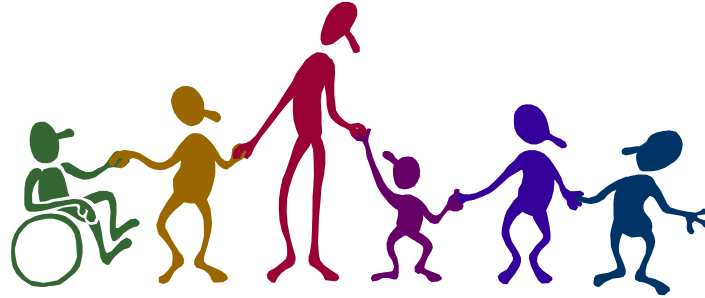


Disability Equality in English Primary Schools:

End-of-Award Report





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This report reflects the views of the authors alone and does not necessarily reflect the views of those mentioned above. The authors take full responsibility for the report contents.

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Report 1.0-8.0: 5,499 words (including footnotes, excluding references and appendices).

1.0. Background

- 1.1. Despite ample evidence supporting the idea that, in the UK, we live in a disabling society (Barnes et al 2002), in terms of ‘academic knowledge’ we know surprisingly little about how/if ‘disabling’ or *potentially* disabling attitudes emerge during childhood or what, if anything, schools are doing to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- 1.2. Work carried out by third-sector organisations such as Disability Equality in Education (www.worldofinclusion.com) and the Children’s Society (2008) represents valuable practitioner-based/focused knowledge in this area and provides powerful justification for exploring these issues. Rieser and Mason (1990: 7) have commented that ‘children are not born with prejudices against disabled people, but acquire them (...) When children become adults they reinforce and legitimise the misinformation and fear in the form of policies and practices over which they have varying amounts of control ...’. If we are to break this cycle, we need to explore the role that various institutions, including schools, might play in *changing* non-disabled children’s attitudes towards disabled people.
- 1.3. Sociology/Social Policy have not, however, addressed these issues in any depth. Disability is seldom mentioned within literature relating to children’s social knowledge and understanding of personal characteristics (e.g. Barrett and Buchanan-Barrow 2005; James 1993); similarly, research into educational strategies for tackling prejudice and other ‘controversial issues’ (e.g. Carrington and Troyna ed. 1988) has seldom considered disabling attitudes, or what is increasingly being termed ‘disablism’ (‘discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others’ Miller et al 2004: 5).
- 1.4. A key problem is that there is research claiming to address children’s understanding of disability, but this is somewhat misleading. Existing studies of this type (e.g. Burke 2003; Diamond et al 1997; Lewis 1995) have not been undertaken from a Disability Studies perspective, i.e. one employing the Social Model of Disability as a ‘tool’ for gaining insight into the position of disabled people in society (Barnes et al 2002; Finkelstein 2001). The implication of this is that whilst undeniably valuable, existing research is *not* about children’s understanding of and attitudes towards *disability*, but rather towards *impairment*: its nature, biological/other causes and physical or intellectual consequences. Some research in this vein has also considered relationships between children with/without impairments. What none of these studies adequately address is how and at what age ‘disabling’ attitudes emerge that, when expressed by wider society, come to shape the lives of disabled people.
- 1.5. ‘Prejudice’ is not, of course, an unproblematic concept: what it is, how/if it differs from negative stereotyping and how/if children *learn* prejudice is much debated (Fishbein 2002). Without dismissing these important debates, there is nevertheless a more general agreement that it is only by attempting to trace/understand prejudice, that we can develop strategies to challenge it (e.g. Aboud and Levy 2000 on racism). We thus need to know more about children’s knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards disabled

people, if we are to know how/if education has a role to play in challenging disabling attitudes.

- 1.6. Whilst this gap in the academic literature is important, there is also a policy background to this study: the introduction of the Disability Equality Duty (DED) 2006 and the application of this to schools. The DED involves general and specific duties to promote disability equality. The specific duty required schools to produce a Disability Equality Scheme (DES), outlining how they planned to meet the general duty, by December 2007. The general duty is multi-faceted but includes a requirement to 'promote positive attitudes towards disabled people'.¹ Schools are therefore *legally required* to be more proactive in this regard.
- 1.7. Output 1 provides in-depth consideration of the research background.

2.0. Objectives

- 2.1. In what follows we utilise the term 'teaching for disability equality' to refer to teaching that aims to raise disability awareness and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and 'teaching' to encompass both 'teaching' *and* 'learning' activities.
- 2.2. ***Stage 1: we set out to...***
 - a. Examine whether schools have their DES in place and whether this includes reference to the requirement to 'promote positive attitudes towards disabled people'.
 - b. Assess the extent and nature of teaching for disability equality within primary schools in England, and to establish what challenges schools/teachers face with regard to this teaching.
 - c. Explore what teachers think that they ought to teach children about disability and the lives of disabled people.
- 2.3. Stage 1 objectives were addressed via a survey of schools and interviews with teachers (see methods 3.2-3.5 and results 4.1-4.2).
- 2.4. ***Stage 2: we set out to...***
 - a. Examine primary-age non-disabled children's understandings about disability and their attitudes towards disabled people.
 - b. Consider the processes, in school and elsewhere, by which non-disabled children learn about disability.

¹ Full list of DED requirements available at:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/disabilityandthetdda/requirementschoolsunderthetdda/>

- c. Explore whether there is any evidence of disabling (or potentially disabling) attitudes within primary-age non-disabled children's understanding of, and attitudes towards, disability and disabled people.
- d. Theorise what children's perceptions reveal about the processes at work within the 'disabling society'.

2.5. Stage 2 objectives were addressed via focus groups with primary age non-disabled children (please see methods 3.6 and results 4.3).

3.0. Methods

3.1. Preliminary work

3.1.1. Using aggregated school level data from the Annual School Census (ASC), two-step cluster sampling (using SPSS) was employed to construct a sample that included schools with higher/lower % pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) (socio-economic variable), higher/lower % pupils who have 'special educational needs' ('SEN') (disability variable) and higher/lower % pupils from white British backgrounds (ethnicity variable). Three types of school emerged:

- Type 1 schools: high % of children in receipt of FSMs; high % of children from non-white British groups; high % of children having 'SEN'.
- Type 2 schools: *very* high % of children in receipt of FSMs; average % of children from non-white British groups; *very* high % of children having 'SEN'.
- Type 3 schools: lower % of children in receipt of FSMs; high % of children from white British groups; low numbers of children who have 'SEN'.

3.1.2. When clusters were compared using variables not used as part of the clustering, clusters were shown to differ in terms of size: Type 1 (large); Type 2 (small); Type 3 (average).

3.1.3. We chose to sample 500 schools, rather than the original plan of 250, hoping to ensure at least 100 responses. A 'normal' response rate to a postal questionnaire being around 20%, a sample of 500 schools was required. Schools were randomly selected from each cluster, in a ratio relative to the number of schools in the cluster (Type 1: 86 schools; Type 2: 107 schools; Type 3: 307 schools).

3.1.4. The response rate was 27.4% (137), from school-types 1-3, proportional to the size of each cluster. Using ASC data for comparison, we confirm that no statistically significant differences were found between responding and non-responding schools. The sample of responding schools therefore shares the same characteristics *in terms of the variables used to construct our framing of the stratified 500-school sample*. We do acknowledge the possibility, however, that our respondent schools were more likely to be schools in which there was at least *some* engagement (or willingness to engage) with disability issues. We

had no access to any information at the sampling stage which would enable us to address this possible source of bias.

3.2. **Survey**

The initial plan to utilise an online survey to access the views of schools/teachers was modified after teachers stated that they would prefer hard-copy questionnaires. Questionnaires were sent to the 500 sample schools, to be completed by the Head-teacher or nominated member of teaching staff, for their school's response. The questionnaire was piloted at a sub-sample of 20 schools chosen at random from the wider sample. This survey focused upon stage 1, objectives a) and b) (see para. 2.2.).

3.3. **Choice of case-study schools**

A slight modification was made to our strategy for selecting case-study schools. From the 137 schools that responded to the survey, 2 schools of each type were selected, to include those from different geographical areas (including London; W. Midlands; NW; NE) and that had provided interesting responses to our questionnaire (*appendix 1 provides details of schools*).

3.4. **Interviews with teachers**

Stage 1 objectives a-c (para. 2.2.) were investigated further during interviews with teachers at the 6 case-study schools. Interview schedules were used as a checklist. As the 'culture of inspection' within schools has led many teachers to be reluctant to engage in research that they perceive to be an 'inquisition', we chose to approach the interviews as a *conversation* in order to be sensitive to this.

3.5. **Content analysis**

- 3.5.1. In an extension to stage 1 objective b), we were interested in what, if any, resources schools currently possess that might facilitate teaching for disability equality. Early in the research a decision was made to modify the manner in which this question was approached. We opted to ask, during the survey, whether schools possess any 'inclusive'-type books, DVDs/videos, action-packs/lesson plans, allowing us to determine the extent to which schools possess *any* such resources.
- 3.5.2. In order to say anything meaningful about the *quality* of the resources that schools might possess, a qualitative content analysis (Bryman 2004) was undertaken of one particular type: children's books (fiction and non-fiction). The justification for focusing upon children's books is considered within output 2.
- 3.5.3. The study took the form of an analysis of the portrayal of disability within 100 texts for the primary-age group. There are existing studies on literature published pre-1990 (Quicke 1985; Rieser 1990). We therefore focused upon literature published post-1990 and upon texts most frequently recommended to, or easily sourced by, UK schools. Books were identified by accessing information from a number of UK-based organisations that publish lists of disability-related children's books, including: a number of organisations

'for' and 'of' disabled people; public libraries; schools' library services and Local Authority (LA) book suppliers.

3.5.4. Output 2 provides further methodological detail.

3.6. ***Focus groups with non-disabled children***

3.6.1. Stage 2 objectives (para. 2.4), were explored within focus groups with non-disabled children in years 2 (age 6/7 yrs) and 6 (age 10/11 yrs) at the 6 case-study schools. We focused upon these age groups because they represent the final years of Key Stages 1 and 2 respectively (the original choice of years 3 and 6 was slightly modified to fit with the Key Stages). A point of 'data saturation' was reached following twelve focus groups (1 per year group, per school, with 74 children taking part).

3.6.2. Child respondents were chosen by Head-teachers to be representative of their school population. Interview schedules for the focus groups were piloted at a school that chose not to participate fully in the research, but allowed us to undertake this preliminary work with them. Focus groups proceeded on the basis of a low-to-medium level of moderation, interview schedules acting as a 'check-list' for the researcher.

3.6.3. To combat potential difficulties associated with asking the younger children to discuss the potentially challenging concept of 'disability', year 2 children were introduced to the topic through a story about a disabled child (*'Harry, Willy and Carrothead'* by Caseley 1991). This proved unnecessary with year 6 children, who spoke confidently about disability-related issues without any introduction. These children were asked to construct a basic 'mind-map' about what they know/think about 'disability' (a much simplified version of Buzan's 'mind-maps' [2003]). *Appendix 2 provides examples of the children's mind-maps.* These mind-maps were used to prompt discussion within the focus group.

3.7. ***Ethics***

This project abided by BSA and BERA Statements on Ethical Practice.

3.8. ***Analysis***

- Quantifiable data from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics (qualitative data from open questions were analysed as additional qualitative data).
- Interview and focus group data were analysed using detailed qualitative data protocols, involving immersion within the text; annotation of the text; the search for emergent themes; thematic coding and comparison between interviews/focus groups. In an attempt to reduce researcher subjectivity, all qualitative analysis was undertaken independently by two researchers.
- Mind-maps were analysed in two ways: firstly, by using qualitative content analysis; secondly, what children said about their maps was analysed together with the qualitative data.

- Content analysis of children's books was considered under para.3.5.

3.9. ***Mixed-strategy approach***

Following Hammersley's (1996) classification of three approaches to combining quantitative and qualitative methods, preliminary analysis of the survey (quantitative) component of the research *facilitated* the selection of case-study schools (for the qualitative dimension of the study). By carrying out a survey and interviews with teachers, *complementary* data relating to teacher-views were generated. Survey and interviews were *triangulated* by exploring the extent to which/how the views of teachers compared with the trends/themes emerging from the survey.

4.0. Results²

4. 1. ***Stage 1: The views of schools and teachers***

4.1.1 The survey was sent to schools between January-April 2008, *after* the deadline when schools were legally required to have their DES in place. Amongst responding schools:

- 30% had a DES that included their plan to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- 8% had a DES, but admitted that it did not include reference to promoting positive attitudes
- 14% were in the process of developing a DES and indicated that it would include their plan to promote positive attitudes
- 3% were in the process of developing a DES, but indicated that it did not include their plan to promote positive attitudes
- 16% of schools were preparing a DES but did not indicate whether they were including the positive attitudes dimension
- 24% had no DES and did not indicate that one was in preparation³.

4.1.2. Disability issues are not always accorded the salience that could be expected in the light of the DED. There is a hierarchy in terms of teaching about equality issues; 'race' equality tending to be prioritised over both gender and disability. Fifty-six percent of schools ranked 'race' equality first.

4.1.3. Disability equality is not always fully embedded within the wider curriculum and instead tends to be located either within certain subjects – PSHE in particular - or within more

² Throughout this section, a statistically significant result implies $p \leq 0.05$.

³ 5% 'other' responses – varied.

general and informal school activities. A key question emerging is whether such informal approaches run the risk of diluting the 'message'. Presumably it will depend upon whether schools, regardless of their approach, ensure that the issue is adequately addressed and have planned accordingly. Certainly, the majority of schools indicated that they believed that it was either important or *fairly* important to take a 'planned approach' to teaching for disability equality. Only a minority (14%) stated that they did not consider this to be 'important'.

- 4.1.4. Fifty-seven percent of schools responded that they 'could do more' to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. To make progress, however, schools need to be confident that teachers possess relevant knowledge and training and adequate resources, including time, are available. Findings indicate a clear and almost equal division between schools that believe that there *is* adequate time within the existing curriculum to teach for disability equality (44.6%) and those that do *not* (45.4%)⁴. The schools that stated that there 'was not enough time', were less likely to embed disability within the curriculum and in terms of their characteristics, tended to be schools with a high level of pupils eligible for FSMs. The opposite was the case for schools that argued that there *was* enough time.
- 4.1.5. In relation to resources that might support teaching for disability equality (e.g. books, videos, lesson plans etc), 21% of schools stated that they had no such resources. Schools with a high proportion of pupils who have 'SEN' were less likely to have any resources. Several written responses to the survey indicated that some teachers believe their 'best resource' is their disabled pupils. Whether the presence of a disabled child in a school means that no additional resources (or more proactive approach) are required to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, is uncertain – further investigation is required here.
- 4.1.6. Thirty-two percent of schools responding to a question about the availability of books stated that they had no 'inclusive'-type books⁵. Finally, 76% of schools that answered a question about the availability of 'action packs' or other resources, such as lesson plans to facilitate teaching about disability, stated that they had no such resources⁶.
- 4.1.7. When asked about access to training, 76% of schools that answered a related question indicated that their staff had not received training in relation to education for disability equality⁷. In response to a further question, 48% of schools stated that training would

⁴ 10% 'unsure'. 97% response rate to question

⁵ 79% response rate to question

⁶ 84% response rate to question

⁷ 97% response rate to question

help to improve teacher confidence – although 44% said that training would only ‘perhaps’ make a difference.⁸

- 4.1.8. Many of the issues raised by teachers during the survey were reflected in the teacher-interviews. Responses elaborated on the issue of overall commitment to the DED and the resource issue that emerged from the survey. The interviews were also designed to elicit information about the message that teachers think they should be conveying about disability to non-disabled children (stage 1, objective c, para.2.2). Views expressed ranged from an approximation of a Social Model approach, to other, less ‘progressive’ understandings and those that indicated both confusion and uncertainty about how disability equality should be ‘handled’ - one respondent indicated that they would be reluctant to discuss disability with children for fear of “highlighting difference”.
- 4.1.9. Virtually all respondents acknowledged the importance of children having positive encounters with disabled people – but in the majority of cases much was made of the difficulties involved in arranging this. Similar responses were received in relation to relevant resources, but there was also evidence of a more general lack of awareness about how to access these. Some respondents had little idea of what, if any, ‘inclusive’-type books existed in their school’s library, while others did not know whether the (usually few) ‘inclusive’-type books that they *did* possess were ever read by non-disabled children. Again, little use appears to be made of lesson plans available from organisations like Disability Equality in Education, the Red Cross and the Disability Rights Commission. One case-study school was, however, utilising a resource pack from the Father Hudson’s Society.
- 4.1.10. Underpinning many responses was a sense – expressed forcefully in some cases – that teachers lack sufficient confidence to deal with disability issues, particularly in terms of the appropriate use of language and how disability should be presented/explained.

4.2. **Resources**

- 4.2.1. Our content analysis of 100 books revealed a mixed picture. Evidence of either disabling/disablist language or tone, and/or negative portrayals of disabled people, was found in 45 books. Negative portrayals included those that: promote a Tragedy Model approach to disability (Oliver 1990); present the disabled person as a ‘curio’ or ‘spectacle’ for the interest or amusement of the non-disabled reader; include miracle cures for impairment; and stories in which the ‘virtuous disabled’ are portrayed as being a ‘lesson to us all’. Encouragingly, 55 books contained no evidence of inappropriate language/tone or negative portrayals of disabled people.
- 4.2.2. Establishing clear-cut analytical categories with regard to these ‘better’ texts was not easy, however, partly due to the fact that although more positive in their portrayal of disability, this is not to say that they all represented ideal examples of ‘inclusive’-type literature -

⁸ 99% response rate to question

some were, for example, poorly illustrated, with characters using old-style NHS wheelchairs and other outdated 'aids'. Despite these difficulties, two broad analytical categories emerged: firstly, books that take a 'disability is part of diversity' approach and promote the idea that disabled people are not an 'other' and should be full and respected members of society; secondly, books that take a more overtly 'anti-disablist' stance and highlight the range of barriers, most often attitudinal, faced by disabled people. There were far fewer of the latter type of book (15).

4.2.3. Conclusions from this somewhat 'self-contained' dimension of the study were that although there are good examples of 'inclusive'-type literature, discriminatory language and negative stereotypes about disability continue to be present in a range of children's books, including some texts that are being recommended to schools. More *still* needs to be done to ensure that schools are provided with information relating to the best examples of 'inclusive'-type literature. Efforts must continue to be made to inform authors, publishers and illustrators about how to approach the issue of disability.

4.3. **Stage 2: Children's views**

4.3.1. The findings of year 6 children's mind-maps revealed that children tend to hold Medical or Tragedy Model understandings of disability (Oliver 1990) and associate disability with incapacity. Children connected the experience of disability with being '*hard*', '*horrible*' and '*lonely*'- sympathy being the general tone here.

4.3.2. Analysis of mind-maps also indicated that children are thinking about how 'we' (non-disabled people) ought to treat disabled people. Comments on this theme were varied. Some children stated that non-disabled people ought to '*care for*' and '*look after*' disabled people, while others focused upon the need to treat disabled people '*fairly*' and/or not bully them.

4.3.3. Wider discussions with both age-groups of children echoed the findings from the mind-maps, but also revealed additional information. We found that some, although not all, year 2 children had difficulty understanding the permanency of impairment (e.g. the difference between 'broken legs' and permanent mobility problems). A few year 6 children also found this distinction difficult. More importantly for this study, however (given that our focus is upon understandings of 'disability' and not 'impairment'), children demonstrated a preoccupation with the body as the site or source of the 'problem' of disability, thus providing more evidence of their tendency to understand disability in Medical Model terms. As an extension of this focus on the body, there was some suggestion that both age groups found the idea of 'different bodies' both fascinating and frightening. This response was, for some children, reinforced by their viewing of 'Body-Shock'-type TV documentaries. Television was found to be a major source of children's information about disabled people.

4.3.4. The 'incapacity' theme was also reinforced by focus group discussions - findings indicating that many children were uncertain about whether disabled people would be able to work, have relationships, get married or have children. These issues will be

considered in later publications. but indicatively, year 2 children tended to believe that disabled people would not be able to get married for 'practical' (as they see it) reasons such as being unable "*to get a ring that fits*", whilst at year 6, explanations focused upon perceptions that disabled people are not sexually attractive. Many children of both age groups stated that they did not think disabled people can be employed – this was the most frequent response - but some older children who were aware of disabling barriers in the labour market, stated that disabled people *should* be able to work, although were sometimes denied this opportunity. With regard to parenting, there was a marked tendency within both age groups to suggest that disabled people either could not or probably *should not* have children (with regard to the latter, some year 6 children were concerned that disabled people might "pass on" congenital impairments to their children).

- 4.3.5. Some discussion took place about 'famous' disabled people. Children clearly admired 'exceptional individuals' such as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Stephen Hawking. Of concern, however, was the fact that there was some divergence between children's positive response to these 'exceptional achievers' and their attitudes to disabled people as a wider group within society.
- 4.3.6. A final significant finding related to children's response to the question 'how do you think we should treat disabled people'? They stressed the importance of being 'kind'. To a degree, this is an extension of medical and/or tragedy model thinking – disabled people need 'our' (non-disabled) *care*. It was also clear, however, that some children were employing the term 'kind' to mean that we should treat disabled people *well or fairly*.
- 4.3.7. The first stage of analysis of the focus group data is complete, but analysis continues. We continue to explore some minor, though not insignificant differences between the responses of children in different schools. In particular, we will be examining whether children in schools with higher numbers of children who have 'SEN' have greater understanding of particular impairments and/or more positive attitudes towards disabled people (initial analysis suggests that this is sometimes the case, but not *always*). This additional stage of the analysis will be important because it will allow us to comment upon the extent to which a truly 'inclusive ethos' (Armstrong and Barton 2007; Thomas 1997) is being promoted in what purport to be 'inclusive classrooms'.
- 4.4. ***Conclusions and recommendations***
- 4.4.1. Misunderstandings about and negatives stereotypes of disabled people *are* expressed by the primary age-group. It *is* therefore possible to trace the origins of some disabling attitudes to childhood. We propose that these early articulations of disabling attitudes are part of a process of 'othering' disabled people that continues into adulthood. In subsequent publications these findings will be related to 'ingroup/outgroup' studies in the field of the Psychology of Prejudice (and Social Psychology) and to non-psychological theorising on the process of 'othering' (e.g. de Beauvoir [1949] 1968; Douglas 1966).

- 4.4.2. Whether children's negative stereotyping is symptomatic of prejudice 'proper' against disabled people is, however, less clear. As previously stated, there is considerable debate about the nature of prejudice. We favour Allport's (1954) definition of prejudice as existing when people continue to hold negative attitudes even when new knowledge that should challenge those attitudes is introduced. What is clear is that none of the children whom we met had received much information about the lives of disabled people. So in this sense, we would be wary of stating that we have uncovered 'prejudice' *per se*. Additionally, there was encouraging evidence that where children had received accurate information about the lives of disabled people and had been encouraged to engage critically with disabling barriers, this had had *some* positive impact upon their attitudes (e.g. encouraging them to consider whether the position of disabled people in society is always 'fair'). Further research is needed, however, to examine whether *all* of the negative stereotypes expressed diminish after children are properly informed.
- 4.4.3. We propose, however, that whilst sociologically interesting, firming-up this distinction is somewhat less important than acknowledging that many of the views expressed by children *are potentially disabling*. The implication of this conclusion is clear - whilst schools are not the only agents with responsibility here (families and the media *also* need to play their part), there are good reasons why they need to 'do more' in terms of teaching for disability equality.
- 4.4.4. That not all schools/teachers are currently doing enough in this regard, citing such things as uncertainty about *how* disability equality can be fitted into the curriculum or a reluctance to talk about disability for fear of highlighting 'difference', is therefore worrying. Overall, the survey findings suggest that schools' acceptance of, and progress in relation to, the DED has been slow and 'patchy'. Given that this conclusion only reflects the situation within respondent schools (presumably those that are at least prepared to engage *to some extent* with the issue of teaching for disability equality), we are concerned that acceptance and progress in relation to the DED within non-respondent schools may be even less. Encouragingly, the findings show that there *are* schools that manage to integrate and embed disability equality into their activities in ways that conform to the 'promoting positive attitudes' dimension of the DED. The question is how to encourage and help other schools to do the same.
- 4.4.5. There are clearly issues here for school leadership: Head-teachers need to be more aware of their responsibilities under the DED. Whilst many schools admitted that they 'could do better' in this regard, there is a tension between a willingness to improve and not having sufficient resources or training to facilitate more confident teaching. In the absence of these resources and training, we suggest that less confident teachers may be resorting to a series of explanations, including 'insufficient time', for why they are not doing more in terms of teaching for disability equality.
- 4.4.6. Resources and training are unlikely to resolve all the difficulties raised, however, not least because, as one respondent stated, what is learned about 'disability politics' at one point can quickly become dated. Alongside an attention to training, then, we suggest that the

DCSF needs to consider strategies for keeping teachers up-dated about disability equality issues.

- 4.4.7. Interestingly, in terms of potentially effective teaching strategies, where schools already know how to embed disability into the curriculum, teaching about disability is not perceived to be a 'burden'. Encouraging schools to embed disability into the curriculum (as is currently being recommended by Richard Rieser and the Children's Society) may indeed, therefore, be the best way forward, even for schools that are struggling with multiple challenges.
- 4.4.8. Schools would also value more support from the Disability Movement itself (e.g. visits to schools by members of disabled people's organizations [DPOs], and/or recommendation or provision of useful resources). We believe that these organizations have a pivotal role to play in supporting schools – they will, however, need adequate financial support and realistically, this can only come from the Government.
- 4.4.9. Finally, inspection must have a role to play here. Perhaps this could be achieved via greater OFSTED engagement with the DED. The new requirement placed upon state and state-funded schools to 'promote positive attitudes towards disabled people' was a welcome policy development. Many of the consequences of applying an apparently 'light-touch' to enforcing the DED have, however, been demonstrated by this research - not all schools engaged sufficiently with all dimensions of the DED and too many schools failed to have their Disability Equality Scheme in place by December 2007. For the Government to demonstrate a real commitment to promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people *through education*, then in addition to ensuring that schools receive more support to achieve this, they also need to become more rigorous in enforcing all aspects of the DED in schools.

5.0. Activities

- A paper – 'Inclusive Classrooms Need Inclusive Literature' – delivered at the Disability Studies Association Conference 2008.
- A guide to inclusive literature, sent to all respondent schools. Directors of Children's Services in English Local Authorities informed of the availability of this document on project websites.
- A validation event at the University of Leeds in July 2009, attended by advisors from the teaching profession, UK DPOs and academics from Disability Studies/Inclusive Education.
- Findings and conclusions discussed with Richard Rieser.
- Relevant findings accepted as evidence by the Lamb Inquiry into 'SEN' and Parental Confidence.
- A press release resulted in articles appearing in magazines e.g. *Disability Now* and online news sites or e-journals (e.g. *EmaxHealth*, *Inclusion Europe*). Press release:

[http://www.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/121/schools need to do more to tackle childrens misunderstanding of disability](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/121/schools%20need%20to%20do%20more%20to%20tackle%20childrens%20misunderstanding%20of%20disability)

- An End-of-Project Conference at Leeds University, September 2009, with delegates from the teaching profession; Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education; UK DPOs; disability equality trainers; local authorities; Disability Studies and Inclusive Education academics. Conference website:
<http://www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk/research/events/deeps-end-of-project-conference.php>

6.0. Outputs

Further academic articles relating to the findings are in progress. To date there are:

- Presentations on the findings, available on the project and ESRC Society Today websites. Project website:
<http://www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk/research/projects/deeps/>
- A Practitioner Guide: *Inclusion Literature. A Guide to Books for Disability Awareness*:
<http://www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/research/deeps/inclusionliteratureguide.pdf>
- Journal articles:

Beckett, A.E. (2009) 'Challenging disabling attitudes, building an inclusive society: considering the role of education in encouraging non-disabled children to develop positive attitudes towards disabled people', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30 (3), pp.317-329.

Beckett, A.E., N. Ellison, S. Barrett and S. Shah. (*forthcoming 2010*) "Away with the Fairies?" Disability within primary-age children's literature.', *Disability and Society*.

7.0 Impacts

Encouraging early signs of impact:

- Research findings were welcomed as evidence to the Lamb Inquiry (see para. 5.0.)
- Beckett will be contributing a chapter on the research findings to an Open University edited collection on the 'role of the SENCO', commissioned to be the key text for the new National Award for SEN Co-ordination (Hallett, G. and Hallet, F. *forthcoming 2010*).
- Working relationships have developed between investigators and a) Richard Rieser and b) the Children's Society. Beckett has been invited to be a member of the steering group for Rieser's new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority-funded project in a related area. Collaborative research bids are in progress that aim to extend the DEEPS Project.
- Beckett submitted a related funding application to the Leverhulme Foundation, with a colleague from the Institute of Engineering Systems and Design, University of Leeds, to explore ways to facilitate meaningful play between disabled and non-disabled children.

8.0 Future Research Priorities

- There is a need to extend this research to explore similar questions with secondary school teachers and students.
- There is a need for action-research projects that work with teachers, at primary and secondary levels, to develop and evaluate ways of promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.

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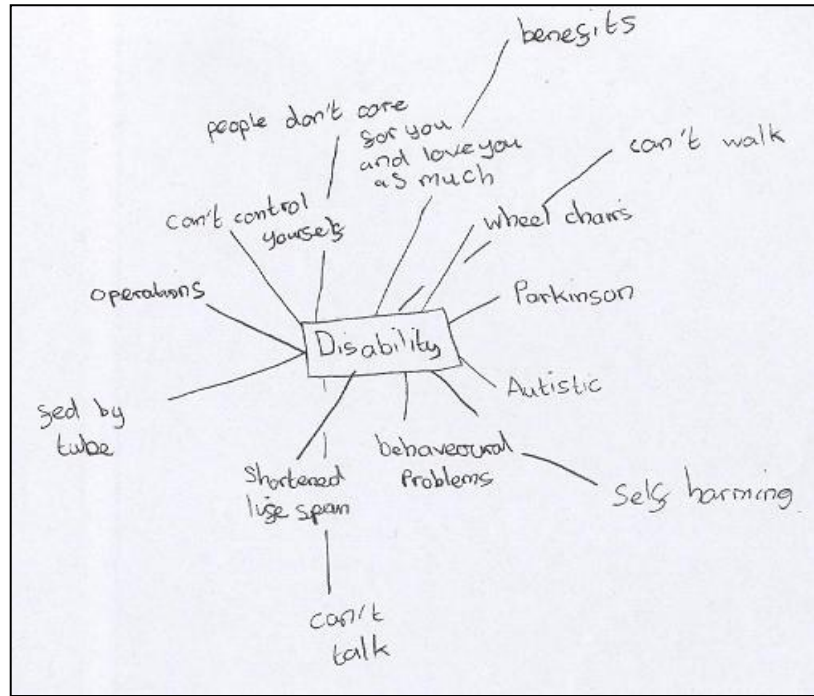
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Appendix 1: case study schools

School	Cluster	Area	Questionnaire Responses of Interest
A	3	Lancashire	Indicated that teaching for disability equality took place less frequently within school than teaching for 'race' or gender equality. Minimal resources. Stated that a disabled child attending school is their 'best resource'.
B	1	N.Yorkshire	Stated disability brought into SEAL, but not embedded in wider curriculum. Mentioned interesting resources.
C	3	Midlands	Stated did embed disability into curriculum, but believed not really enough time/scope to do this. No inclusive-type books held, but did possess interesting action-pack.
D	1	London	Stated embedded disability into curriculum. Indicated finding it difficult to find good resources (books).
E	2	W.Yorkshire	Stated not enough time/scope within curriculum to teach for disability equality. School's DES does not include strategy to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. Indicated 'could do more'.
F	2	Cheshire	Stated that 'as a resourced primary school disability awareness is intrinsic to our core values'.

Appendix 2: two example mind-maps drawn by year 6 children (aged 10/11 yrs)

Example 1: School A



Example 2: School B

