidate a sense of normality and status.
- Segregated schooling contributes discrimination, devaluation, stigmatisation, stereotyping, prejudice, and isolation – the very conditions which disabled adults identify as among the biggest barriers to respect, participation and a 'fulfilment'.
- Segregated schooling does not lead to inclusion.

To find out more, go to the website of the CSIE at [www.csie.org.uk](http://www.csie.org.uk) or contact the National Inclusive Schools Project.

For further information on the issues raised in this document, contact the National Inclusive Schools Project, National Institute for Learning Disabilities, 88-92 Vauxhall Road, London SE1 7XL, UK. Tel: 020 7813 5100.

The National Inclusive Schools Project (NISP) (CSIE) believes that the purpose of education is to enable every child to fulfil their potential, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, social class, family background, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or learning ability, or any other factor.

CSIE  
Centre for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education  
National Inclusive Schools Project  
National Institute for Learning Disabilities  
88-92 Vauxhall Road  
London SE1 7XL, UK  
Tel: 020 7813 5100  
Email: [nisp@nild.org.uk](mailto:nisp@nild.org.uk)  
<http://www.csie.org.uk>

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Disabilities

88-92 Vauxhall Road

London SE1 7XL, UK

Tel: 020 7813 5100

Email: [nisp@nild.org.uk](mailto:nisp@nild.org.uk)

# **CSIE**

Centre for Studies in  
Inclusive Education

Room 25293

5 Lark

Fenner's Lane

Guildford GU2 2JZ

UK

01483 5050

33-6 44

JR

Telephone 01483 5054022

Fax 01483 505400

web: [www.csie.ac.uk](http://www.csie.ac.uk)

email: [csie@gsu.ac.uk](mailto:csie@gsu.ac.uk)

for more information, see the following:  
multicultural education, diversity, learning and  
participation, inclusion, schools through a diversity  
incidence, social development  
Teaching is aimed at those in schools and other  
education institutions who are responsible for inclusion  
and teaching.

developing learning and  
participation in schools

Tony Bath and Kell Kingdon

with contributions from

Nicola Fawcett

and Sue Hart

**Index**  
**for inclusion**  
**revised 2002**







## Appendix B

# 12 Maori cultural values

*special education practice for Maori*, 2001. Wellington: Draft report to the SES Board and Executive Team, by Berryman, M., Glynn, T., Walker, R., Rewiti, M., O'Brien, K., Boasa-Dean, T., Glynn, V., Langdon, Y. and Weiss, S. (2002.)

Nga turanga takitahi me nga mana whakahaere – specific individual roles and responsibilities required to achieve individual and group outcomes.

Kanohi ki te kanohi – the Maori cultural preference of dealing with people in a face-to-face situation.

Wairuatanga – beliefs and practices that involve the spiritual dimension. People who emanate wairuatanga are seen to have a unique identity involving spiritual warmth and energy.

Whanaungatanga – the process of establishing links or making connections with people one meets by identifying in culturally appropriate ways, whakapapa linkages, points of engagement, or other relationships.

Kotahitanga – the collective response towards a commonly held vision, goal or other such purpose or outcome. Tribal unity is an example of kotahitanga. Kotahitanga also means accepting responsibility for each other's actions.

Manaakitanga – the cultural obligation to express love, caring and/or support towards others without an expectation of reciprocal benefits.

Mahi tahi – working together as one towards the same objective or common purpose.

Mana tangata – the authority one gains, according to their ability, to develop and maintain skills.

Ako – the reciprocal sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences.

Wananga – the sharing of knowledge through collective meetings

in which views are exchanged, and knowledge is shared, practised and learned.

Aroha ki te tangata – a quality of goodness expressed by love and caring for people and living things. A person with aroha expresses genuine concerns and demonstrates this love by sharing it with people without discrimination.

Mana motuhake – in modern times mana has taken on many meanings, such as legitimisation and authority, and can relate to an individual or group's ability to participate at the local and global level. Mana motuhake involves the development of personal or group identity and independence.





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