ISBN Number to follow

Survey of parents and carers of disabled children and young people in Great Britain

Final report: Part 1 (Main report)

June 2006

Funded by the Disability Rights Commission

CONFIDENTIAL

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Acknowledgements

Our thanks to colleagues at the DRC: Lisa Boardman, Catherine Casserley, Jo Ferrie, Kathleen Jameson, Steve Haines, Chih Hoong Sin, Janice Fong, Anne Greagsby, Caroline Johnson, Colin MacFarlane and (at the start of the project) Louca Mai Wilson for their continuing support and lively exchange of ideas.

This project has involved a large team at the University of Birmingham in addition to the authors of this report. In particular, our thanks to: Julie Foster, Liz Potts and Lin Walsh for administrative and secretarial support; Tony Fielding for specialist statistical advice, Paul Edwards for e-survey expertise; and Buddug Griffiths for advice concerning the Welsh translations.

In addition we have benefited from continuing and challenging discussions about this work with the core members of our advisory group: Louise Niblett and Jeremy Sharpe.

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Glossary

CEHR	Commission for Equality and Human Rights
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
DSD	Children with disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties
Extended schools	Proposed by the DfES in June 2005; schools in England to offer ‘high quality childcare’ from 8.00am to 6.00pm with a varied menu of before- and after-school activities.
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LEA/LA	Local Education Authority (often referred to as Local Authority following the introduction of integrated Children’s Services)
List	Term used in Scotland for pupils identified as having additional learning needs (analogous to the special needs register in England). Note that during the project, *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice* was implemented in Scotland and this introduces significant changes in terminology
Parent	The term ‘parents’ is used throughout to encompass parents and carers
Record of need	Term used in Scotland for pupils identified as having additional learning needs requiring specialised support additional to that routinely provided by the school (analogous to the statement of SEN in England). Note that during the project, *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice* was implemented in Scotland and this introduces significant changes in terminology. In 2005 the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act introduced the removal of the Record of Needs and the introduction of the new co-ordinated support plan alongside the new concept of ‘additional suppport needs’ which is wider and more encompassing than ‘special educational needs’.
Register	Term used in England for pupils identified as having special educational needs (analogous to the ‘list’ for special needs in Scotland); previously described as the first stage in assessing and meeting special needs
School Year	See Appendix, Table 45 for England, Wales and Scotland equivalents
SENDA	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
Statement	Term used in England for pupils identified as having special educational needs requiring specialised support additional to that routinely provided by the school (analogous to the record of need in Scotland)

Summary

(Relevant page numbers in square brackets; Ap=appendices)

Sampling and sample

1. Six geographical areas were selected to reflect a spread of GB regions: four in England (two urban, one urban/rural, one rural); one mixed urban/rural area in Wales and one urban area in Scotland. A sample of secondary, primary, special schools and colleges were identified in each of these regions and 7200 postal questionnaires were distributed, via these establishments, between November 2005 and March 2006 to parents/carers of pupils. (Note - by design this included many parents of children without formally designated special needs although the questionnaire explicitly focused on disability or special needs.) [51 and Ap 1.1, 1.2]

2. We received 1776 valid returns by 31 March 06. These were split across the three countries (England 79.3%, Scotland 6.8%, Wales 13.9%). The full spectrum of parental occupational groups was represented with (compared with national data) a slight bias towards modern professional occupations. A wide range of minority ethnic groups were represented (86.8% of all returns were from people in white ethnic groups, 2.1% from mixed ethnic groups, 6.6% from Asian ethnic groups and 2.4% from black ethnic groups). [52-63 and Ap 1.1 and 1.2]

3. A method of disproportionate stratified sampling was used in order to target the survey at sufficient numbers of families within three strata. We had returns from entire cohorts of mainstream educational establishments (77.4%), parents of pupils on the school's SEN register/record of need (8.7%) and entire cohorts in special schools (13.9%). [51-56 and Ap 1.2]

4. Within these strata, four age groups, varying slightly by GB country, were targeted, as follows (returns in brackets): 9-11 year

olds (27.6%); 11-12 year olds (35.8%); 15-16 year olds (22.9%) and 16-18 year olds (13.7%). These age groups were selected as they are either side of key transition points and therefore, from research and policy literature, known to be significant in shaping life chances. [51-56 and Ap 1.2]

Disabled children, children with special needs and children with difficulties

5. Around one third of the returns were from parents/carers of pupils with difficulties and/or SEN and/or disabilities. The special needs sample was in line with national norms for this group in terms of pattern of difficulty (e.g. most had a learning difficulty/disability while relatively few had sensory needs), incidence of free school meals (32.9%), a bias towards boys (60.3%) and pupils who had been excluded (9.4%). This supports the reliability of the sampling strategy. [64-65 and Ap 3.1]

6. Disabled children, children with special needs and children with difficulties ('DSD' in short) represent overlapping groups with distinctive sub groups within them. Only 40% of our parents described their child as coming into all three of these groups. Perhaps surprisingly, one third of parents of children with special needs (35%) (including parents of pupils in special schools) described their children as having special needs but not disabilities. Therefore policy, provision and legislation aimed at a particular sub group may not be seen by parents as applicable to others. The recent introduction of terms such as 'additional needs', albeit a term introduced for positive reasons, compounds the problems. This presents a considerable challenge in the context of disability. [15-16, 64-73 and Ap 3.1 and 4]

7. The types of difficulties or conditions varied across mainstream and special school strata. Broadly, behavioural problems (clustered) occurred more frequently in the mainstream stratum

(42.2% of all there) while language/ autism and sensory needs were found more often among the special school stratum (45.9% and 30.5% of all there, respectively). [73-79]

Parental attitudes to causes of disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties

8. The large majority of parents of pupils in the DSD group perceived those problems or conditions as primarily reflecting ‘just the way she/he is’ (62.9% strongly agreeing /agreeing). That is, for the most part, the child’s difficulties were not being attributed to the school or other social context. While this applied across all strata, it was strongest for the special school group (the percentages of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that DSD were caused by ‘the way the child is’ were 80.4%, 57.0% and 48.9% for the special school, register or list, and mainstream groups respectively). [78-83]

Choice and satisfaction with schools

9. Parents (particularly those of children without disabilities, special needs or difficulties) were generally well satisfied with their child’s schooling. 86% of all parents surveyed were satisfied with the way the school treated their child and under 5% were not satisfied. This finding applied across a range of satisfaction measures and is in line with other research. This was unrelated to deprivation. Free text comments pointed to considerable efforts from many mainstream schools in fostering inclusion, moving beyond merely increasing physical access, and indicating greater progress towards inclusive schools than was suggested in OFSTED’s (2004) report. [83-97 and Ap 3.5]

10. In relative terms, there was a small but consistent difference between DSD (disabilities, special needs or difficulties) and non DSD groups concerning satisfaction and choice in school. In each case the non DSD group was significantly more positive,

33.6% of those with DSD and 43.7% of parents of those without DSD strongly agreed with a range of satisfaction questions. [83 and Ap 3.1]

11. However parents of children with statements or record of needs were less likely than other DSD group parents to say that the school was the cause of difficulties (11.6% of parents of children with statements and 21.0% of those without agreed). Similarly (using a clustered satisfaction measure) parents who perceived their child as having special needs but did not have a statement or record of need were less positive about their child's progress. [83-86, Ap 3.2]

12. The parents of the DSD group were less likely than other parents to feel that they had sufficient information to inform their choice of school or that they were able to do so (approximately 60% compared with 80% respectively). [87]

13. Parents of pupils in special schools were particularly satisfied with their children's experiences of schooling. 48% of this group strongly agreed with a range of satisfaction questions, compared with 40% mainstream and 26% list or register doing so. Overall, special school parents were statistically less likely than other parents to see the system as hindering their child's progress and more likely to see the child's disability or special need as hindering progress. [84 and Ap 3.3]

14. Parents of pupils in the DSD group, particularly those in special schools, believed that teachers encouraged their child to aim high. (79.1% for special school group compared with 62.5% (mainstream parents) and 59.3% (register/list parents) agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was so. [97-8]

Awareness of the DDA and special needs

15. Awareness of the DDA has, by extrapolation, increased considerably among parents in the last few years. Nearly 60% of our parents were aware of the DDA. However knowledge of the detailed impact of the DDA was lacking, even among parents of disabled children. Lack of knowledge was greatest among those in deprived communities. [21-26, 99-105 and Ap 3.3]

16. Nearly 40% of parents had asked the school to make changes for their child. Parents who had heard of the DDA were more likely than were other parents to ask the school to make changes in order to help the child overcome difficulties (57% of those requesting a change had heard of the DDA) [102].

17. Compared with other ethnic groups, fewer Asians were aware of the DDA (31% having heard of it compared with 50%-62% for other ethnic groups) [104-105].

18. Lack of awareness of the DDA and DRC may go with a more general lack of visibility about special needs and disability. A minority of parents (particularly of boys) reported not knowing their child's status in relation to SEN or disability (for example, overall just over 5% did not know whether their child had an SEN statement or record of need). One might expect that parents of children on the school's SEN list or register may be comparatively unaware of their child having special needs. This was the case with nearly half (42%) of all these parents describing their child as not having special needs. [65]

Inclusivity and accessibility

19. Schools were generally doing well, in parents' views, in terms of including all children in extra-curricular activities. Nearly 70% of the DSD group parents disagreed with the statement that the child's difficulties stopped the child from doing extra activities run by the school. The evolving contexts of extended schools in

England, community schools in Wales and ‘new community schools’ in Scotland will warrant scrutiny in this connection. [97]

20. In general, there were much greater concerns about post school life and opportunities, from parents whose children had disabilities, special needs or difficulties, than there were with schooling. These concerns were echoed by our Advisory Group. Almost half of the parents of pupils in the DSD group felt that these DSD would stop the child from getting a good job. (44.6% agreed/strongly agreed that ‘My child’s difficulties will stop him/her getting a good job.’ while 36.5% disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement.) The notion of community-specific resilient trajectories provides a potentially helpful way of looking at issues around autonomy, independence and aspirations of children/young people with disabilities. [43-44, 97, 111-115]

21. In the light of the balance of parents’ responses concerning the perceived strengths and limitations in the current system set against views concerning their child’s difficulties, we propose an equity-based framework as a re-conceptualisation of inclusion. Such a model neither over-individualises difficulties nor locates these solely as social constructs. Rather, it acknowledges the importance of addressing educational inequality, but recognises that this can only be reduced partially through the ensuring of educational entitlements. [38-40, 111-115 and Ap 4]

Illustrative quotes from parents

Finally the last word here should go to parents: asked at the end of the questionnaire to add anything else they wished to say, they wrote strongly – both of concerns and triumphs, for example:

> *Does the government really care about our views? If they really did care about disabled children why are they always treated second class? I.e. Parents have to*

> *fight the LEA for SEN statements, no help from social services, lack of special schools. No play-schemes, no respite homes to give parents a break. I feel if the government really want to know parents views all parents who have a disabled child should have a questionnaire.*

> *Our school is doing its best to help [our child] and even organised a event at lunch time for her to go to. This is to help her with her activities. There should be more survey's like this one in order for parents to air there views.*

Note about context:

The emphasis in this survey was on parent/carer views; these will be supplemented with pupil views from the subsequent, linked case studies. The report from that work will be published in autumn 2006 alongside the report concerning the role of the advisory group of disabled young people.

This highlights a possible disjunction at legislative, policy and practice levels between the views of parents and those of their children; where these concur this is not an issue. However children and young people with special needs or disabilities may hold views which conflict with those of their parents and this is reflected in the rationale behind our parallel case studies.

This report outlines research funded by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and undertaken between August 2005 and April 2006, by a team based at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. It followed from phase 1 (August 2004-March 2005) research on the experiences of disabled pupils and their families. Reports on phase 1 (which concerned particularly the development of methods and sampling) can be found on the University of Birmingham (School of Education) and DRC websites (see below).

http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/aboutus/profiles/inclusion/projects_and_seminars/drc/DRC_project.doc

http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/campaigndetails.asp?section=att&id=519

Note:

The parent survey was part of three linked projects. These included an advisory group of disabled people who commented on the survey (processes, findings etc) at regular intervals and discussed their views with the core research team. The advisory group will be the focus of a separate report (summer 2006).

Recommendations
(Relevant summary point(s) in square brackets)

1. Clarification is needed concerning definitions of disability contrasted with special needs, their places in respective legislation and polices; and this information communicated to parents as well as professionals across children's services. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC)/ Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) could take a lead in reviewing, coordinating and developing a clear, coherent and acceptable framework and reference point concerning disability terminology which has currency across phases of education and across children's services. [6]

2. Parents' positive messages should be conveyed to professionals in the field alongside support for further increasing of inclusive practices and an 'un-picking' of satisfaction levels (for example, linked to avoiding under-expectation among parents) to avoid complacency. [9]

3. The balance between school-based responsibility and local authority responsibility warrants scrutiny, particularly in the cross GB context given some evidence (and echoed in our regional discussions) that in Scotland and Wales, compared with England, the balance of responsibility concerning special needs and disability is perceived as resting more with schools than with the local authorities. If this is the case, then greater attention needs to be given to supporting as well as challenging schools in their efforts to develop more effective inclusive practice. [9]

4. A public information campaign moving beyond awareness raising in the disability context is needed. Such a campaign might begin with targeting parents of children with disabilities, special needs or difficulties at transition points in their education (eg on starting school, and at year 6/7 in England and Wales, primary 7/secondary 1 in Scotland), in deprived communities and among Asian families. Ultimately all parents need to receive

clear and straightforward summary information (perhaps) via schools and other everyday contexts such as doctors' surgeries in the form of a simple and accessible leaflet. Difficulties and disability may affect children at different stages in their lives and so all parents need to know their rights in these contexts. [8] [11] [12] [15]

5. The evolving approaches in Scotland and Wales around SEN, disability, and additional support for learning warrant detailed monitoring and evaluation in terms of their impact on equitable and inclusive practices. It would be useful for this to be an integral part of the agenda for the CEHR, Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly. [19]

6. More specifically, systematic research needs to be carried out across England, Scotland and Wales to evaluate the working of schools operating various forms of an extended day to explore the impact of these developments on all children. [19]

7. Given the very strong and recurrently demonstrated association between special needs or disability and deprivation, particular attention needs to be given to these and extended schools in deprived communities. Links between school based extension activities and more community based activities aimed at increasing social inclusion (participation) warrant further study across GB. [5] [19]

8. The roles and potential of parent partnership services, and related voluntary sector services, to support families in a broad range of ways, warrants further discussion. This is particularly the case for families in deprived communities. [19]

9. Factors underlying parents' positive response to special schools could usefully be detailed as a means, through their generalisation, of enhancing provision across special and mainstream schools. This could include examining the features

associated with perceived success (eg these might, for example, include assessment and monitoring of pupils, curricular breadth, extra-curricular activities, home-school relationships). [13] [14]

10. Systematic examination of the basis and validity of parental concerns about post school opportunities are needed and policy incentives for equality of occupational and community-based opportunities reviewed. [20]

11. Resilience as a key organising feature (emerging here and in current case studies) warrants development as a way of understanding ways to foster inclusiveness in schools and society more fully. For example, protective factors might be examined across the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) concerns including through a systematic review of evidence and community-focused intervention studies. The DRC/CEHR might also look more closely (GB wide) at links between schooling and social inclusion (for example, as noted in Phase 1, the roles of faith and cultural groups). [5] [20]

12. It would be helpful to a range of stakeholders for a key body such as the DRC or CEHR to lead discussion about the development and application of an equity-focused approach to inclusion. Such an approach should connect practices in schools, or other formal education settings, to the broader concept of social inclusion and the contexts in which this is fostered. The implications of this equity-focused approach to inclusion would then need to be conveyed clearly and accessibly to parents and carers, and to education professionals. [7] [8] [21]

1. Remit: Objectives and themes

This report outlines research funded by the DRC and undertaken between August 2005 and April 2006, by a team based at the University of Birmingham, School of Education. It followed from phase 1 research on the experiences of disabled pupils and their families (August 2004-March 2005) (Lewis, Robertson and Parsons 2005). Reports on phase 1 (which concerned particularly the development of methods and sampling) can be found on the University of Birmingham (School of Education) and DRC websites.

The survey of parents and carers of disabled children in Great Britain (GB) reported here is part of the phase 2 work, carried out in tandem with related case studies (focusing on 40 pupils GB wide) and the advisory group of disabled young people. Reports from those parallel projects will be published in autumn 2006.

The primary interest of this project was in the views of parents and carers of disabled children (note - not ‘special educational needs’ only). The survey was referenced to DRC’s five key themes: knowledge and assertion of rights, experience of accessible/inaccessible educational services and environments, attitudes and behaviour, independence and autonomy, and ambitions and aspirations; elaborated below.

1.1 Main project objectives in relation to the national survey (GB wide) of parents/carers of disabled pupils.

To inform the education work of the DRC by:

- Identifying key issues faced by the parents or carers of young disabled people in relation to experiences of their child's education, and exploring their views and experiences;
- Identifying the barriers faced by young disabled people in education, and ways of overcoming these barriers;
- Providing evidence of prejudice and discrimination in education;
- Ascertaining the factors that young disabled people and their parents or carers associate with positive experiences of educational institutions (and related services);
- Identifying key issues concerning young disabled people's experiences of education in England, Scotland and Wales;
- Linking the findings from the research with those from previous DRC and other relevant research.

1.2 Main themes to be addressed

- Independence and autonomy (eg role of parents/carers/teaching assistants as advocates, experience of involvement in decisions and choice).
- Ambition and aspirations (eg perceived impact of impairment and attitudes on career aspirations).
- Knowledge and assertion of rights (eg disability identity, knowledge of rights and the DDA).
- Experience of accessible/inaccessible educational services and environments (eg building design/layout, curriculum and qualifications, school travel and trips).
- Attitudes and behaviours (eg impact of attitudes to disability of parents/carers, peers, teachers and other school staff; impact of bullying).

2. Discussion

This survey has generated a large dataset (N=1776) spanning parents/carers of a range of children/young people (across Great Britain) with, or without, disabilities, special educational needs (SEN) or difficulties, in mainstream or special education. Thus this database, as well as providing information about pupils in these groups, enables comparisons to be made with the views of parents of other pupils. We start this discussion with consideration of parents of children with disabilities, special needs or difficulties and, where appropriate, make comparisons with parents of other children. We then discuss findings with reference to the DRC's key themes (see above), followed by examination of specific matters concerning Scotland or Wales. Finally, bearing in mind the CEHR's wider remit, we discuss briefly wider matters concerning gender and ethnicity.

Note: For ease of reference we refer to five groups, as drawn from the survey findings: disabled children; children with special educational needs (SEN); children with difficulties (note these may be children not included in the 'disabled' or 'SEN' groups, for example, when those children's difficulties are described by parents as stemming from domestic problems); children with DSD (disabled, special needs and/or children with difficulties) - this represents the above three groups combined and has been used in some analyses to make comparisons with the non DSD group; and all children – used in some analyses, particularly when non-DSD variables such as gender or ethnicity are being considered.

2.1 Children with disabilities, special needs or difficulties (DSD)

Disability compared with special needs

The survey highlighted the complexity of terminology and perceptions in the disability and special needs contexts. We identified four main pupil groups: first, those children described by their parents as being disabled. A second group were those children (many of whom had a statement of SEN) described by their parents as having special needs. A third group were those described by their parents as having difficulties which were often neither special needs nor disabilities, suggesting some other source of problems (such as domestic difficulties) which were impacting on the child.

Overall, about one third of parents responding to our survey described their children as having disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties. We use the collective acronym DSD (disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties) when referring to these groups and (our fourth group) 'non-DSD' to refer to other children.

Our use of the umbrella term 'DSD' for the collective group (n=614, 35% of all respondents) masks the extent of overlap between its three parts which generated seven sub-groups, shown later in a Venn diagram (figure 1 section 6.1). While 40% of parents in our DSD group described their children as having difficulties **and** special needs **and** also disabilities, 60% of our DSD group did not do so, thus differentiating between these sub-groups. Virtually all parents (94%) who described their children as having disabilities also described those children as having special needs. The converse was not the case. Perhaps surprisingly, one third of parents of children with special needs (35%) (including parents of pupils in special schools) described their children as having special needs but not disabilities. This mismatch between SEN and disability suggests that in parental perceptions these represent different characteristics (with, for parents, SEN a more global term). The intention of SENDA was for education and disability based legislation to fit coherently together but our findings suggest that this is not filtering through to parents.

An illustration concerns mental health difficulties as these are sometimes cited as illustrating disability but not special needs. 24 parents reported their children as having mental health difficulties; 9 of these said their child was disabled, and 12 indicated special needs. It should be noted that 13 were from special schools, and the average number of difficulties for these 24 children was 3.6: so, in general, they were children with multiple difficulties.

The disability legislation addresses disability explicitly but not special needs so if there is a gap between the groups then those not having a ‘disability’ are in a legal sense falling outside the direct focus of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Meanwhile, the education legislation addresses (albeit for historical rather than conceptual reasons), in terms of legal rights to provision, only those with a statement of SEN (Miller et al 2005).

So the apparently straightforward starting point of identifying the special needs group in whom we were interested showed at the outset that this is not a simple matter. Anticipation of this underpinned our sampling decision to target whole cohorts of children, not only pupils formally identified as having special needs. This sampling decision led to considerable complexities in the research design but has resulted in illuminating the DSD group in relation to parental perceptions in an interesting and innovative way. The importance of this is not only methodological but has implications for the operationalising of ‘special needs’, for example, it might be argued that the definition, and hence provision, concerning ‘special needs’ should be broadened to encompass the wider group of children having difficulties. However, in contrast, the trend across GB following from the second SEN Code of

Practice (DfES 2001) has been to emphasise an individualised response to all children (now highlighted through the ‘personalisation’ agenda (Leadbeater 2004, 2005)).

Under-stating special needs at early levels

Such a trend is difficult to capture but schools seem to be moving in this direction and our sampling process illustrated this in an unexpected way. In those schools surveyed only in relation to pupils on their SEN register or list, half (50%) of all those parents described their child as not having special needs. This seemed slightly odd given that those children were, by definition, described by schools as having special needs. Reflecting this, some schools approached about register/list-only survey distribution declined to do this for ethical reasons ie while they were happy to distribute surveys to all parents they did not wish to explicitly identify only pupils on the register/list. So, at an early level (register/list) schools might choose to take an open, clearly articulated decision not to explicitly describe a child to their parents as having special needs. This is relevant here because of possible direct links with the views of those parents about their own child’s schooling as well as their perceptions concerning related policy, legislation and provision more generally.

Characteristics of the DSD groups

Overall, the characteristics of the DSD group were in line with other national surveys. These striking consistencies support the validity and reliability of our questionnaire and sampling process. For example, boys and pupils having free school meals were both over-represented in the DSD group compared with either our non-DSD sample or the school population as a whole (ie other surveys). (38% of boys, and 30% of girls, were in the DSD group. 66% of those receiving free school meals, compared with only 29% of those without free school meals, indicated a DSD). Again, children in the DSD group tended to come from more deprived areas (using the Index of Multiple Deprivation [IMD]) than did other children. Similarly, other studies have found that pupils with SEN are considerably over-represented in exclusions. This pattern was also found in our data; 75% of those who had been excluded, compared with 32% of those who had not been excluded, were reported to have a DSD.

In terms of parental occupation our special school sample was in line with national population norms but the mainstream and register samples were both slightly skewed towards professional/ managerial occupations. If DSD groups, rather than strata (ie mainstream/special/ register) are considered then this broad pattern is seen again with more DSD in the manual groups (43%) compared with professional/ managerial (29%), clerical (26%), or technical (30%) groups.

A simple comparison across our six areas showed large differences with 66% of parents from one highly urbanised area having children with a DSD but only 18% having DSD in one of our rural areas. Re-analyses by postcode enabled more detailed conclusions to be drawn. The greatest ratio of DSD to non DSD respondents occurred in small urban areas (44%:56%) although numbers are very small (0.6% of sample). In large urban areas (in which most of the sample resided, 62% of sample), the ratio of pupils with DSD compared with non DSD for our respondents was 40%:60%. The picture was very similar across the GB countries.

There are links between deprivation and the incidence of free school meals although the limitations of this as a proxy indicator for deprivation have been acknowledged elsewhere. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, see statistical note in appendix 3) showed, as expected, that the DSD group lived in more deprived areas than did the non DSD group. This was also true of pupils who had been excluded from school (a substantial and statistically significant association).

The range of ethnic groups identified (37 different written in groups in addition to those given as options in the survey question) showed that we were sampling a wide range of ethnic and linguistic groups. However numbers within particular groups were small so we are cautious about over-interpreting low numbers. Percentages of black and minority ethnic (BME) pupils in our samples were 9.9% (mainstream), 16.2% (register) and 29.7% (special school). This reflects a slight bias away from BME groups in the mainstream and towards BME groups in the special school samples. Given overall links between occupation and ethnicity, this is consistent with the slight occupational bias mentioned earlier Note, an exception to this general pattern were DSD group pupils from black ethnic minority groups. These were, by comparison with other BME groups, over represented in professional/managerial occupations. Overall, BME groups were more likely to report having a DSD than were white ethnic groups, as recorded in the census categories used. 53% of the Asian groups, 44% of the mixed ethnic groups, 38% of the black groups and 33% of the white groups were identified by parents as having a DSD.

Analyses of factors associated with DSD suggest that there is an interaction with age; that is, broadly, the older the child, the less likely were parents to report the child as having DSD. This suggests that a comparatively heavy emphasis was placed on identifying problems or conditions for younger children and/or that these declined with age and/or that younger people became more adept at concealing these problems from their parents. Young people’s apparently diminishing DSD with age may in part reflect a survival strategy of, sensing or suspecting prejudice against people with difficulties in the wider world beyond school, playing down such difficulties. Interestingly this pattern applied across years 5/6 (primary 6/7 in Scotland), 11 (secondary 4 in Scotland) and 12/13 (secondary 5/6 in Scotland) but for year 7 (secondary 1 in Scotland) there was a lower than expected percentage with DSD. This may reflect a sense of a ‘fresh’ start following the move to secondary schooling and is considered further later in relation to transition between schools.

Pupils in special schools

As might be expected, parents of pupils in special schools were much more likely than other parents to describe their child as having multiple problems or conditions. However this was not the only difference concerning these pupils. The types of problems or conditions varied across mainstream and special school strata. Broadly, behavioural problems (clustered) occurred more frequently in mainstream schools while language/autism and sensory needs were found more often among special school pupils. Should we be taken aback by this? There are various interpretations. One view may be that incidence of behavioural problems and/or intolerance towards these is growing in relation to mainstream children who would not otherwise be considered to have special needs. Another view is that pupils with autism, in particular, require the environment of a special school. The social model of disability would point to such contextual features, rather than within child factors, to explain these distributions.

Children with statements

A sub-group of children with special needs are those with statements of SEN. Statements, as a proportion of the number of pupils on roll has declined steadily since 2001 with a year on year decrease in the issuing of new statements of 27% between 1997 and 2004 (DFES 2006a, 2006b). This was reflected in our findings; 15.8% (n=280) of our respondents had children who had a current statement and a further 2.4% (n=42) had had a statement in the past which had now ended. A very much smaller percentage (0.2%, n=4) had a statement pending. The balance between these two last sets of figures is in line with the recent trend to cease statements and also to speed up the making of statements.

By definition, the statement (and its specified provision) is required to enable the child's educational needs to be met. If statements are being withdrawn prematurely then one would expect the group of parents whose children had once received, but had now had ceased the statement, to be comparatively dissatisfied. (Note - we did not ask how long ago the statement had ended.) This was not borne out by the data; rather, the large majority (approximately 72%) of parents whose children no longer had a statement described themselves as agreeing (or strongly agreeing) that the school treated their child well and that the child was making good progress. This generally positive stance chimed with good levels of satisfaction with schools (see below).

2.2 Knowledge and assertion of rights

Knowledge and awareness of the DDA and DRC generally

Overall, just over half (57%) of the parents surveyed were reportedly aware of the DDA and slightly fewer (45%) were aware of the DRC. There was an association between awareness of the DDA and the DRC with occupational background, perhaps suggesting a third factor, such as educational level. So taking occupational groups, the percentage within each group (total sample) having heard of the DDA was 75% (professional/managerial), 57% (clerical), 56% (technical) and 37% (manual). A very similar but sharper pattern applied in relation to awareness of the DRC (60%, 48%, 37% and 26% for each occupational group respectively). Similarly, those who were aware of the DDA or DRC were from less deprived areas. This has implications for how and where the DRC and CEHR target information about disability discrimination.

Lack of awareness of special needs or disability

Lack of awareness of the DDA and DRC may go with a more general lack of visibility about special needs and disability. Perhaps it is not surprising that some parents were unaware that their child was on the SEN register/list (see above). More unexpectedly, a minority of parents (particularly of boys) reported not knowing their child’s status in relation to SEN or disability (for example, overall just over 5% did not know whether their child had an SEN statement or record of need). More perplexingly, given that one would expect virtually all special school pupils to have a statement or a record of need, over 10% of parents of special school pupils did not know whether their child had a statement/record of need. Just under 4% of the parents did not know whether their child had a disability. This would suggest that in those cases parents were either not involved in annual reviews associated with statement/record of need or that, although involved, they did not associate these events with special needs or disability or the statement/record of need. It may have been the case that in some schools this disjunction was made deliberately and with good intentions not to ‘alarm’ parents. Given the gender bias concerning uncertainty about special needs, these findings may also reflect genuine uncertainty about what is to be expected of children, particularly boys; given the media portrayals which tend to problematise their behaviour.

Awareness and school transitions

Another feature which one might guess to be associated with awareness of the DDA is school transition. We found support for this hypothesis with significantly more year 7 (ie post secondary school transition) parents (50%) saying that they knew the DDA applied to schools than had year 5/6 parents (41%). There could have been due to a cohort effect which was reflected in this change as it was not the same parents being surveyed at the two stages. However the statistical significance of this finding (see statistical note in appendix 3) indicates that it is more robust than merely a cohort effect. This finding suggests that it may be particularly valuable to target parents at the transition phases with information about the DDA and related legislation as those points coincide with a reappraisal of their children’s education. This also links with our earlier note about lower DSD in year 7 (secondary 1 in Scotland).

Awareness of the DDA/DRC for parents of disabled children

One might expect that parents of disabled children would be more aware of the DDA and the DRC than would be other groups. However this was **not** the case (55% of parents of disabled children were aware of the DDA and 42% had heard of the DRC). Slightly lower figures applied to parents of children with SEN (52% being aware of the DDA and 40% having heard of the DRC). These points hold even though the numbers (across all strata) saying they were aware of the DDA or the DRC may be an over-estimate as the response bias would be to proffer agreement. Interestingly, there was some association with numbers of problems or conditions; for example, parents of children with more than five sorts of difficulty were slightly more likely than parents of a child who had only one difficulty, to be aware of the DDA. We did not ask about siblings and special needs but it is possible that families with a child having multiple difficulties were also more likely to have several children with such difficulties (eg reflecting a genetic component). In which case, parents may have had a history of seeking appropriate provision and so more likely to know of the DDA.

There is some evidence, by implication, that awareness of the DDA by parents of disabled children is improving. By comparison with the figures above, a web-based survey by Contact a Family (2003), presumably also mainly of parents of disabled children and asking a very similar question, found that around one third of respondents described themselves as aware of disability discrimination laws in education. At about the same time, the Disability Rights Commission in Scotland (DRC (Scotland) 2003) found that just over three quarters of respondents were unaware of new duties under part III of the DDA.

However despite this improvement, one interpretation of these results is that awareness and knowledge of the DDA is, in particular, not reaching the groups who may be most directly affected by it personally. This suggests that a vigorous campaign about the DDA is needed and directed at communications, services and places, accessed by those families specifically (such as health, child care and youth services). The government and its agencies, local authorities and schools have an important task in increasing understanding and awareness at school and community levels concerning SEN and disability. The DFES pack *Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years Settings*, which looks at the accessibility planning and reasonable adjustment duties, as well as the Disability Equality Duty, has the potential to provide vital starting points for the development of such understanding. Their use warrants careful monitoring and evaluation as the decline in the traditional SEN infrastructure in local authorities and changing patterns of children's services mean that new conduits need to be developed. For example, Special Educational Needs Co ordinator (SENCO) networks, specific personnel in children's services or parent partnerships in England might be used to target relevant families and sustain the impact of such materials.

Assertion of rights related to DDA

So far in this discussion we have focused on matters relating to knowledge of disability or special needs - what did our survey reveal in relation to parents' assertion of their rights in the disability context?

In contrast to awareness of the DDA (above), evaluative judgements about the impact of the DDA (for example, asked about degree of agreement with the statement 'The DDA has improved how schools treat disabled children') showed little difference across occupational groups in terms of the proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing (around four fifths in all occupational groups). This suggests wide support for the impact of the DDA at least at this rather abstract level. Tougher questions are to ask directly about whether the parent's own child's school has worked hard to implement the DDA and whether their own child has been helped by the DDA. Here again (although there was less strong support for the statements) the consistency of response across occupational groups was striking, suggesting that (reportedly) it has not impacted differentially across occupational groups. This suggests, reassuringly, that although parent groups differed (by occupation) in their **awareness** of the DDA, its **impact** was not perceived differentially across these groups.

Only just over half of the parent group with disabled children reported that they knew how the DDA helped their child at school. Overall, the written-in comments (question 9h) revealed a 50-50 split between parents who did not know about the Act (or thought it made no difference) and those who were more positive about its impact. It is encouraging that some parents reported a greater sense of empowerment for themselves and support for their children as a result of the legislation. It is important to note though, that many of the more positive comments were balanced, or qualified, with further statements. These indicated, first, that the impact of the Act was patchy and, second, that it did not address all the challenges and needs. This suggests that the legislation is taking time to filter through both in terms of awareness/knowledge and in relation to its practical implications in schools and the wider community. This point was endorsed independently by our advisory group (see their commentary).

Additionally, a few parents suggested explicitly that the legislation did not apply, or was of limited relevance, to people with learning disabilities; the focus being thought to be on physical disabilities. This is clearly a key area that will need to be addressed in the dissemination of information to parents/carers about the DDA. It was striking that among responses to question 12 (inviting any further comment) were some powerful references to the DDA and rights. For example, three parents wrote:

> *Please can you send some information on DDA. I am having problems for adapting the council property where we live, to suit my child's need, he is going to be ten years old in April*

> *06, I am carrying him up the stairs to his bedroom, and carry him to change his nappies and bathing him. No ramps at the property at all…*
>
> *It is not only the physically disabled that need the DDA (to which we have not heard of). But the behavioural and children that will self harm and want to take their own lives that need the support as well. Mentally 'many slip through the net' as to quote the psychologist. Between the ages of 12-16 it is a scary time for them. There is not enough help for those that fall into the category of not physically disabled…*
>
> *My daughter was not supported in year 7, severely bullied on top, I had no choice but to put her in Steiner School for 1 year and then home ed and then she decided to go back to do GCSE's to which I and she were told there was no way of her doing so. It was stressful for all of us and xxxx was involved and only got her in on human rights. I don't think my daughter will ever put her child through state education, I have been treated very badly as well regarding my disability and I have a year 8 who has to go through all of this again. The attitude of senior members/staff at this school is a disgrace and being disabled means I have no choice as a parent where my child goes due to transport difficulties…*

Obtaining preferred choice of school

Whether or not parents explicitly reference the DDA, they may act with implicit knowledge of its guidance and requirements. This may emerge in, asking schools to make changes (discussed below under accessible environments) or, for example, in obtaining a preferred choice of school. Our telephone interviews with parents in the case studies will probe reasons for choice of school and the extent to which this was related to disability or special needs.

The parents of the DSD group were less likely to feel that they had sufficient information to inform their choice of school or that they were able to do so. 62.2% of these parents felt they had enough information compared with 82.3% for the non-DSD parent group (70.7% and 75.4% respectively). This was less marked with regard to the choice of an English or Welsh medium school.

Overall, there was a range of reasons why current school placement was not the first choice for parents (question 6c) but this did not appear to be in favour of, or against, a particular type of school or setting (special or mainstream, for example). Responses suggested highly individualised reasons and varying priorities about what made a good placement. Sometimes this was based on principles, other times on lack of any real choice and at other times on pragmatic factors. No parent made explicit reference to the DDA in commenting about lack of choice of school.

2.3 Experience of accessible/inaccessible educational services and environments

Physical access

Accessibility of environments is most obviously associated with physical barriers and a very small minority of parents reported that the child's difficulties stopped the child moving around the school. This may be interpreted as reflecting both the relatively small percentage of parents with children with physical disabilities (in our survey and nationally, as a proportion of all children with disabilities) and/or progress in improving physical access in schools and colleges. However to receive any reports about a child's difficulties preventing the child from moving around school/college is disappointing given the DDA and capital grants for improving access in recent years and developments in inclusive design that have had a direct influence on school redevelopment and new build work (Bishop 2001). We are aware of the work of a disability officer in Scotland who has a dedicated budget for access work and a strong regional remit to foster physical access in educational settings, with reportedly good results. This may be a model which could usefully be applied in England and Wales, and be particularly important in the development of integrated children's and young people's services.

Requests from the school for changes

More generally, accessibility is reflected in the preparedness of providers to be flexible and to make adjustments across a range of dimensions, so that all individuals can participate fully. 38.3% of the DSD group parents had asked the school to make changes

We asked directly: 'Have you asked the school to change in order to help your child with this difficulty?' (q 7e). (Interestingly, given the context of this survey within the wider project about pupils' views, none of the written in comments made explicit reference to a child or young person having expressed their views about preferred provision.) A request that the school make changes can be seen as reflecting a number of factors including the nature of the child's problems, school provision, parental confidence and parental knowledge of the DDA.

There were 180 written in responses to this question, giving further information from parents about the nature and reported outcomes of specific requests for change. The diversity of these requests is striking (encompassing behaviour, staffing, timetabling, locations, curricula, assessment arrangements, mealtimes, personal care, and home-school links), again (see above concerning school choice) illustrating the highly individualised nature of special needs and parental priorities.

The evaluative written in comments were divided approximately equally between the positive and the more critical. Positive comments tended to reflect several features: a very specific and reasoned request for change which was within the scope of the school to implement, the request being treated sympathetically at the outset, the change(s) being sustained, and parents being informed about this eg

> *They have agreed that he doesn't need to do homework ie He's too tired. He has help, with someone doing his writing. Emotionally his form teacher has been excellent and very supportive*.

and another parent:

> *Asked for one to one support – request met. Asked for signs on doors to prevent OCD door opening and closing - request met. Asked for less noise in the classroom - work ongoing.*

In contrast, negative responses to requests for change often conveyed a sense of not having been taken seriously by the school/college or being made to feel uncomfortable eg

> *Had a meeting with all teachers involved, they interrogated me, I was too upset to continue the meeting and left. Community nurses and doctors felt upset for my family and acted as liaisons for my family.*

These comments suggest, encouragingly, that parents were generally very ready to approach the school or college with a request for change and that, if treated seriously, quite a small change satisfied the parents and helped the child. From these reports, many schools were implementing inclusive policies and practices, moving beyond making merely physical/access adjustments. By comparison, two years earlier OFSTED (2004) presented a more critical picture having found that over half the schools visited had no disability access plans and of those that did, the majority focused on accommodation only.

Parents’ readiness to request change also needs to be viewed in the context of the findings that many parents (especially those with children with disabilities) did not know about the DDA legislation that could assist them with this process (see above). It is possible that more parents could help to achieve an even more positive response from schools if they were empowered with clear and up-to-date information. That information needs to address what they can reasonably request of schools as well as how to go about asking the right questions. In addition, of course, the school needs to be similarly clear about its obligations and duties in relation to the DDA and SENDA.

Another clear message is the vigilance exercised, and needed, by parents for monitoring their children’s progress. Many written in comments reflected the need for continuing dialogue and requests for information and changes. In some cases, there was disappointment that having been listened to initially, gains were not sustained. This suggests that parents, who may justifiably be very anxious about their child’s progress in school, should be provided with more information in a proactive way. This can help to assuage some anxieties by letting parents know that their requests and views are being taken seriously and not forgotten.

Cross-referencing type of difficulty reportedly experienced by the child with whether parents had requested that the school make changes in order to help the child showed marked differences across the SEN or disability groups. For example, around half the parents of children who had been bullied or had Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) had made such requests to the school. These findings have face validity given that these are more obviously socially constructed difficulties than are, for example, sensory impairments. This pattern endorses the popular perception that inclusion ‘works’ for children with sensory impairments but is more problematic in relation to children with SEBD. However, that perception may become a self fulfilling prophesy such that parents of these respective groups are more/less inclined to request changes because of these expectations. We are exploring this in the case studies.

Our data show that parents who knew of the DDA were more likely than other parents to have asked the school to make changes in order to help with their child's difficulties. This does not necessarily indicate a direct causal link but it may reflect this and/or be explained by a third factor such as a general awareness of rights. The likelihood that a parent of a child with difficulties would request a change from the school varied with occupational background (for example, over half of senior managers and administrators, one third of those in clerical occupations and just over a quarter of those in manual/service occupations requested a change).This raises wider issues about power and control (and associations with poverty or deprivation) in the SEN or disability contexts.

Involvement in extra-curricular activities

Parental requests for change provide a useful 'litmus test' of schools' commitment to promoting accessible environments within the school day.

A relatively new challenge for schools in England in relation to accessibility concerns proposals (2004) for extended schools (NGC 2006). These proposals raise further issues about access; specifically how children with SEN or disabilities are, or will be, included in extended school activities. Guidance on this matter clearly indicates that their involvement is a matter of right (DfES 2005). Different approaches have been taken in Scotland ('new community schools') and Wales which place much greater emphasis on community action and support for this. The logic of extended schools is that there is an assumption that communities are not providing suitable pre and post school activities, so schools must fill this gap. Neither DRC colleagues in Scotland/Wales nor we have been able to locate specific studies addressing SEN or disability issues in the extended or new community schools contexts. This suggests that this is an area warranting further investigation in relation to fostering inclusion.

Parents of children on the register or list of SEN did not, in general, feel that the child's difficulties stopped the child participating in extra activities run by the school.

About two thirds of the parents of special school pupils (60%) disagreed that the child's difficulties stopped the child from participating in such activities.

However, parents of special school pupils were more likely to agree (25% agreeing) than mainstream parents (15% agreeing) that the child's difficulties would curb participation in extra curricular activities. This fits with these parents' stronger reference to within child, rather than system-based, limits to opportunities.

These findings point to schools generally doing well at including all pupils in this context; whether in mainstream or special schools. The settings for additional activities in extended schools will differ substantially from the current situation (for example, it is likely that more non teachers will be running post school activities and that the periods involved will be longer both before and after the formal school day). There are potential challenges in relation to, for example, flexible transport arrangements and staff training. Interestingly, this, and a wider concern about affordable and accessible transport, is commented on by many young people themselves in a major consultation (involving over 19000 young people) (DfES 2006c).

2.4 Attitudes and behaviours

Attitudes and behaviour are considered here in two main ways: first, through parental satisfaction with schools, which can be seen as implying **school** attitudes and behaviour. Second, **parent** attitudes are revealed through the conceptualisation of strengths and barriers in relation to their child's education.

Satisfaction with schools

Parental satisfaction with how schools were meeting their child's needs (q 5.3 - all parents; and 7.3 1 - parents of children with difficulties) elicited strikingly positive responses. In relative terms, there was a small but consistent difference between DSD and non DSD groups concerning satisfaction and choice in school. In each case the non DSD group was significantly more positive. One might anticipate that in line with this, parents of children with statements or record of needs might be less satisfied (reflecting their children's greater support needs). So it was interesting to find that this was not the case. These parents were less likely to say that the school was the source of any difficulties. It may be that these parents were aware of the move to reduce statements and records of need and so where, contrary to this trend, these had been sustained (or made) they appreciated the value of a scarce resource.

Further, statements are allied to particular and relatively detailed documentation plus annual reviews. These may contribute to satisfaction and, extrapolating from this, suggests that parents may value some formal record that sets out needs/provision very clearly. It is likely that this helps in relation to approaching the school and asking about provision (that is, they have something clear against which to reference concerns/queries). So, in a climate of reducing statements there needs to be something (a formal document of some description) that helps parents to understand different aspects of provision in relation to their expectations. This links also with our point concerning comparative lack of satisfaction of parents with children on the register/list of special needs.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation was not associated with views about progress in school so it was not the case that, for example, families living in the most deprived areas were the least satisfied with their child’s progress in school. Similarly, although there may be a popular conception that more affluent areas are associated with a better choice of schools, this was not borne out by our data. IMD did not affect parents’ views about choice of school.

One interpretation of the high general levels of satisfaction with both schools and local authorities is that they were indeed doing well at meeting the children’s needs. The overall positive picture portrayed here is not intended to mask or play down the undeniably difficult circumstances that some parents have experienced in relation to finding/keeping appropriate educational provision for their children. Nevertheless, with systematic sampling it seems to be the case that these families represent a minority for whom the educational system does not appear to be working well.

We noted earlier that many parents of children on the SEN register/list did not report their child as having special needs even though by definition (ie the sampling) these children were thought by schools to have special needs. These parents were slightly less satisfied than were parents of pupils in other strata (mainstream or special) and this possibly reflects some ambiguity about those pupils’ progress. On average 26% of those parents of children on the list or register strongly agreed with the four statements of satisfaction, ‘feels settled’, ‘looks forward to school’, ‘is treated well in school’ and ‘is making good progress’. This compares with 48% of the parents of those at special school and 40% of the mainstream parents.

Written in responses from the register/list group (question 7d) concerning the child's most serious difficulty were considered in order to try to find possible reasons for the parents' slightly lower satisfaction levels. For example, one reason this group may feel less satisfied may be because the mainstream setting for their children may be less able to meet specific needs. If so, we might expect to see more of their written in responses relating to the environment, attitudes and understanding. However, there was no difference in their pattern of responding compared with other strata; 73% of written in comments from this group related to specific difficulties; 6% to bullying; 3% to socialisation / friendships and 16% to environment, attitudes and understanding. In other words, comments did not suggest that the register/list group were an atypical subgroup in their statements regarding the most serious difficulty.

We also examined the responses from this parent group concerning choice of school to see whether this shed any light on their position. However only seven of the written-in comments concerning not obtaining their preferred choice of school (question 6c) were from parents in the register/list only group and the diversity of their responses precludes generalisations about the reasons for slightly lower satisfaction.

A more critical interpretation of generally high parental satisfaction is that parental expectations were low and so modest efforts were pleasing. This survey cannot address which of these interpretations is more valid (or it may be that both apply but to different parent groups/schools) but it is an issue being explored more fully through the parent telephone interviews in the case studies.

Parental attitudes to causes of DSD

We turn now to parent attitudes concerning the nature of SEN or disability.

The more deprived (using the IMD) the area, the more parents judged that difficulties would hinder their child’s progress. Similarly, high deprivation went with a lower degree of feeling that difficulties were caused by the school. These points may reflect the child having more severe difficulties, a justifiable view that those parents were unable to access help, a sense that in a context of multiple deprivation, the school was a source of potential support and/or lower expectations of the school. The links between DSD and poverty/deprivation are very well established but the processes underlying countering the association warrant more investigation.

It was striking that the large majority of parents of pupils in the DSD group (28.5% strongly agreed, 34.4% agreed) perceived those problems or conditions as primarily reflecting ‘just the way she/he is’; that is, for the most part, the child’s difficulties were not being attributed to the school or other social context. This finding has face validity in that it is consistent with many of these parents not being aware of the DDA and the work of the DRC, both of which have drawn attention to the social contexts in which disabled people live.

Parents of children with special needs were more likely than other DSD group parents to believe that their children were hindered by the difficulty. They more strongly disagreed with the educational cause factor (see appendix 3); this means that they were even less likely to implicitly regard the difficulty as socially constructed. These are very interesting findings as they run counter to accepted wisdom in the field which tends to conceptualise special needs as more likely than disabilities to be socially constructed.

Satisfaction and special schools

There has been intense debate about the value or otherwise of special schools within purportedly 'inclusive' systems in Great Britain (DFES 2003). On the one hand it is argued that a truly 'inclusive' system should successfully educate all its pupils within the same age-appropriate schools; 'expensive' SEN specialist resources being re-allocated across that mainstream provision. However on the other hand it is argued that some pupils and their parents prefer what they see as the unique characteristics of special schools (particularly their relatively small size, low pupil-adult ratios, specialist expertise and, in the context of implementing *Every Child Matters* (Department of Health 2003), potentially rich bases for integrated children's services).

It seems that there is probably a link between generally high satisfaction with special schools and those parents' perceptions about the nature of their child's difficulties. That is, a 'within child' view of their child's difficulties meshed with the underlying ethos and rationale of special schools.

Building on these perceived strengths of special schools while recognising the importance of the drive towards inclusion requires greater fluidity between special and mainstream sectors as well as enhanced links between maintained, independent and voluntary services. However while fluidity is much vaunted in this context, it is in danger of becoming a panacea. Fluidity may, for example, mask a high degree of fragmentation of services, individualistic responses to collective problems and an absence of a (sometimes essential) strong central steer to planning and provision.

It also under-emphasises problems, endemic in education and other services, related to meeting the needs of children and young people with low incidence needs, and those of their families, for example, in relation to respite care and transition (Gray et al. 2006). Thus fluidity needs to be referenced both to very clear educational goals for individuals and equally explicit, agreed collective ambitions.

Drawing on the survey findings and our emergent case studies, we propose an equity-based framework which neither over-individualises difficulties nor locates these solely as social constructs, as an appropriate way to conceptualise further moves towards an inclusive system.

Equity-based model of inclusion

The DDA is premised on the view that the social context is crucial in ameliorating possible disadvantages and discrimination associated with disability. In line with this, the formal policy emphasis on inclusion over the last decade has helped to make SEN and disability a ‘whole school’ issue and helped to ensure access and entitlement to valued forms of learning and the assessment of these. However this process may have inadvertently under-played reference, and appropriate response, to difference in education (Wedell, 1995, 2005) and the need to develop effective educational and related interventions based on the concept of equity.

Whilst the special educational needs dimensions and the disability discrimination dimensions of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) sought to ensure that individual needs would be met effectively, and that discrimination in relation to disability would be eliminated in educational contexts, in practice the gap between these two dimensions has not been bridged effectively. Educational interventions based on equity might enable this gap to be narrowed.

Such interventions recognise the importance of addressing educational inequality at systems levels (eg curriculum provision) but recognise too, that better entitlements do not in themselves guarantee that children and young people are able to take advantage of these. As Corbett (2001) has noted, developments in inclusive education are only likely to take root and be sustainable where a successful balance between entitlement and equity has been achieved.

When considered in relation to disability legislation and its impact on education, the concept of equity can usefully be aligned with that of more favourable treatment to meet disabled people’s needs, a key requirement of the new Disability Equality Duty for the public sector. In practice, this would mean that schools or colleges, for example, need to ensure that in order to provide effective education for disabled children and young people, they would have to provide curriculum entitlements on an equal basis. This would require careful planning at the whole school or college level.

At the same time, efforts would need to be made at a more individual level to ensure that disabled children and young could take advantage of entitlements, and where necessary, receive personalised additional support and guidance which takes account of specific impairments and the possible impact of these on learning. This equity based approach is congruent with principles of the social model of disability and efforts to operationalise these in complex educational environments where teachers and other educational professionals are continually striving to address the needs of cohorts of children and young people, and to respond to individual differences. It also acknowledges the ‘it’s just the way she/he is’ perspective of parents and does not regard this as irreconcilable with the view that difficulties and disabilities are socially constructed.

Placing a stronger emphasis on equity and the development of more equitable educational provision would not require changes to legislation or significant changes to educational policy and any associated guidance. However it would require that schools and other education providers should be challenged and supported to develop high quality policies relating to equality (see appendix 4) in general, and to their disability provision for disabled children and young people in particular.

Practice exemplar:
Equality focused provision and equity focused provision

Equality in provision:

A disabled pupil attends mainstream school and mainstream lessons (is well *placed*). The school adheres to requirements of the DDA part 4 and has an appropriate access plan in place. The disabled pupil's individual needs are met through the provision of additional learning support (teaching assistant x 15 hours a week). This provision is based on assessment linked to the special educational needs statutory framework.

This approach can appear to be effective and compliant with principles of equality but if the individual needs of the pupil are construed solely in terms of within person deficits then the educational provision can too easily focus on 1 to 1 support (to enable the pupil to 'do something different' or 'catch up') that fails to enable the pupil *to participate* in the main stream of teaching and learning activity.

Equity in provision:

This approach would focus on ensuring the pupil participates fully in all aspects of main stream classroom activity and challenging support systems (eg the use of a teaching assistant) to reduce barriers to this participation. Reducing these barriers would always require the dual consideration of how best to respond to individual needs and how to reduce inequality (eg opportunities to spend time with a teacher or peers). Sometimes, this dual consideration might lead to the taking of difficult, but informed decisions concerned with the balance (tension) between providing individually focused learning opportunities (linked to carefully assessed need) and providing a wider range of educational experiences and opportunities to participate in social activities.

This approach to provision would also operate within an overarching commitment to promoting equality.

2.5 Independence and autonomy

Our survey asked indirectly about independence and autonomy in relation to pupils with SEN or difficulties including access issues (see above).

One might anticipate that the parents of pupils attending special schools would be more inclined than parents of pupils in mainstream schools to regard the child's difficulties as curbing independence (eg hindering doing extracurricular activities). The pupil populations are probably different and numbers within cells here are low, so caution is required when making cross-sector comparisons.

Additional support

A large number of parents (n=179) provided written in comments (q 8c) in relation to the type of additional support provided for their children. A number of these remarks related to the child's autonomy and independence; usually in positive terms, eg

> *He is encouraged to ask for help from classroom assistants and also has 3 hrs a week on 'ILS' computer program to help with English and Maths.*

and from another parent:

> *Needs additional help with studies as a little slower then most specifically maths. Low concentration levels therefore repetitive work. Support is given regularly and she has a support worker whom she can go to everyday, gets taken out of class once – > twice weekly. It's also her choice; she can go to ask regularly for help herself. This is to encourage life skills as a means for her to control her own choices.*

Some parental ambivalence about the fostering of children's independence was evident:

> *Can't answer this as I am not told (my daughter is) and she can't communicate on to me. College, say as she is over 18 years old. She has to give permission for me to be told.*

Resilience as an over-arching theme

An over-arching theme across this study and our related DRC-funded projects exploring the views of disabled pupils and their families has been resilience. Resilience in (Western) lay terms is about being able 'to survive and thrive'; 'to hope and cope'. Traditionally, it has been seen as reflecting a quality within the person – he/she is seen as resilient because they don't 'go under' when times are hard. Resilience in that vein is defined as an individual's ability to cope with adversity. However recent research and reviews on this topic (Ungar 2005; Boyden and Mann 2005) indicate that resilience reflects the outcomes of complex interactions between the child and their environments (family, school and community). This later work defines resilience as a dynamic process involving interactions between risk and protective processes.

The applied value of such thinking has been demonstrated by Daniel (2006) in a study operationalising the concept of resilience in interventions with neglected children in Scotland. Increasingly, writers refer to resilient trajectories, reflecting the fluidity and multiplicity of factors embodied in resilient outcomes rather than solely a 'within child' quality. However some factors (notably in this context, low cognitive levels) are associated with risk across a range of studies (note- overwhelmingly from western, developed countries; their cross-cultural applicability is questionable).

Factors contributing to resilient trajectories (however defined) are important to offset risk. These moderating factors (mitigating risk) and/or protective factors (shielding from risk) include personal aspects such as self esteem, self-confidence and self efficacy which, within western cultural traditions, are allied to the broader notions of autonomy and independence (Raskind et al 1999). Research and policy on the lives of children with disabilities or special needs might usefully take these twin foci (moderating factors and protective factors) as key dimensions of analyses. This might lead, for example, to illuminating the role of a non-judgemental, concerned but also detached (ie. from the immediate context) ‘mentor’ in fostering a resilient trajectory. Our emerging case study work is providing insights about this.

This focus on resilient trajectories sits well alongside our earlier discussion of an equity-based model of inclusion as both sets of ideas stress variability (people and contexts vary widely), fluidity (people and contexts change over time) and sensitivity in response (legislation alone is unlikely to be either effective or appropriate). A full discussion of these conceptual ideas is beyond the scope of this research report.

2.6 Ambitions and aspirations

Note: These questions were answered only by parents of the DSD group so it is not possible to make comparisons with the non DSD group.

<u>Teachers’ reported aspirations for pupils</u>

Independence and autonomy (considered above) influence, and are influenced by, ambitions and aspirations. We asked parents whether teachers encouraged their child to aim high. There was a generally positive response to this, particularly from the parents of pupils in special schools. (79% agreeing/strongly agreeing; compared with 59% doing so for register/list pupils and 63% doing so for mainstream pupils).

This may reflect significant changes in the education provided in this sector in recent years and challenge polarised thinking about the relative merits of mainstream and specialist provision (see policy section).

If pupils are excluded from school, then they are removed from participation in processes leading to the attainment of conventional schooling. These goals become, by definition, more difficult to attain. Perhaps surprisingly, parents of excluded children were also largely, strongly in agreement that teachers had previously encouraged the child to aim high.

Aspirations and transition

Scrutiny of transition data (across years 6-7 / P7-S1) in relation to school satisfaction showed that pre-transition parents were particularly satisfied, agreeing that their child felt settled in school (see statistical note in appendix 3). This has face validity. Post transition parents agreed slightly less strongly that their child liked going to school, possibly reflecting natural difficulties in moving schools although it should be noted that our survey forms were completed just before Christmas or (for the majority) in the first half of the Spring term when initial adjustments might have been expected to have been made. Despite these concerns, parental aspirations for their children were not diminished after the move to secondary schooling. Nor did this move affect how parents viewed their child’s difficulties. These points are reassuring given that the move from primary to secondary school is often presented as problematic, particularly for children with special needs. Indeed such claims are used to explain why inclusion is ‘more difficult’ at secondary than at primary school levels. Our case studies will explore these issues further, drawing on direct evidence from children and young people to complement the parental views surveyed.

Parental aspirations for their children

Two aspects of aspirations concern getting a job and continuing in education after the end of compulsory schooling. Responses to these questions may be seen as reflecting not only parent views about their children but also parental views of society. Almost half of the parents of pupils with DSD felt that these would stop the child from getting a good job. (45% agreed/strongly agreed that 'My child's difficulties will stop him/her getting a good job.' while 36% disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement.)

These concerns were also voiced very strongly by our advisory group in their independent commentary on the draft final report (see their closing note in this report).

Perhaps surprisingly, in terms of aspirations for their children, there were only modest differences between those of the parents of the excluded pupils and those of other parents (in the direction of exclusion curbing parental aspirations). Whether these parents' aspirations matched those of their children is an open question and this is being explored in the case studies. If they do differ then it may reveal interesting aspects of resilience and protective factors.

Some written in comments captured very vividly parents' frustrations about opportunities for their disabled children:

> *I do not work, I am a housewife which is full time, I have children with disabilities, Cerebral Palsy & Spastic Dipigia & Nystagmus. At school and college need help in toilet. A helper hoist to put them on and of toilet. Eyesight, they have difficulties to find job. I think children with disability do not have a future to learn or work like they would wish to. Careers teachers are no use to them. They ask 'What job would you like to do.' Who in there right mind would employ*

> *a child who is able to write only there name, needs help to go toilet. They have no place to go but sit at home, get bored, nobody wants to know. I would like to know what places are there for them, after 18, except residential which is not a option. They need a helper at all times, a hoist in the toilet. Most places do not have.*

2.7 Specific issues concerning Scotland and Wales

We have illustrative data from Scotland and Wales but these cannot be regarded as representative of those countries as a whole. Their participation in the survey was intended to signal possible cross-GB differences and to highlight foci warranting scrutiny in the case studies. We anticipated that these might relate to (for both countries) inclusion, reflecting different policy trajectories in this context, transition issues (Scotland, given different ages for school transfer) or Welsh medium issues in Wales. The comparatively low numbers of respondents for Scotland and Wales (and low number of schools involved), particularly if DSD groups only are considered, necessitate caution about these findings. The data may reflect school or regional, rather than country, factors. In Scotland, we were aware of a marked sense of policy fatigue; the recruitment and retention of schools in the project was problematic.

Awareness of the DDA and the DRC was highest in Wales (67% and 57% respectively) and lowest in Scotland (54% and 40% respectively) with England between these figures. These patterns parallel requests to the school for change with Wales more likely, and Scotland less likely, than England (grouped) to do so. There is a possible causal connection. The Wales data show more parents being aware of the DDA, making more requests for change and being comparatively satisfied with the school (eg question 7c1 concerning the school being seen as doing well in helping their child). The converse applied to Scotland. Awareness of the DDA in Scotland can be compared with a related DRC funded survey three years ago (SCDR/CIS for DRC 2004) which found that just over half (51%) parents had not heard of the DDA. However as those data relate only to parents of pupils with special needs (not our much wider group) and found that parents of disabled children were more likely than others to have heard of the DDA, it suggests that awareness of the DDA has increased in Scotland in recent years.

A striking contrast between the GB countries is the way in which they have each responded to moves to foster inclusion (see section 6 and appendix 4 on policy). Bearing in mind the above provisos, can we draw any conclusions about the comparative impact of these policies? There were wide intra-area differences in response to question 7b1 concerning perceptions that the child's difficulties were caused by the LEA. Collectively, parents in Wales were more likely (70%) than those in Scotland (64%) or England to disagree with this statement. However relatively large numbers (particularly in Scotland (21%) and Wales (14%)) gave a neutral response. A tentative interpretation is that the locus of responsibility in Scotland in particular, and in Wales to a lesser degree, was seen to be more with individual schools than with the local or regional body. This may link with slightly higher levels of satisfaction in Scotland.

The Wales sample produced a comparatively high proportion of pupils excluded from school (5.4%) compared with a very low percentage from Scotland (2.5%) (with England at 4.2%). Given the relatively small numbers, these need to be interpreted cautiously but suggest that there may be some systematic differences emerging across GB.

2.8 Gender and education

There were no systematic differences found for total respondents between boys and girls. However, in line with other surveys and DFES data, boys were over represented in DSD groups (38.4% of boys compared with 30.2% of girls), children with statements /record of need

(20.7% of boys compared with 14.8% of girls) and among exclusions (6.9% of boys compared with 1.4% of girls).

Perhaps reflecting this pattern, parents of boys were also more likely to ask the schools to make a change in meeting the child's educational needs (12.4% of parents of boys but only 9.0% of parents of girls made such requests). Boys were over-represented and girls under-represented in relation to particular sorts of difficulties, in line with other research. So boys were more likely than girls to be described as having language and/or autism difficulties (12.0% boys, 8.0% girls) or EBD/bullying/mental health difficulties (boys 15.8%, girls 9.3%). This could be taken as indicative of strong genetic and/ or social components in these difficulties. In comparison, it does not in itself support deprivation as a causal factor per se as one would expect to find this equally across gender groups. Interestingly, hypothesised causes of difficulties and awareness of the DDA did not show significant differences between the parents of boys and girls.

If schools are not being asked for changes by parents then this implies comparative satisfaction and this was indeed the case. Parents of girls reported slightly higher satisfaction levels than did parents of boys.

2.9 Ethnicity and education

The large majority of respondents (88.1%) were from white ethnic groups with the next largest ethnic grouping being Asian (6.7%), mixed ethnicity (2.7%) and Black 2.4%). There are well-established links between school attainment, aspirations and ethnicity (Schagen and Benton 2003) but given our small sub samples in relation to ethnicity there is a danger of confounding variables (for example, a disproportionate number came from just one of our six areas and from areas with a high deprivation index).

Asian groups were significantly more likely than other ethnic groups to have free school meals. Contrary to other groups, the association between free school meals and exclusions did not apply to the Asian groups. Fewer Asians had heard of the DRC, were aware of the DDA, or knew the DDA applied to schools (all three overall chi-squares, $p<0.001$) suggesting that there is a very strong case for targeting information at this group in particular.

There were differences in types of difficulty experienced by the ethnic groups, with Asians reporting higher frequencies of language and autism (grouped), sensory and learning difficulties, but mixed ethnicity groups had the highest reported frequency of EBD + bullying + mental health difficulties (grouped). This suggests that the information needs of these sub groups will differ and warrants further scrutiny as other work (Lindsay et al, in press) has found associations between particular ethnic groups and specific conditions (known as ‘consanguinity’).

The salience of ethnicity in identity was illustrated in the written in responses concerning ethnicity. The options given (question 12) for ethnic group were those used in the census data but were regarded as inappropriate by a substantial minority of respondents with 59 giving an alternative ethnic group from those supplied. These included 19 people giving their identity as Welsh (the largest additional sub group; not named in our question as it was not separately identified in the 2001 UK census form). Other ‘ethnic’ groups (each named by 1-2 people only) included American, Finish, Greek Orthodox Cypriot, Iraqi, Japanese, Kosovan, South African and Yemeni.

The emphasis in this survey has been on parent views; these will be supplemented with pupil views from the subsequent, linked case studies. This points up a possible disjunction at legislative, policy and practice levels between seeking parent and pupil views. Despite much rhetoric around the importance of exploring the views of children and young people, these seem not to be integrated into parental responses more generally. Some policy mechanism is needed (possibly linked with Disability Equality Duties) which explicitly (perhaps under a children’s services umbrella) brings together these views. This might give greater recognition to both perspectives, particularly in matters related to concerns about educational provision involving formal expressions of concern, appeal and redress.

The following sections provide detail of the methods, sampling and findings reflected in this discussion and are followed by a section locating the work in the wider policy context.

3. Sampling and questionnaire construction

3.1 Sampling (see appendices 1 and 2 for further details)

1. Six (GB wide) geographical regions

Four focal geographical areas were selected to reflect a spread of GB regions: one urban and one rural in England; one area in Wales and one area in Scotland. Within each region, a focal or ‘hub’ mainstream secondary school was identified along with its primary feeder schools. Special school provision within each area was also identified and included. Additional schools from two further regions in England were involved in order to extend the size of the sample as well as the geographical areas covered. One was an urban region and the other a mostly rural region which neighboured the former. In both, as many schools were contacted as possible and invited to take part in this national parent survey.

2. Four selected age cohorts

Given the interest in school transfer as a critical point for pupils, four age cohorts were identified (varying slightly across England/Scotland owing to different ages at primary/secondary transition), reflecting key transitions (broadly, ages 9-11; 11-12; 15-16 and 16-18).

3. Three strata

The primary interest of the project was in the views of parents and carers of disabled children (note- not ‘special educational needs’ only). This group comprises a comparatively small proportion of the school population (less than 5%) but cannot readily be identified in terms of targeting of such surveys. Consequently, to enable powerful inferences, a method of disproportionate stratified sampling was used in order to target the survey distribution at sufficient numbers of families within three strata:

- Entire cohorts of mainstream educational establishments (primary and secondary schools and FE colleges). Target = parents of 1500 pupils in each of four age cohorts.
- All pupils on the school's SEN register/list (including pupils with statements /record of need) of mainstream educational establishments (primary and secondary schools and FE colleges). Target = parents of 300 pupils.
- Entire cohorts in special schools. Target = parents of 300 pupils in each of four age cohorts.

A total of 7200 questionnaires were taken by hand or sent to schools, for distribution (November 2005- January 2006) by the school to parents, in line with this sampling strategy.

Table 1: Response rates

	mainstrm			**register/ list**			**special school**		
	sent	returned	resp rate	sent	returned	resp rate	sent	returned	resp rate
Yr 5/6	1592	407	25.6%	148	28	18.9%	260	56	21.5%
Yr 7	1442	512	35.5%	285	78	27.4%	248	45	18.1%
Yr 11	1448	307	21.2%	193	32	16.6%	292	67	22.9%
Yr12/13	767	149	19.4%	165	17	10.3%	360	78	21.7%
Total	5249	1375	26.2%	791	155	19.6%	1160	246	21.2%

Out of 7200 questionnaire distributed, 1776 (24.7%) were returned. Table 1 shows the pattern of returns by year group and by strata. Mainstream returns (26.2%) were higher than register/list (19.6%) and special school (21.2%). With special schools, the response rate was similar across the four cohorts, however, mainstream and register strata had generally had lower response with older pupils. The exception to this trend was the primary school register/list group; this may reflect the difficulty or reluctance of primary schools to use a special needs register. In fact, no returns were received from several ‘register’ primary schools, so we suspect the questionnaires were not distributed in these schools.

Note - This strategic sampling via schools in the focal regions was supplemented by an on-line version of the survey. This was intended to enable families with children not in formal education to participate, including parents/carers who were home-educating their children, as well as families not based within our focal geographical regions. A link to the survey accompanied by an explanatory paragraph was disseminated through a number of distribution lists, including Education Otherwise; the DRC and Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities. These returns (N=129) are not reported here as those respondents were additional to the systematic sampling outlined above. The e-survey data will be reported in a later paper addressing the combined e-surveys (phases 1 and 2) completed by the parents /carers of children with special needs or disabilities.

3.2 Questionnaire construction (see appendix 2 for further details)

The paper survey was presented as an 8-page booklet, in Arial 14 font, with the introduction as the first page and seven main sections over the remaining 7 pages. The survey sections were planned to cover different aspects of the five key research themes of the project (see above).

The Scotland and Wales versions of the survey varied slightly from the England version because of some differences in terminology (eg Additional Support Needs in Scotland and Special Educational Needs in England). The large majority of questions were identical. Welsh language versions for all year groups were also produced making a total of 16 different versions of the survey (4 Year Groups in England, Scotland and Wales plus 4 x Welsh language versions). Welsh Medium schools were sent both English and Welsh language versions of the survey where it was the policy of the school to send all documents to parents in both languages.

The following section summarises returns on the basis of key aspects: geographical area, strata, year group, social deprivation, employment status, ethnicity and first language.

We have also made some extrapolations concerning comparisons with national norms. However the difficulties in doing so should be borne in mind as our sample was (deliberately) neither intended to be representative of parents of all pupils nor representative of solely the conventional ‘special needs’ group. Crucially, we were also interested in parents whose children had difficulties or disabilities which fell outside ‘special needs’ as currently operationalised.

4. Sample

4.1 Returns by area, strata and age band

Final returns as at 31/03/06 numbered 1776; returns by area, strata and age groups are given in the following tables.

Table 2: Returns by geographical area

Area	Frequency	Percent
Scotland - urban	121	6.8
England-urban	298	16.8
England-rural	426	24.0
England-semi rural 1	351	19.8
England-semi rural 2	333	18.8
Wales urban/rural	247	13.9
Total	1776	100.0

We have deliberately used disproportionate stratified sampling to targeting parents of pupils on SEN registers and in special schools. Nationally, only around 1% of the pupil population goes to special schools, so the whole mainstream cohort is a good reflection of the entire population as 91% of pupils are taught in maintained mainstream schools (most of the rest are in independent schools). Our other strata are of particular interest regarding disability and special needs in schools, and so should be viewed separately.

Table 3: Returns by strata

			Strata			Total
			List or register	**Special school**	**Whole year group**	
Difficulties in school?	Yes	Count	83	200	231	514
		%	56.5%	84.0%	19.8%	33.2%
	No	Count	64	38	933	1035
		%	43.5%	16.0%	90.1%	66.8%

Table 4: Returns by year group

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
year group/ Scottish equiv	5	491	27.6	27.6	27.6
	7	635	35.8	35.8	63.4
	11	406	22.9	22.9	86.3
	12	244	13.7	13.7	100.0
	Total	1776	100.0	100.0	

4.2 Social deprivation

We have used eligibility for free school meals as our measure for social deprivation. In 2005, 16.9% of primary and 14.0% of secondary pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals in England.

Table 5 *: Responses to:

'Does your child receive free school meals?'

Cohort	Response	Strata		
		List/ register	Special school	mainstream
Year 5/ 6	Yes	8 (29%)	24 (44%)	53 (13%)
	No	20 (71%)	29(54%)	351(87%)
	Don't know	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (0%)
Year 7	Yes	13 (17%)	24 (55%)	47 (9%)
	No	65 (83%)	20 (45%)	462 (91%)
Year 11	Yes	3 (9%)	26 (39%)	19 (6%)
	No	29 (91%)	41 (61%)	288 (94%)
Year 12/ 13	Yes[1]	9 (53%)	35 (46%)	10 (7%)
	No	7 (41%)	39 (51%)	137 (93%)
	Don't know	1 (6%)	2 (35)	1 (1%)

* Note- Numbers in this and many subsequent tables add up to fewer than 1776, as some parents did not respond to the question.

The primary (year 5/6) mainstream sample (13%) is a little lower than the national norm (16.9%) regarding free school meals, but the register/list (29%) and special school (44%) samples are higher. There is a similar story for the other years with the mainstream sample lower

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[1] The year 12/13 cohort was asked whether they **ever** had been eligible, as free school meals stops in Year 11 whereas national statistics are on current eligibility.

than the national norm of 14%, and the register/ list and special school groups are higher, except for the register /list Y11 / S4 pupils which is smaller.

4.3 Employment status

1599 of the 1776 parents responded to the question asking for the employment status of the parent/guardian who earns the most money. Most categories are fairly similar across the three strata, but there are more of the first three categories in mainstream (49.0%) than in register /list (40.5%) than in special school (31.3). Conversely, categories 7 and 8 are lower for the mainstream stratum (17.8%) than for register/list (27.2%) than for special school (35.6%). This indicates that parents in the mainstream sample are on average of higher employment status than the register/ list sample, who in turn are higher than those in special schools.

Table 6: Employment status among our respondents

Employment status		Mainstream	Register	Special school	Total
1. Modern professional	Count	288	28	31	347
	%	22.3	20.6	18.3	21.7
2. Traditional professional	Count	136	10	9	155
	%	10.5	7.4	5.3	9.7
3. Senior manage/ admin	Count	210	17	13	240
	%	16.2	12.5	7.7	15.0
4. Middle + junior mangers	Count	91	9	10	110
	%	7.0	6.6	5.9	6.9
5. Clerical/ intermediate	Count	141	13	20	174
	%	10.9	9.6	11.8	10.9
6. Technical + craft	Count	176	18	24	218
	%	13.6	13.2	14.2	13.6
7. Semi routine+ service	Count	121	18	30	169
	%	9.4	13.2	17.8	10.6
8. Routine Manual	Count	109	19	30	158
	%	8.4	14.0	17.8	9.9
9. More than one	Count	22	4	2	28
	%	1.7	2.9	1.2	1.8
Total	Count	1294	136	169	1599
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The simplified, self-administered version that we used is difficult to compare with national norms as the official categorisation for employment status is complex, usually involves interview and is undergoing change[2]. So, to make comparisons with national norms, we have amalgamated our employment categories into the NS-SEC 5 categories assuming that everyone is employed in large organisations[3].

These percentages are compared with national norms in table 7. Despite the limitations in the data, it is clear that the special school sample is similar to the national norm, but the register/list sample is skewed towards the professional/managerial category and away from the manual category; this skew is even more pronounced with the mainstream sample.

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[2] As well as asking for the type of employment, the questionnaire asks whether you are self-employed or an employee, and your supervisory status. For reasons of brevity these questions were omitted.

[3] This won't be entirely accurate (hence no category 3: see http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/downloads/nssec_self_coded_matrix.doc)

Table 7: Employment status- adjusted to national comparators

	Mainstream	**Mainstream NS-SEC 5**	**Register**	**Register NS-SEC 5**	**Special school**	**Special school NS-SEC 5**	**National norm %**
Modern professional	22.3	56.0	20.6	47.1	18.3	37.2	34.64
Traditional professional	10.5		7.4		5.3		
Senior manager/ administrator	16.2		12.5		7.7		
Middle/ junior manager	7.0		6.6		5.9		
clerical and intermediate	10.9	10.9	9.6	9.6	11.8	11.8	14.11
Self-employed	-	-	-	-	-	-	10.00
Technical/ craft	13.6	13.6	13.2	13.2	14.2	14.2	9.90
Semi-routine manual/ service	9.4	17.8	13.2	27.2	17.8	35.6	31.35
Routine manual/ service	8.4		14.0		17.8		
More than one tick	1.7	1.7	2.9	2.9	1.2	1.2	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.4 Ethnicity

In table 8, 90.1% mainstream, 83.8% on the register, and 70.3% of special school pupils are white. Therefore 9.9% mainstream, 16.2% register/ list and 29.7% special school in our sample could be regarded as of minority ethnic origin.

In 2005, 19.3% of primary and 15.9% of secondary pupils were classified as minority ethnic origin in England (DfES 2005). In our mainstream stratum, 15.8% Year 5/6, 8.0% Y7 and 8.1% Y11 were minority ethnic origin, so this stratum contains a higher proportion of white ethnic groups than is the English national norm. However, the register stratum is about the same, and the special school stratum contains a lower proportion of white ethnic groups than the norm. It should be remembered that there is a lower percentage of pupils of minority ethnic origin in both Wales and Scotland than in England.

Table 8: Ethnic group

Ethnic group			Mainstream	Register	Special school	Total
White	British	Count	1215	128	168	1511
		%	88.4	82.6	68.3	85.1
	Irish	Count	1	1	0	2
		%	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.1
	Other	Count	22	1	5	28
		%	1.6	0.6	2.0	1.6
Mixed	White+Black Caribbean	Count	12	2	8	22
		%	0.9	1.3	3.3	1.2
	White+Black African	Count	3	0	0	3
		%	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2
	White + Asian	Count	9	2	1	12
		%	0.7	1.3	0.4	0.7
	Other	Count	8	1	2	11
Asian/ Asian British		%	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6
	Indian	Count	24	5	5	34
		%	1.7	3.2	2.0	1.9
	Pakistani	Count	29	3	31	63
		%	2.1	1.9	12.6	3.5
	Bangladeshi	Count	2	1	9	12
		%	0.1	0.6	3.7	0.7
	Other	Count	5	2	2	9
		%	0.4	1.3	0.8	0.5
Black/ Black British	Caribbean	Count	18	6	6	30
		%	1.3	3.9	2.4	1.7
	African	Count	8	1	3	12
		%	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.7
Chinese		Count	6	0	1	7
		%	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4
Other		Count	1	0	1	2
		%	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.1
No response		Count	12	2	4	18
		%	0.9	1.3	1.6	1.0
Total		Count	1375	155	246	1776
		%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.5 First language

94.8% mainstream, 95.9% register list and 82.5% special school pupils have English as their first language; this compares with 91.1% in primary and 94.3% in secondary schools in England (higher in Wales and Scotland). So our samples are broadly in line with the national norms in this respect.

Table 9: First Language

		Mainstream	**Register**	**Special school**	**Total**
English	Count	1243	139	189	1571
	%	94.8	95.9	82.5	93.2
Asian/ Arabic	Count	37	3	31	71
	%	2.8	2.1	13.5	4.2
African	Count	3	0	2	5
	%	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.3
Oriental	Count	4	0	2	6
	%	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.4
Western European	Count	3	2	0	5
	%	0.2	1.4	0.0	0.3
Sign language	Count	1	0	5	6
	%	0.1	0.0	2.2	0.4
Eastern European	Count	1	1	0	2
	%	0.1	0.7	0.0	0.1
Welsh	Count	19	0	0	19
	%	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.1
Total	Count	1311	145	229	1685
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

We turn now to our findings in which we begin by examining the nature, incidence and overlaps between disabilities, special needs and difficulties.

5 Main findings

5.1 Disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties

There were 3 main questions concerning types of problems in school, all with ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answers:

1. Does your child have a disability?
2. My child is currently having difficulties at school
3. Does your child have a special need?

These were grouped together as the Disabilities, Special needs and/or Difficulties (DSD) group. In this section we first present data for each of these groups separately then the combined data.

Table 10 shows that just under one third of parents/carers had children with **difficulties** (28.9%, n=514). Slightly fewer (but largely the same parents) reported their child as having **special or additional needs** (24.6%, n=421, table 11) and fewer reported **disabilitie**s (16.4%, n=280, table 12). (See table 13 (and figure 1) for the overlap and statistical note, appendix 3 for more detailed scrutiny of the relationships between these groups.)

Table 10: Strata x difficulty

		Strata			
Difficulty		**List/ register**	**Special school**	**Whole mainstream**	**Total**
No	Count	72	46	1144	1262
	% within Strata	46.5%	18.7%	83.2%	71.1%
Yes	Count	83	200	231	514
	% within Strata	53.5%	81.3%	16.8%	28.9%
Total	Count	155	246	1375	1776
	% within Strata	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11: Strata x special need

Have special need?		Strata			Total
		List/ register	Special school	Whole mainstream	
Yes	Count	75	225	121	421
	% within Strata	50.3%	93.8%	9.2%	24.6%
No	Count	63	10	1178	1251
	% within Strata	42.3%	4.2%	89.1%	73.1%
Don't know	Count	11	5	23	39
	% within Strata	7.4%	2.1%	1.7%	2.3%
Total	Count	149	240	1322	1711
	% within Strata	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12: Strata x disability

Have disability?		Strata			Total
		List/ register	Special school	Whole mainstream	
Yes	Count	28	202	50	280
	% within Strata	18.8%	86.7%	3.8%	16.4%
No	Count	115	26	1261	1402
	% within Strata	77.2%	11.2%	95.0%	82.0%
Don't know	Count	6	5	16	27
	% within Strata	4.0%	2.1%	1.2%	1.6%
Total	Count	149	233	1327	1709
	% within Strata	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

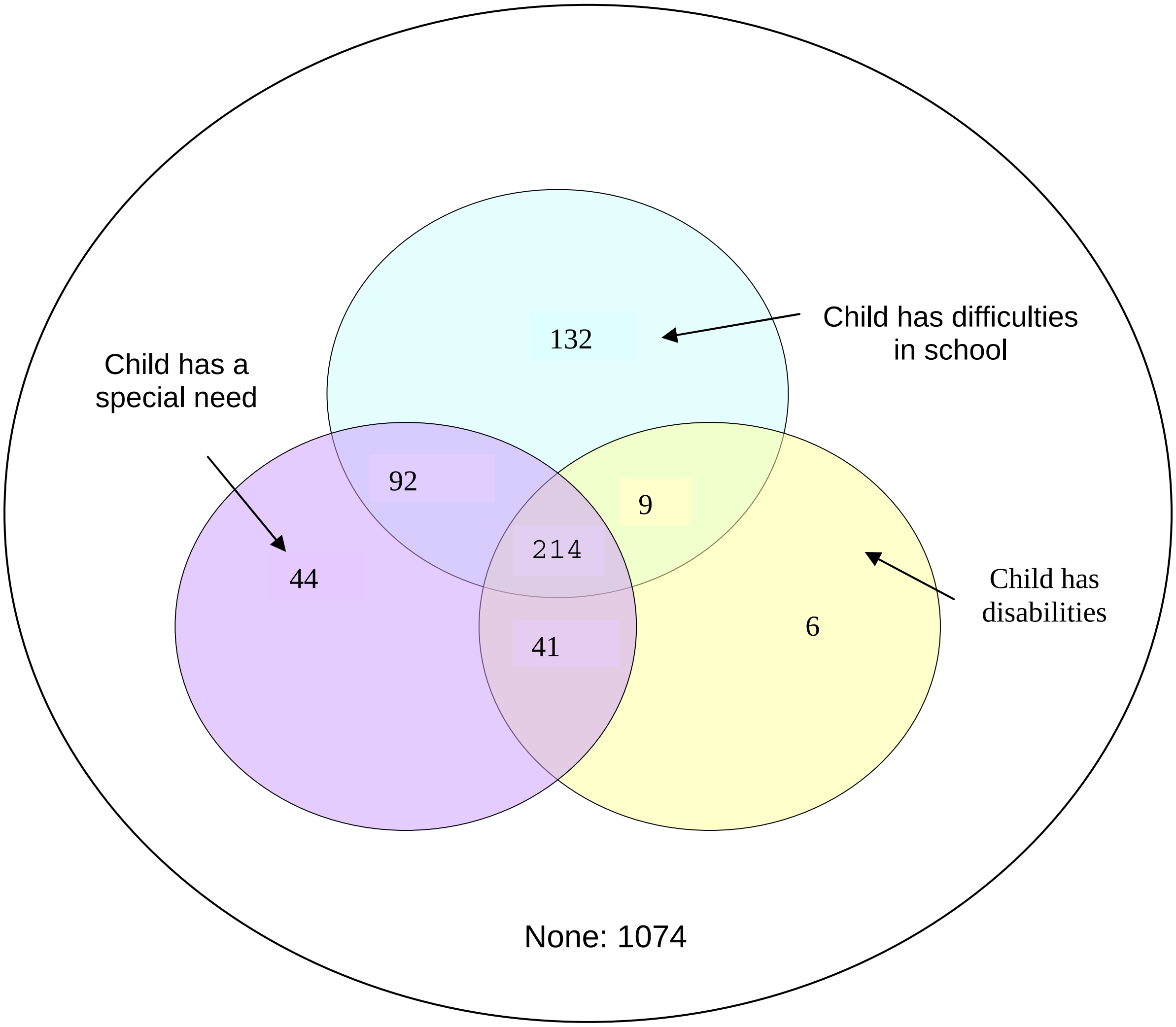
We investigated the interrelationship between these answers. Table 13 shows the responses from 1667 parents as 109 did not answer one or more questions. As shown in this table, these three questions are strongly associated. 214 parents (12.8%) said ‘Yes’ to all 3, and 1074 (64.4%) said ‘No’ to them all. (Note- the percentages in the above text and in the related tables 10-12 are out of those who responded to the relevant set of questions not out of the total sample.)

Table 13: SEN x disability x difficulty

Have disability?			**Have special need?**			**Total**
			Yes	**No**	**Don't know**	
Yes	Difficulty in school?	No	41	6	3	50
		Yes	214	9	3	226
	Total		255	15	6	276
No	Difficulty in school?	No	44	1074	10	1128
		Yes	92	132	13	237
	Total		136	1206	23	1365
Don't know	Difficulty in school?	No	2	0	1	3
		Yes	13	3	7	23
	Total		15	3	8	26
Total			406	1224	37	1667

These data are shown diagrammatically in figure 1

**Figure 1: Overlapping groups:
disabilities, special needs and difficulties**



Numbers within circles represent ‘yes’ responses, so 214 parents described their children as having disabilities, special needs and difficulties. Few parents described their children as having disabilities only. Interestingly 136 (44+92) parents described their children as having special needs but not disabilities.

Table 14 shows the distribution of this group within the strata, so nearly one half are to be found in mainstream schools, just over one third in special schools and the rest are on the list or register in mainstream schools.

Table 14: Strata x disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties

Disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties		**Strata**			
		List/ register	**Special school**	**Mainstream**	**Total**
Yes	Count	100	242	272	614
	% within disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties	16.3%	39.4%	44.3%	100.0%
	% within Strata	64.5%	98.4%	19.8%	34.6%
	% of Total	5.6%	13.6%	15.3%	34.6%
'No'	Count	55	4	1103	1162
	% within disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties	4.7%	.3%	94.9%	100.0%
	% within Strata	35.5%	1.6%	80.2%	65.4%
	% of Total	3.1%	.2%	62.1%	65.4%
Total	Count	155	246	1375	1776
	% within disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties	8.7%	13.9%	77.4%	100.0%
	% within Strata	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.7%	13.9%	77.4%	100.0%

Table 15 below shows the distribution of the DSD group through the school year groups. The younger year groups are slightly larger than the older ones.

Table 15: Year x disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties

Disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties		Year				
		5 and 6	7.0	11.0	12 and 13	Total
Yes	Count	176	177	148	113	614
	% within disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties	28.7%	28.8%	24.1%	18.4%	100.0%
	% within Year	35.8%	27.9%	36.5%	46.3%	34.6%
	% of Total	9.9%	10.0%	8.3%	6.4%	34.6%
'No'	Count	315	458	258	131	1162
	% within disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties	27.1%	39.4%	22.2%	11.3%	100.0%
	% within Year	64.2%	72.1%	63.5%	53.7%	65.4%
	% of Total	17.7%	25.8%	14.5%	7.4%	65.4%
Total	Count	491	635	406	244	1776
	% within disabilities, special needs and/or difficulties	27.6%	35.8%	22.9%	13.7%	100.0%
	% within Year	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	27.6%	35.8%	22.9%	13.7%	100.0%

5.2 Statements

Where the child is reported as having a special need, 64.4% (266 out of 413) had a statement or record of need compared with only 0.7% reporting a statement without a need. For a further 11.4% (n=202) the child had additional support but without a statement. This (given national comparisons) suggests that our respondents may have been slanted towards more significant special needs or disabilities groups and, intuitively, one would anticipate that the parents of these children might be more strongly motivated to respond to a survey about disability or SEN.

There were a relatively small number for whom statements had now been ended (2.4%) and, perhaps surprisingly, a significant minority (5.1%) who did not know whether their child had/had a statement/record of need (see table below). Similarly, 6% (n=106) did not know whether the child had additional support without a statement/record of need. These minorities are interesting in that these data suggest that there is a body of parents who are still unclear about support for special needs (whether or not their own child needs or is receiving this support) (borne out by other data here).

Table 16: Frequency of statement or record of needs

SEN statement/ record of needs?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	280	15.8
No: ended	42	2.4
No: never	1147	64.6
Pending	4	0.2
Don't know	90	5.1
Total	1774	99.9

5.3 Statements compared with support

There were three questions specifically concerned with special needs, which are shown in three separate tables within Table 17:

- 8a Does your child have a special need? Or in Scotland: does your child have additional support needs
- 8b Does your child have a Statement of Special Educational Needs issued by the Local Authority? Or in Scotland: Does your child have a Record of Needs issued by the Education Authority?
- 8c Does your child receive additional support but not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs? Or in Scotland: Does

your child receive additional support but not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs?

Table 17: Special need, statement or support

Have special need?	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't know**	**Missing**	**Total**
Frequency	421	1251	39	65	1776
Percent	23.7	70.4	2.2	3.7	100.0

Have statement?	**Yes**	**No it has ended**	**No never**	**Pending**	**Don't know**	**Missing**	**Total**
Frequency	280	42	1147	4	90	213	1776
Percent	15.8	2.4	64.6	0.2	5.1	12.0	100.0

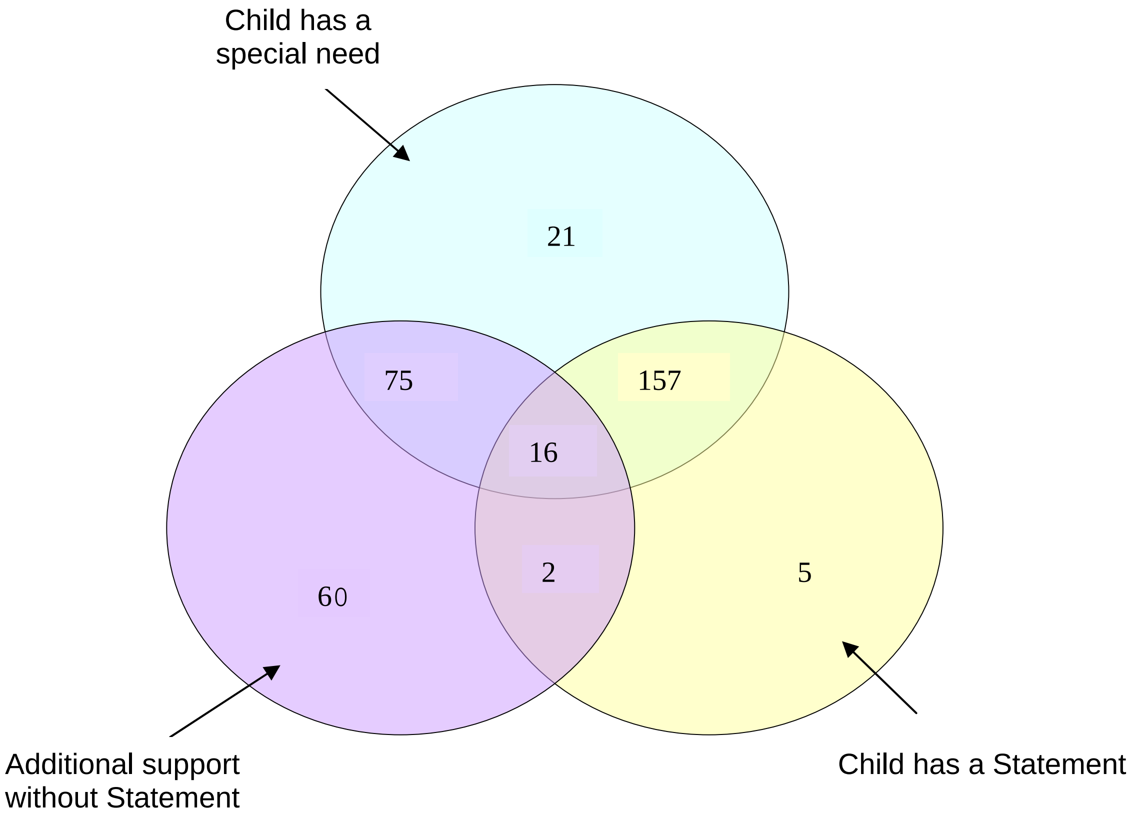
Support without statement?	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't know**	**Missing**	**Total**
Frequency	202	1230	106	238	1776
Percent	11.4	69.3	6.0	13.4	100.0

Table 18: Special need x statement x support

Support without statement?	**Have special need?**	**Have statement?**				
		Yes	**No it has ended**	**No never**	**Pending**	**Don't know**
Yes	Yes	16	11	64	2	10
	No	2	2	58	0	4
	Don't know	0	0	6	0	2
No	Yes	157	3	18	1	4
	No	5	17	915	0	15
	Don't know	1	0	4	0	3
Don't know	Yes	26	2	1	1	23
	No	0	1	20	0	5
	Don't know	0	0	2	0	15

The data in table 18 have been summarized in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Overlapping groups concerning SEN



Numbers inside circles represent ‘Yes’ responses. So 932 said ‘No’ to all three questions. Please note that questionnaires with ‘don’t know’, ‘pending’ or not answered to any of these questions have been ignored (total n = 1268, 71%). Analyses of variance (see appendix 3) suggested that (1) parents who perceived their child as having a special need but who did not have a statement were less positive about their child's progress in school (2) parents whose child had a statement disagreed more strongly that the educational establishment was causing their child's difficulties.

Table 18 shows responses concerning interaction between the three different levels of support. The apparent anomaly (16 responses showing the child has a statement but also has 'support without a statement') is a further illustration of the point made elsewhere in this report concerning the high degree of confusion for many parents in relation to their child's provision. This is also reflected in the numbers of parents giving a 'don't know' response to the question concerning whether their child had 'support without a statement/record of need'.

5.4 Nature of difficulties

514 parents (28.9%) indicated that their child had one or more difficulties at school/college. These parents cited 1011 difficulties, so clearly many cited more than one difficulty. Of those parents with children on the list or register in mainstream schools, 43.5% considered that their children did not have difficulties compared with 80.2% of the whole year group and 16% of those at special school.

The difficulties reportedly experienced by the children/young people broadly reflected national patterns with 15.3% having a learning disability; 8.2% social, emotional or behavioural difficulties; 7.7% a language/communication difficulty and 4.4% autism/ASD (see table below). There were overlaps between these categories.

Table 19: Nature of difficulties

Nature of difficulties	Frequency	Percent
Mental health difficulty	24	1.4
EBD difficulty	146	8.2
Language/ communication difficulty	136	7.7
Autistic spectrum difficulty	79	4.4
Long term illness	27	1.5
Learning disability	271	15.3
Prejudice	16	0.9
Bullying	94	5.3
Physical disability	64	3.6
Visual impairment	25	1.4
Hearing difficulty	47	2.6
Other		
Other medical	19	1.1
Other behavioural	15	0.8
School induced	28	1.6
Home problem	3	0.2
Total other	82	4.6

Table 20 displays relationships between these difficulties. The 25 parents who ticked 5, 6 or 7 difficulties are a small percentage, but are responsible for many of the links between different difficulties; therefore, these have been ignored in the table below.

Table 20: Relationship between difficulties for parents who indicated 2, 3 or 4 difficulties

	Mental health diff	EBD diff	Lang com diff	Aut spect diff	Long term illness	Learning disability	Prejudice	Bullying	Physical disability	Visual imp	Hearing diff	Other diff
total links	26	172	186	111	25	261	23	70	75	27	65	63
Mental health difficulty		8	2	1	0	4	2	3	1	0	3	2
EBD difficulty	8		33	28	0	52	4	17	7	1	10	12
Language/ communication difficulty	2	33		26	4	68	3	4	14	7	21	4
Autistic spectrum difficulty	1	28	26		3	33	2	6	4	1	3	4
Long term illness	0	0	4	3		8	0	3	3	0	0	4
Learning disability	4	52	68	33	8		2	20	29	9	15	21
Prejudice	2	4	3	2	0	2		7	0	0	2	1
Bullying	3	17	4	6	3	20	7		4	0	1	5
Physical disability	1	7	14	4	3	29	0	4		4	4	5
Visual impairment	0	1	7	1	0	9	0	0	4		3	2
Hearing difficulty	3	10	21	3	0	15	2	1	4	3		3
Other difficulty	2	12	4	4	4	21	1	5	5	2	3	

The table below indicates that there was, as we might expect, a highly significant statistical association between strata and multiplicity of difficulties; that is, pupils in special schools (compared with the other strata) were more likely to be described by their parents as having more than one type of difficulty.

Table 21: Number of difficulties x strata

Number of difficulties	Strata		
	Mainstream	Register	Special school
0	1139	72	45
	82.8%	46.5%	18.3%
1	149	45	65
	10.8%	29.0%	26.4%
2	58	25	52
	4.2%	16.1%	21.1%
3	18	6	39
	1.3%	3.9%	15.9%
4	7	5	26
	.5%	3.2%	10.6%
5	2	1	11
	.1%	.6%	4.5%
6	2	1	3
	.1%	.6%	1.2%
7	0	0	5
	.0%	.0%	2.0%
Total	1375	155	246
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Most of the cells in table 21 are non-zero. This means that a very large number of combinations of difficulties affect some children in the survey. It also means that classification is difficult; consequently the following groupings in the table below have been determined by applying professional judgement to the data:

1) Learning disability: this sub-group had the most children and links, so it was retained separately. It is more common, in all strata, than any of the following groups.
2) Language and autism: These two areas had 26 links (ie children with both) and are viewed as having broad underlying similarities related to communication problems. However, it should be noted that both these communication-based difficulties also have links with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

3) Psychosocial: SEBD/EBD, bullying and mental health difficulties were grouped together.
4) Motor and sensory: Physical, visual and hearing difficulties are all motor or sensory impairments and might be expected to lead to access problems.

As expected, all these groups are most common in special schools and least common in the mainstream stratum (see the table below). However, it is striking that pupils on the register/ list (25.8%) were nearly as likely as those in special schools (30.1%) to have psychosocial difficulties.

Table 22: Strata x type of difficulty

		Strata recode		
		Mainstream	**Register**	**Special school**
Learning disability	Count	84	43	144
	% pupils	6.1	27.7	58.5
	% of difficulties	31.9	35.5	35.5
Language +autism	Count	44	21	113
	% pupils	3.2	13.5	45.9
	% of difficulties	16.7	17.4	27.8
Psychosocial (EBD+Bull+MH)	Count	111	40	74
	% pupils	8.1	25.8	30.1
	% of difficulties	42.2	33.1	18.2
Bodily (phy+vis+hear)	Count	24	17	75
	% pupils	1.7	11.0	30.5
	% of difficulties	9.1	14.1	18.5
Total pupils within strata	Count	1375	155	246
Total difficulties within strata	Count	263	121	406

It was expected that the motor or sensory impairments might be associated with specific issues and this parent group would have different attitudes when compared with others. Therefore, the table below shows the responses, for this group only, to questions 7b, 7c and 7e concerning perceived cause of difficulties.

Table 23: Motor/sensory x cause of other difficulties

	Motor/sensory (phsy+vis+hear) difficulty	Mean[4]	Significance
7bi Difficulties by LA	No	3.95	P=0.03
	Yes	4.13	
7bii Difficulties by school	No	3.78	P=0.06
	Yes	3.99	
7biii Diff by lack of understand	No	3.43	P=0.04
	Yes	3.71	
7biv Diff just the way s/he is	No	2.52	P<0.001
	Yes	2.00	
7ci School helping	No	2.30	P<0.001
	Yes	1.90	
7cii stop doing well	No	2.78	P=0.7
	Yes	2.72	
7ciii prevent learning	No	3.01	P=0.3
	Yes	3.13	
7civ stop moving	No	3.98	P=0.004
	Yes	3.57	
7cv stop extra activities	No	3.82	P<0.001
	Yes	3.28	
7cvi stop good job	No	2.93	P<0.001
	Yes	2.30	
7cvii encourage aim high	No	2.22	P=0.01
	Yes	1.95	
7cviii prevent doing what want	No	3.47	P=0.03
	Yes	3.09	
7e Asked school to change?	No	1.65	P=0.2
	Yes	1.73	

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[4] Remember 1 = strongly agree etc, so the lower the number, the stronger the agreement with the statement.

Those parents whose children had motor or sensory impairments disagreed more with the first 3 questions, but agreed more strongly with 7biv ('my child's difficulties are just the way s/he is'). Not surprisingly, these parents were more inclined to hold a medical, rather than a social, model in mind when compared with the other DSD group parents. Also, they were more positive that the school helped their child (7ci and 7cvii) but less strongly disagreed that the difficulty hinders (7civ, 7cv, 7cvi, and 7cviii). These significant differences in attitudes may, first, indicate genuine differences due to the nature of these motor or sensory impairments and/or, second, reflect severity of the difficulties.

There were differences in types of difficulty experienced by the ethnic groups, as shown below. Asians reported higher frequencies of language and autism (grouped), sensory and learning difficulties, but mixed ethnic groups had the highest reported frequency of EBD + bullying + mental health difficulties (grouped).

Table 24: Ethnicity and difficulties (grouped)

	difficulty	**White**	**Mixed ethnicity**	**Asian**	**Black**	**significance**
Lang+autism	no	1413	39	89	34	
		91.7%	81.3%	75.4%	81.0%	
	yes	128	9	29	8	
		8.3%	18.8%	24.6%	19.0%	p<0.001
EBD+Bull+MH	no	1351	36	101	40	
		87.7%	75.0%	85.6%	95.2%	
	yes	190	12	17	2	
		12.3%	25.0%	14.4%	4.8%	p=0.02
Sensory	no	1454	45	96	41	
		94.4%	93.8%	81.4%	97.6%	
	yes	87	3	22	1	
		5.6%	6.3%	18.6%	2.4%	p<0.001
Learning diff	no	1320	38	89	38	
		85.7%	79.2%	75.4%	90.5%	
	yes	221	10	29	4	p=0.01

5.5 Causes of DSD

The 614 parents in the DSD group were asked about possible causes (see table 25). Children's DSD were most frequently considered to be caused by 'the way the child is' (63% n=287, strongly agreeing/agreeing with this). Consistent with this, there was a generally positive view about the role of schools and local authorities in supporting their children with DSD. For example, 84.9% (n=1507) were satisfied with the way the school was treating their child.

Table 25a: Perceptions of cause of DSD

Difficulties caused by	**Education Authority**		**School Organisation**		**Lack of Understanding**		**Just the way s/he is**	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly Agree	15	3.9	18	4.6	39	9.6	130	28.5
Agree	23	5.9	38	9.7	69	16.9	157	34.4
Neutral	45	11.6	54	13.7	57	14.0	74	16.2
Disagree	175	45.1	170	43.3	142	34.8	45	9.9
Strongly disagree	130	33.5	113	28.8	101	24.8	50	11.0

Similarly, (see table above) 78.6% (n=305) disagreed with the statement that the child's DSD were caused by the local authority. 72.1% (n=283) disagreed with the statement that the child's DSD were caused by the school organisation. However a lack of understanding was considered by 26.5% of parents (n=108) to contribute to their child's DSD.

While all parents were inclined to see DSD as caused by 'just the way the child is', this was particularly so for parents of special school pupils.

Table 25b: DSD caused by the way the child is

Just the way s/he is	List or register	Special school	Mainstream
Strongly agree	13 (16.5%)	85 (46.2%)	34 (15.7%)
Agree	32 (40.5%)	63 (34.2%)	72 (33.2%)
Neutral	19 (24.1%)	18 (9.8%)	39 (18.0%)
Disagree	8 (10.1%)	15 (8.2%)	28 (12.9%)
Strongly disagree	7 (8.9%)	3 (1.6%)	44 (20.3%)

There were 403 responses to the open question describe your child's most serious difficulty (question 7d), with all (apart from four that were difficult to classify) falling into 4 main categories. The overwhelming majority of comments related to the **specific difficulties or disability of the child**, for example difficulties in reading and writing, Autism, dyspraxia, epilepsy etc. 291 (72%) of the comments were classified in this way and two are included below as examples:

> *Uncontrolled epilepsy causes her to pass out and interrupts her thoughts and development leaving her with severe learning difficulties*
>
> *Ability to absorb any information and retain this information*

This 'within-child' view of the most serious difficulties corresponds to the finding that a majority of respondents agreed that the main cause of the child's difficulties was 'just the way they were'.

10% (41) comments specifically mentioned **bullying** or situations that suggested the child was being bullied; and 2% (8) placed a focus on the **lack of socialisation / friendships** and low self-esteem as a result of the disability as the most serious difficulty:

> *My daughter has severe learning difficulties and this impacts her friends, she doesn't have friends*

> *Lack of confidence and self esteem due to special needs. Although these difficulties are relatively minor, she has difficulty 'fitting in' and understanding sports'*

The remaining 14.5% (58) suggested the main source of difficulty was located within the **surrounding environment, attitudes or understanding**, including a lack of support within the school ie views more linked to the social model of disability:

> *Lack of understanding from most teachers. They have favourites and only concentrate on those that will achieve good results. He continues to see the psychologist now and is just starting to come of his own*

> *Lack of encouragement and extra tuition to catch up where fallen behind or where has difficulty understanding work*

> *Lifts always breaking down, fore doors too heavy to open in a wheelchair*

Overall, this qualitative data on the most serious difficulty faced by children corresponds to, and supports, the statistical result of a majority of parents identifying the cause of any difficulties as 'within child' and not within the attitudes or environment of the wider community, as argued in the social model.

5.6 Satisfaction with school experience

Overall there was strong satisfaction with the school experience (table 26). However, parents whose children had DSD were less convinced that their children were happy and thriving in school when compared with the views of parents whose children did not have DSD.

Table 26: Satisfaction with school experience, DSD group

	Feels settled in school		**Looks forward to school**		**Is treated well in school**		**Is making good progress**	
DSD	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Strongly agree	235 (39.2%)	624 (53.8%)	192 (31.9%)	418 (36.3%)	205 (33.8%)	477 (41.3%)	177 (29.3%)	501 (43.2%)
Agree	230 (38.3%)	473 (40.8%)	215 (35.8%)	520 (45.1%)	256 (42.2%)	569 (49.2%)	263 (43.5%)	567 (48.9)
Neutral	72 (12.0%)	44 (3.8%)	119 (19.8%)	170 (14.8%)	85 (14.0%)	89 (7.7%)	92 (15.2%)	79 (6.8%)
Disagree	40 (6.7%)	13 (1.1%)	51 (8.5%)	40 (3.5%)	40 (5.6%)	20 (1.7%)	54 (8.9%)	11 (0.9%)
Strongly disagree	23 (3.8%)	5 (0.4%)	24 (4.0%)	4 (0.3%)	20 (3.3%)	1 (1%)	18 (3.0%)	1 (1%)

Although the picture is positive overall, those parents with children on the list or register in mainstream schools were the least positive about their children’s educational experiences. Where the children attended special schools, the parents’ responses were similar to those from the whole year group stratum across a range of aspects of satisfaction with schools (see tables 27-29). Cross-strata comparisons are considered further below (p 97-8), in relation to aspirations.

Table 27: Satisfaction with school experience by strata, those on the list or register

List or register	Feels settled in school	Looks forward to school	Is treated well in school	Is making good progress
Strongly agree	50 (32.7%)	40 (26.1%)	35 (22.7%)	35 (22.6%)
Agree	68 (44.4%)	56 (36.6%)	81 (52.6%)	73 (47.1%)
Neutral	17 (11.1%)	34 (22.2%)	19 (12.3%)	27 (17.4%)
Disagree	10 (6.5%)	13 (8.5%)	11 (7.1%)	14 (7.7%)
Strongly disagree	7 (4.6%)	9 (5.9%)	7 (4.5%)	4 (3.9%)

Table 28: Satisfaction with school experience by strata, those attending special school

Special school	Feels settled in school	Looks forward to school	Is treated well in school	Is making good progress
Strongly agree	122 (51.3%)	117 (48.8%)	118 (49.2%)	101 (41.9%)
Agree	87 (36.6%)	80 (33.3%)	91 (37.9%)	94 (39.0%)
Neutral	15 (6.3%)	25 (10.4%)	19 (7.9%)	27 (11.2%)
Disagree	8 (3.4%)	11 (4.6%)	7 (2.9%)	14 (5.8%)
Strongly disagree	5 (2.1%)	5 (2.1%)	5 (2.1%)	4 (1.7%)

Table 29: Satisfaction with school experience by strata, whole year group

Whole year group	Feels settled in school	Looks forward to school	Is treated well in school	Is making good progress
Strongly agree	687 (50.1%)	453 (33.2%)	529 (38.6%)	542 (39.4%)
Agree	548 (39.9%)	599 (43.9%)	653 (47.6%)	663 (48.2%)
Neutral	84 (6.1%)	230 (16.8%)	136 (9.9%)	117 (8.5%)
Disagree	35 (2.6%)	67 (4.9%)	42 (3.1%)	39 (2.8%)
Strongly disagree	16 (1.2%)	14 (1.0%)	9 (0.7%)	9 (0.7%)

Rurality and satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the child's school was high, irrespective of rurality. (see table 30 below)

Table 30: Satisfaction by rurality, England and Wales

Eng+Wales rurality		**Agrees/strongly agrees with the statement:**				
		Feels settled in school	**My child is making good progress**	**I am satisfied with the way the school is treating my child**	**My child looks forward to going to school**	**Years 5&6 My child is looking forward to the next year at school**
Urban R	Count (%)	7 (77.8%)	8 (88.8%)	8 (88.9%)	7 (77.8%)	3 (75%)
	% of Total	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.8%
Town R	Count (%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	1 (50%)
	% of Total	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Village R	Count (%)	16 (84.2%)	16 (89.5%)	16 (84.3%)	13 (78.4%)	4 (66.7%)
	% of Total	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	1.1%
Hamlet/ I R	Count (%)	24 (85.7%)	25 (89.3%)	22 (78.6%)	19 (65.5%)	11 (73.4%)
	% of Total	1.7%	1.7%	1.5%	1.3%	2.8%
Urban Con	Count (%)	808 (89.9%)	763 (84.4%)	765 (84.7%)	687 (76.9%)	234 (78.2%)
	% of Total	55.5%	52.3%	52.4%	47.3%	58.9%
Town Con	Count (%)	190 (90.9%)	185 (88.5%)	185 (88.1%)	161 (76.7%)	20 (83.4%)
	% of Total	13.1%	12.7%	12.7%	11.1%	5.1%
Village Con	Count (%)	154 (84.6%)	159 (87.8%)	155 (85.6%)	136 (74.7%)	26 (81.3%)
	% of Total	10.5%	10.9%	10.6%	9.3%	6.5%
Hamlet/ I Con	Count (%)	95 (89.6%)	87 (82.8%)	90 (85.7%)	78 (74.3%)	12 (80%)
	% of Total	6.5%	6.5%	6.2%	5.4%	3.1
Total	Count (%)	1298 (89.2%)	1248 (85.5%)	1045 (85.4%)	1105 (76.1%)	311 (78.3%)

See appendix for background information relating to categories. The more sparsely populated areas occur first.

Table 31: Satisfaction by rurality, Scotland

Scotland rurality		**Agrees/strongly agrees with the statement:**				
		Feels settled in school	**My child is making good progress**	**I am satisfied with the way the school is treating my child**	**My child looks forward to going to school**	**Years 5&6 My child is looking forward to the next year at school**
Large Urban	Count (%)	68 (90.7%)	67 (89.4%)	70 (94.6%)	66 (88%)	34 (82.4%)
	% of Total	4.3%	4.2%	4.4%	4.2%	6.5%
Accessible Rural	Count (%)	27 (95.4%)	25 (89.3%)	22 (81.5%)	18 (66.6%)	0 (0%)
	% of Total	1.7%	1.6%	1.4%	1.1%	0%
Remote Rural	Count (%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
	% of Total	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0%
Very Remote Rural	Count (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
	% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0.1%	0%
Total	Count	106	106	104	105	34

Choice of school

The parents of the DSD group were less likely to feel that they had sufficient information to inform their choice of school or that they were able to do so. This was less marked with regard to the choice of an English or Welsh medium school.

Table 32: Choice of school, DSD and non DSD

Disabilities, Special needs and/or difficulties		**Agrees/strongly agrees with the statement:**		
		We have enough information to decide what to do next	**We are able to choose what to do next**	**I will have the choice between English and Welsh Medium schools**
Yes	Count (%)	373 (69.2%)	242 (65.2%)	29 (70.7%)
	% of Total	22.8%	21.3%	13.7%
No	Count (%)	901 (82.3%)	812 (75.1%)	129 (75.4%)
	% of Total	51.5%	50.6%	60.8%
Total	Count %	1274 77.9%	1154 71.8%	158 74.5%

Although most children were at the school of their parents’ choice, the DSD group were less likely to be so.

Table 33: School of choice, DSD and non DSD

Difficulty, Special need and/or disability		**At the school of their choice**			
		Yes	**No**	**Don’t know** (	Total
Yes	Count (%)	525 (87.2%)	56 (9.3%)	21 (3.5%)	602 (100%)
	% of Total	30.2%	3.2%	1.2%	34.6%
No	Count (%)	1087 (95.7%)	43 (3.8%)	6 (0.5%)	1136 (100%)
	% of Total	62.5%	2.5%	0.3%	51.5%
Total	Count %	1612 92.8%	99 5.7%	27 1.6%	1738 100%

Rurality and school of choice

In England and Wales 92.4% were at the school of their choice. With the exception of small towns (75%, count 3) this was evenly spread. In Scotland 92% of those in large urban areas were in the school of their choice and100% everywhere else.

Table 34: Rurality and choice, England and Wales

Eng+Wales rurality	**Agrees/strongly agrees with the statement:**		
	We have enough information to decide what to do next		**We are able to choose what to do next**
Urban R	Count (%)	7 (100%)	7 (100%)
	% of Total	0.5%	0.5%
Town R	Count (%)	3 (75%)	3 (75%)
	% of Total	0.2%	0.2%
Village R	Count (%)	12 (63.1%)	8 (42.1%)
	% of Total	0.8%	0.5%
Hamlet/ I R	Count (%)	21 (75%)	18 (64.3%)
	% of Total	1.5%	1.3%
Urban Con	Count (%)	630 (76%)	559 (68.7%)
	% of Total	46.3%	41.8%
Town Con	Count (%)	159 (80.3%)	162 (82.3%)
	% of Total	11.7%	12.1%
Village Con	Count (%)	145 (84.3%)	128 (75.7%)
	% of Total	10.7%	9.6%
Hamlet/I Con	Count (%)	90 (88.2%)	77 (77%)
	% of Total	6.6%	5.8%
Total	Count (%)	1067 (78.5%)	962 (71.9%)

Table 35: Rurality and choice, Scotland

Scotland rurality		**Agrees/ strongly agrees with the statement:**	
		We have enough information to decide what to do next	**We are able to choose what to do next**
Large Urban	Count (%)	42 (62.7%)	37 (57.8%)
	% of Total	2.9	2.6%
Accessible Rural	Count (%)	21 (87.5%)	20 (80%)
	% of Total	1.5%	1.4%
Remote Rural	Count (%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
	% of Total	0.2%	0.2%
Very Remote Rural	Count (%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
	% of Total	0.1%	0.1%
Total	Count	66	60

Written in responses (question 7e) provide information about changes requested of schools and so amplify the sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In total, 180 comments were provided here, covering a broad range of factors and issues. There were many **general** comments (38, 21%) that were either broadly negative or positive about present school placement, but where it was not possible to identify a particular aspect or issue:

> *We have approached the school with ways to teach my child, unsure whether these are being used*
>
> *The school is very good and understands my son*

There was an additional set of general comments (16, 9%) that related to the **attitudes** of teachers and/or schools and again suggested both positive and negative experiences in this area:

> *We work very closely with the school and they are very responsive in support and always looking for new strategies to help*

> *I have approached (my son's) teachers but have received negative comments and no follow-up. The head-teacher was helpful but again no follow-up and this has been happening for over 3 years*

Parents also mentioned specific requests for **additional support** (20, 11%) in the form of extra help or tuition, or asked for changes in relation to specific **curriculum and assessment** issues (25, 14%):

> *To use ability appropriate testing so that children do not feel they are failing and taken on board by SENCO teacher – she is working with teachers to do this*

> *Asked if deadlines could be extended and extra time with teachers to help individually. The 6th form did everything possible to help*

For both sets of comments there was again a variety of responses, with some schools responding well to requests from parents and others less helpful.

14 comments explicitly mentioned approaching the school about **bullying** (8%), either in terms of asking for information about policies or how it was being handled. A number of comments noted a reasonably good response from the school initially which was not sustained:

> *They are monitoring the bully and my child. This works for a while but then it reverts back*

29 comments (16%) related specifically to aspects of the school **environment** they had asked to be changed, including classroom organisation (moving class or where the child sits in relation to the rest of the class, for example) and specific strategies for helping some specific needs (eg managing behavioural difficulties). Encouragingly, many parents reported positive experiences around asking for changes within the school environment:

> *School and college had asked me as a parent what changes should be made and therefore this has helped a lot*

Unfortunately this was not the experience of all parents with some reporting less helpful responses, although these were in the minority:

> *I have spoken to the school eg learning mentor, head of year etc. I told them (my son) found any change difficult and was struggling. All they talk about with me are the bad things he does. They don't return phone calls as well*

Only a small number of parents/carers mentioned asking the school about **health** related issues (5, 3%) and again this suggested a mixed response. 4 parents/carers (2%) mentioned the involvement of **other agencies**, all reporting negative experiences either in relation to the attitudes of individuals or (more often) the length of time involved in accessing additional support:

> *We asked for counselling – one provided from out of school but did not liaise with school or us. Contacted educational psychologist – school contacted them. Have received date for sessions – 7 months after we asked for help*

7 comments (4%) specifically mentioned how schools dealt with **information** provided by parents /carers or provided information to

parents/carers about their child. Unfortunately, this was an area in which experiences were largely negative:

> *Meeting with form teacher to highlight (son's) special needs etc - organised by me! Form teacher not provided with statement of special needs by school director of special education. Other teaching staff unaware of needs of student or in particular autism*
>
> *Each year we take an information pack on his specific syndrome into school. Unfortunately it is not always taken on board*

Finally, there were a few comments that were difficult to classify (9, 5%; eg 'He isn't the only child in the class') and so these were not included in any of the previous categories. The remaining responses (13, 7%) related to processes around **statements, assessment and diagnosis** with parents requesting assessments of ability (eg. for dyslexia) or more/new information about IEPs or Statements. As usual, some were positive about this:

> *I asked the school to investigate if dyspraxia was the problem and they dealt with it immediately. She now has additional lessons to help her overcome her difficulties*

and some much less so:

> *Rewrite his IEP which hasn't altered in 3 years! To put him on school action and achievable targets. To compensate and understand his behaviour is due to his condition and not because he is lazy and disruptive*

Overall, in relation to asking the school to change, there was a very mixed response and a wide range of experiences. Some schools appear to respond well to approaches from parents/carers and any requests made or information provided; others appear reluctant to accept the views of parents/carers and do not incorporate suggested changes into dealing with the specific difficulties of the child.

There was no evidence to suggest that different schools or different groups of respondents (in terms of the survey cohorts: mainstream; register only and special) received or experienced different treatment in response to request for changes.

All open comments were coded into broadly supportive/positive, broadly negative and neutral. The number of comments coded into each category for each survey cohort is included in table 36 below. There was no significant difference between the groups based on chi-squared analysis.

Table 36: Positive/negative comments concerning request for change

	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Totals**
Special	16	18	11	45
Mainstream	30	42	27	99
Register only	6	17	9	32
Totals	52	77	47	176

Satisfaction with respect to gender and ethnicity

Satisfaction with school was slightly higher for girls than for boys (Q5a, b, c and d); but differences in choice of school were not significant (Q6bi, bii and c). Likewise, causes of difficulties and awareness of the DDA were not significant.

Table 37: Satisfaction by gender

	Sex	Mean	Std. Error Mean
5a Settle	Female	1.62	.028
	Male	1.75	.029
5b progress	Female	1.71	.027
	Male	1.92	.029
5c treat	Female	1.76	.028
	Male	1.86	.028
5d go	Female	1.86	.030
	Male	2.06	.032
6bi info	Female	2.00	.033
	Male	2.04	.033
6bii choose	Female	2.14	.037
	Male	2.22	.037
6c want	Female	1.08	.011
	Male	1.09	.011
Hinder factor	Female	3.2129	.06868
	Male	3.2688	.04909
Educational cause factor	Female	3.7722	.05906
	Male	3.7718	.04857
DDA factor	Female	1.9325	.02641
	Male	1.9603	.02698

Satisfaction with school (Q5a, b, c and d) was similar for the four ethnic groups, although parents from Black ethnic groups tended to be most positive (overall mean of 1.64) and parents from mixed ethnic groups were the least positive (overall mean = 1.97). This difference was highly significant[5] for Q5d (‘My child looks forward to going to school’) with Black (1.55) and Asian (1.66) being more positive than White (2.00) and Mixed ethnicity (2.04) parents. Differences in choice of school were not significant (Q6bi, bii and c), although Qbi (‘I had enough information to decide which type of school was best for my child’) approached significance (p=0.09) with parents from Black minority ethnic groups again the most positive. Likewise, causes of

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[5] Significance tested with Kruskal-Wallis One-way non-parametric ANOVA: chi-squared (3) = 26.0, p<0.001)

difficulties and awareness of the DDA were not significant, although the hinder factor approached significance (p=0.06) with Asians more likely to consider their child as hindered by their difficulties. This may be because they had greater difficulties and/or higher levels of deprivation making it harder to overcome problems.

Table 38: Satisfaction by ethnicity

	White	**Mixed ethnicity**	**Asian**	**Black**
5a Settle	1.70	1.68	1.57	1.45
5b progress	1.81	2.09	1.81	1.76
5c treat	1.81	2.06	1.77	1.79
5d go	2.00	2.04	1.66	1.55
progress factor (above questions combined)	1.83	1.97	1.70	1.64
6bi info	2.00	2.31	2.14	1.97
6bii choose	2.17	2.36	2.13	2.28
6c want	1.08	1.17	1.15	1.12
Hinder factor	3.29	3.16	2.95	3.45
Educational cause factor	3.77	3.70	3.80	3.88
Choice factor	2.08	2.36	2.14	2.17
DDA factor	1.94	1.84	1.97	1.95

We asked directly: ‘Does your child currently go to the type of school that you want? If the answer is ‘no’, please say why this is’ (Question 6c). A total of 94 comments were written-in regarding why children were not at the school of parent/carers’ choice. The most frequent comment (25, 27%) related to the type of school/facilities; that is, the parent would have preferred a special/mainstream/grammar/ independent/private/religious setting for their child:

> *He goes to the best available school and is doing well but I wish there was a special school he could go to without any ‘problem/naughty’ pupils*
>
> *I would like to have him go to a normal school*

15 responses (11%) were difficult to categorise and were grouped as ‘other’. The next most frequent type of response (14) was based on whether the current placement was **meeting the specific needs** of the child and/or if an alternative would be able to do this better:

> *No, because they are not addressing his specific learning needs. It improves for a while when I push, but they do not really follow forward*

With 10 comments (11%) each, the next two groups of responses referred to **financial** reasons (ie not being able to afford the cost of fees for a preferred school) and **standards** in the school (management; attainment; behaviour):

> *It is a special needs school where the standard of education is poor. Unfortunately there is no other viable option at present*

The remaining reasons either stated there was **no choice** (4, 4%), **no room** (2, 2%)) at the school of their choice or that their child’s placement was constrained / determined by the **catchment area** (8, 8%) in which they lived:

> *My daughter has to go to the school that’s in the catchment area and not the best school for her*

4 parents (4%) specifically commented on either the distance or cost of **transport** as a problem:

> *The LEA issued incorrect information regarding criteria for free transport. Unable to take up place due to cost of providing transport*

and 2 commented that it was the choice of their child to go to/stay in their present school:

> *I feel he would do better (perhaps) in another school but he won't move*

5.7 Aspirations and autonomy

Table 39: Aspirations and autonomy, DSD (by DSD sub-group)

	Teachers encourage child to aim high	Difficulties will prevent child getting good job	Difficulties will prevent child doing well at school	Difficulties stop child moving around school	Difficulties prevent doing extra activities
DSD					
Strongly agree	138 (29.4%)	102 (23.7%)	73 (16.2%)	16 (3.5%)	22 (4.8%)
Agree	182 (38.8%)	90(20.9%)	142 (31.6%)	34 (7.5%)	65 (14.3%)
Neutral	102 (21.7%)	81 (18.8%)	90 (20.0%)	64 (14.2%)	54 (11.8%)
Disagree	29 (6.2%)	105 (24.4%)	106 (23.6%)	208 (46.0%)	201 (44.1%)
Strongly disagree	18 (3.8%)	52 (12.1%)	39 (8.7%)	130 (28.8%)	114 (25.0%)

In terms of aspirations, 70.3% (n=218) of parents of pupils with SEN agreed with the statement that teachers encouraged their child to aim high. However 58.3% (n=161) of those parents felt that the child's difficulties would prevent the child from getting a good job and 47.8% (n=140) agreed with the statement that the child's difficulties would stop the child doing well at school. Splits by strata showed that 79.1% (special school parents), 62.5% (mainstream parents) and 59.3% (register/list parents) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers encouraged their child to aim high.

Table 40: Aspirations and autonomy (by DSD sub-group)

	Teachers encourage child to aim high	Difficulties will prevent child getting good job	Difficulties will prevent child doing well at school	Difficulties stop child moving around school	Difficulties prevent doing extra activities
Difficulties					
Strongly agree	132 (28.9%)	99 (23.5%)	69 (15.7%)	16 (3.6%)	21 (4.7%)
Agree	177 (38.8%)	88 (20.9%)	141 (32.1%)	32 (7.2%)	64 (14.3%)
Neutral	101 (22.1%)	79 (18.8%)	88 (20.0%)	64 (14.4%)	53 (11.9%)
Disagree	29 (6.4%)	104 (24.7%)	104 (23.7%)	205 (46.3%)	197 (44.2%)
Strongly disagree	17 (3.7%)	51 (12.1%)	37 (8.4%)	126 (28.4%)	111 (24.9%)
SEN					
Strongly agree	103 (33.2%)	88 (31.9%)	54 (18.4%)	13 (4.4%)	19 (6.4%)
Agree	115 (37.1%)	73 (26.4%)	86 (29.4%)	19 (6.4%)	46 (15.4%)
Neutral	67 (21.6%)	48 (17.4%)	65 (22.2%)	37 (12.5%)	39 (13.0%)
Disagree	15 (4.8%)	44 (15.9%)	65 (22.2%)	140 (47.1%)	122 (40.8%)
Strongly disagree	10 (3.2%)	23 (8.3%)	23 (7.8%)	88 (29.6%)	73 (24.4%)
Disabilities					
Strongly agree	82 (38.0%)	79 (41.8%)	41 (20.3%)	13 (6.5%)	16 (7.9%)
Agree	80 (37.0%)	47 (24.9%)	57 (28.2%)	17 (8.5%)	37 (18.2%)
Neutral	36 (16.7%)	29 (15.3%)	44 (21.8%)	25 (12.4%)	31 (15.3%)
Disagree	12 (5.6%)	22 (11.6%)	45 (22.3%)	94 (46.8%)	78 (38.4%)
Strongly disagree	6 (2.8%)	12 (6.3%)	15 (7.4%)	52 (25.9%)	41 (20.2%)

Aspirations are linked with independence. The child’s special needs were not seen generally by their parents as curbing movement around school (the associated statement evoked agreement from 10.8% (n=32) of these parents, 15% (n=30) of those with disabilities. Figures were slightly higher if we consider responses only from parents of children with physical disabilities or visual impairments (29.6% and 31.8% respectively strongly agreeing that movement around the school was curbed). The child’s special needs were seen as more limiting in relation to ‘extra’ school activities (such as after school clubs) with 21.8% (n=65) with SEN, 26.1% (n=53) with a disability, agreeing with that statement.

Both these sets of findings have implications for discussion about the wider contexts of disability and special needs.

5.8 Awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act and DRC

Interestingly, a higher percentage of those parents whose children do not have difficulties in school or SEN/additional needs reported being aware of the DRC and the DDA and the fact that it applies to schools.

Table 41: Awareness of the DRC and DDA

		DSD		**Children have difficulties in school**		**Children have SEN/additional needs**		**Children have disabilities**	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Have heard of the DRC	Yes	231 (38.9%)	564 (51,1%)	185 (36.9%)	498 (50.8%)	163 (40.1%)	612 (50.5%)	114 (41.5%)	670 (49.0%)
	No	326 (54.9%)	510 (46.2%)	284 (56.7%)	452 (46.1%)	221 (54.4%)	567 (46.8%)	147 (53.5%)	654 (47.8%)
Aware of the DDA	Yes	307 (51.3%)	713 (64.4%)	245 (48.8%)	627 (63.4%)	215 (52.4%)	769 (63.3%)	152 (54.9%)	853 (62.0%)
	No	252 (42.1%)	363 (32.8%)	227 (45.2%)	326 (33.0%)	168 (41.0%)	412 (33.9%)	108 (39.0%)	480 (34.9%)
Know DDA applies to schools	Yes	218 (36.8%)	565 (51.5%)	173 (34.7%)	492 (50.3%)	152 (37.5%)	608 (50.5%)	104 (38.0%)	665 (48.7%
	No	374 (63.2%)	533 (48.5%)	326 (65.3%)	486 (49.7%)	253 (62.5%)	596 (49.5%)	170 (62.0%)	700 (51.3%)

We were interested in exploring views about the impact of the DDA: ‘In what ways (if any) has the Disability Discrimination Act made any difference to your child and/or family?’ (Question 9h)

There were 84 open responses to this question; 20 (24%) indicated that it had **not made any difference** and 22 (26%) said they were **unaware of the Act** or did not know whether it had had an impact.

Some parents provided more detail:

> *Limited impact – legal obligations and practical implementation are miles apart for children with low levels of disability. Caters more for severe disability and high level of physical disability which do not apply to my son*

> *None whatsoever. Parent has begged for support with child from school and local authority. All that happened is that reports were filed and the child has become disadvantaged. No one thought it was their responsibility*

Other parents specifically asked us for more information:

> *Don’t know – have not seen or read the act. It would be nice to have a copy*

There were a few comments (4, 5%) that were **aspirational** in the sense that they did not know whether the DDA had made any difference yet, but were hopeful that it would in the future:

> *Don’t know at present but hope it will help my child in the future when seeking employment*

The remaining comments were varied in how they thought the DDA had made a difference and largely positive in this respect. 8 responses

(10%) suggested there had been **improved or extra support for their child**:

> *Gave him the right to have verbal parts of the GCSE language exam read out rather than by tape, but required some action – didn't happen automatically*

4 responses (5%) were more to do with the **extra support or confidence knowledge of the Act had provided for parents**:

> *Confidence to state the case, 'ownership' of issues (by child), knowledge and understanding*
>
> *Awareness and knowledge of the DDA has helped me to confidently express opinions at my son's reviews. However, I've found that school and staff have theoretical knowledge but lack practical skills/resources to implement all aspects for my son*

3 parents (4%) mentioned the importance of the Act in relation to **equality** for their children:

> *Our son is included in Year 6 of the local primary school. This ensures he is a part of the community that he lives. The Act demands that he is treated the same as his neighbours and his disability does not discriminate him*

and 5 (6%) specifically mentioned **improved accessibility** either to buildings and/or services:

> *The DDA has enabled (son) to access funding in order to continue education post 16 in order to access a life long education*

> *The DDA has improved our lives greatly due to the fact that there is far better access to shops etc due to the provision of ramps, automatic doors etc. There are still problems with public transport*

There was one comment that focused on **inclusion**:

> *This has made her be included into visits and trips that take place at college*

whilst the rest were either difficult to classify (7, 8%) or more **general** in tone (9, 11%):

> *This act has given my child protection and the opportunity to live and learn in a safe and helpful environment*

There was only a slight relationship between parents' awareness of DRC or DDA and their views relating to having sufficient information to inform their choice. This relationship was in favour of those with an awareness of the DDA and DRC. Parents who had heard of the DDA were more likely than other parents to ask the school to make changes (57.1% of those who asked for a change had heard of the DDA, 42.9% who did so had not heard of the DDA; to put this another way, of those who were aware of the DDA 40.0% had asked for a change).

Table 42: Awareness of DRC and DDA in relation to 'choice' questions

		Agrees/strongly agrees with the statement:		
		We have enough information to decide what to do next	**We are able to choose what to do next**	**I will have the choice between English and Welsh Medium schools**
Have heard of the DRC	Yes	587 (78.1%)	559 (74.7%)	92 (76.0%)
	No	598 (78.0%)	509 (68.4%)	59 (72.8%)
Aware of the DDA	Yes	429 (78.8%)	701 (72.8%)	109 (75.2%)
	No	429 (76.9%)	371 (68.6%)	42 (70%)
Know DDA applies to schools	Yes	590 (79.1%)	550 (74.5%)	85 (80.2%)
	No	636 (71,4%)	561 (69.4%)	68 (67.4%)

For those who were at the school of their choice there was little difference between those who had heard of the DRC/DDA and those who had not. This has face validity as people who are generally satisfied with their child's schooling are probably less likely to be aware of discrimination-related legislation. In line with this, more of those whose children were **not** at the school of parents' choice were aware of the DRC and the DDA and its application to schools.

Table 43: Awareness of DRC and school of choice

		At the school of their choice		
		Yes	**No**	**Don't know**
Have heard of the DRC	Yes	716 (92.0%)	54 (6.9%)	8 (1.0%)
	No	773 (93.6%)	41 (5.0%)	12 (1.5%)
Aware of the DDA	Yes	915 (91.4%)	76 (7.6%)	10 (1.0%)
	No	575 (94.9%)	19 (3.1%)	12 (2.0%)
Know DDA applies to schools	Yes	701 (91.6%)	58 (7.6%)	6 (0.8%)
	No	838 (93.7%)	38 (4.3%)	18 (2.0%)

Compared with other ethnic groups, fewer Asians had heard of the DRC, were aware of the DDA, or knew that the DDA applied to schools (all three overall chi-squares, p<0.001).

Table 44: Ethnicity and awareness of DRC and DDA

		Main ethnic groups			
Heard of DRC?		**White**	**Mixed ethnicity**	**Asian**	**Black**
Yes	Count	707	21	33	20
	% within Main ethnic groups	47.7%	45.7%	31.4%	52.6%
No	Count	725	24	60	17
	% within Main ethnic groups	49.0%	52.2%	57.1%	44.7%
Don't know	Count	49	1	12	1
	% within Main ethnic groups	3.3%	2.2%	11.4%	2.6%

Aware of DDA?		**White**	**Mixed ethnicity**	**Asian**	**Black**
Yes	Count	925	28	32	19
	% within Main ethnic groups	62.1%	60.9%	30.5%	50.0%
No	Count	515	18	60	15
	% within Main ethnic groups	34.6%	39.1%	57.1%	39.5%
Don't know	Count	50	0	13	4
	% within Main ethnic groups	3.4%	.0%	12.4%	10.5%

Know DDA applies to schools?		**White**	**Mixed ethnicity**	**Asian**	**Black**
Yes	Count	713	20	23	13
	% within Main ethnic groups	48.2%	44.4%	21.7%	36.1%
No	Count	765	25	83	23
	% within Main ethnic groups	51.8%	55.6%	78.3%	63.9%

6. Policy context

The following commentary builds on that outlined in phase 1 of the project (Lewis, Robertson and Parsons, 2005). The general direction of educational and related policy remains relatively clear and stable in England, Scotland and Wales, with the imperative of developing more inclusive educational provision still a key driver. This is emphasised in a draft report being prepared by the Education and Skills Lifelong Learning Committee in Wales which states that '*there is a very broad consensus that, irrespective of learning difficulties, children should as far as possible be educated alongside their peers in the most mainstream setting possible*.' (National Assembly for Wales 2006, p.8). The phase 1 report highlighted the importance of the social model of disability, but also noted that its overarching influence was likely to be challenged by evolving and more complex perspectives on disability (see, for example, Humphrey 2000, Dewsbury et al. 2004, Terzi 2004). The need for more sophisticated analytical tools is likely to become more important as the disability focused and education focused legislation become more congruent and intertwined (Miller et al. 2004).

Significant new legislation has been introduced, or is likely to be introduced in the coming months (see also appendix 4). Some of this legislation, although not directly concerned with special educational needs, additional support for learning needs or disability, requires scrutiny. Other legislation is more directly focused on issues that fall within the remit of this research project. Finally, in the period since the phase 1 research was completed (mid-2005) important political debate about special and inclusive education has taken, and is taking, place. This debate was triggered by the publication of a pamphlet by Baroness Warnock in June 2005. Policy outcomes arising from the debate are, as yet, unclear, but it seems likely that they will at least be identifiable in some form before the completion of this project (phase 2). Further, it seems plausible that the impact of this debate will be GB wide, given that Baroness Warnock's views have been discussed in Scotland and Wales, as well as in England.

Moves towards inclusion have been successful in England, Scotland and Wales, and this is reflected in inspection evidence (Ofsted 2004; Estyn 2006) and independent research (Pirrie et al. 2006). This evidence indicates that developments in inclusive provision <u>may</u> have been more successful in Scotland and Wales than in England in recent years. It also highlights that difficulties persist with regard to the inclusion of children and young people on the margins of education. For example, the Estyn report referred to above highlights the less than equal treatment of learners in pupils referral units (PRUs), including those with health problems, and learners in the criminal justice system.

Despite successful developments in inclusive education, and presumably reasonably levels of satisfaction amongst parents of children and young with special educational needs and disabilities, concerns persist regarding procedures linked to the identification, assessment and meeting of needs. This suggests, given that such difficulties were clearly outlined by the Audit Commission (2002a, b) four years ago, with reference to England and Wales, some difficulties with the Special Educational Needs Statutory Framework are resistant to change. These difficulties are confirmed in a policy review, which included a public consultation with parents and professionals, undertaken by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee in Wales (National Assembly for Wales 2004).

In Scotland, similar difficulties have been tackled in the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004* and through the introduction of a new Code of Practice (Scottish Executive, 2005). The legislation and the Code challenge the stigma associated with SEN and seek to replace unwieldy identification and assessment procedures with more inclusive, effective and coordinated support for a range of children and young people with additional support needs. However, implementation of the legislation is in its first phase and evidence about effectiveness is not yet available. Given that the work of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has been identified as a key driver in changing education policy in Scotland (Pirrie et al. 2006, p.12) the impact of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* (Part 4), and the *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Act 2002* in relation to the *Education Act 2004* warrants close monitoring. This intersection of legislation will become more significant still, when new Disability Equality Duties come into force.

As the policy of inclusive education has evolved during the past decade, so too, have local authority and school responses to the inclusive imperative, or presumption. This requires that the implementation and impact of disability rights legislation as it applies to education, and schooling in particular, needs to be understood in the context of what might be called the revised inclusion project. This project is characterised by rapid changes and revisions to national policies (Department for Education and Skills 2006a, b, c) and recognises the contribution that schools and local authorities make 'on the ground' to shaping local inclusive educational policy and practice (Norwich 2000). It is also characterised by the struggle to connect minority focused aspects of educational policy (eg those targeted at children and young people with special educational or additional support needs) with those that focus on the majority of learners.

This struggle is very evident, for example, in the English government's *Education and School Inspections Bill 2006* which places a strong emphasis on personalisation. The White Paper on which that Bill is based, *Higher Standards, Better Standards for All*, drew significant criticism because of the way in which personalised learning could have very negative effects on the educational experiences of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee 2006, a b). From a disability rights perspective, similar criticisms could be expressed, but perhaps in relation to potentially discriminatory policy and practice.

A final point to note, in this brief commentary on policy context, is the way in which the evolution of inclusive policy and practice has in fact, already moved beyond the concern expressed by Mary Warnock (2005, p.39) that '*Inclusion should mean being involved in a common enterprise of learning, rather than necessarily being under the same roof*.' The more complex challenge would seem to be about forging policy and practice that moves beyond the traditional characterisations of 'special' (segregated) and 'mainstream' (inclusive), and the values associated with these forms of provision, and recognising the dangers that these can create. This challenge is identified in a policy review undertaken by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee in Wales (National Assembly for Wales 2004), and also succinctly described in relation to the Scottish educational context by Pirrie et al*.* (2006 p.50, para 6.1):

> *The perceptions … that special schools are considered a 'barrier' to inclusion, or indeed that 'parental views … can be a barrier to mainstreaming' give some cause for concern. Failure to address these misapprehensions may prejudice the future development of the inclusion project, and of the evolution of special school provision within a policy climate of inclusion. There is a danger that inclusion becomes a new orthodoxy, and that authorities and schools engage in a relentless pursuit of an elusive gold standard. The effects of this may ultimately be counterproductive, in so far as it may result in a polarisation of views and of educational provision.*

The polarisation of views referred to here may well be reduced through the development of more connected educational provision. At the same time, children and young people with disabilities and particularly those with low incidence disabilities could yet find themselves experiencing a fragmented kind of education in which gaps in services and support are too all too common. Evidence that this does happen is reported in recent research by Gray et al. (2006) and warrants careful monitoring from a disability rights perspective.

7. Advisory group: Collective response to the draft final report

Louise Niblett and Jeremy Sharpe

Independence and autonomy

Whether one has special needs or learning difficulties or disabilities is largely due to context. For example, it is a really important fact in the success of the project that we are disabled; in our personal relationships with others this may, or may not, be significant.

In terms of transition within the education system, particularly in the latter stages, this can indeed be challenging and unsettling. Post school transitions, issues such as growing up, lack of communication and information lead to general confusion and worry. The school has been the centre of life for so many years - what happens after that? We appreciate and fully endorse the legitimate fears of parents/carers and children, whatever the reason behind the fears – LEA funding, quality of education or infrastructures available to support the disability SEN, are just a few examples we can think of. By definition, change forces us to confront the unknown - until familiarity, understanding and trust is established in the new environment.

Ambition and aspirations

We would agree that the notion of resilience provides a helpful way of looking at issues surrounding autonomy, independence and aspirations - factors such as who, or what, makes that person get up and fight.

As a parent or carer, if one has acknowledged/accepted/embraced the idea that one has a child with a disability, it is probably easier to accept that the child may also have SEN or other needs. This is especially so if the disability is a significant contributory factor to the SEN, learning difficulty or other need.

Perhaps one way to address the issue of definitions of disability is to make more use of the term ‘impairment’. We doubt that someone with HIV, for example, would consider themselves to be disabled.

A coordinated policy approach in special and mainstream schools is required. If all schools had a mixture of the ‘caring’ relaxed approach fostered in special schools combined with the academic rigour of mainstream schools then parents could make a real choice about educational setting.

Person-centred planning has not liaised very well with education services and consequently it has not really taken off. We can find pockets of good practice by all sorts of concerned agencies but no concerted efforts to coordinate this and spread it into schools.

It is certainly true for one of us in particular, that the realistic aspirations and full potential of disabled people are not achieved or reached in the workplace. Outcomes are certainly not reflected in the extra efforts made to date. Not achieving career progression after getting a good education (and working extremely hard throughout) has had a negative impact on self esteem and this in turn, may well affect future outcomes.

Advisory group: Collective response to the draft final report

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Knowledge and assertion of rights

Our impression is that the DDA has raised awareness of disability. Even if organisations or individuals do not know the minutiae of the legislation, they
__know they have a duty to do something or to behave in a particular way. So the DDA is a useful tool to reference when other people argue a point about equality and opportunity. However while people may say that they know of the DDA, the numbers who are prepared to quote and use it may be few indeed.

Employers know that they can no longer overtly discriminate against disabled people, but in an interview for example, we question whether one can prove necessarily, whether or not an employer acts covertly in a discriminating way. If one fails at an interview, who knows whether it is down to a disability or special need, or simply a case of the disabled person not being the best person for the job? In this respect, we wonder whether legislation such as the DDA has contributed to sending discrimination ‘underground’. This whole area is huge and certainly warrants further research and discussion, taking into account an infinite number of factors, such as a disabled person’s social background, upbringing, political persuasions, philosophy, their views on SEN and disabilities (including their own) and the resulting experiences.

Accessible/inaccessible educational services

In our experience (early-mid 1980s), the emphasis in a special school was often on the disability itself rather than on academic development. In addition, by definition, ‘special schools’ are designed to cater for disabled children so this in itself may give parents/carers less cause to complain.

The view that it is the ‘special need’ that is hindering the child’s progress rather than the system, from parents whose children went to special school did not surprise us. This is symptomatic of society’s general misconceptions and prejudices against disability. Many special schools, through their isolationist and protectionist policies, foster and promote this stance.

Government regulators in any field tend to adopt a ‘could do better’ approach, although journalists regularly play a part in this by exacerbating such approaches, highlighting negative rather than positive outcomes in reports. It is human nature to recall what is bad rather than to focus on, disseminate and broadcast what is good. Human beings find it easier to criticise but not so easy to come up with constructive alternatives or solutions.

Schools know that they have an obligation to make changes and can choose to recognise that disabled and non-disabled people need to co-exist, not only in school, but throughout life. There is educational value in this from which all parties in a mainstream school can learn.

Attitudes and behaviours

By far the most important factors to us are attitudes and behaviour - we can live with locked disabled toilets and inaccessible buildings etc but find that it is still the attitudes of mainstream society which are most disabling.

Further, we would assert that the attitudes of a range of people make educational services in/accessible, and so shape our independence, autonomy, ambitions and aspirations.

It may seem softer and kinder to some parents to describe their child as having ‘special educational needs’ rather than as being ‘disabled’. Similarly, those with temporary ‘problems’ may label their children as having difficulties because of the connotations of disability. However, this may be no more than a matter of semantics.

The Disability Discrimination Act is still relatively new and although it is a step in the right direction, it will take years before making a meaningful impact on people’s lives and attitudes. More work needs to be done to raise awareness of the DDA in terms of who is covered and the obligations of organisations and individuals under it. Only then can we reduce the perceived stigmatism of being disabled or having SEN. In simple terms, the ultimate would be for society to accept and embrace disability, rather than viewing people with such disabilities or SEN as problems. To this end, everyone in society has a duty to behave and act responsibly and with an open mind.

Survey of parents and carers of disabled children and young people in Great Britain

Final report: Part 2 (Appendices)

June 2006

Funded by the Disability Rights Commission

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Appendix 1 Details concerning methods

1. Sampling

1.1 Geographical regions

As a starting point, four focal geographical regions were chosen: one urban and one rural in England; one area in Wales and one area in Scotland. These locations were chosen for a variety of reasons and after discussion with DRC colleagues in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Within each region, a focal or 'hub' mainstream secondary school was identified along with its primary feeder schools. Special school provision within the area was also identified and included (with the exception of hospital schools which were excluded due to the requirement for lengthy ethical application procedures through NHS Ethics Committees which would not have been possible within the time-frame of the project).

Invitation letters were sent to the identified schools explaining the project and what involvement would entail. This was followed by a telephone call (or, in many cases, a number of calls) to the schools to ask if they were willing to take part by distributing surveys to parents in specified year groups. Some of the schools in these four focal regions also participated in the case study strand of the project. Additional schools from two further regions in England were included in order to extend the size of the sample as well as geographical areas covered. One was an urban region and the other a mostly rural region which neighboured the former. In both, as many schools were contacted as possible.

Scotland Urban: has a population of 209,000 (2002) and is the seventh largest council in Scotland. 2.3% of the school population in this city have a record of needs (580 pupils of a total of 24, 999 as recorded in 2002), which is higher than the Scottish average of 1.98%. There are deprived areas of the city as well as more affluent regions but individual schools do not represent either socio-economic extreme. School populations may be ethnically mixed as substantial numbers of foreign students and their families are attracted to the city; overall, 65 different nationalities and 52 languages are found amongst school pupils.

Wales Urban/Rural: this area incorporates a large town (population 128,000 as of 2001) as well as a number of smaller towns and villages, including some in rural locations. Almost 99% of the population is white and 14% of the population speak Welsh. There is a mixed socio-economic profile; although there is a strong local economy with lower than average levels of unemployment, this area also ranks in the top 10 most deprived unitary authorities in Wales according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. Seven primary schools and one secondary school in the area teach through the medium of Welsh (and some are included in our sample).

England Urban 1: a major city with over 1 million inhabitants. High levels of deprivation occur although there are some more affluent areas. The population is ethnically diverse with 43% of schools pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Unemployment is higher than the England national average. In 2000, 2.8% and 4.1% of primary and secondary school age pupils had statements of special educational need which was very similar to the national average (2.8% and 4.0% respectively). The proportion educated in special schools is well above the national average although the percentage of students with special educational need educated in mainstream settings rose from 37% to 61% between 1997 and 2001.

England Urban 2: this city has a population of 221,700 (based on 2001 census figures) and in many ways is ‘average’ compared to national figures; although within the city there are some very affluent areas and some very deprived ones. The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups is similar to national figures although the percentage of Indian and Pakistani heritage pupils is higher than the national average. The percentage of students with statements of special educational need is in line with the national average.

England Rural: this mixed urban and rural area has a population of 167, 900 (2001) and is the second most sparsely populated county in England.

Small schools and geographical isolation are common; just over half of the population live in rural areas of very low population density. Minority ethnic pupils represent 0.5% of the school population; there is a large Traveller population in the county with pupils attending many of the primary and secondary schools. Unemployment is below average although wages also tend to be lower. The proportion of primary and secondary age pupils with statements of special educational needs (2.2% and 4.6% respectively) is slightly higher than the national average.

England Urban/Rural: a diverse area which is mainly rural but with a number of urban areas that suffer some social deprivation. The population for 2001 was 734, 585 and 98.5% white. Unemployment rates are below the national average, although there is wide variation between different areas of the county. The proportion of students with statements of special educational need is in line with the national average for primary pupils and above average in secondary schools.

1.2 Year groups within schools and disability and/or SEN

The primary interest of the project was in the views of parents and carers of children with disabilities, and this is a small proportion of the population (less than 5%). Random (or systematic) sampling of the whole population and representative (eg proportional stratified) sampling minimise bias in the sampling design but lack statistical power in this case (due to the small proportion of target no's in the population). To enable powerful inferences, a method of disproportionate stratified sampling was employed in order to target the survey at sufficient numbers of families within each strata, which were defined as follows:

- **Entire cohorts** of mainstream educational establishments (primary and secondary schools and FE colleges). Target = 1500 pupils.
- Full **School action plus register** (including statemented pupils) of mainstream educational establishments (primary and secondary schools and FE colleges). Target = 300 pupils.
- Entire cohorts in **special schools** (including some independent schools). Target = 300 pupils.

Reaching the target numbers for each cohort would enable statistically meaningful comparisons to be carried out between types of disability, special or mainstream education, and by gender and ethnicity.

Due to the project focus on issues around transition, as well as for manageability, specific Year Groups were targeted which enabled a consideration of the transition between primary and secondary schooling, and pre- and post-16. Therefore, in England and Wales, parents of children/young people in Years 5/6, 7, 11 and 12 were surveyed. In Scotland there is a slightly different organisation of Year Groups across primary and secondary schools with children typically staying a year longer at their junior school before making the transition to secondary. In order to maintain an equivalent focus on transition across England, Scotland and Wales this required including slightly older children in the Scotland sample in relation to the transition between primary and secondary schooling only (transition to post-school study or destinations happens at age 16 in all countries). Thus, parents of children and young people in Primary 6 and 7, and Secondary 1, 4, 5 and 6 were surveyed in Scotland. The mail-out of surveys to schools aimed to reach 2200 in each Year Group (note that Yrs 5 and 6 or P6 and 7, as well as Years 12 and 13 or S5 and S6 were combined for this purpose), making a total planned mail-out of 10 000 surveys. Table 45 below summarises the groups across countries and age groups and their relevance to key transition points.

Table 45: Year groups and target numbers

Year Group and age: England and Wales	Year Group and age: Scotland	Transition point	Numbers targeted by age group
Year 5: 9-10 yrs	Primary 6: 10-11 yrs	Moving to the final year at primary school	2200
Year 6: 10-11 yrs	Primary 7: 11-12 yrs	Moving from primary to secondary school	
Year 7: 11-12 yrs	Secondary 1: 12-13 yrs	First year of secondary schooling	2200
Year 11: 15-16 yrs	Secondary 4: 15-16 yrs	Final year of compulsory secondary schooling	2200
Year 12: 16-17 yrs	Secondary 5: 16-17 yrs	First year of non-compulsory post-16 study	2200
Year 13: 17-18 yrs	Secondary 6: 17-18 yrs	Final year of non-compulsory post-16 study	

1.3 Non-school and other groups

This strategic sampling via schools in the focal regions was supplemented by an on-line version of the survey. This was intended to enable families with children not in formal education to participate, including parents/carers who were home-educating their children, as well as families not based within our focal geographical regions. A link to the survey accompanied by an explanatory paragraph was disseminated through a number of distribution lists, including Education Otherwise; the DRC and Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities. (Note - there was a snowballing effect from this and some people contacted us directly to let us know this eg Tourette Scotland; National Autistic society (NAS); community support groups in Manchester and London).

2. Questionnaire Construction

2.1 Paper-based survey

The survey was prefaced by an introductory page that explained who was doing the project (and contact details), why the project was useful, respondents' rights of confidentiality and anonymity, and that there would be a prize draw with 5 winning entries receiving £100 each. The survey was presented as an 8-page booklet, in Arial 14 font, with the introduction as the first page and seven main sections over the remaining 7 pages.

The survey was constructed to maximise respondent numbers from parents/carers generally rather than having an immediate or obvious focus on SEN or disability. This was to try to capture responses from parents/carers who may not explicitly identify their child as disabled or has having additional support needs but who may have difficulties at school that could be covered by the DDA. Thus, the first three sections of the survey made no mention of disability or SEN and focused instead on the child's progress at school and transition choices (see below).

The survey sections were planned to cover different aspects of the five key research themes of the project:

1. Independence and autonomy (eg role of parents/carers/teaching assistants as advocates, experience of involvement in decisions and choice)
2. Ambition and aspirations (eg perceived impact of impairment and attitudes on career aspirations)
3. Knowledge and assertion of rights (eg disability identity, knowledge of rights and the DDA)
4. Experience of accessible/inaccessible educational services and environments (eg building design/layout, curriculum and qualifications, school travel and trips)
5. Attitudes and behaviours (eg impact of attitudes to disability of parents/carers, peers, teachers and other school staff; impact of bullying).

These themes and the seven sections of the survey do not map directly to each other but the summary below describes each section and how it relates to the themes. At the end of the survey there was a blank space in which respondents were encouraged to add further information.

Survey section	**Questions included**	**Link to key themes**
1. About your child	4 questions, including gender, postcode, eligibility for free school meals and whether the child had ever been excluded from school.	Background/Demographic
2. Your child's progress at school	4 or 5 questions - depending on year group - on a 5 point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree; whether child is settled and making progress at school; looks forward to going to school; and satisfaction with the way school is treating the child.	4 and 5
3. Moving from current year	4 main questions including a pre-specified list of possible choices of school/college/course; 2 questions about having enough information to decide and ability to choose preferred school/option; a yes/no option for whether child goes to type of school preferred and an open option to explain why/why not.	1 and 2
4. Difficulties my child has at school	15 main questions, including a pre-specified list of difficulties (eg bullying, prejudice, learning disability – see Appendix for full list); 12 Likert scale questions exploring the cause of the difficulties and how the school is handling them; 1 open question to describe the most serious difficulty (if applicable); 1 yes/no question about asking the school to change to help the child with any difficulty plus space to explain if needed.	4 and 5
5. Special Needs	3 main yes/no questions about whether the child has a special need; a Statement or Record of Needs and any additional support but no Statement/Record. In each case, there was space to include additional information if needed.	Background/Demographic
6. Disability	11 questions in total, including 5 yes/no options about awareness of the DRC and DDA and whether the child has a disability; 4 Likert rating scale responses about how the DDA applies to, and is working in, schools; and 2 open questions for respondents (if applicable) to describe the disability and whether the DDA has made any difference to the child and/or family.	3
7. More about your family	3 questions regarding background/demographic information on employment status (taken from the ONS categories); first/main language spoken in the home; and ethnic group of the child (again taken from ONS categories).	Background/Demographic

For Scotland and Wales, the majority of questions were identical to the English version except for the inclusion of Welsh Medium schools in two questions on the Welsh version (Section 3), and the change of language (to Additional Support Needs rather than Special Educational Needs) as well as a question regarding plans to open a Coordinated Support Plan on the Scottish version (Section 5). These slight changes to some of the questions, as well as the production of all Year Group versions in the Welsh language, resulted in 16 different versions of the survey (4 Year Groups in England, Scotland and Wales plus 4 x Welsh language versions). Welsh Medium schools were sent both English and Welsh language versions of the survey where it was the policy of the school to send all documents to parents in both languages. Six respondents returned Welsh language versions of the form.

2.2 On-line survey

In order to make the on-line survey as straightforward as possible to complete, the 12 English language paper-based versions were condensed into one. The overall structure of the survey remained the same so that data would be comparable with the paper-based results, but the wording of some questions was changed slightly to make them more widely applicable. For example, the section that asked about choice of school and courses was amended to include all possible options across the different year groups, including post-16 and post-18/19 possibilities. Respondents were asked to tick only the options that they had considered/were considering.

Respondents were also encouraged to complete the survey if their children were aged between 8 and 19. This was to avoid any confusion that may have arisen through specifying particular year groups; in addition, this would not have been appropriate for children not being educated formally at school. This meant that some responses from the e-survey would be from parents/carers with children in different year groups to the focal ones for the project, but these were likely to be a minority of the total responses received.

2.3 Translations

Four welsh-speaking students at the University of Birmingham were recruited to translate the survey and project information sheets into Welsh. To ensure the quality of translation, the students were paired into two teams; one member of each pair translated the documents into Welsh and the other member back-translated the Welsh documents into English (without seeing the original English version). Finally, the Welsh language survey was double-checked by a Welsh-speaking member of staff at the University and final amendments made.

One school also contacted the team to suggest that a version of the survey should be available in Urdu. This was an important consideration as the project aimed to reach, and be accessible to, as many parents/carers as possible. After seeking specialist advice from a local translation company in Birmingham that regularly provides translation services for Urdu speakers, it was decided not to pursue this option. This was due to concerns that even with a translated document, Urdu-speaking parents might struggle with some of the technical language contained in the survey, making the time and cost of translation not worthwhile. This does of course raise important issues about finding an acceptable balance between accessibility and the practical constraints of any project in terms of time and budget available. There could have been many more versions of the survey produced to maximise accessibility (eg Polish; a signed video version for the Deaf; an audio and/or Braille version for visually impaired people; Farsi; Gujurati etc); however, this was not realistic or feasible within the parameters of the project.

(Note that the results from the on-line survey have not been included in this survey report due to contrasts between the two approaches (ie the e-survey and postal survey) such as sampling strategies. The e-survey data from Phases 1 and 2 will therefore be presented in a separate paper in future dissemination.)

3. Methods of Analyses

A data entry sheet was constructed to record the responses. The open questions were thematically coded and analysed using Nvivo software. Further reference to these data will be made in the main Phase 2 report. Both the closed questions and the coded open questions were imported into SPSS for quantitative analysis. As well as descriptive statistics (percentages and means), statistical tests such as t-tests and analysis of variance were used.

4. Timescale

Date/time period	Activities	Outputs
July/August 05	Start of project qaire developed consultation with advisory group	
Sept	Piloting of qaire ethical checks	Pilot qaire
Oct	Initial contact with schools/colleges key LEA personnel contacted	Final qaire agreed
Nov	Distribution of qaire response to queries coding categories finalised data entry	Initial returns
Dec	Deadline for returns - mid December data entry chase non returns	Returns
Jan 06	Chase non returns data entry start of analyses	Returns
Feb	Interim analyses of open ended questions data entry and data cleaning analyses of numerical data - interim	
Mar	Work on interim report analyses of numerical data - full database	Interim report-submitted to DRC and discussed with DRC steering group 28/03/06
April	Work on final report on parent survey	Draft final report Final report
May	Visits to DRC colleagues in Scotland and Wales for country- specific discussions about findings and links with case studies	

Appendix 2 Examples of questionnaires and covering letter

1. Sample questionnaire – English

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Disability Rights Commission

November 2005

Dear parent/carer,

You are invited to participate in a national survey of young people's experiences of school. This survey is part of a project based at the University of Birmingham.

This important project will feed into the development of new government legislation; and so we would like to know what works well for your child as well as areas that are challenging.

To help us, please complete the attached questionnaire which takes about 15 minutes. This is a Year 11 survey; so please answer the questions in relation to the current experiences of your Year 11 child ONLY.

Please leave blank any questions that you do not want to answer or are not relevant for your child. We greatly value your views even if some of the survey does not apply to your child.

Further information

- Your decision to complete the questionnaire is voluntary.
- All your information will be confidential and stored safely at the University of Birmingham.
- Anonymity is guaranteed. This means that names will not appear in our reports.
- We have made sure it meets our professional codes of conduct.

We very much hope you will be able to help us by completing the survey and thank you for your time and support. If you would like to find out more please contact Lin, our secretary:

Tel: 0121 414 4834; Email: l.j.walsh@bham.ac.uk or visit the School of Education website: www.education.bham.ac.uk

Best wishes

Ann Lewis

Professor Ann Lewis

To say 'Thank you!' there will be a prize draw with 5 winning entries receiving £100 each. Simply complete the questionnaire, include your child's name and post it in the FREEPOST envelope provided as soon as possible.

National Parent Survey of School Experiences

Please tick as appropriate. Use the back page if you don't have enough room for your answer.

I have read the letter about this survey and agree to take part ☐

Clearly print your Year 11 child's name to enter the prize draw_____________

About Your Year 11 Child

1. Female ☐ Male ☐

2. Postcode _____________

3. Does your child receive **free school meals**?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don't know☐

4. Has your child ever been **excluded** from school?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don't know☐

Your child's progress at school

5.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child feels settled in school						
My child is making good progress at school						
I am satisfied with the way the school is treating my child						
My child looks forward to going to school						

Moving from Year 11

After Year 11, young adults may continue in school, attend college and go out to work.

6a. Please can you tick all the options being considered for your child:

Sixth Form (School) ☐ Further Education College ☐ Special Education College ☐ Sixth Form College ☐ Employment ☐ Voluntary work ☐ Employment **and** education ☐ other ☐ (please describe) _______________

If you ticked any type of further study, what course(s) are being considered for/by your child (eg A-Levels, NVQ, BTEC)?
____

6b.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
We/I have enough information to decide what to do next						
We/I am able to choose what to do next						

6c. Does your child currently go to the type of school that you want?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don't know☐

If the answer is 'No', please say why this is

Difficulties my child has at school

There are many reasons why children may experience difficulties.

Please tick all that apply

7a. My child is **currently** having difficulties at school due to:

Mental health (eg depressed, schizophrenia)☐ Prejudice (eg racial)☐ Emotional or behavioural difficulty☐ Bullying ☐ Language and communication difficulties☐ Physical disability☐ Autistic spectrum disorders☐ Visual impairment☐ Long term illness☐ Hearing difficulties☐ Learning disability☐

Other (please describe)☐____

If your child is not currently having difficulties, please go to question 8

The cause of my child's difficulties

7b.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child's difficulties are caused by the local authority						
My child's difficulties are caused by the school organisation						
My child's difficulties are caused by lack of understanding in the school						
My child's difficulties are just the way s/he is						

More about these difficulties

7c.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The school is doing well helping my child with these difficulties						
My child's difficulties will stop him/ her doing well at school						
These difficulties prevent my child from learning in school						
These difficulties stop my child moving around the school						
These difficulties stop my child doing extra activities run by the school						
My child's difficulties will stop him/ her getting a good job						
The teachers encourage my child to aim high						
My child's difficulties will prevent him/ her from continuing education after Year 11						

7d. Please describe the most serious difficulty

7e. Have you asked the school to change in order to help your child with this difficulty?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don’t know☐

If ‘Yes’, please describe what you asked the school and their response.

Special Needs

8a. Does your Year 11 child have a special need?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don’t know☐

8b. Does your child have a Statement of Special Educational Needs issued by the Local Authority?

Yes ☐ No- it has ended☐ No-never☐ Pending☐ Don’t know☐

If your child has or had a statement, please explain what it is/ was for:

8c. Does your child receive additional support but not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don’t know☐

If ‘Yes’, how much support is provided and for what purpose?

Disability

9a. Before this survey, had you heard of the Disability Rights Commission?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don’t know☐

9b. Are you aware of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don’t know☐

9c. Did you know that the DDA applies to schools?

Yes ☐ No☐

How do you feel about the working of the DDA in relation to the following:

9d.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know
The DDA requires schools not to disadvantage disabled children						
The DDA has improved how schools treat disabled children						
The school works hard to fulfil its duties under the DDA						
I know how the DDA helps my child at school						

9e. Does your child have a disability?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don’t know☐ **If ‘No’, please go to question 10**

9f. Please describe this disability

9g. Is this disability covered by the Disability Discrimination Act?

Yes ☐ No☐ Don’t know☐

9h. In what ways (if any) has the Disability Discrimination Act made any difference to your child and/or family?

More about your Family

10. Employment status of the parent/ carer/ guardian, of your Year 11 child, who earns the most money.
The following questions refer to your current main job, or (if you are not working now) to your last main job. Please tick **ONE** box to show which **best** describes the sort of work you do.

Modern professional occupations *such as:* teacher - nurse - physiotherapist - social worker - welfare officer - artist - musician - police officer (sergeant or above) - software designer	☐	1
Clerical and intermediate occupations *such as:* secretary - personal assistant - clerical worker - office clerk - call centre agent - nursing auxiliary - nursery nurse	☐	2
Senior managers or administrators (usually responsible for planning, organising and co-ordinating work and for finance) *such as:* finance manager - chief executive	☐	3
Technical and craft occupations *such as:* motor mechanic - fitter - inspector - plumber - printer - tool maker - electrician - gardener - train driver	☐	4
Semi-routine manual and service occupations *such as:* postal worker - machine operative - security guard - caretaker - farm worker - catering assistant - receptionist - sales assistant	☐	5
Routine manual and service occupations *such as:* HGV driver - van driver - cleaner - porter - packer - sewing machinist - messenger - labourer - waiter / waitress - bar staff	☐	6
Middle or junior managers *such as:* office manager - retail manager - bank manager - restaurant manager - warehouse manager - publican	☐	7
Traditional professional occupations *such as:* accountant - solicitor - medical practitioner - scientist - civil / mechanical engineer	☐	8

11. What is the first or main language spoken in your home? _____________

12. What is the ethnic group of your Year 11 child? *Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic group.*

A White

☐ British
☐ Irish
☐ Any Other White background
(please write in)
____

B Mixed

☐ White and Black Caribbean
☐ White and Black African
☐ White and Asian
☐ Any Other Mixed background
(please write in)
____

C Asian or Asian British

☐ Indian
☐ Pakistani
☐ Bangladeshi
☐ Any Other Asian background
(please write in)
____

D Black or Black British

☐ Caribbean
☐ African
☐ Any Other Black background
(please write in)
____

E Chinese or other ethnic group

☐ Chinese
☐ Any Other Chinese background
(please write in)
____

Thank you for taking the trouble to complete this questionnaire. This will help us to inform the government of parents' views. Please post using the FREEPOST envelope (no stamp needed) as soon as possible so you will be entered into the prize draw with five £100 prizes.

Please continue previous questions or add any further comments you wish to make in this box

2. Covering letter

November 2005
Headteacher

Dear …

Experiences of disabled students and their families
Project commissioned by the Disability Rights Commission

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in the above project which will feed into national policy discussions concerning provision for pupils with disabilities or special needs. I am enclosing, as agreed, copies of the parent questionnaire **for all parents in years 5 and 6** in your school. Please let me know if you have received insufficient copies of the questionnaires. If you find that you have too many questionnaires, please return any spares to us.

We should be very grateful if you would send these questionnaires out to parents by **Friday, 2 December 2005** as we hope to have them returned to us before your school's Christmas break.

Parents have a freepost envelope for the return of the questionnaire to us. If any returns are received directly by your school, forward them to us. Parents returning questionnaires will, as indicated on the form, be entered for a prize draw (with five £100 prizes in total). In due course we shall send you a summary report about the project and, if requested, a short report on your school.

Many thanks. If you have any further points, please do not hesitate to contact me. We appreciate, and have been very impressed with, the willingness of schools in your area to be part of this important project.

Yours sincerely

Professor Ann Lewis
Disability, Inclusion and Special Needs

Project Team

Ann Lewis
Sarah Parsons
Christopher Robertson
Ian Davison
Jean Ellins
enc

Appendix 3 - Statistical notes

1. Disability, special needs and/or difficulties analysis (DSD)

In the questionnaire, parents could indicate issues in terms of difficulties, special needs and disability. For the following analyses, parents who indicated any issues in one or more of these three areas have been grouped together into a new category DSD: difficulty, special needs and/or disability. There were 614 (35%) respondents in this DSD category.

65% of respondents from one urban area were in the DSD category, compared with only 18% in a rural area.

Table 46: Area x DSD

			Disability, special needs or difficulties		
			Yes	'No'	Total
Area	Scotland	Count	41	80	121
		% within Area	33.9%	66.1%	100.0%
	England 1	Count	193	105	298
		% within Area	64.8%	35.2%	100.0%
	England 2	Count	151	275	426
		% within Area	35.4%	64.6%	100.0%
	England 3	Count	64	287	351
		% within Area	18.2%	81.8%	100.0%
	England 4	Count	100	233	333
		% within Area	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
	Wales	Count	65	182	247
		% within Area	26.3%	73.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	614	1162	1776
		% within Area	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%

Considering cohorts, Years 5/6/Primary 6/7 and 11 had about the expected percentage of DSD, but Year 7/Secondary 1 was lower (30%), and Year 12/13/Secondary 5/6 was higher (46%) than average.

Table 47: Year x DSD

			Disability, special needs or difficulties		
			Yes	**'No'**	**Total**
Year	5.0	Count	176	315	491
		% within Year	35.8%	64.2%	100.0%
	7.0	Count	177	458	635
		% within Year	27.9%	72.1%	100.0%
	11.0	Count	148	258	406
		% within Year	36.5%	63.5%	100.0%
	12.0	Count	113	131	244
		% within Year	46.3%	53.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	614	1162	1776
		% within Year	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%

As expected, fewer (20%) in the mainstream stratum reported a DSD, compared with the register / list (65%) and special school (98%) strata.

Table 48: Strata x DSD

			Disability, special needs or difficulties		Total
			Yes	'No'	
Strata	List/ register	Count	100	55	155
		% within Strata	64.5%	35.5%	100.0%
	Special school	Count	242	4	246
		% within Strata	98.4%	1.6%	100.0%
	mainstream	Count	272	1103	1375
		% within Strata	19.8%	80.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	614	1162	1776
		% within Strata	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%

Significantly more boys (38%) were in the DSD group compared with girls (30%) (chi-squared (1) = 13.0, p<0.001)

66% of those receiving free school meals indicated a DSD compared with only 29% without free school meals. Our other measure of deprivation is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). As expected, the DSD group lived in more deprived areas (mean = 25.3) than the non-DSD group (mean = 19.6). Similarly, 75% of those who had been excluded were reported to have a DSD compared with 32% who had not been excluded.

Table 49: Free school meals x DSD

			Disability, special needs or difficulties		Total
			Yes	No	
meal	Yes	Count	179	92	271
		% within meal	66.1%	33.9%	100.0%
	No	Count	424	1064	1488
		% within meal	28.5%	71.5%	100.0%
	Don't know	Count	4	2	6
		% within meal	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	607	1158	1765
		% within meal	34.4%	65.6%	100.0%

The differences across employment groups are less pronounced, although there were more DSD in the (semi-) manual group (43%).

Table 50: Employment x DSD

Employment code		Disability, special needs or difficulties		Total
		Yes	'No'	
1	Count	246	606	852
	%	28.9%	71.1%	100.0%
2	Count	45	129	174
	%	25.9%	74.1%	100.0%
4	Count	66	152	218
	%	30.3%	69.7%	100.0%
5	Count	141	186	327
	%	43.1%	56.9%	100.0%

The minority ethnic groups all reported higher DSD than whites: Black 38%, Asian 53% and Mixed ethnicity 44% compared with 33% for White.

Table 51: Ethnicity x DSD

Ethnic group		Disability, special needs or difficulties		Total
		Yes	No	
White	Count	502	1039	1541
	%	32.6%	67.4%	100.0%
Mixed ethnicity	Count	21	27	48
	%	43.8%	56.3%	100.0%
Asian	Count	63	55	118
	%	53.4%	46.6%	100.0%
Black	Count	16	26	42
	%	38.1%	61.9%	100.0%
Other	Count	4	5	9
	%	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
Two ticks	Count	8	10	18
	%	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%

There is a small but consistent difference between the DSD and non-DSD groups regarding satisfaction and choice in school. In each case the non-DSD group is significantly more positive.

Table 52: Satisfaction x DSD

	Disability, special needs or difficulties	Mean	Significance
5a Settle	Yes	1.98	p<0.001
	'No'	1.53	
5b progress	Yes	2.13	p<0.001
	'No'	1.66	
5c treat	Yes	2.03	p<0.001
	'No'	1.70	
5d go	Yes	2.17	p<0.001
	'No'	1.86	
6bi info	Yes	2.26	p<0.001
	'No'	1.91	
6bii choose	Yes	2.37	p<0.001
	'No'	2.08	
6c want	Yes	1.16	p<0.001
	'No'	1.05	

2. Causes of difficulties: Factor analysis and ANOVA

Factor analysis was used to group the 22 Likert scale[1] questions; this shows us the pattern of responses which helps our understanding of the parental views. It also allows subsequent analysis of variance to look for differences between categories of pupil. Only the 514 DSD group parents were asked to answer the 12 Likert questions (questions 7b and 7c) concerning these difficulties. Therefore this factor analysis is focused on these respondents.

Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was employed on these 12 questions. The data were shown to be suitable for this type of analysis (determinant = 0.008; KMO measure of sampling adequacy = 0.78; Bartlett's test of sphericity, $p<0.001$). The scree plot indicated two main factors; these accounted for 53% of the variance.

The table below displays the rotated components with factor loading less than 0.3 suppressed. Component 1 appears to show lack of support from the school and LEA; negative factors on component 1 show support from the school and teachers and acceptance of the difficulties as due to the child. Component 2 is related to ways in which the child's difficulties may cause him or her problems. It is interesting that these groups of answers are fairly distinct: that is to say, belief that the child's DSD may have negative consequences appears to be independent of whether the parent feels the DSD are due to the school. This is graphically displayed in the component plot below.

'Factors' for subsequent analysis

Using the table[2] below, it was decided to construct the following two 'factors':

---

[1] Valid responses were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'; 'don't know' was coded as missing data.

[2] Factor loadings less than 0.3 have been suppressed.

1. Educational cause: the questions (7b4, 7c1 and 7c7) with negative factor loadings were inverted so that agree and disagree were reversed. The mean score was then taken of all the questions (7b1, 7b2 and 7b3 and inverted 7b4, 7c1 and 7c7). The scoring used was strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, neutral = 3, disagree = 4, and strongly disagree = 5.

2. Hinder: The mean score was taken for these questions (7c2, 7c3, 7c4, 7c5, 7c6 and 7c8)

Table 53: Logistic regression variables

Questions	**Rotated factors**	
	Educational cause	**Hinder**
7b1) My child's difficulties are caused by the local authority	.547	
7b2) My child's difficulties are caused by the school organisation	.845	
7b3) My child's difficulties are caused by lack of understand in the school	.817	
7b4) My child's difficulties are just the way s/he is	-.625	
7c1) The school is doing well helping my child with these difficulties	-.781	
7c2) My child's difficulties will stop him/ her doing well at school		.714
7c3) These difficulties prevent my child from learning in school		.699
7c4) These difficulties stop my child moving around the school		.578
7c5) These difficulties stop my child doing extra activities run by the school		.623
7c6) My child's difficulties will stop him/ her getting a good job		.791
7c7) The teachers encourage my child to aim high	-.688	
7c8) My child's difficulties will prevent him/ her from continuing education after Year 11[3]		.735

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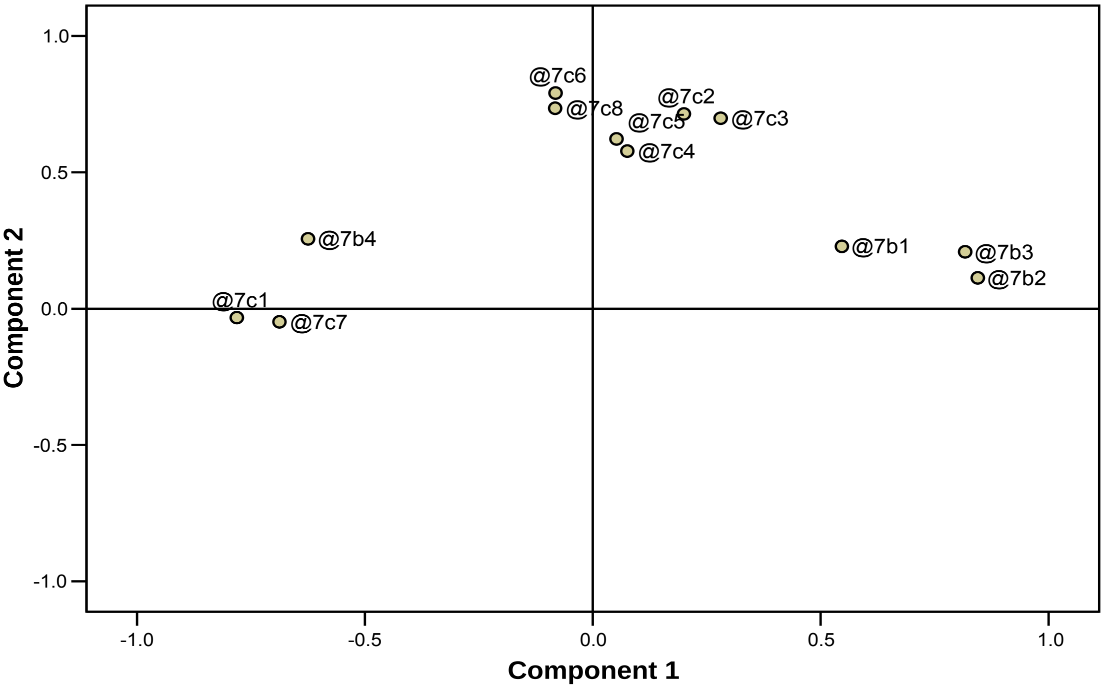
[3] For Years 12/ 13 this was changed to: My son/ daughter's difficulties will prevent him/ her from doing what s/he wants after leaving school/ college.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Figure 3

Component Plot in Rotated Space



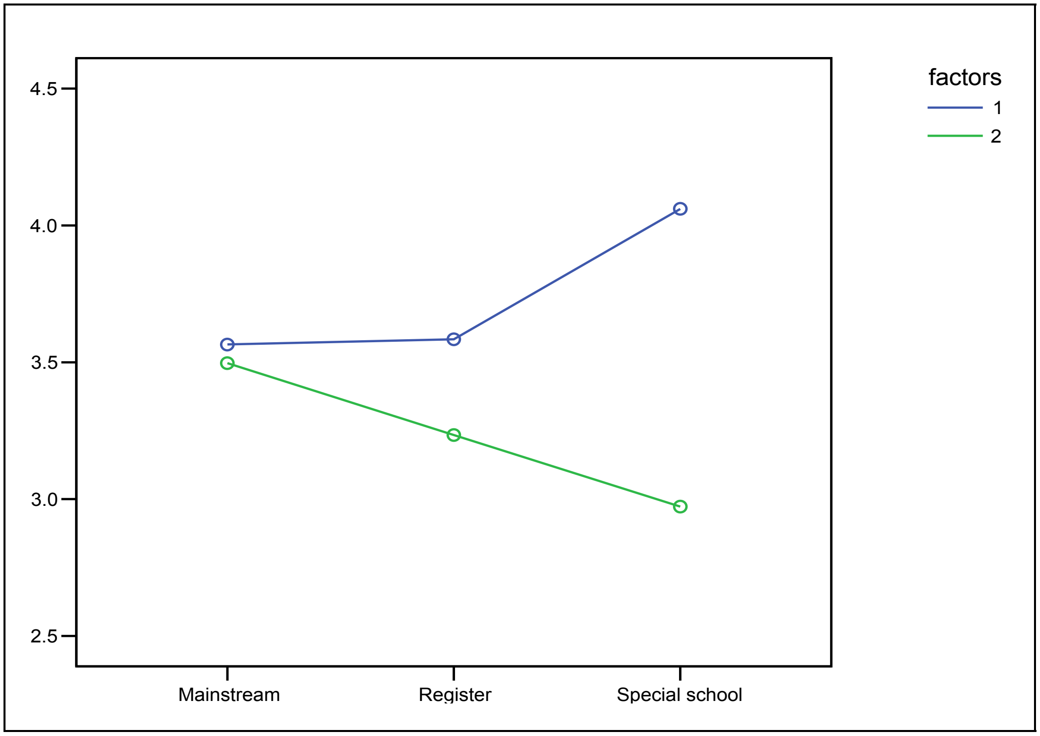
Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Educational cause factor	532	3.77	0.87
2. Hinder factor	508	3.25	0.91

The mean of 3.77 for the educational cause factor is closer to ‘disagree’ than ‘neutral’ for these questions, indicating that parents tended to disagree with the school causing the difficulties. The mean of 3.25 for ‘hinder’ shows that on average, parents generally select ‘neutral’ (or disagree) to the difficulty preventing their child doing these things.

Analysis of Variance

A repeated measures analysis of variance (rm ANOVA) was used to compare responses to these two factors for the different strata. Of most interest was the significant interaction between the factors and strata (F(2, 504) = 49.3, p<0.001). The graph below indicates that parents of mainstream pupils with difficulties gave a mean rating of 3.5 (mid-way between neutral and disagree) to both factors. When the child was on the SEN register, disagreed less with the hinder factor (factor 2). That is to say, they were less sure that the difficulty didn’t have an impact. With children in special schools, the responses to the two factors are quite different: factor 1 (educational cause) has a mean rating of 4 (disagree) and the hinder factor has a mean rating of neutral. This makes sense as it means that parents of more severely disabled children are more likely to see the disability as hindering but less likely to be caused by the educational system.

Figure 4: Educational cause and hinder factors



3. Progress, school choice and DDA: Factor analyses

There were ten Likert questions which all parents were invited to answer: four on their child's progress at school; two on choosing the school; and four concerning the DDA. A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on these 12 questions. The data were shown to be suitable for this type of analysis (determinant = 0.021; KMO measure of sampling adequacy = 0.80; Bartlett's test of sphericity, $p<0.001$). The scree plot indicated three main factors which accounted for 69% of the variance.

A priori, it was likely that a factor analysis would split responses into the 3 categories of questions 5, question 6 and question 9; the table below shows that this, indeed, was the case. The high factor loadings suggest that each factor is a good summary statistic; however there is no theoretical reason why they should be considered together.

To enable further analysis, the three factors were computed by taking the mean of the questions.

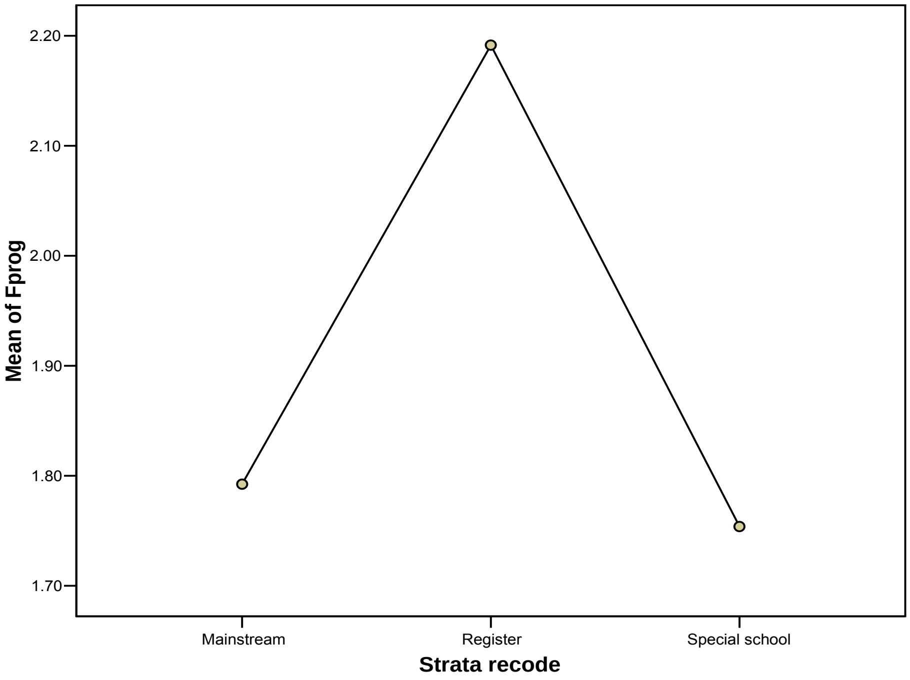
Progress in school

Table 54: Progress in school x choice x DDA factors

	Rotated Factors		
	Progress in school	**School choice**	**DDA**
5a My child found it easy to settle into Year 7	.801		
5b My child is making good progress at school	.814		
5c I am satisfied with the way the school is treating my child	.811		
5d My child looks forward to going to school	.810		
6bi I had enough information to decide which type of school was best for my child			.867
6bii I was able to choose the type of school that I wanted			.895
9d1 The DDA requires schools not to disadvantage disabled children		.696	
9d2 The DDA has improved how schools treat disabled children		.841	
9d3 The School works hard to fulfil its duties under the DDA		.848	
I know how the DDA helps my child at school		.672	

The mean for all groups was around agree (score = 2) regarding their child's progress in school, however, the register /list group was significantly less positive, as the mean is on the neutral side of agree (F(2, 1769) = 23.5, p<0.001). Interestingly, the special school mean is as positive as the mainstream.

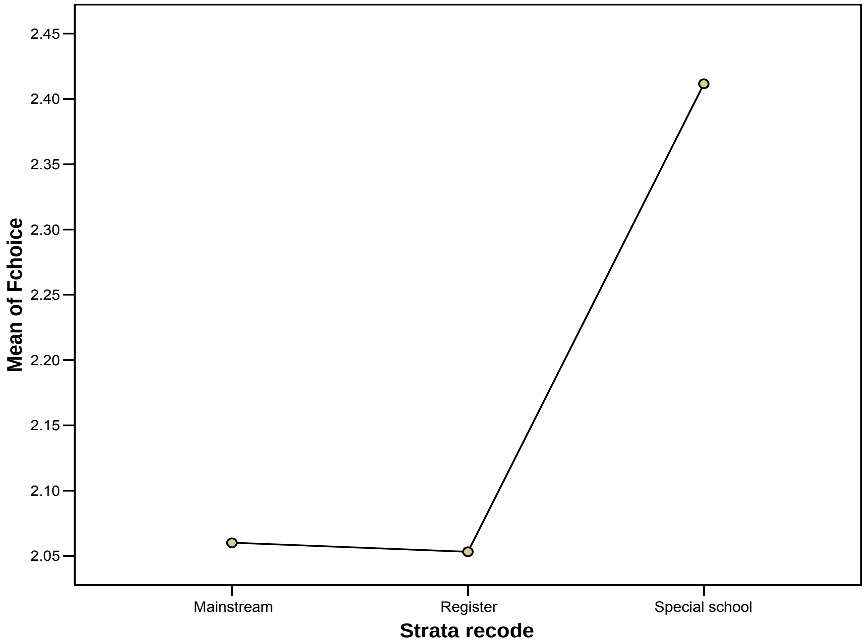
Figure 5: Progress in school – factor analyses

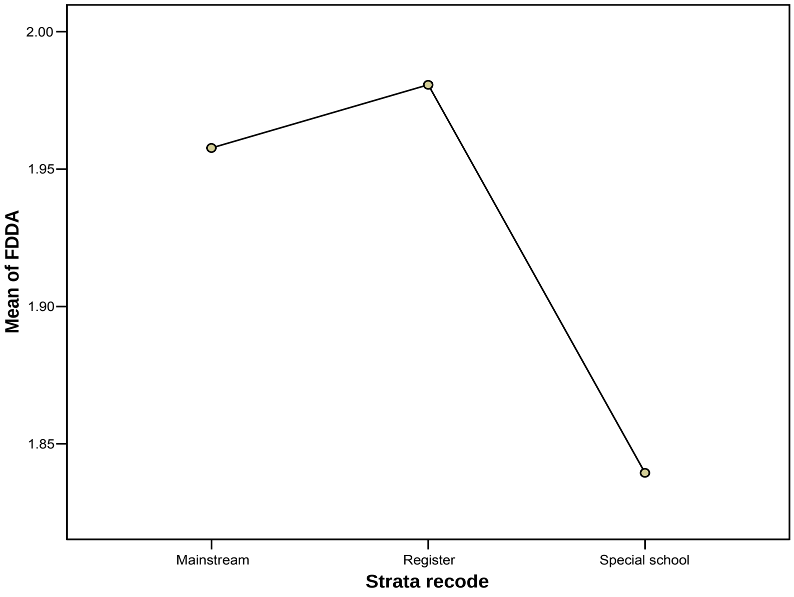


School choice

The mainstream and register/ list groups had means close to ‘agree’ (score = 2) regarding these two school choice questions. However, for special schools, the mean was 2.4, which indicates that parents in this group were still positive regarding school choice, but less so than in the other two groups. This group difference was significant (F(2, 1651) = 13.1, p<0.001).

Figure 6: School choice (2 related figures)





DDA questions

All groups had high agreement regarding the four DDA questions, with means slightly more positive than ‘agree’. Perhaps unsurprisingly, parents of children in special schools were most positive; however this difference was not significant (F(2, 1382) = 2.34, p=0.1).

4. Factors associated with difficulty in school: logistic regression

Clearly we are interested in factors associated with the 3 sorts of problems: disabilities, special needs and difficulties. As an example, let us consider factors associated with difficulty in schools.

- Does your child have difficulties in school (Yes/No response)?
  and the following independent variables:
- Strata (list, special school, or mainstream)
- Gender (male/female)
- Eligible for free school meals (Yes/No)?
- Ever been excluded from school (Yes/No)?, and
- Year in school (Coded as a categorical variable: Years 5, 7, 11, 12).

Using SPSS, all the above variables were entered. Compared with no predictors, these 5 predictors combined improved the model (X^2 (8) = 494, p<0.001).

The next table looks at the importance of each variable separately. All variables are significant[4] apart from gender.

Table 55: Factor analysis: Variables – strata x age band

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig	Exp(B)
Strata (mainstream baseline)			263.382	2	.000	
Register stratum	1.650	.185	79.162	1	.000	5.209
Special sch stratum	2.987	.201	220.163	1	.000	19.818
Gender (female base)	.217	.128	2.856	1	.091	1.242
Meal (no = base)	.722	.172	17.700	1	.000	2.058
Exclude (no base)	1.024	.313	10.686	1	.001	2.785
Year (5/ 6= base)			11.492	3	.009	
Year 7	-.462	.158	8.523	1	.004	.630
Year 11	-.371	.179	4.321	1	.038	.690
Year 12/ 13	-.576	.219	6.920	1	.009	.562
Overall baseline	-1.533	.137	125.051	1	.000	.216

---

[4] There are concerns about the accuracy of the Wald F ratios (eg Field, 2000, p180); an alternative approach is to use the change in overall chi-squared when a variable is added. Using this method, adding gender as the last variable is significant (X^2 (1) = 6.52, p=0.01.

The percentage of pupils experiencing one or more difficulties can be calculated for all categories from the table[5]. Below are some of these:

Table 56: Example percentages with difficulties

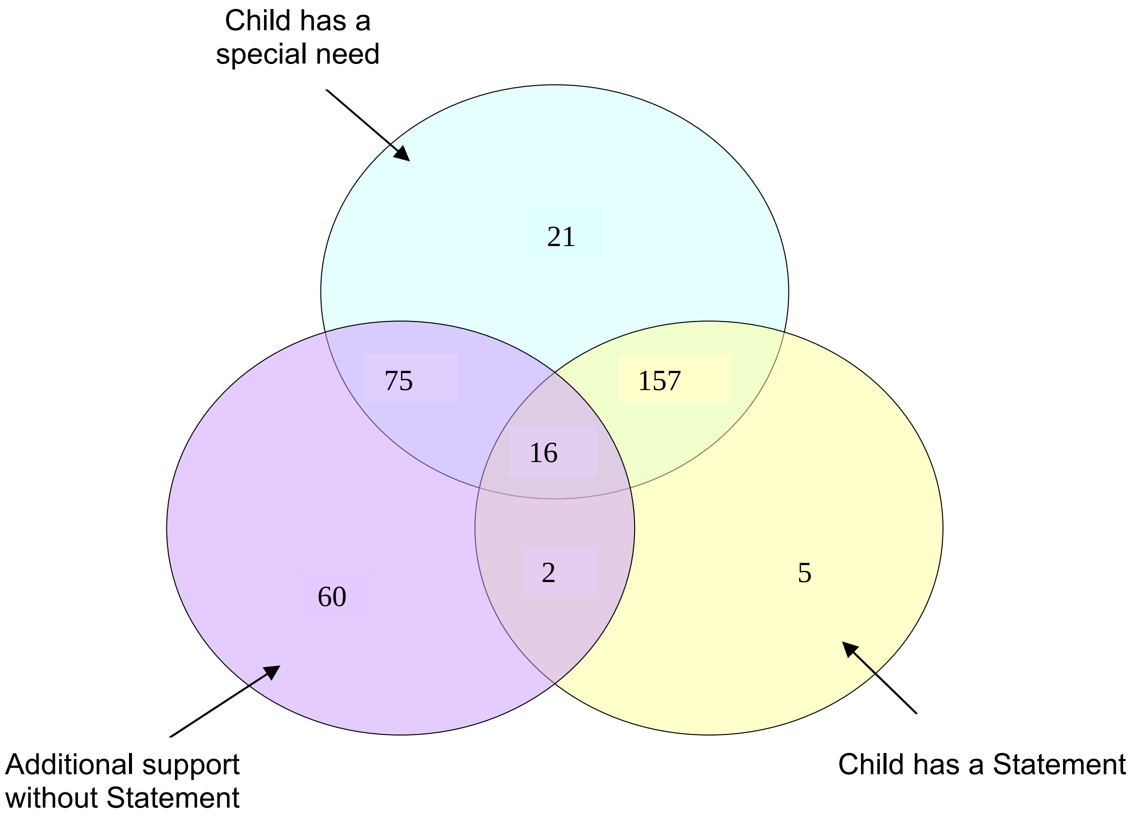
Stratum	Gender	Free school meal?	Ever excluded?	Year	Percentage experiencing difficulty/ies
mainstream	female	no	no	5	18%
mainstream	male	no	no	5	21%
mainstream	female	no	no	7	12%
mainstream	female	yes	no	5	31%
mainstream	female	no	yes	5	38%
mainstream	female	yes	yes	5	55%
register	female	no	no	5	53%
Special school	female	no	no	5	81%
Special school	male	yes	yes	5	97%

---

[5] There are several assumptions underlying these calculations and, as ever, caution should be used in interpreting these figures, particularly regarding less common combinations.

5. Satisfaction x support: ANOVA

Figure 2: Overlapping groups concerning SEN



Numbers inside circles represent ‘Yes’ responses. So 932 said ‘No’ to all three questions. Please note that questionnaires with ‘don’t know’, ‘pending’ or not answered to any of these questions have been omitted here (total n = 1268, 71%).

We were interested in comparing the average satisfaction of the four largest groups in the figure. To do this, we used the average of the four questions concerned with progress in school, and this is shown in Table 57.

Table 57: Satisfaction x statement/support

Group	N	'Satisfaction' mean[6]	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Support + need	75	2.14	1.98	2.29
Support only	60	2.15	1.96	2.33
Statement + need	156	1.90	1.76	2.04
No to all three	932	1.72	1.68	1.76

One-way analysis of variance on all 8 groups in figure 1 was significant (F(7, 1259) = 7.56, p<0.001) and Games-Howell post hoc tests indicated differences between the 'no to all three' and 'support + need' groups (p<0.01) and between 'no to all three' and 'support only' groups (p=0.001). These results suggest that parents who perceive their child as having a special need but do not have a statement or record of need are less positive about their child's progress in school.

Table 58: 'Cause' x statement/support

Group	N	'Educational cause' mean[7]	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Support + need	47	3.64	3.39	3.88
Support only	18	3.48	3.05	3.92
Statement + need	135	4.06	3.93	4.19
No to all three	101	3.41	3.23	3.59

---

[6] Average response: 1 =strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neutral, 4=disagree, 5= strongly disagree.

[7] Average response: 1 =strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neutral, 4=disagree, 5= strongly disagree.

The table above shows that parents of pupils with a statement/record of need disagreed more strongly that the educational establishment was causing their child's difficulties.

6. Transitions

The Likert scale questions are rated 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, and 5= strongly disagree. Where means are given, please use this scale! For example, 1.8 is a little higher than 2, so the average response is a little better than 'agree'.

Year 5/6 to Year 7 transition

These comparisons are from the 491 Year 5/6 and 635 Year 7 parents.

Satisfaction

Both cohorts were highly satisfied with the five progress in school, with overall means of around 1.8. However, Year 5/6 parents were particularly satisfied with 'My child feels settled in school', and Year 7 parents were possibly slightly less strongly agreeing that 'My child looks forward to going to school'.

Table 59

	Year	Mean	Significance[8]
5a Settle	5.0	1.55	P<0.001
	7.0	1.84	
5b progress	5.0	1.84	P=0.9
	7.0	1.80	
5c treat	5.0	1.88	P=0.08
	7.0	1.78	
5d go	5.0	1.87	P=0.014
	7.0	1.97	
5e next	5.0	1.91	

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[8] Tested using Mann-Whitney U test. Please note with so many comparisons, there is a risk of Type 1 errors; , so perhaps only significances of p=0.01 and lower should be considered.

Choice of School

Table 60

	Year	Mean	Significance
6bi info	5.0	1.95	P=0.4
	7.0	1.92	
6bii choose	5.0	2.38	P<0.001
	7.0	2.06	

Both cohorts were equally positive about the information to decide on which type of school. Interestingly, Year 5/6 parents agreed less that 'I will be able to choose the type of school that I want', so it is possible that some parents are more pleased than expected about the secondary school their child goes to. 94% of Year 5/6 and 92% of Y& parents indicated that their child currently goes to the type of school they want.

Aspirations

For parents who indicated their child had difficulties, they were asked about aspirations and possible problems. There were 153 (31%) from Y5/6 and 150 (24%) from Y7. The higher proportion in Y5/6 may be partly due to more being in special schools (see table below).

Table 61

	Year	
Strata	5.0	7.0
List/ register	28	78
	5.7%	12.3%
Special school	56	45
	11.4%	7.1%
mainstream	407	512
	82.9%	80.6%

Clearly there is little difference in the table below regarding how Year 5/6 and Y7 parents viewed their children's difficulties or how they affect their aspirations.

Table 62

	Year	Mean	significance
Diff just the way s/he is	5.0	2.55	P=0.9
	7.0	2.57	
encourage aim high	5.0	2.34	P=0.3
	7.0	2.16	
prevent doing what want	5.0	3.50	P=0.2
	7.0	3.65	

Just over a third of these parents (39% Y5/6, 36% y7) had '… asked the school to change in order to help your child with this difficulty'.

Awareness of DRC and DDA

Table 63

	Year	% Yes	significance[9]
Had you heard of the DRC?	5.0	44	P=0.3
	7.0	46	
Are you aware of DDA?	5.0	55	P=0.06
	7.0	62	
Did you know the DDA applies to school?	5.0	41	P=0.005
	7.0	50	

Just under half indicated that they had heard of the DRC, and slightly over half claimed to have been aware of the DDA. Significantly more Y7 parents (50%) than Y5/6 parents (41%) said they knew the DDA applied to schools.

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[9] Yes/ No data like these are tested using the chi-squared test. Again, p=0.01 or less is probably a sensible criterion for judging significance.

6. Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004

The index of multiple deprivation (IMD) is a number: the higher the number, the more deprived the area (see below for the domains used to calculate the IMD). I hope the IMD is calculated in the same way in England and Wales; however, in Scotland (SIMD), clearly a different system is used. The areas defined for England and Wales are lower layer Super Output Areas (SOAs), which are given in the All Fields Postcode Directory (AFPD) as SOA1; for Scotland, the areas are called data zones (DZONE1 on the AFPD).

England (Calculation may also apply to Wales?)

The overall IMD 2004 (see the following 'IMD 2004' page) has two data columns:
The first data column is the Index of Multiple Deprivation Score .
The second data column is the Rank of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The SOA with a rank of 1 is the most deprived, and 32482 the least deprived, on this overall measure.

The IMD 2004 was constructed by combining the seven transformed domain scores, using the following weights:

- Income (22.5%)
- Employment (22.5%)
- Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%)
- Education, Skills and Training (13.5%)
- Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Living Environment (9.3%)

The Seven Domain Indices
Each of the domains (see the following seven domain pages) has two data columns:

The first data column is the Domain Score. This was constructed by combining the indicators within that domain. The second data column is the Rank of the Domain Score. The SOA with a rank of 1 is the most deprived, and 32482 the least deprived, for each domain.

Scotland

The Index has been constructed by the Office of the Chief Statistician at the Scottish Executive. The summary technical report of the SIMD 2004 is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/SIMD2004Report and the results can be viewed on the following interactive website: www.scotland.gov.uk/SIMD2004Mapping.

Contents

A separate page of information is provided for the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 and each of the six domain indices:

- Current Income
- Employment
- Health
- Education, Skills and Training
- Housing
- Geographic Access and Telecommunications

SIMD 2004

The SIMD 2004 is presented at Data Zone level. For each Data Zone information is provided on:

- the Local Authority it belongs to
- total population based on the 2001 Census
- working age population based on the 2001 Census
- score on SIMD 2004
- rank on SIMD 2004 (in red). The Data Zone with a rank of 1 is most deprived, and 6505 is least deprived
- score and rank on each of the individual domains
- the number of people who are income or employment deprived.

The SIMD 2004 was constructed by combining the domains using the ratios 6 : 6 : 3 : 3 : 2 : 1 in the following order
* Current Income
* Employment
* Health
* Education, Skills and Training
* Geographic Access and Telecommunications
* Housing.

The Six Domain Indices

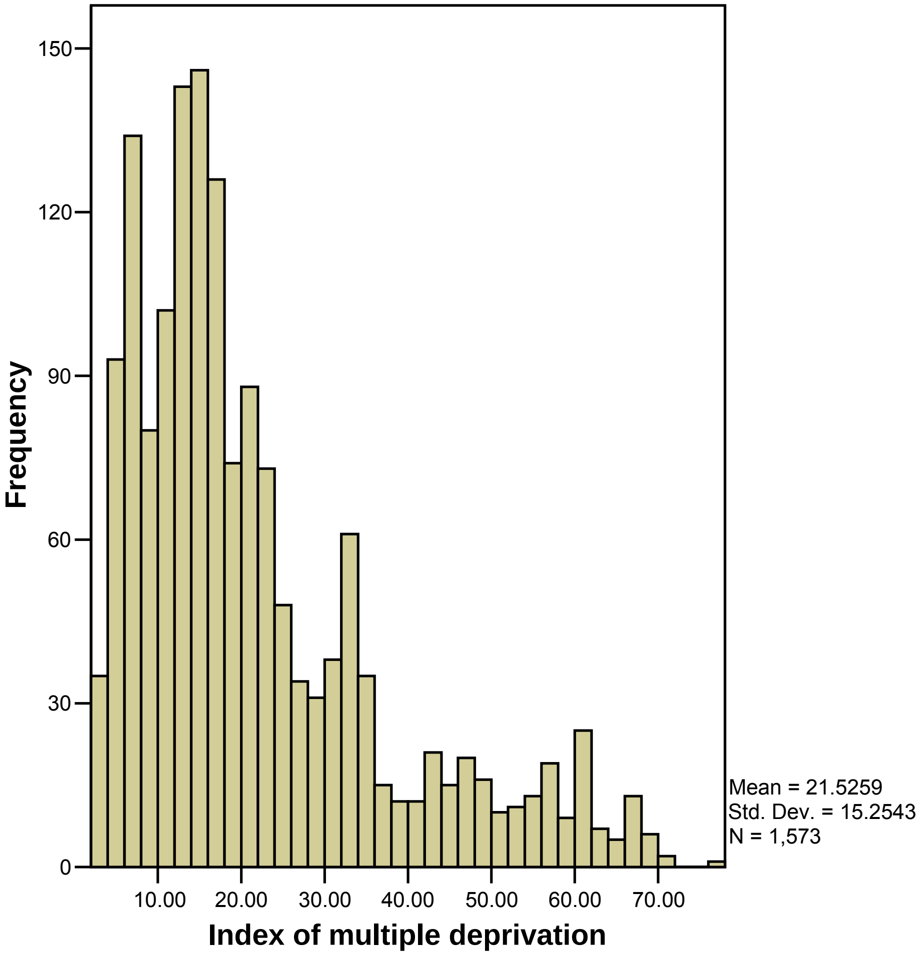
The data for each of the domains is contained on the following six pages. For each Data Zone information is provided on:

- domain score
- rank of the domain score. The Data Zone with a rank of 1 is most deprived and 6505 is least deprived for each domain.
- the indicator data which has been used to construct the domain (where possible). Where the indicators have been age and sex standardised or the shrinkage technique applied, this is noted on the relevant page.

The above taken from: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1128440 however, only applies to England. Welsh equivalent is at: http://www.dataunitwales.gov.uk/eng/Project.asp?id=SX96AB-A77FC8E7 and I hope is exactly equivalent!! The Scottish data is found at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/simd2004/

Analyses with the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Figure 7: Index of Multiple Deprivation



The IMD scores varied widely between 2.4 and 76.4, with a mean of 21.5. The higher the IMD, the more deprived the area in which the pupil lived. It can be seen below that the Year 5 cohort was from slightly more deprived areas. Also, one urban area was much more deprived than elsewhere.

Table 64: Index of multiple deprivation

	Mean
5.0	24.5
7.0	20.3
11.0	20.9
12.0	19.5

Table 65

Area	Index of multiple deprivation
Scotland	16.5799
England 1	37.1604
England 2	22.7592
England 3	18.0108
England 4	15.3652
Wales	17.2951
Total	21.5259

The mainstream stratum was from least deprived areas (19.5), then register /list(24.3), and then special school (31.9).

Table 66

Strata	Index of multiple deprivation
List/register	24.2545
Special school	31.8593
mainstream	19.4627
Total	21.5259

The difference between boys (22.0) and girls (20.9) was not significant; but there was a big difference between those on free school meals (35.3) and those who were not (19.1). Similarly the difference between those who had been excluded (26.5) and those who had not (21.2) was sizeable and significant.

As expected, those in employment category 1 (professional/ managerial) lived in least deprived areas, and those from category 4 (manual) were from most deprived areas. Categories 2 (clerical) and 4 (technical) were similar, with category 4 slightly less deprived.

Table 67

Employment code	Index of multiple deprivation
1	17.1169
2	21.8662
4	19.8648
5	26.3303
Total	19.9368

The ethnic groups varied considerably, with Black (46.8) and Asian (41.1) from the most deprived areas, then ‘Other’ (32.3) and Mixed (28.0), with the White group from least deprived (19.4).

Table 68

Ethnicity	Index of multiple deprivation
White	19.3654
Mixed ethnicity	27.9967
Asian	41.0826
Black	46.8053
Other	32.3018

Those who said they had heard of the DRC (Q9a), were aware of the DDA (Q9b) and knew the DDA applies to schools (Q9c) were from less deprived areas.

Table 69

			Mean	Count
Heard of DRC?	Yes	Index of multiple deprivation	19.36	795
	No	Index of multiple deprivation	22.90	836
	Don't know	Index of multiple deprivation	28.79	66

Table 70

			Mean	Count
Aware of DDA?	Yes	Index of multiple deprivation	19.04	1020
	No	Index of multiple deprivation	24.35	615
	Don't know	Index of multiple deprivation	30.23	70

Table 71

			Mean	Count
Know DDA applies to schools?	Yes	Index of multiple deprivation	18.48	783
	No	Index of multiple deprivation	23.70	907

We derived 5 factors using factor analysis which can be correlated with the IMD. The factors were scored: 1= strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= neutral, 4= strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. As shown in the table below, the IMD does not affect the views on progress in school (Q5 a, b, c and d combined) or choice of school (Q6 bi, bii and c combined). The other 3 factors correlated between 0.05 and 0.08 with IMD, which is significant at $p<0.05$ level. Given the size of the sample, these significance levels are weak and the correlations are low, so not much should be read into them.

A high IMD indicates greater deprivation and is (slightly) associated with a low hinder score indicating more agreement that the child’s difficulties stop him/ her doing things. Thus the more deprived the area, the more the parent judges difficulties will hinder their child: this of course, could be true, as the difficulties may be stronger (more in special schools) and/ or they are less able to access help.

The educational cause factor is high when the parent disagreed that the educational establishment was responsible for their child's difficulties but agreed that 'it's just the way s/he is' and that the school was supportive. So, this positive correlation indicates that the higher the IMD, the less the difficulty is felt to be caused by the school. Again this may be because the difficulties tended to be more severe, or it may be that these parents had lower expectations.

The DDA factor combines the four Likert questions asking about the DDA in schools. The negative correlation between IMD and the DDA factor suggests parents from more deprived areas had less awareness of the DDA.

Table 72

Kendall's tau_b		**Educational cause factor**	**progress factor**	**Choice factor**	**DDA factor**	**Hinder factor**
Index of multiple deprivation	Correlation Coefficient	.078(*)	-.024	.017	-.051(*)	-.074(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.189	.373	.013	.023
	N	456	1573	1470	1235	435

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 4: Supplementary note concerning the wider policy context

It is worth highlighting, alongside the earlier discussion of policy (section 6 in the main body of the report), some significant policy developments that may have a significant impact on the educational experiences of disabled children, young people and their families. These developments are also likely to impact on the nature of educational provision and professional support that disabled children, young people and their families receive. Although the effects of policy initiatives and specific applications and provisions may not be immediate, they are likely to have some bearing on the current research and will be monitored carefully.

Specific developments of relevance to the project include

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 – this legislation attempts to broaden approaches to educational support provided to children and young people with a range of additional support needs. It also deliberately moves from a categorical to a circumstantial approach to defining and responding to educational and other needs. The implementation of this legislation is supported by the introduction, in November 2005, of *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice* (Scottish Executive, 2005). Schools in Scotland now have to have regard to this Code and may have to develop new understandings of special educational needs and disability to implement it effectively. How far the Act and Code complement Disability Rights legislation is a matter of conjecture at the current time. How effective key practical features of the Code (eg the introduction of co-ordinated support plans covering educational and other service provision) will be in practice also remains to be seen, but they appear to be well considered and based on careful consultation.

Policy Review of Special Educational Needs by the Education and Skills Lifelong Learning Committee for the National Assembly for Wales (2004 to 2006) – this major review of policy, practice and provision is broadly supportive of the direction in which special education is moving, and the presumption of mainstreaming wherever this is most appropriate. At the same time, the role of specialist provision is also considered to be important and this is congruent with policies in both England and Scotland. Part 2 of this review (draft 2) includes significant recommendations concerning statements of special educational needs, and suggests that these should be gradually replaced for most children (para 4.19, pp. 14-15). However, it also acknowledges parental concerns about unmet needs, and advocates the use of more effective continuous assessment (using a 'passport') and whole school improvement methodologies. Developments in Wales may well be influenced too, by changes to legislation in Scotland and the introduction of coordinated support plans.

House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee of Inquiry into Special Educational Needs (England) – This Inquiry, is, in a sense, 'catching up' with developments in Scotland and Wales. The policy review currently being undertaken will be completed shortly, and a report is expected to be presented to Parliament in mid summer. Recommendations in the report will not necessarily be accepted by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), but nor will they be ignored. A recent memorandum, presented to the Inquiry by the DfES, acknowledges some weaknesses in current special educational needs policy but clearly indicates that the Government does not recommend radical reform, and as such, presents a more cautious approach than those of their Welsh and Scottish counterparts (Department for Education and Skills, 2006a)

Accessibility Planning (England) – schools and local education authorities have been required to develop plans and strategies to improve access to education for disabled pupils. The first plans and strategies should have been operational (for three years) from April 2003. Parallel, but not precisely the same requirements have applied in Scotland and Wales. However, as Ofsted (2004) noted in the report *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards inclusive schools*, many schools in England struggled to adhere to this legislative requirement and the majority of schools that did have plans in place focused on improving accommodation rather than all three strands of the 'planning duty' (curriculum, environment, and information). As a new three year cycle for the provision of plans (schools) and strategies (LEAs) commences on 1 April 2006 (running until 31 March 2009) it will interesting to see if they will be more widely used and have a greater impact.

A key driver in this area may be the publication of new guidance and resources developed as part of the *Accessibility Planning Project* (by the Council for Disabled Children and Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative). This material, some of which is already available online (www.teachernet.gov.uk) based on work with schools and LEAs includes a framework for planning and clear criteria for evaluating processes and outcomes. Related work, the *Reasonable Adjustments Project*, undertaken by the DfES with Disability Equality in Education, has also led to the development of resources and training materials designed to assistant them in making reasonable adjustments (in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Part 4 and duties outlined in the Disability Rights Commission's Code of Practice for Schools, and implemented in September 2002). The impact of legislation and the use of guidance, resources and training materials will be monitored by the research team. Although some of the above resource material may have taken account of GB wide perspectives and examples, its relevance (eg in relation to use of the Welsh language) to all three countries will not be presumed by the research team.

The Disability Equality Duty – The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to place a duty on all public sector authorities, including schools colleges and universities, to promote disability equality. The Disability Equality Duty will require the public sector to promote disability equality, and is positive in that it aims to bring about a shift from a legal framework which relies on individual disabled people complaining about discrimination to one in which the public sector becomes a proactive agent of change.

The Act sets out a General Duty which requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities for disabled people. They will also need to consider the elimination of harassment of disabled people, promotion of positive attitudes and the need to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life. Clearly, this General Duty has implications for educational organisations and the way that they set about the equalising opportunities for disabled pupils, students, staff and parents.

The regulations will also give key public authorities a Specific Duty which will define for them a framework used to meet the General Duty. The main element of this will be the requirement to produce a Disability Equality Scheme. Guidance on the development of an effective Disability Equality Scheme, using a staged process is outlined in the Disability Rights Committee publication *Doing the Duty: An overview of the Disability Equality Duty for the Public Sector* (www.dotheduty.org). The process of producing a Disability Equality Scheme must:

- involve disabled people in producing the scheme and developing an action plan
- identify how they will gather and analyse evidence to inform their actions and track progress
- set out how they will assess the impact of their existing and proposed activities on disabled people
- produce an action plan for the next three years.

Schemes produced by educational bodies will also need to give particular consideration to the effect of their policies and practices on the education opportunities and achievements of disabled learners.

The duty applies in England, Scotland and Wales. The duty in England and Wales is in all key respects the same as the duty which applies in Scotland, except there are different arrangements in relation to education due to differences in other legislation. More detailed guidance implementing the Disability Equality Duty is outlined in the *DRC Code of Practice on the Disability Equality Duty (England and Wales)* and the *DRC Code of Practice on the Equality Duty (Scotland)*.

The Disability Rights Commission is also producing a number of non statutory guidance documents to support the implementation of the Disability Equality Duty and the DfES ((England) is looking to distribute this as an additional section to the resources linked to accessibility planning and reasonable adjustments (*Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early years settings*) in the Autumn of 2006.

The general duty comes into force on 4 December and all public authorities should be prepared by then. Most public authorities subject to the specific duties must publish their Disability Equality Schemes by 4 December 2006. However, primary and special schools in England have until 4 December 2007 to publish their Disability Equality Schemes and all schools in Wales must publish their schemes by 1 April 2007.

Impact of the Disability Equality Duty for the public sector – the new Disability Equality Duty (general and specific) referred to in the previous section is likely to give added momentum to the development of disability rights that are mainstreamed within policy and strategy at local authority and school levels in England, Scotland and Wales. From the perspective of this project, it will be interesting to discern whether schools and colleges will anticipate requirements of new legislation due to come into effect from December 2006. The new duties are clearly designed to challenge patterns of institutional discrimination against disabled pupils and students, and more significantly in relation to our research, to ensure that disabled people participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of Disability Equality Schemes. Arguably too, the general and specific duties will give further impetus to the provision of inclusive (mainstream) education. However, this may create tensions - in the English context for example - with other major policy developments in education, most notably proposals outlined in the Schools White Paper published in 2005.

The capacity of educational bodies to implement the Disability Equality Duty without a framework of support and guidance may prove to be challenging. Schools for example, may find it difficult to respond effectively to the requirement to produce compliant Disability Equality Schemes. This may indicate a need for external monitoring and support provided by related key public bodies (eg a local authority) of a kind that helps schools to develop effective Disability Equality Schemes that enable them to demonstrate that they have taken the actions they have committed themselves to, and achieved appropriate outcomes.

The Schools White Paper: *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* (England) – the proposals in the White Paper have been widely discussed and been the subject of a recent House of Commons Education and Skills Committee of Inquiry. The report of this Inquiry (HC 633-1, available online at: www.parliament.uk), published on 27 January 2005 expresses significant concerns regarding school admissions policies, as outlined in the White Paper, noting particularly the disadvantaging effects these would have for children with special educational needs (and implicitly, disabled children). It also, whilst recognising the value of personalised learning advocated in the White Paper, expresses concern that, if it is not thought through carefully, the policy will disadvantage significant groups of children and young people (eg children from ethnic minority groups and pupils with special educational needs). The main thrust of the argument in this report suggested that without major revisions, the White Paper would not lead to the achievement of some of its central aims, most notably those concerned with diversity and fair access in education. The Education and School Inspections Bill presented to Parliament recently, partially addressed some of these concerns, but it is still possible that the legislation will be implemented in a way that clashes radically with the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act 2005. Our research is unlikely to produce findings that relate directly to the strengthening of disability rights legislation and its relationship with changing policies and structures in the English education system. At the same time, it may shed light on school admissions policies for disabled children and young people, and provide some initial insights into their experiences of personalised learning.

Appendix 5: Note concerning outcome of prize draw

Every survey return received by 1 May 2006 was allocated a unique identification number. These numbers were entered in a random number generator program.

The first five numbers generated were for:

one Year 12 pupil (England, postal survey – rural/urban area)

one Year 11 pupil (Scotland, e survey)

one Year 6 pupil (England, postal survey – urban area)

one Year 7 pupil (England, postal survey – rural area. NB not the same school as above)

one Year 7 pupil (Wales, postal survey)

Parents were contacted and offered either a monetary prize (£100, payable into a bank account) or book tokens to this value.

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