

Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF)

Speeches:

Launch of Inclusion Development Programme

Speech by **Andrew Adonis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools & Learners**

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[Inclusion is about creating a secure, accepting and stimulating school ethos where everyone is valued and where all pupils can perform well, whatever their impediments to learning. Improving the confidence and expertise of staff to deal with special educational needs, is crucial to improving the educational experience of all students. Parents need to be assured that their children's needs will be identified and addressed in a sensitive and effective manner.]

"I'm delighted to be here for the launch of the Inclusion Development Programme. This is a vitally important £2m programme to improve training in areas of SEN; my department has been working on it for more than a year and I believe it marks a significant step forward in enhancing the infrastructure for special needs education.

I'd like to begin by thanking the National Strategies team for their hard work in bringing this programme to fruition. Can I also offer warm thanks to colleagues from I CAN and Dyslexia Action who have been the lead specialist organisations working with the National Strategies to develop the materials. I am also grateful to the many other organisations that have contributed, including No To Failure, Xtraordinary People, the British Dyslexia Association, the Helen Arkell Centre, the Professional Association of Teachers of Students With Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS), AFASIC, and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.

I also note that the IDP, alongside our other policies to improve SEN provision, is made possible by the significant increase in investment we are making in this area. Spending on SEN is up from £2.8 billion 5 years ago to £4.5 billion in 2006/7, and the new Comprehensive Spending Review for the next three years will see it rise further.

The IDP builds on successive measures we have taken to improve SEN support in schools. In particular, we are currently strengthening the role of the SEN Co-ordinator in schools. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a specific legal requirement for schools to designate a member of staff as the person responsible for co-ordinating SEN provision in the school. Previously, there was an assumption - in the Code and elsewhere - that such an appointment would be made, but there was not a specific legal requirement. Now, we have commissioned TDA to develop nationally accredited training arrangements for all SENCOs new to the role. It is our intention that this training will be mandatory.

Inclusion is about creating a secure, accepting and stimulating school ethos where everyone is valued and where all pupils can perform well, whatever their impediments to learning. Improving the confidence and expertise of staff to deal with special educational needs, is crucial to improving the educational experience of all students. Parents need to be assured that their children's needs will be identified and addressed in a sensitive and effective manner.

Access to specialist support is particularly important if children with SEN are to make progress. This was confirmed in a recent OFSTED report. Therefore - through the specialist schools

programme - we are enabling many more special schools to develop their outreach capacity and provide access to specialist advice and support for mainstream schools.

In July, we announced an additional £23 million to expand the number of SEN specialist schools in the programme over the next three years. This will mean around 150 special schools taking up a specialism in this area. Bringing special schools within the mainstream of the national specialist schools movement for all secondary schools, to huge mutual advantage, has been an ambition of mine since becoming minister for SEN, and I am very glad that this is now happening.

We are supporting specialist trusts in the areas of dyslexia, communication and autism. These will raise awareness of needs in their respective areas; promote specialist training opportunities, and direct teachers and others to information and advice. We see these as important new developments as hubs of expertise.

We are also developing - through the South East Regional Partnership - national standards for SEN support and outreach services to inform Ofsted inspections.

By kick-starting regional innovation projects in all of the regional partnership areas, we are helping to promote specialist expertise and collaboration between local authorities and other agencies. This helps to provide for children with low incidence or other priority needs.

In providing mainstream education for children with special educational needs, we need to provide support to parents as well as teachers. Parents have told us that they would like more information about how we are supporting their child's special needs – and we are taking steps to improve accountability to them in a number of ways.

Firstly, by introducing a common data set, so teachers can monitor and evaluate pupils' progress, and compare with their peers. This also helps professionals make judgements about additional support that should be put in place. We are encouraging schools to discuss this information with parents at termly meetings.

Secondly, through the National Strategies we are promoting better information for parents. This will show what support is available for their child and how it links to appropriate interventions and arrangements to get the best SEN provision.

Third, we are setting clear expectations for Parent Partnership Services in each area to increase parental confidence in their impartiality and the quality of the information and advice they provide. That work is well underway and will be issued later this term.

This brings me to the IDP as the next brick in the wall of our improving infrastructure for supporting SEN.

When we responded to the Select Committee report on SEN last year, we set out our priorities as follows:

- raising the awareness and skills of staff in identifying and meeting special educational needs;

- increasing access to specialist support;
- improving accountability for children's outcomes;
- providing better quality support to parents; and,
- improving provision for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and children with autistic spectrum disorders.

The standards for qualified teachers - recently reviewed by the Training and Development Agency for Schools are one important vehicle for helping trainee teachers improve their knowledge and understanding of SEN and disability. And, we have declared SEN and disability to be a national priority in the framework for continuing professional development.

Over the next four years, through the IDP, we will focus on helping mainstream staff to develop more inclusive practice, raising SEN awareness and enabling teachers to develop strategic approaches, to meet the diverse needs of individual pupils.

TDA £1.1m programme

Separately, we are working, with the Training and Development Agency for Schools, to take forward a £1.1 million programme, to improve staff skills at all levels through initial teacher training and induction.

The TDA programme is essentially practical in nature. We have been developing and trialling new specialist SEN and disability units for ITT courses and creating enhanced opportunities for trainee teachers to work in special schools or specialist provision. And we have established support facilities for tutors and exemplars and guidance for assessment. Phil Snell from the TDA will be describing some of that in greater detail later today in his presentation.

We have also asked OFSTED to conduct a thematic review of the journey the trainee teacher takes through ITT and induction in relation to SEN and disability. That review will be important in terms of highlighting what works well – and what doesn't.

And of course, we are commencing our national programme of continuing professional development for staff, delivered through the National Strategies. The Inclusion Development Programme will help teachers differentiate their approach to meet the needs of individual children - needs which can often be very complex. They should also be able to recognise common indicators of language problems early on, or recognise signs of dyslexia in their pupils. And all staff should be able to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment in the classroom.

The Inclusion Development Programme starts with training in helping children with speech, language, communication needs and dyslexia. Subsequent rounds will deal with autistic spectrum disorders, behavioural, emotional and social needs, and moderate learning difficulties.

We know that support for communication pays dividends.

When our Standards Fund Speech and Language projects were evaluated a few years ago, 14 of 24 targeted reception and year 1 children in the Telford & Wrekin project had made marked and

measurable accelerated progress in expressive and receptive language. And, there were noted improvements in children's vocabulary, level of interaction and appropriate behaviour.

Teachers were also more aware of their use of language. One interesting finding from that study was that as teachers became more sensitive to language and communication issues, they spotted potential problems in children who were not obvious targets for attention.

We are currently funding a National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance, which includes professional development materials and courses, and new BESD guidance is due to be published later this year. Alongside the new guidance, teachers and others working in schools will continue to find much practical advice on working with children and young people with BESD in our guidance entitled Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings. And following the publication of good practice guidance in 2002, our Autism Working Group will be working on the National Strategies to develop the autism materials for the IDP, and complementing them with further materials.

As I mentioned earlier, we intend that professional development for staff in meeting the needs of children with autistic spectrum disorders and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties will be covered by forthcoming rounds of the Inclusion Development Programme.

I would like to explain why we have chosen to focus first on communication difficulties – speech, language and communication needs and dyslexia. This was a conscious decision on our part, reflecting the fundamental importance of communication to children's learning and progression, and indeed the fact that communication is a key life skill.

It needs to be seen alongside the recent announcement by Ed Balls and Alan Johnson of a review of support for children with speech, language and communication needs, being led by John Bercow MP. The review will advise on how the very best provision for children and young people up to age 19 can be mirrored in all areas. It will also focus on how local services can work better together to ensure children get the support they need. John's review will report next summer.

It is also important to say that what we are seeking to do through IDP is promote confidence-raising training for teachers and others. The intention is that the materials should be used flexibly in support of local training programmes. We are not – and I emphasise this – providing highly specialised, high level, training. That is available for those who want it from various providers. For example, the newly established Communication Trust and No To Failure dyslexia trust will have an important role in promoting specialised training opportunities and pointing people to specialised sources of information and advice.

A key principle of IDP is to draw upon the best of the available training materials, many of them developed by specialist voluntary organisations with well-established links with parents. We know that some schools find it difficult to find their way through the wide variety of material on offer. IDP is shaped in such a way as to cherry pick the best material – though of course we will want to learn from experience of the opening round in terms of what people find most helpful.

Here in short the IDP will help, promote better in-service training and assist early years settings and schools develop more inclusive practice, raise awareness and confidence among staff about meeting the needs of children with different types of SEN. We believe it will make a significant contribution to whole-school (or setting) approaches to the diverse needs of children with SEN. We are also actively exploring how the materials might be used in an initial teacher training context.

Today you will be given a flavour of the materials being developed for Phase 1 of the Programme and the approaches that underpin them. This will be followed, in December, by a series of regional dissemination meetings. But IDP will only work if it has your active support. Please help by ensuring that this new programme has maximum impact through active local promotion in your areas. And do please give the IDP team feedback on how the materials have gone down and how they have been used locally.

I'd like to end by wishing you well for the rest of the day and hand over to Chris Beek. Thanks."