Disability Equality:
Promoting positive attitudes through the teaching of the National Curriculum
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Introduction

The context to the research

Disabled people are often prohibited from participating equally in society by a number of barriers. These barriers include people’s attitudes, the built environment, and policies that affect how society is organised. They exist because there has not been widespread recognition of how these barriers systematically discriminate against disabled people. In 2005 the Government published Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, this committed Government to achieve the following;

By 2025, disabled people in Britain should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life, and will be respected and included as equal members of society.

In the last few decades, considerable progress has been made but significant barriers remain and need to be overcome if all disabled people are to be respected and to access their right to participate equally in society (Disability Rights Commission, 2007).

This section provides an introduction to the report. It provides some context to why there is a need to promote positive attitudes towards disability by beginning with some consideration of our understanding of disability. It then provides some background on the role that schools can play in this before going on to provide some information about the research study.

What is disability?

Understanding the distinction between what are known as the medical and social models of disability is critical to understanding the meaning of ‘disability’, and the concept of ‘disablement’. By way of an introduction, a basic description of the medical and social models is provided here.

The medical or individual model is the traditional and dominant model. Its “focus is on bodily ‘abnormality’, disorder or deficiency, and the way in which this in turn ‘causes’ some degree of ‘disability’ or functional limitation” (Barnes et al, 2000; 21). This functional ‘incapacity’ then becomes the basis for a wider classification of an individual. Barnes et al, (2000) explains that this leads to ‘disability’ being used as the defining characteristic of an individual and to the generalisation of their incapacity. In turn, this “forms the basis for a ‘personal tragedy’ approach,
where the individual is regarded as a victim, and as someone who is in need of ‘care and attention’, and dependent upon others” (p21). In the medical model, the solution lies in medical intervention. The aim is to overcome, or, at least, to minimise the negative consequences of the individual’s ‘disability’. As such, it detracts from valuing the person as an individual with rights to participate in society equally.

The social model was derived from the increasing criticism of the individual, medical model of disability by disabled activists. It argues that it is society that ‘disables’ people with impairments. Impairment is defined “as the loss or limitation of physical, mental or sensory function on a long-term or permanent basis”, while disability or “disablement is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers” (Disabled People's International, 1981, cited in Rieser, 2000; 120). People with impairments are excluded from participating by barriers and discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and practices. The solution, therefore, lies in societal change rather than individual adjustment and rehabilitation.

In the following table, Rieser (2006a) illustrates the differences in medical and social model thinking, and their potential for bringing change, by comparing their approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Medical model thinking</strong></th>
<th><strong>Social model thinking</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Child is faulty</td>
<td>Child is valued</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>Strengths and needs defined by self and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labelling</td>
<td>Identify barriers and develop solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impairment becomes focus of attention</td>
<td>Outcome-based programme designed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment, monitoring, programmes of therapy imposed</td>
<td>Resources are made available to ordinary services</td>
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<td>Segregation and alternative services</td>
<td>Training for parents and professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary needs put on hold</td>
<td>Relationships nurtured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-entry if normal enough OR permanent exclusion</td>
<td>Diversity welcomed, child is included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society remains unchanged</td>
<td>Society evolves</td>
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The distinction between these models is central to understanding how society excludes and discriminates against people who have impairments.
Why is there a need to promote positive attitudes to disability?

Attitudes are formed on the basis of beliefs. Beliefs are derived from a myriad of sources. People’s beliefs and attitudes can be prejudicial. Ignorance, a lack of awareness and a fear of difference (or, arguably, of being disabled) can lead to prejudice. It can also be the result of a number of influences that can create, maintain and reinforce prejudicial views.

In reference to the oppression of disabled people, Rieser (2006a) writes:

> The well-spring of our oppression comprises deeply held social attitudes that reflect generations of prejudice, fear and discrimination towards disabled people in education, work and social life. The main reasons are negative attitudes and stereotypes which are based on untrue ideas that have been around for thousands of years and which are amazingly persistent (p143)

In Western culture, in historical and contemporary times, negative and stereotypical portrayals of disability have been widespread. Rieser (2000) identifies the ancient world, the Judeo-Christian tradition and the medieval period as seminal sources of the negative portrayal of impairment and disabled people. (1) During each of these periods, those with impairments were viewed negatively. In Greek and Roman times, the body beautiful was worshipped and adored, and those that did not fit the ideal were denigrated. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, impairment was interpreted as a punishment from God. In medieval Europe, disabled people were seen as both saints and sinners. In more modern times, following the industrial revolution those with significant impairments were seen as a social and educational problem and segregated out of the mainstream, into workhouses, asylums, colonies and special schools (Oliver, 1990). In the twentieth century, with the growth of eugenics, disabled people were seen to be ‘defectives’ and a policy of segregation prevailed. In recent years, things have begun to change but it is still possible to see the effects of such influences in the representation of and beliefs about disability and disabled people’s lives.

A number of negative stereotypes remain prevalent in the depiction of disabled people and their lives (Bilkin and Bogdana, 1977; Bogdana et al, 1982; see later discussion on page 23). These often connect with the dominant medical model of disability described above. Often, an emphasis is placed upon the person’s impairment rather than their lives as a whole, and show disabled people as dependent, requiring the care and support of non-disabled people. The ‘disability’ is seen as the defining characteristic of an individual. It is possible to see this in operation in the attitudes that people have towards disability today.

A recent study (Grewal et al, 2002) identified four ways in which prejudicial or exclusionary attitudes about disability are expressed. Firstly, by labelling, referring to or treating disabled as different to ‘normal people’ or outside of ‘mainstream society’. Secondly, by attributing general characteristics or behaviours to disabled people simply because they are perceived to be disabled. Thirdly, by expressing fear, dislike or mistrust of disabled people, avoidance of people because of their disability. Fourthly, by making assumptions that a

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(1) For more detailed discussion, see Rieser, 2000, pages 126-133.
person’s quality of life, or their ability to live life fully, is diminished because of their disability.

The ongoing exclusion of disabled children and adults from participation in many aspects of ordinary life limits opportunities for these negative views or stereotypes to be challenged. As a result, dominant beliefs about disability and about disabled people and their lives are often poorly informed and remain negative - which, in turn, means that disabled people are denied opportunities and possibilities to participate as equals in society. The way in which negative, prejudicial attitudes can influence behaviours, and lead to discrimination against disabled people, are evidenced in the life experiences of disabled children and adults.

Promoting well-informed social attitudes towards disability is central to breaking this cycle and to the achievement of equality for disabled people. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 makes recognition of this with the introduction of the Disability Equality Duty, which includes a requirement to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. Proactively and explicitly promoting positive attitudes to disabled people and an understanding that it is barriers of attitude, environment and organisation which disable people with impairments is called ‘disability equality training’. This is not the same as disability awareness which focuses more on ensuring that non-disabled people are aware of how disabled people lead their lives. Disability awareness usually focuses on developing empathy rather than an understanding of socially created barriers which follow from an understanding of the social model of disability. One of the principles underlying the Duty to Promote Disability Equality is the social model of disability.

The potential role of schools

So, what role can schools have in promoting positive attitudes? Schools are well-placed to proactively inform and raise awareness among children, young people and their families. They can promote positive attitudes and disability equality more widely, by being inclusive. This is a point that motivates those campaigning for the rights of disabled children to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers. For example, in their production of the Salamanca Statement, representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations agreed that:

*Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all* (UNESCO, 1994, ix).

This view was recently reinforced by the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in general, and in particular Article 24 on education which requires the inclusion of disabled children into the general school system with reasonable accommodations, and the support necessary to achieve their potential. (\(^2\))

\(^2\) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities was adopted by the General Assembly in December 2006. Open for adoption by states from March 2007, 130 states have adopted and to date 38 have ratified.
The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education’s (CSIE) *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2000) defines inclusion in schools in the following way:

- **Valuing all students and staff equally**
- **Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools**
- **Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality**
- **Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as ‘having special educational needs’**
- **Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely**
- **Viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than as problems to be overcome**
- **Acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality**
- **Improving schools for staff as well as for students**
- **Emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement**
- **Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities**
- **Recognising that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.** (Quoted from: http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/indexlaunch.htm)

The CSIE index, and its supporting materials, was distributed to all schools by the Department for Education and Schools in 2000. Materials are organised around three dimensions, each of which has a number of indicators for schools to work on. Rieser and Peasley (2002) describe the three dimensions – of culture, policy and practice - that are outlined as underpinning the development of inclusive schools. The creation of an inclusive culture involves creating a secure, accepting, collaborating and stimulating community in which everyone is valued. It is concerned with developing inclusive values, shared between all staff, students, governors and parents/carers that are conveyed to all new members. The principles, derived within inclusive school cultures, then guide decisions about policies and moment-to-moment practice. The production of inclusive policies is about securing inclusion at the heart of school development, permeating all policies, so that they increase the learning and participation of all students. In evolving inclusive practice, Rieser and Peasley (2002) explains, this dimension is about making practice reflect the inclusive cultures and policies of the school. In essence, only an overall whole school approach by schools can lead to fully inclusive educational environments. This is a key point that forms a backdrop to all subsequent discussion in this report. This report is not about developing inclusive schools, per se, but about creating opportunities for the promotion of the positive attitudes through the teaching of the National
Curriculum. It is done in this way not to suggest that schools should take a ‘bolt-on’ approach or that schools should focus on this element alone but rather to provide schools with the opportunity to give some in-depth consideration to its potential in the promotion of positive attitudes. Having the opportunity to critically reflect on the origins and basis of beliefs and opinions can be a key to tackling prejudicial attitudes.

Quicke et al (1990) suggest that a serious challenge to prejudice in society can be mounted by radically reforming the curricula of schools. Previously, Quicke (1985) considered prevailing influences on attitudes to disability and concluded that:

_My contention is that such ideas are pervasive even if they are not overtly stated – they are latent to the consciousness of many children and adults in society. In my view there is enough evidence here to justify a teaching intervention which tackles the problem directly by including a planned element in the curriculum specifically designed to encourage positive attitudes and action (p4)._  

Rieser (2006a), too, sees a key role for schools:

_Prejudicial attitudes towards disabled people and indeed against all minority groups are not inherited. They are learned through contact with prejudice and ignorance of others. Therefore, to challenge discrimination against disabled people, we must begin in schools (p139)_

This report is concerned with the use and development of teaching to encourage positive attitudes.

**The aims and objectives of the research**

The overall aim of this research study was to map what is currently happening in primary and secondary schools in developing knowledge and understanding of disability and disabled people’s lives through the teaching of the National Curriculum. The objective of the research was to gain a better understanding of schools’ needs and to identify any existing good practice that could assist schools to develop their practice.

**Research methodology**

There were three main strands to the methodology of the research:

- A literature review, which aimed to identify and provide a synthesis of available guidance and teaching/learning resources that focus upon facilitating disability awareness/understanding of disability equality concepts
- A national survey of young people, which aimed to identify if young people had learned in class about disabled people and people with learning difficulties
A national survey of primary and secondary schools, with follow up qualitative interviews, which aimed to identify if and how teachers incorporate learning about disability and discrimination into the teaching of the National Curriculum.

**Literature review**

A literature search was undertaken to identify research evidence, good practice guidance and resources that related to the teaching of disability awareness and the promotion of disability equality. Education databases were searched to identify literature. Manual searches of websites on disability activism, disability rights organisations and education practice/policy websites were also conducted.

**National survey of young people**

**Sampling strategy**

The data collected for this report was collected as part of a wider survey (Rees and Lee, 2005) that was undertaken to update a previous study of the prevalence of running away. Therefore, the sample strategy was constructed to replicate that of the original study undertaken in 1999 (Safe on the Streets Research Team, 1999), which used stratified cluster sampling to survey 16 areas representing a range of terms of ethnic diversity, population density and economic prosperity. Details of the sample achieved are provided below.

**The survey**

In order to reach a large and reasonably representative sample of young people aged 14-16, data was gathered using self-completed questionnaires issued through schools within the selected areas. The target was to survey either a complete year 10 or complete year 11 in four or five secondary schools in each of the 16 areas, thus generating a total sample of over 10,000 completed questionnaires. In order to ensure that the sample included young people who did not regularly attend mainstream school, and young people with learning difficulties, the survey also included a sample of pupil referral units and special schools for young people with moderate learning difficulties.

The Directors of Education with responsibility for the sample areas were informed about the research. Several offered support and none raised concerns about the proposed survey. Initially the secondary schools that participated in Still Running were approached to see if they would take part in the 2005 survey. These were boosted by the selection of additional schools within the area or matched area. They were chosen randomly, with the exception of single sex schools and selective schools where a balanced sample was required. Fifty per cent of the secondary schools and a third of the special schools and pupil referral units approached declined to take part, mainly due to being very busy – having been approached by a number of research projects or being involved with inspections. Negotiation with schools and the administration of the survey took place from January to July 2005 inclusive.

**Piloting and content of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was developed and piloted with year 10 and 11 groups in three schools and one pupil referral unit in Bradford and York during the winter of 2004-2005. The students and school staff provided valuable face-to-face feedback and
many improvements were made to the final questionnaire as a result.

The questionnaire consisted of six sections covering demographic characteristics; The Children’s Society four key areas of focus; (3) and general questions about well-being. Questions were primarily in tick-box format with room for additional comments where appropriate. There were also a number of open-ended questions.

The findings that are reported on here are derived from an analysis of a series of questions that asked young people about what groups of people they had learned about in class – this included asking whether they had learned about particular groups and whether they would like to learn about particular groups. Two of the groups referred to included disabled people and people with learning difficulties. It also included an open-ended question asking if there is anything else that they wanted to say on learning about people who may experience prejudice.

**The sample**

In total, 10,772 young people were surveyed in 70 mainstream secondary schools, representing a return rate of 73%. The main reason for the non-participation of students was non-attendance at school or involvement in ‘out of school’ activities on the survey date. The final data set from the mainstream schools consists of 10,705 questionnaires, as a small number of questionnaires were spoiled or it appeared that they were not completed seriously. This report contains findings on an analysis of the mainstream school sample.

**Data processing, analysis and presentation of results**

The data from the questionnaires was entered in full onto an Access database. Quality control was conducted on nine percent of the questionnaires inputted from secondary schools (randomly selected) and on a larger proportion of the questionnaires from other educational establishments. Inputting errors were found to be relatively rare and ranged across the questionnaire, rather than being connected to a particular question.

Quantitative data was transferred to SPSS – a statistical software package – for cleaning and statistical analysis. The statistical analysis made use of robust non-parametric tests, primarily chi-square tests for bivariate nominal data. Where a result is reported as statistically significant the p-value test was less than 0.01% (99% confidence).

Due to the sampling strategy adopted, young people living in some areas were over represented in the final sample compared to the overall population of young people in England, with others being under represented. In order to present reasonable accurate estimates, weighting was used to correct for these variations, and all proportions presented are based on a weighted sample unless otherwise stated.

The report includes the presentation of qualitative responses received from young people. These responses were selected to represent the themes that were identified through an analysis of random sub-samples of the overall sample.

(3) The work of the Children’ Society focuses on the rights of refugee children, disabled children, children in trouble with the law, and children at risk on the streets.
National survey of teaching staff within primary and secondary schools

Sampling strategy
A stratified random sample of secondary schools was selected, which equated to 10% of mainstream secondary schools in England. In addition to this, a stratified random sample of primary schools was selected to match the total number and areas reflected in the secondary school sample.

A multi-stage sampling strategy was used. In summary, a fixed number (10) of schools were randomly selected from a number of local education authority (LEA) areas (where \( N \times 10 = 10\% \) of total \( N \) of mainstream secondary schools). LEA areas were randomly selected proportional to the number of schools within each area. The sample was constructed in this way to ensure that it was representative while also limiting the total number within the sample, in order to keep within the resources available for the survey, and to allow for exploration of any regional differences.

The sampling frame was derived from the listings of all mainstream secondary schools, excluding those deemed middle, in England reported in the National Statistics of Education. In January 2005, the total figure of mainstream secondary schools listed was 3,130. A 10% sample therefore amounts to 313 schools, which we rounded to 310. On this basis we randomly selected 31 areas proportional to the number of schools within the area. This was done by consecutively numbering all areas to reflect the numbers of schools within each area. Prior to numbering the areas, each LEA area with a total number of secondary schools less than 10 was paired with another LEA area of similar size to allow for a sampling frame large enough to select 10 schools. For example, Durham with 36 schools was numbered 1-36, Gateshead with 10 schools was numbered, 37-46, Hartlepool combined with Middlesborough totalling 12 schools was numbered 47–58 etc.

Thirty-one numbers were then selected from a random numbers table, with each number determining an area to be selected. Where more than one number within the range of an area was selected then another number was randomly selected. Ten primary and ten secondary schools within each of these areas were randomly selected.

The survey
A questionnaire was sent to 310 primary and secondary schools, which covered 31 local education authorities in England. The questionnaire was addressed to Head Teachers in primary schools and to co-ordinators of PSHE and Citizenship in secondary schools.

The survey was administered by post and asked teaching staff to complete the questionnaire on behalf of their school and to return it by post. The survey was administered between June and September 2006, with an initial mail out in the last few weeks of the summer term and a follow-up mail out made in the first few weeks of the autumn term.
Piloting and content of the questionnaire

The drafting and design of the questionnaire involved extensive consultation with The Children’s Society project workers who had previously worked as teaching staff or who had experience of working in schools. Additionally, a few teachers who had connections with The Children’s Society volunteered to comment on the questionnaire design and content. This led to a decision to develop two separate questionnaires focusing upon Key Stages 1 and 2 and Key Stages 3 and 4. It also informed a decision to direct the questionnaires to head teachers in primary schools and co-ordinators of Citizenship and PSHE in secondary schools.

The questionnaire aimed to collect information about:

- The ways in which schools currently use the National Curriculum to facilitate learning about disability, discrimination and equality
- The curriculum needs of schools at different key stages
- Any existing good practice in development of disability awareness among pupils.

Disability awareness was defined as:

_In asking about disability awareness, we want to know about opportunities that pupils have to: develop an understanding of disability; explore their own attitudes, values and experiences; critically evaluate negative stereotypes that are perpetuated within society and how these relate to discrimination and inequality_)

The questionnaire was not piloted in schools due to time constraints and to difficulties in recruiting schools staff to be involved. However, extensive consultation with teachers who volunteered to comment on the questionnaire was undertaken.

Sample achieved

A total of 97 questionnaires were returned by primary schools, from 30 local education authorities, equating to a 31% response rate. A total of 83 responses were returned by secondary schools, from 28 local education authorities, equating to a 26.7% response rate. Given the poor response rates achieved, the findings are unlikely to be representative of all schools despite the sample being selected as a random, stratified sample. However, they do provide us with some insight into coverage by individual schools and the issues that may affect the delivery of disability equality training within schools.

Data processing, analysis and presentation of findings

The data from the questionnaires was entered in full into a customised Access database. Data entry checks were carried out on 10% of the overall sample. The data was transferred to SPSS for data analysis.

In the main, the findings are descriptive and total numbers or proportions are presented in the tables and sections that explore schools’ practice.
A brief summary of each chapter

Chapter 2 commences with some discussion of the legal and policy context to teaching disability awareness in the National Curriculum.

Chapter 3 brings together the findings of the review of literature, and provides discussion of these in four sections. In 'establishing strong foundations', the authors explore factors that are likely to assist in the (effective) teaching of disability awareness. In 'general points on the formal curriculum content and teaching', the authors present a number of recommendations that emerge from the literature. These cut across subject teaching, and are also relevant to other school practices. 'Teaching methods, approaches and materials' brings together suggestions from the guidance and research literature and resources available. The final section on 'subject based suggestions' brings together pointers for teachers in relation to different National Curriculum subjects.

Both Chapters 4 and 5 report on findings from the teachers’ and pupils’ surveys. Chapter 4 presents the data that maps out what is happening within schools and Chapter 5 draws together teachers’ reflections on what affects the development of good practice in teaching disability awareness in the National Curriculum.

The final chapter highlights the key findings and a number of implications for research, policy and practice.
Promoting positive attitudes through education: Legislative and policy context

This introductory chapter sets out policies relevant to the promotion of positive attitudes to disability through education. With changes to the Disability Discrimination Act, specifically the requirements on schools under the Disability Equality Duty, schools have a duty to systematically promote positive attitudes to disability. Schools can do this not only through their practice and policies on access and inclusion but also in their teaching of the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum itself allows for this. In this chapter, in order to situate later discussion of the research findings, background information is provided on the school curriculum in general and the National Curriculum in particular, as well as on the Disability Equality Duty and the role of schools.

The values and aims of the school curriculum

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils, including the National Curriculum, which defines the knowledge, understanding and skills to which children and young people are entitled.

As outlined on National Curriculum online, the values of the curriculum can be defined as such:

*Education influences and reflects the values of society, and the kind of society we want to be. It is important, therefore, to recognise a broad set of common values and purposes that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools (National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, May 1997).*

*Foremost is a belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development, and thus the well-being, of the individual. Education is also a route to equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy, and sustainable development. Education should reflect the enduring values that contribute to these ends. These include valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment in which we live. Education
should also reaffirm our commitment to the virtues of truth, justice, honesty, trust and a sense of duty. (4)

The two broad aims for the school curriculum are reflected in section 351 of the Education Act 1996. These aims provide an essential context within which schools develop their own curriculum. These two aims reinforce each other and are essential to raising attainment standards for pupils:

- **Aim 1:** The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve
- **Aim 2:** The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The Act requires the Secretary of State, local authorities and the governing body and head teacher to take steps to achieve these requirements. The Secretary of State meets his responsibilities in this area by providing a national framework that incorporates the National Curriculum, religious education and statutory requirements. This framework is designed to enable all schools to respond effectively to national and local priorities, to meet the individual learning needs of all pupils and to develop a distinctive character and ethos rooted in their local communities.

In the context of this report, it is important to bear these statements and statutory duties in mind. As a route to equality of opportunity for all, schools should be inclusive of all children but also be active in their promotion of respect for all people within society.

**The National Curriculum**

The National Curriculum is a framework to be used by all maintained schools to ensure that teaching and learning is balanced and consistent. It sets out; the subjects to be taught and the knowledge, skills and understanding required in each subject. The framework also sets out standards or attainment targets for each subject that teachers can use to measure and assess a child's progress and plan their future learning.

The four main purposes of the National Curriculum are outlined as:

- "To establish an entitlement:
  - The National Curriculum secures for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, an entitlement to a number of areas of learning and to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for their self-fulfilment and development as active and responsible citizens.

(4) http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/valuesAimsPurposes.shtml
To establish standards:

The National Curriculum makes expectations for learning and attainment explicit to pupils, parents, teachers, governors, employers and the public, and establishes national standards for the performance of all pupils in the subjects it includes. These standards can be used to set targets for improvement, measure progress towards those targets, and monitor and compare performance between individuals, groups and schools.

To promote continuity and coherence:

The National Curriculum contributes to a coherent national framework that promotes curriculum continuity and is sufficiently flexible to ensure progression in pupils’ learning. It facilitates the transition of pupils between schools and phases of education and provides a foundation for lifelong learning.

To promote public understanding:

The National Curriculum increases public understanding of, and confidence in, the work of schools and in the learning and achievements resulting from compulsory education. It provides a common basis for discussion of educational issues among lay and professional groups, including pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers. (5)

In developing the school curriculum, guidance makes recognition that while these four purposes do not change over time the curriculum itself cannot remain static:

It must be responsive to changes in society and the economy, and changes in the nature of schooling itself. Teachers, individually and collectively, have to reappraise their teaching in response to the changing needs of their pupils and the impact of economic, social and cultural change. Education only flourishes if it successfully adapts to the demands and needs of the time. (6)

The National Curriculum applies to all pupils in state funded schools that are known as maintained schools. It does not apply in private schools (known as independent schools), although most choose to follow it. The National Curriculum is organised into four key stages: one applies to children aged 5-7, two to children aged 7-11, three to children aged 11-14 and four to young people aged 14-16 years old.

The National Curriculum includes core subjects and foundations subjects, and there are differences in what pupils must study at different key stages. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the statutory subjects are: English, mathematics, science, design and technology (DT), information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, art and design, music and physical education. Key Stage 3 includes the same as those at Key Stages 1 and 2 plus modern foreign languages and citizenship. At Key Stage 4, English, mathematics, science, ICT, physical education (PE) and citizenship are statutory subjects, with students being able to select additional subjects to study. The National Curriculum also includes a requirement that all pupils must study religious education at all Key Stages.

(5) http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/valuesAimsPurposes.shtml

(6) http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/valuesAimsPurposes.shtml
(although, parents have the right to withdraw children from these lessons). Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 must also receive sex education and careers education. It is possible for parents to withdraw their children from sex education, except where it is part of the science curriculum. Key Stage 4 pupils must also have work-related learning.

The potential offered by the National Curriculum

Within the framework of the National Curriculum, schools are free to plan and organise teaching and learning in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils. Many schools use the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) Schemes of Work to plan the curriculum. These provide a basis for delivering the National Curriculum, but these do not emphasize opportunities for raising a disability focus.

National policy suggests that schools have considerable scope to develop their own curriculum within and around the National Curriculum framework. Schools can introduce other experiences and subjects to meet the needs and interests of their pupils once they are satisfied that they are meeting the statutory requirements of the Curriculum. They can take account of distinctive strengths and local context of the school and emphasise particular subjects or approaches in the Curriculum. The government prescribes what is to be taught but not how. In summary, the National Curriculum is the starting point for planning a curriculum and schools can adapt it in a number of ways to provide appropriate learning challenges for all their pupils. (7)

The National Curriculum Statutory Inclusion Statement outlines how teachers can modify, as necessary, the National Curriculum to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage. It requires all teachers to have due regard to the three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum. These are:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils (See teachernet.gov.uk).

Teaching the National Curriculum carries with it a responsibility to:

promote equal opportunities and enable pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping, develop an understanding of where such prejudice comes from, develop pupils' integrity and autonomy and help them to be responsible and caring citizens capable of contributing to the development of a just society. It should promote pupils’ self-esteem and emotional well-being and help them to form worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others at home, school, at work and in the community. (8)

(8) http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/valuesAimsPurposes.shtml
This includes challenging discrimination and stereotyping of disabled people, and developing an understanding of where such prejudice comes from. The specific duty that is placed upon schools by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 reinforces this requirement.

The Disability Equality Duty

In April 2005, a second Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed by Parliament. It amended and extended existing provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. One of its key extensions is the general duty that it places upon all public authorities to promote disability equality (s49A), including all state funded schools. Thus, the basic requirement for a public authority when carrying out their functions is to have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled peoples disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

In addition to the general duty for all public authorities, the regulations introduce a specific duty for listed public authorities. The specific duty defines a framework for these key public authorities to use to ensure that they meet the general duty. The list includes central government departments, local and health authorities, regulatory bodies and institutions such as schools, colleges and universities, and museums.

The statutory code of practice (Disability Rights Commission, 2005a) provides the following summary of the regulations that outline the specific duties:

- A public authority should publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties
- A public authority should involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme
- The scheme should include a statement of:
  - The way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the scheme
  - The authority’s methods for impact assessment
  - Steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the ‘action plan’)

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The authority’s arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions

The authority’s arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes

A public authority must, within three years of the Scheme being published, take the steps set out in the action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information

A public authority must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

(Disability Rights Commission, 2005a; 54-55)

All listed public authorities, with the exception of special, primary schools and PRU’s in England, were required to publish their Schemes no later than 4th December 2006.

The Disability Equality Duty and schools

All schools are subject to the specific duty. Secondary schools were required to publish their disability equality schemes by the 4th December 2006. Primary schools, Community special schools or Foundation special schools maintained by a local education authority in England, or a local authority in respect of its pupil referral units in England, were required to publish their schemes by the 3rd of December 2007. All educational establishments in Wales had to have a scheme by April 2007. In Scotland Local Authority Schemes had to cover their schools from December 2006.

Promoting Disability Equality in Schools (DIES, 2006a) provides detailed guidance to schools on their duties under the Disability Equality Duty. It highlights that these requirements are not new rights nor do they replace current duties but are about making schools proactive about disability equality at every level, showing evidence of what has been done and what is planned. The expectations on schools aim to be reasonable and a practical, staged approach to developing a scheme is to be applied. The guidance outlines how current disability accessibility plans fit or complement the development of a scheme, as well as key differences so that schools are aware that their accessibility plans alone will not meet their requirements under the Duty. It suggests that drawing up and publishing a scheme will be straightforward for some schools:

Schools that are already actively meeting their duties in the DDA should not find it difficult to take a more proactive, explicit and comprehensive approach that involves disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school (Department for Education and Skills, 2006a;3)
It summarises the four strands that underpin the duty and explains that schools need to be:

- “More proactive – schools need to move from a focus on an individual response to an approach that builds disability equality considerations in from the start and at every level of the school – at strategic, policy, management and classroom level
- More explicit – schools have to be able to demonstrate what they have done and what they plan to do to improve opportunities and outcomes for disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school
- More involved – schools have to involve disabled pupils, staff, parents and others in the development of their scheme. Disabled people need to be involved from the very start and their involvement needs to inform the preparation, development, publication, review and reporting of the scheme
- More comprehensive – schools have a range of duties under the DDA: towards their employees, under Part 2; towards other users of the school, under Part 3; and towards their pupils, under Part 4”. (Department for Education and Skills, 2006a, 3-4)

* Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years (DfES 2006b) provides guidance to schools in developing a Disability Equality Scheme, creating a school Access Plan that includes access to the curriculum and how to implement the Reasonable Adjustment Duty. All schools are under a duty to not treat disabled pupils less favourably and make reasonable adjustments to admissions, education and associated services and exclusions since September 2002. This is an anticipatory duty so schools are meant to incorporate adjustments into their policies, practices and procedures before disabled pupils are attending the school. This resource contains many DVD examples of adjustments from 41 schools. Some of these adjustments include promoting positive images and introducing disability content into the curriculum. Interviews with over 300 heads, SENCO’s, teachers, parents and pupils in the project found that this was the weakest area in these schools. This Pack is available free to all schools in England. (9)

**Promoting positive attitudes**

An integral part of the Duty is to proactively promote positive attitudes. Educational institutions are particularly well placed to do this by demonstrating it in practice, through existing as inclusive environments, and by incorporating learning about disability equality.

Disability Rights Commission guidance on the disability equality duty states that the duty will:

"encourage education institutions to think strategically about… promoting a greater knowledge and understanding of disability amongst all learners with benefits to society at large (Disability Rights Commission, 2005a; 13)."

Teaching of the National Curriculum offers one such strategic opportunity - it is therefore one aspect that schools may consider in the formulation of their action plans. This report seeks to assist teaching staff within schools to work with the potential that the National Curriculum offers to promote positive attitudes to disability. When writing on education, human rights, and equality, Cole (2000) argues that

"Schools do not have to be places where pupils/students are encouraged to think in one-dimensional ways… They can and should be arenas for the encouragement of critical thought, where young people are provided with a number of ways of interpreting the world, not just the dominant ones (Cole, 2000; 4)."

The following chapter considers approaches and resources than can be used to support pupils/students to think critically about disability, ‘disablement’ and equality.
Teaching disability awareness and promoting disability equality

There is some existing guidance, both official and other, to schools on ways to build disability equality into all areas of the school curriculum (Department for Education and Skills, 2006b; Disability Rights Commission, 2006; Rieser, 2006b; Rieser and Peasley, 2002). As this chapter illustrates, this includes advice and information relevant to the promotion of disability equality through the teaching of the National Curriculum.

An understanding of disability equality can be developed from the foundation stage through each of the key stages. It can be developed across the curriculum, in each of the subjects included within the National Curriculum, and it can be taught as a cross-curricular topic. Some publications offer suggestions on how this can be done as well as illustrating clearly the reasons that it should be done (See for example, Rieser, 2006b; Rieser and Mason, 1990). There are a number of resources that have been designed specifically for the purpose of teaching about disability in curriculum subjects in addition to a number of resources that can be used in class to accompany teaching (e.g. children’s literature, DVDs) that have been produced to raise awareness but not necessarily in schools. A synthesis of the ideas and suggestions that are included within these different sources of information is presented here.

Establishing strong foundations

Make it one element of a wider strategy

There are different ways in which the National Curriculum can be used to promote disability equality. Firstly, the National Curriculum guidance, the Inclusion Framework for inclusive practice and the teaching of the National Curriculum to all pupils, can together contribute towards disability equality. If practice is truly inclusive, it models positive attitudes and behaviour to all pupils within the classroom and school. For example, valuing and listening to disabled pupils’ and students’ perspectives can also encourage other children and young people to see them as active participants. In 2001, DfES produced a useful guide to the range of adjustments that can be made to accommodate disabled pupils. (10) Secondly, the content of all subjects within the curriculum can include explicit

reference to disability and disablement/discrimination, and can promote positive attitudes and equality through the development of understanding and awareness.

The effectiveness of the latter is likely to be dependent upon the presence of the former, alongside a whole school approach, and, as noted earlier, it is important this is held in mind while considering the material discussed in this report. The effectiveness of increased teaching of disability equality concepts and material in the content of National Curriculum is likely to be influenced by the wider culture, policies and practices in schools. That is, by what pupils learn through the 'hidden curriculum'. Disability equality work in the curriculum is likely to be ineffective if schools take an approach that involves "bolting-on" an anti-prejudice programme that has little connection to what happens within the school (Quicke et al, 1990). It is, therefore, important that it is only part of what is happening in schools to promote disability equality. For further information on whole school approaches, see the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2000) and guidance on the Disability Equality Duty in schools (Disability Rights Commission, 2006; DfES 2006b; Rieser, 2006b).

Ensure teachers are prepared for their role

Much of the literature on reducing prejudice among children and young people in schools refers to teachers' roles as pivotal. They determine whether the materials, teaching and immediate classroom environment is appropriate. Their preparation and commitment is seen as key (Quicke et al, 1990). Their values, attitudes and behaviour are also seen as key to their positive modelling of contact between themselves and disabled students, and also in their mediation of contact between disabled and non-disabled students (Gray, 2003).

Rieser and Peasley (2002) recommend disability equality training and ongoing INSET is provided for all staff (teachers, learning support and auxiliary staff such as catering staff) and governors. They suggest that such a programme will help schools to move towards inclusion and disability equality, and ensure all staff are involved in and understand the process of inclusion. Such a whole school approach would also assist schools to develop an inclusive culture, which will, as noted above, reduce the risk of a disjuncture between what is taught in the formal curriculum and what is experienced through the hidden curriculum.

Previous studies (Quicke et al, 1990) on the effectiveness of anti-discrimination programmes have pointed to the importance of teachers feeling informed, confident and comfortable with the material that they are teaching. Rieser (1990c), when discussing the teaching of disability awareness, argues “you do not have to be disabled to do this. You just need to have an understanding of what it is like to be disabled in society” (p181). Not all teachers will have such an understanding. There is some evidence that teachers do not feel well prepared, in this study and in others.

An evaluation of an inclusion and disability equality training scheme highlighted that teachers had felt unprepared by their initial and ongoing teacher training (Jura Consultants, 2003). The evaluation recommended, “all staff within a school should be included in training or awareness raising initiatives to bring about a collective change in attitudes for teachers to feel properly prepared for what they
have to do” (p8). Although Gray (2003) noted that there is little research that evaluates the success of DET/disability awareness activity in changing or developing adult attitudes, there is some anecdotal evidence that it may have a positive effect. Jura Consultants (2003) found that the teacher-training programme (on disability and inclusion) had increased the awareness of teachers in how to engage children in discussions about disability and as a result teachers felt that they were more relaxed when talking about disability. However, an independent evaluation of the training delivered to schools by Disability Equality in Education was undertaken by Oxford Brookes University in 2001. This demonstrated that 96% of participants rated the training as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ and that 6 months after training 60% of schools reported positive changes in attitude and practice.\(^{(11)}\)

The level of teacher commitment to teaching disability awareness is also identified as a critical factor in the success of programmes (Quicke et al, 1990).

**Research findings relevant to fostering positive attitudes**

Lewis (1995) highlights a number of research findings that can be used to guide work on developing children’s understanding of, and positive attitudes towards, other people:

- The familiar is preferred over the unfamiliar. Visibility of disabled people is important if positive attitudes are to be fostered. Teachers can maximise the opportunities for students to have interpersonal contact with disabled people, as well as become more familiar with disabled people through media representations.

- In general, the more limiting an impairment is seen to be the more negatively the disabled individual is viewed. It is important, therefore, that an individual’s abilities are highlighted. Teachers can use autobiographical accounts of disabled people to draw attention to strengths and the whole person. These de-emphasise the impairment as a deviation from the norm and as the defining characteristic of a person.

- The visibility of an impairment seems to be a factor in acceptance. In general, those that are more visible are viewed more negatively. This association is stronger for attitudes held by younger children (i.e. early years) than for upper primary/secondary age children. The association between visibility and negative attitudes is likely to decrease in significance as children have more contact with disabled people.

- Children who have had little contact with disabled people are more accepting of disabled people in school settings, than in home or community settings. This finding may be a reflection of broader social unease in the community but it does suggest that school can provide a good starting point for developing positive attitudes.

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In general, structured contact with disabled people has led children to have more positive attitudes than occurs with unstructured contact. A range of work has suggested that collaborative working is the most productive form of structured contact. The literature also points to the role of the teacher in structuring the contact, mediating it and modelling behaviour as crucial.

Other factors likely to affect non-disabled children’s acceptance of disabled people include people’s ‘communication difficulties, unusual behaviours and interpersonal skills (particularly impression management)’. This indicates that both disabled and non-disabled people require the opportunity to learn how to make the most of attempts to communicate with each other.

Attitudes towards known disabled groups are generalised to less well-known groups. This suggests that adults need to be careful not to reinforce stereotypes or over-generalisations about disability. It is important that children have the opportunity to know and work with people who have a range of impairments.

Competent children tend to be seen more positively than less competent children. However, researchers have also found that children are more ‘tolerant’ of a child who is not expected to perform well than they are of a child for whom there is no obvious explanation for relative lack of attainment. Teachers should consider this but also be aware of a need to carefully balance this with an awareness of how the low expectation of disabled students has affected their self-esteem and attainment.

Categorised contact (i.e. when a disabled group is clearly labelled as such) is more effective than de-categorised contact (i.e. when differences between disabled and non-disabled individuals are less obvious) in developing and generalising positive attitudes.

Work in schools on the intentional building of relationships between disabled and non-disabled children demonstrates that whatever the type or degree of impairment acceptance and even friendships can be developed. This is well illustrated by the use of Circles of Friends. (See DfES (2006b) and Newton and Wilson (2003).

General points on formal curriculum content and teaching

The Disability Equality in Education (Rieser and Peasley, 2002) Inclusion in Schools Coursebook provides a checklist on what a whole school policy on disability equality and inclusion should cover. Among its recommendations are a number that refer to topics that are relevant to planning and teaching the formal curriculum. These are brought together here with recommendations from other reports, many of which are also relevant to other practices within schools.
Be aware of and challenge stereotypes through teaching

Stereotypical representations of disabled people are prevalent in all forms of media. They are propagated through historical and contemporary media, including literature, films and the press. Teachers need to be aware of the operation of a range of stereotypical representations of disabled people in order to be able to challenge them. Different analyses have outlined the main stereotypes that exist (Biklen and Bogdana, 1977; Bogdana et al, 1982). Rieser and Mason (1990), with their adaptation of Biklen and Bogdana’s typology, list ten main stereotypes and provide examples of where these occur in popular literature (See pages 98-104). The stereotypes identified are the disabled person as: pitiable and pathetic; an object of violence; sinister or evil; ‘atmosphere’ or exotica; ‘super crip’ or ‘triumph over tragedy’; laughable; having a chip on their shoulder; a burden/outcast; non-sexual or incapable of having a worthwhile relationship; and, incapable of fully participating in everyday life.

When seeking to avoid the use of materials that contain such stereotypes, teachers can look to the recommendations made by the ‘1 in 8 Group’ to identify round and full representations of disabled people’s lives. Following a conference, hosted by Save the Children and The Integration Alliance in 1995, on the lack of positive representations of disabled children in the media, the ‘1 in 8 Group’ identified the need for:

- “One-dimensional characterisations to be shunned. Instead portray disabled people as having complex personalities capable of a range of emotions
- The avoidance of depicting disabled people as always receiving. They should be shown as equals – giving as well as receiving
- The avoidance of presenting physical and mental characteristics as determining personality
- Refrain in depicting disabled people as objects of curiosity. Instead make disabled characters ordinary
- Impairments should not be ridiculed or made the butt of jokes.
- The avoidance of sensationalising disabled people as victims or perpetrators of violence
- Refrain from endowing us with superhuman attributes
- Avoid pollyana-ish plots that make disabled people’s attitude the problem. Show the societal barriers they face that keep them from living full lives
- Avoid showing disabled people as non-sexual. Show them in loving relationships and expressing the same range of sexual needs and desires as non-disabled people
- Show us as an ordinary part of life in all forms of representation
• Most importantly cast us, train us and write us into your scripts, programmes and publications” (Rieser, 2006b; p145).

Be critical of ‘disablist’ language

The use of language and gestures can engender and reinforce discriminatory attitudes and negative stereotypes. Rieser and Peasley (2002) urge teachers to be critical of ‘disablist’ language used to describe pupils, in teaching and by pupils. It suggests that much of the language used is ‘disablist’ and impairment derived, and that schools can develop a critical reappraisal through disability equality training, assemblies and in class. Disability Equality in Education provides some guidance to schools on language in a number of publications (See: Rieser, 2006b, p147; Rieser, 1990b, pp85-89). For example, Rieser (1990b) provides guidelines on language to avoid and language to use, such as the use of ‘person who has’ or ‘person with’ in place of ‘victim of’, ‘crippled by’, ‘suffering from’, ‘afflicted by’. Mason (1990) adds that the issue of language can be brought up from nursery age upwards (p192).

Disability Equality in Education (2005) provides a wide range of materials, storybooks, posters and ideas on developing disability equality for early years and Key Stage 1 pupils. The teachers guide also contains a guide to meaning and origin of the language used to describe disabled people.

The Duty to Promote Disability Equality requires schools to eliminate disability related harassment. Challenging disablist behaviour and comments is essential for all teachers. Use of words that are derogatory and insulting language should be challenged and the meanings explained to the class. Burrows and Sullivan (2004) two primary teachers, provide comprehensive guidance on how to carry this approach into primary practice.

Promote the social model

The social model is critical to understanding ‘disability’ as the result of social oppression. Rieser and Peasley (2002) advises teachers to promote the social model, and to build up resources and literature that are non discriminatory. Rieser (2006b) provides teachers with an opportunity to become familiar with social and medical models of disability and how these may relate to practice within schools. Rieser and Mason (1990) provide a wealth of material for teaching staff that ranges from multiple autobiographical accounts on ‘disablement’ to exercises that explore medical and social models of disability.

Ensure disability issues are included throughout and across the curriculum

As noted above, learning about disability issues and promoting positive attitudes can be incorporated into teaching from the early years onwards. Rieser and Peasley (2002) suggest that schools ensure disability issues are in the curriculum, and to consider including a disability dimension when planning curriculum units, topics or modules. (Some ways in which this could be done are described in the following section on subject-based teaching). Additionally, Rieser
and Peasley (2002) and Gray (2003) recommend that schools should conduct audits of fictional and factual resources and publications that they use to ensure that they are not discriminatory and are positive in their portrayal of disabled people. Undertaking such an audit would also serve to identify where and how schools include disability awareness in the curriculum.

In reference to the curriculum, Rieser (2006b) poses a number of questions for schools to consider when implementing the DED:

- “Does the school ensure that all pupils gain an understanding of the discrimination disabled people face and the negative attitudes and stereotypes that can commonly occur?”
- Does the school ensure that some part of the curriculum in each year raises disability equality issues?
- Does the school ensure disability equality is raised in PHSE and Citizenship?
- Do disabled pupils feel comfortable explaining to their peers about the nature of their impairment, what prejudices they face and how they wish to be treated?
- Are disabled adults from local disability organisations encouraged to regularly address pupils?
- Are the achievements of disabled people displayed in positive ways?
- Do teachers consider the disability content of different parts of the curriculum and how this will impact on disabled pupils (e.g. negative stereotypes in literature, or arguments about terminating disabled babies in Religious Education or Biology)?” (p73)

Include positive and diverse images in all materials

Similar to the points made in the previous section, Disability Equality in Education advises schools to ensure that disabled people are positively displayed in the images that are used and displayed in school, and that everyone has access to positive images of disabled children and adults. The Disability Rights Commission (2006) also makes this point suggesting that both positive and diverse images are used.

Teaching methods, approaches and materials

As indicated above, it is important that teachers feel confident about the issues that could form the focus of disability teaching. Teachers can develop awareness and confidence through participation in disability equality training or through their own experience of disabled students and adults or they can achieve this by familiarising themselves through their own reading and research. However, it is
crucial that they find a way to do so prior to teaching the topic to students (Quicke et al, 1990), as they will need to guide and inform discussion and debate. Quicke et al (1990) also note that teaching in this area, as with any sensitive issue, needs careful planning.

Naturally, the teaching methods, approaches and materials that teachers elect to use will need to be appropriate to the learning needs of their students. Teachers may also wish to consider when planning lessons that explore disability, equality and discrimination the methods and approaches they have used when working on similar topics, such as race equality or others falling within personal and social education, and consider the lessons that they have learned through their practice. Quicke et al (1990) suggest that

> the role of the teacher is to prepare pupils to become moral agents who make judgements based on ethically informed rational argument. The process will inevitably involve critical reflection upon concepts and experiences and the most appropriate teaching strategy would appear to be one that eschews didacticism and encouraged pupils to think through issues for themselves.

They quote Lynch’s (1987) advice that “forced value injection is doomed to failure”. Aboud and Fenwick (1999) report on the evaluation of three different types of school-based interventions to reduce prejudice. Each of these interventions was focused on the reduction of racial prejudice. They conclude that from the results of these studies that “peers and adults may have a positive effect on the racial attitudes of others when their talk is explicit and tailored to the listener” (p782). But, they emphasise that simply expressing positive attitudes may not be enough and that “it is important to identify information that is known to reduce prejudice and that fits or is just beyond the cognitive capabilities of the student” (p782). Rieser (2006b) also advises, “We have to help children look at the roots of discrimination against disabled people, and to counteract it in all its forms... This cannot be done without continuously challenging negative language, stereotypes and images, linked with positive discussion”.

Teachers need to find ways to inform as well as stimulate critical reflection and discussion among pupils, and can use a number of strategies to do this. Quicke et al (1990) emphasise that an interactive style is required which values the experiences of pupils and establishes the conditions whereby pupils feel confident enough to discuss these experiences in the classroom. Lewis (1995) refers to the potential offered by: circle time and related approaches, map exercises, circle of friends, games, role-play and simulation. Quicke et al (1990) also suggest that most experiential and ‘active learning’ techniques – such as, drama, role-play, group discussion etc – are suitable for these purposes. Other sources refer to simulation techniques that aim to develop understanding of barriers that disabled people may encounter - Rieser (1990c) counsels that it is crucial not to do such activities alone. He further points out that such activities should be limited to younger children and that for those who are 8 and above it is better to establish an understanding of the barriers disabled people face (Rieser, 2004b).

Lewis (1995) refers to the potential offered by first-hand accounts. As mentioned above, the use of structured contact between disabled people and non-disabled people can have a positive effect on children’s attitudes. This could occur in a context where disabled and non-disabled peers are attending school together or
where this does not already occur structured contact could take a number of forms. For example, guidelines on the dimensions of the CSIE inclusive index, referred to above, suggest that schools mobilise resources by making use of student difference as a resource for teaching and learning, and by developing an awareness of and drawing on resources in the community (Rieser and Peasley, 2002).

The former may be a way to work with students together but it is important that it is managed well and appropriately. The latter may involve working with disabled adults or disabled-led organisations that form part of the local community. Quicke (1985) reports on an unpublished survey of a Northern city that explored teachers’ approaches and found that some used “visits to hospitals, training centres and visits to the school from various charitable bodies or disabled adults themselves. Such visits to out of school locations were sometimes part of a community-service project” (p5). Again, it is important that such activities are constructive and do not reinforce negative stereotypes, either by the nature of the activity undertaken or by the absence of critical appraisal of the circumstances or perspectives gained through the contact made. Teachers may want to consider if the environments that students have encountered present a positive portrayal of disabled people’s lives – do they show disabled people living full and participatory lives or do they reinforce notions of dependency and ‘incapacity’?

Rieser (1990a) writes “it is important to try and arrange for disabled people to come into the classroom on a regular basis and create the time for fruitful discussion with the classes” (p145). This might be in the form of a workshop or discussion facilitated by a disability equality trainer, who is disabled. But Mason (1990) suggests, as a point of good practice in the classroom, that it is important to include the involvement of disabled people at all levels,

not as curios, invited to speak about disability, but as useful and interesting human beings. If a local disabled person has an interesting hobby, invite them to talk about it. If they have a skill to share, ask them to come and share it. If they have time to share, perhaps they could come and listen to children read, or do an art project, or cooking or photography… The point is to allow contact so that questions can arise and be dealt with naturally, and at the same time the non-disabled pupils are experiencing disabled adults as having something to give (p193).

Quicke (1985) and Rieser (1990a) have discussed the advantages of approaching the topic through fiction. This is given some more consideration in a later section on English/literacy. Film offers similar opportunities as is demonstrated in Disabling Imagery (Rieser 2004b). Many young people have a highly developed critical attitude towards moving media images that can be constructively developed.
Subject based suggestions

The Citizenship and the PSHE/PSE curricula can assist schools to foster the moral, social and emotional development of pupils/students. As a result, there is often the perspective that teaching that focuses on rights, equality and discrimination best fits here. Disability awareness/equality work does fit closely with work around citizenship and democracy but the experience of disablement throughout time and space and society’s varying reactions to impairment suggest it should be central to many areas of the curriculum. Arguably, it is necessary that it does form part of core subjects or at least those that are statutory throughout all stages of schooling. (12) Given the status accorded to the core subjects, reinforced by the assessment requirements across all key stages, it is arguable that including reference to disability equality within their teaching is likely to have more considerable impact. Rieser (1990c) argues that teaching in the core subjects of the national curriculum is “the best way of getting disability into the school curriculum rather than in a ‘cross-curricular’ area” (p145). The following sub-sections contain suggestions of topics and materials that teachers might use to incorporate disability equality work into different subjects.

Literacy/English

There is considerable potential to include disability equality work as an implicit and explicit part of teaching in literacy/English. Children’s fiction offers the opportunity to promote positive images and attitudes towards disability (Leicester, 2007; Rieser, 1990b; Quicke, 1985). It also has the potential to reinforce negative stereotypes, so it is important that teachers are aware and able to critically evaluate the representation of disability and disabled people to consider its impact. A good starting point for schools is to audit the content of the stories and novels that they use to identify if they include positive images of disabled people or if they reinforce negative stereotypes. DfES (2006) provides this as an illustration of good practice – with a description of a primary school’s review of its reading books, followed by a decision to set a target of 20 new books with positive images to be acquired over the following year.

Rieser (1990a) provides guidance to teachers on the use of children’s literature. He draws on the evidence provided by Baskin and Harris (1984) who suggest

that the best books do not have a ‘message’ that overwhelms the narrative. The central characters must be created in the illusion of fullness, roundness – must be shown to be complete human beings. Good children’s literature should help the readers discover the truth for themselves, rather than seek to convert the readers to a cause (p105).

Baskin and Harris (1984) argue that there is growing evidence that deliberate use of books, followed by discussions or other exploratory techniques, has a measurable impact on attitudes. It may be that critical evaluation of the

(12) English, Maths and Science are core subjects across all four key stages.
representation of disabled people in traditional stories, folklore, or contemporary fiction forms part of the reading of literature.

For example, Rieser (2006b) suggests reading and discussing traditional stories that feature disabled characters (such as Rapunsel, Hansel and Gretel, Rumpelstiltskin, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves) before rewriting or retelling them so that the disabled characters are not stereotyped. Or, analysing how authors have used disabled people as a literary device or portrayed them in stereotyped ways. He gives a range of examples that could be used, including Shakespeare’s Richard III, Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, John Steinbeck’s Cannery Row, J M Barrie’s Peter Pan and Frances Hodgson Burnett’s The Secret Garden.

Working with literature cuts across all key stages, including the foundation stage, although this is of course dependent on the availability of suitable literature. In the past, a dearth of appropriate literature has been identified although it appears that this is beginning to change. Rieser (1990a) includes a list of recommended publications, which are positive in their portrayal of disabled characters, many of which are available to buy from Disability Equality in Education. Other notable children’s novels have emerged more recently. For example, Micheal Foreman’s Seal Surfer suitable for children aged 3 to 8, Morris Gleitzman’s Blabber Mouth and Sticky Beak suitable for children aged 8-12, Lois Keith’s A Different Life suitable for young people aged 12-16. (13) Rieser (2006b) puts forward a more up to date list.

Some resources exist which give some direction to teachers on using particular stories or novels. Watson (1990) provides teachers with notes and ideas on developing a unit of work for GCSE English/English literature. Leicester (2007) provides stories and guidance on their use for teachers working in key stages 1 and 2. Lois Keith (2001) in Take up thy Bed and Walk: Death, Disability and Cure in Classic Fiction for Girls, provides a thoughtful and powerful analysis of the uses of disability in classic children’s literature and can be used to develop a great Key Stage 3, 4 or 5 module.

Mathematics
Maths too offers opportunities to explore disability issues. Rieser (2006b) identifies the following as subjects that could be included in maths lessons. Students could explore the mathematics of the Braille system. They could be engaged in projects that consider and calculate the gradients for wheelchair ramps, or reviewing scale and measurement in carrying out and drawing a school access survey. They could consider turning circles in geometry. They could undertake calculations for benefits, which often use complex equations. They could study statistics of disabled people in local, national and international populations.

Science
Topics in science could include understanding the main causes of impairments in human biology. They could also be assisted to develop their understanding of

(13) For recommendations and to purchase: contact Disability Equality in Education www.diseed.org.uk who produce a catalogue of books, some of which are novels for children and young people.
different types of impairment, and that it is the experience of the majority of people during the course of their lives. Understanding of genetics could be linked to discussion of the moral issues of Eugenics. Students could look at how scientific thought has changed the way disabled people have been viewed in society (Rieser, 2006b; p139). The Disability Equality in the Classroom resources includes a unit of work on science and disability that can be used for teaching students at key stage one (see pages 218 – 231).

**History**  
In history, teachers could explore the treatment, experiences and activism of disabled people through the ages. Rieser (2006b) identifies a number of topics that teachers could use. These include consideration of the treatment of disabled people by the Greeks and Romans; the Great Witch Hunts of 1480-1680 and the impact on disabled people; the Industrial Revolution and the exclusion of disabled people from the workforce and the Poor Law Relief; the disabled veterans of the First World War, which he describes as the first disability movement; the treatment of disabled people in Nazi Germany; and the Civil Rights movement and the growth of the disability movement (p140).

There are some examples of resources that have been developed for use in history. Speaking for Ourselves (Scope) is a teaching pack based on oral histories collected by the organisation. It provides learning materials relevant to the National Curriculum Key Stages 1 to 4, with particular focus on Citizenship and History subject areas in Key Stages 3 and 4. The materials can also be applied to PSHE learning and for any students looking at the social model of disability. The materials are presented in a number of formats, including CD-Rom, DVD, a poster charting oral history of disabled people’s rights in the UK, topic sheets and a guide for teachers on how to use the materials.

**Geography**  
In geography, teachers have the opportunity to incorporate study of disability in a number of ways. Rieser (2006b; p140) gives the following suggestions. Students could look at the global distribution of impairments (e.g. injuries from land mines, polio, malaria), or at the poor world and lack of resources to eradicate 80% of impairment that is preventable. They could explore the ecological consequences of pollution in terms of the impairment of populations. They could consider the built environment, and undertake access surveys of the school, local environment and shopping centres, or look at the cost/benefit of making public transport accessible. They could study housing, barrier free design and the urban environment.

**Drama**  
Like literature, drama has the considerable potential for exploring attitudes, experiences and feelings. Rieser (2006b) suggestions include:

- Analysing the portrayal of disabled people in film. This could be assisted by the Disabling Imagery resource developed by Disability Equality in Education and the British Film Institute
• Analysing the plot and content of TV soaps and dramas for disabled characters. Students could write their own plots or write letters to producers and politicians about lack of portrayal

• Reading literature that features disabled people in non-stereotyped ways (p138).

Additionally, there is scope for schools to involve external theatre companies in performing in school or in facilitating drama workshops. For example, Graeae is a disabled-led theatre company that profiles the skills of actors, writers and directors with physical and sensory impairments through workshops and theatre productions in schools. Their work aims to “combat negative images of disabled people through active participation, offering a new insight and perspective on the position and status of disabled people in our society”. Shape, too, opens up access to the arts, enabling greater participation by disabled and older people. Shape also creates partnerships with schools and arts venues for artists’ residencies and educational programmes. Skilled tutors, including disabled artists, work with teachers on projects that are both educational and designed to promote social inclusion of disabled children and young people at school and in the arts.

The two above organisations collaborated on the schools production 'The Trouble with Richard', which employed an inclusive professional cast of disabled and non-disabled actors. The tour highlighted issues of inclusion and worked to clarify attitudes and assumptions about disability, dealing with Citizenship themes relevant to Key stage 3. “The aim of 'The Trouble with Richard' was to encourage debate and highlight awareness that individuals' acts effect both themselves and others; to encourage students to care about the feelings of others and to try and see things from their point of view, through investigating the terms difference and acceptance”. The tour included a comprehensive package of forum theatre workshop, teacher's pack and teacher's development sessions.

Other inclusive drama companies that offer training and workshops include Chicken Shed, Deafinitely Theatre, Heart N Soul, Mind the Gap, Oily Cart, Full Body and the Voice and No Limits Theatre Company.

**Religious Education**

Religious education lessons could include consideration of:

• How religions view disabled people, and the impact that this has had on the way in which disabled people are treated

• Whether religious texts should be take literally (e.g. review the ways that disabled people are described in the bible)

• The place of charity and its changing role, and how it has depicted disabled people and how disabled people view charity

• The link between good and physical perfection in many cultures

• How to value difference. (Rieser, 2006b; p139).
**Art and design**

In art and design, students could study the portrayal and lack of portrayal of disabled artists by artists in different periods. Teachers could also draw on contemporary arts projects, such as the sculpture of Alison Lapper commissioned for Trafalgar Square in 2004. Rodgers (2006) documents the artist’s perspective on the piece and the media controversy that surrounded its installation. They could also study the work of disabled artists, such as Frida Kahlo, Toulouse Lautrec or Van Gogh. They could study the work of the present Disability Arts Movement and analyse what they are trying to do. Students could do life drawings of disabled models. (Rieser, 2006b; p140).

**Modern Languages**

In the study of modern languages, students could be encouraged to examine the language that is used to describe or label disabled people, and its derivations. Students could research the treatment and rights of disabled people in the countries that use the languages they are studying. They could then present their findings in the language that they are studying (Rieser, 2006b). British Sign Language could be taught as a curriculum subject, available to hearing and deaf children. For example, *Count Me In* presents Lister secondary school in Newham as a good practice example – the school provides sign interpreters in all class lessons for deaf pupils but also provides basic Sign Language in Modern Languages as well as through lunchtime and after school clubs for all pupils.

**Citizenship/PSHE**

As noted above the topic of disability equality does fit quite closely with the objectives inherent in the citizenship and PSHE curricula. Rieser (2006b) suggests a range of topics that classes could work on. These include: developing an understanding of what constitutes discrimination towards disabled people, studying examples of discrimination towards disabled people with different impairments in housing, family life, transport, education, leisure and work, studying how the Disabled People’s movement fought for and won their civil rights, and involve pupils in developing the equal opportunities policy of the school.

There are a large number of resources available. For example, the Disability Rights Commission (2005b) has designed lesson plans for use within Citizenship curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. This micro site aims to help teachers develop strategies for the inclusion of disabled students within the classroom and the school in general. It also provides teachers with a number of exercises to raise disability awareness. Students learn how the media informs and influences opinion, how literature and the arts can reinforce negative or positive images of disabled people and how disability equality legislation can influence society. This resource includes the ‘Talk’ video.

Disability Equality in Education have developed ‘Disabling Imagery?’ in collaboration with the British Film Institute. It is for teachers wanting to develop their pupils thinking about disability as an equality issue (human rights based)

(14) These can be found at: Http://www.drc.org.uk/citizenship/lessonplans/index.aspH
and helps young people develop a more critical approach to the portrayal of disabled people in the media. It is designed for Key Stages 3 and 4 (ages 11-16), with parts of it also suitable for Key stages 1 and 2 (ages 5-11), and can be used in Citizenship and PSHE, as well as for Media Studies in schools. (Rieser 2004a)

Another resource developed by DEE for use with KS2 to KS4 pupils includes posters and activity cards with a number of ways of raising the disability equality.

**Physical education.**

In physical education, teachers can develop disability awareness and equality by ensuring that PE and sporting activities involve all pupils. Activities can be adapted and games can be developed so that disabled pupils can participate (Rieser, 2006b). This can be done collaboratively and all pupils can improve their personal performance (Rieser and Peasley, 2002).

**Information and communication technology (ICT)**

Rieser (2006b) again offers a number of ideas for incorporating disability awareness. In ICT, students can develop awareness and appreciation for the uses that disabled people make of ICT to overcome barriers such as vocalising, Braille translation, reading, symbols and sign language, the Internet, controlling their home environment. They could devise a computer ‘tool’ or programme for disabled people. They could develop an awareness of the different switching systems disabled people can use to access ITC such as heat pointing, eye pointing, voice activation, touch screen and yes/no switching and augmentative communication aids. Students could research disabled people’s issues through internet websites and make a computer representation of these. They could do a computer graphic representation of statistics of the number of disabled people in the population or some other relevant variable. They could design and produce signage for people with learning difficulties to access a computer function.

**Music**

Like art and design, students could study the work of disabled musicians, such as Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Evelyn Gleny, Beethoven. They could analyse operas that feature disabled characters such as Rigoletto, Traviata and La Boheme or Porgy and Bess for stereotyping and work out alternative scenarios. They could write an opera featuring disabled characters in non-stereotyped ways (Rieser, 2006b).

(15) Disabling Imagery is available on line: Hwww.bfi.org.uk/disablingimageryH and is also available from DEE as a book complete with a DVD with 20 film extracts.
Findings: Teaching and learning within the National Curriculum

This chapter reports on the findings from the survey of teaching staff within primary and secondary schools, and on the findings of the survey of pupils regarding their learning about disabled people and people with learning difficulties. The sub-sections are divided to refer to primary and secondary school responses, although these were often similar.

What teachers told us about teaching disability awareness

In the survey of primary and secondary schools, teaching staff were asked to identify the ways in which schools currently use the National Curriculum to facilitate learning about disability, discrimination and equality.

In the questionnaire, the term ‘disability awareness’ was used and defined as follows:

*In asking about disability awareness, we want to know about opportunities that pupils have to: develop an understanding of disability; explore their own attitudes, values and experiences; critically evaluate negative stereotypes that are perpetuated within society and how these relate to discrimination and inequality.*

In their responses teachers referred to opportunities that were structured and formed part of the formal curriculum as well as opportunities that were not structured and could be referred to as forming part of the hidden curriculum.

Primary schools

A total of 97 primary schools returned questionnaires. Questionnaires were directed to head teachers, but the correspondence enclosed asked for them to pass the questionnaire onto whomever they felt was the most appropriate representative of the school to complete it. In the main questionnaires were completed by head teachers or deputy head teachers with special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) accounting for the third largest group of respondents.

*Teaching disability awareness as part of the National Curriculum*

Respondents were asked if disability awareness was taught within the National
Curriculum at their school. More than two thirds (69 schools) reported that it was, a quarter (24 schools) reported that it was not, and a small proportion (4 schools) reported that they were not sure. Among the four respondents who reported that they were unsure, two had newly joined staff teams and the other two identified activities that included disability awareness as a focus but that they felt were not specifically part of the teaching of the NC.

Coverage in subject areas of the National Curriculum

Respondents were then asked to provide further information on which subjects included teaching of disability awareness. The NC subjects are ranked in table 4.1 to present the frequency with which respondents identified them as a subject that included the teaching of disability awareness. At key stage 1, disability awareness was most often taught within Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship and Physical Education. A similar pattern was reported for key stage 2, with PSHE, Physical Education and Citizenship most often reported as the subjects that included the teaching of disability awareness. Encouragingly, around a quarter of respondents reported the inclusion of disability awareness in the core subjects, English and Science, at KS1 and KS2.

Table 4.1: Subjects ranked in order of the number of schools that include teaching of disability awareness within the subject area (n=69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key stage 1</th>
<th>Key Stage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSHE</td>
<td>PSHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Technology</td>
<td>Design and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and design</td>
<td>Art and design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching disability awareness across the curriculum

Using the data provided by teachers on the subjects that included the teaching of disability awareness, it is possible to identify the total number of subjects within any school that include the teaching of disability awareness. Table 4.2 shows that few schools included the teaching of disability awareness across all subjects of the National Curriculum. Most often, at both key stages 1 and 2, schools included the teaching of disability awareness in only two or three subject areas.
The few schools that reported that the teaching of disability awareness took place in all or almost all subject areas, at key stage one and two, also identified themselves as inclusive schools. In these cases, respondents referred to the diversity within their school population as one of the driving forces in achieving the teaching of disability awareness across the curriculum. They considered that the presence of disabled children meant that awareness about disability and equality ‘filter into all aspects of school life and this includes the curriculum’ or that it leads to ‘all-round awareness of inclusion in subjects’ or that ‘awareness of disability is a daily event’.

Surprisingly, three respondents identified their schools as including the teaching of disability awareness within the National Curriculum but did not identify any subject areas (at either key stage one or two) within which it was taught. Their qualitative responses provided some context to their answers. Two of these schools saw it as an integral part of their practice, with one school referring to its inclusion across the curriculum due to school being fully inclusive and another to activities undertaken in the day-to-day life of the school through its partnership with a neighbouring special school. The third school referred to it being taught as part of religious education (which was omitted from the list provided in the questionnaire).

**Use of resources and approaches**

Respondents were asked to give examples of how disability awareness was taught within their school and to identify the types of resources that they had used in their teaching of disability awareness.

### Table 4.2: Number of subject areas that include disability awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
<th>Key stage 1</th>
<th>Key Stage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers gave examples that ranged from raising awareness through the inclusion of disabled pupils within activities, particularly with reference to physical education, to the incorporation of activities and learning resources that celebrate difference and introduce opportunities to raise children’s awareness about differing abilities and experiences.

In relation to the former, sometimes this was referred to as occurring in a ‘low-key’ way, where inclusion brought with it opportunities for pupils to become naturally aware of difference. Teachers perceived pupils to be accepting of difference, as a result. Some teachers saw it as part of the overall ethos and practice of the school –

\[
\text{it is not taught as an ‘issue’ or separate concept. We are inclusive and through our RE teaching and PSHE we continually reiterate and celebrate differences – whether it be talents/abilities/disabilities}
\]

\[
\text{by the practical inclusion in school life of children with disabilities, on the school roll and visiting regularly}
\]

In other cases, teachers referred to specific work that occurred, sometimes as a result of individual children attending school. This took the form of working with children to promote their understanding and awareness of difference by providing them with opportunities to hear from disabled individuals – this included other children, who were either attending the same school or not, teachers within the school, adults from the local community or adults who represented charities.

\[
\text{We have two parents who are partially sighted, and two parishioners who are also partially sighted. These people have been invited into school to talk about being blind/using Braille as part of work on senses}
\]

From the data available, we do not know the nature of the activities undertaken or how appropriate or effective they are. From the examples that were given, some teachers appeared to be much more positive in their approach by drawing on people’s experiences and abilities while promoting awareness of the way to reduce or overcome barriers. There was also some indication that approaches were not always appropriate or positive. Some teachers appeared to focus upon needs and support. One suggested it was good to place an emphasis on ‘ways in which we can help people less fortunate than ourselves’. Others referred to working in reference to individual children:

\[
\text{tends to be specific to individual classes where we have children with any specific needs}
\]

\[
\text{we have wheelchair users and some children with cerebral palsy – their needs are explained to the children… we will have a blind child Sept 2006 – children will be read stories about those who are blind}
\]

With reference to resources, teachers gave examples of adapting units of work or resources to ensure that examples were included that incorporated learning about disability or they referred to the use of stories or games (including role play figures) that had disabled characters. Where teachers referred to specific learning resources these were often linked to teaching themes that were covered within particular subjects. For example, teachers listed:

- Citizenship – ‘becoming aware of all within their community, respecting and valuing disability’; ‘how society does/doesn’t cater for those with disabilities’; ‘raising awareness of differences’; exploring disability in
school/wider community'; ‘as focus sessions – building a community’;
‘awareness of famous people with disabilities’; ‘about people, differences,
stereotypes, community etc’

- PSHE – ‘understanding that we are all the same despite being different.
Respecting, understanding and valuing others’; ‘stories are told which
involve disabled people’; ‘one of the themes is overcoming difficulties to
go for goals – disability comes into this’; ‘equal access within school,
children talk about and devise ways of assisting others, involving all
children in school life’; ‘as part of feelings and relationships and also in
rights and responsibilities’.

- English – ‘through a variety of texts’

- Science – ‘growing and changes’; ‘via work on five senses’

- PE – ‘links with local special school through outreach work, physically
disabled post 16 pupils come into school to lead games
(football/basketball) sessions with KS2 pupils’; ‘as appropriate, looking at
alternatives and access’; ‘reminder that not everyone can run etc’,
‘disabled olympics talked about etc’…

- RE – ‘the importance of everyone as a unique individual and child of god’

- Art/music – ‘looking at achievements of those with disablity’.

Teachers were also asked a specific question about the resources that they used.
Out of the 69 schools that taught disability awareness, stories and novels were
the most frequently used, with three-quarters (51) of schools reporting that they
used them. Drama and performing arts followed as the second most frequently
used resource, with just under a third (22) reporting their usage. Around a quarter
reported using specific units of work (20) and games (18). Much smaller
proportions (9) had used a session facilitated by a disability equality trainer, or
had used other resources. Other resources mentioned included working with:
photos and pictures, children who shared their own experience of being disabled,
and online resources such as missdorothy.com.

Activities that include disability awareness work

Teachers were asked to identify which activities in school included disability
awareness. Sixty-seven schools answered the question. Out of those, four fifths
(56) reported that it formed the focus of school assembly and collective worship.
The examples that teachers gave included inviting visitors to the school or asking
disabled pupils to give presentations at assembly. Two thirds (44) reported that it
formed the focus of classroom based teaching and a third (23) reported it formed
the focus of social activities. A very small proportion (4) reported that it formed
the focus of other activities, which included school trips and links made with the
local community. Other activities that emerged from the examples that teachers
had given in previous questions included working with local charities or local
special schools where pupils had the opportunity to meet with disabled
individuals.

Planning and responsibility for teaching of disability awareness

Almost half (29) of respondents reported that the National Curriculum was
planned to include disability awareness, with over a third (23) reporting that their
schools did not incorporate it into their planning and the remainder being unsure whether or not it was factored into planning.

Among those who answered that it did form part of planning the teaching of the National Curriculum, many responded that it formed the focus of planning in relation to PSHE. Others identified consideration of it as part of wider school planning that was focused upon ensuring the school was inclusive and offered equality of opportunity for all.

Just under a third (20) reported that they had a designated member of staff responsible for co-ordinating National Curriculum work on disability awareness, with almost two thirds (47) reporting that they did not and a very small proportion (2) reporting that they did not know. In the main, this was either the SENCO or the teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating teaching on PSHE.

Secondary schools

The secondary school questionnaires took a different format, as consultation during design suggested that no one representative of the school would be aware of the content of all curriculum subjects. It was felt that the teaching of disability awareness/equality was most likely to occur within the citizenship area of the curriculum. Questionnaires were therefore addressed to co-ordinators or heads of citizenship and the questionnaire focused upon this subject area. However, teachers were also asked to identify any other subject areas that they knew included teaching of disability awareness.

A total of 83 schools returned questionnaires. In the main they were returned by those responsible for co-ordinating Citizenship, PSHE, RE or personal development curriculum.

The teaching of disability awareness in the citizenship curriculum

Out of 83 schools, the majority (69) included the teaching of disability awareness in the citizenship curriculum. This included just over two fifths (29) that incorporated it into teaching at both key stages 3 and 4, a further two fifths (28) that incorporated it at Key Stage 3 only, and just under a fifth (12) of that incorporated it at Key Stage 4 only.

A small number (6) reported that they did not know if it was included as part of the teaching of citizenship curriculum. One reported that they felt that they were ‘Not totally sure but it seems not explicitly’ whereas another reported that it would be included in the future ‘I am a new head of PSHCE and am in the process of writing a new curriculum where it will be included in tutorial and assembly time’. Eight schools reported that it was not included in the teaching of the citizenship curriculum, although four of these schools did report that it was taught in other areas of the curriculum.

Teachers were asked to identify the types of resources and materials they used in the teaching of disability awareness in the citizenship curriculum. Specific or targeted units of work was the most popular resource used by schools, with over four fifths (60) reporting that they had used them. Examples included using the film clips used as part of Disabling imagery and the Understanding Disability. Stories and novels were popular resources with over a third (24) reporting that
they had used them. Almost a third (20) had used drama and performing arts. A fifth (15) reported using other resources. Those listed included,

- Videos - such as ‘Talk’ which is produced by the Disability Rights Commission and ‘That's My Life’ An Arcadian Production for 4Learning in association with the National Children's Bureau
- Pupil led research projects – which included surveying the school population
- Presentations to the school by disabled individuals – including disabled pupils attending the school, disabled parents, and representatives from charities
- Working in partnership with local special schools to plan joint activities.

Games were the least popular resource used with under a fifth (12) reporting that they had used them.

**The teaching of disability awareness in other subject areas**

Table 4.3 presents the numbers of schools that incorporated teaching about disability awareness into the teaching of other subject areas at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Quite a high proportion of respondents did not know if this was the case or not, perhaps reflecting their roles, as co-ordinators of citizenship, within the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Key stage 3</th>
<th>Key Stage 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Missing data exists where totals do not equal 83.

Those who reported that disability awareness was included in teaching within other subjects at key stage 3 listed the following subjects: Religious education (12); English (8); Drama (5); Physical education (3); Media (1); Modern foreign languages (1); History (1); PSHE (2); Learning support (1); Pastoral curriculum (1). The subjects listed at key stage 4 were similar: Religious education (10); Health and social care (7); Drama (5); Physical education (4); English (3); PSHE (2); Leisure and tourism (2); Business (1); Media (1); and History (1). Additionally, some teachers also noted that they did not teach disability awareness explicitly but that this formed part of the ethos of the school or that it was part of wider teaching around difference and inclusion.

**Activities that include disability awareness work**

Teachers were asked to identify from a range of possible activities those that included disability awareness work in their schools. Varying numbers answered the questions, as shown in table 4.4. A total of 58 schools, which equates to four fifths of those who answered the question, reported that disability awareness had
formed the focus of school assemblies. Surprisingly, given higher numbers had already reported that disability awareness had formed part of teaching in citizenship, 55 schools were reported to include disability awareness as part of classroom based teaching. Thirty schools incorporated it into organised social activities, these included school trips and joint sports days working with special schools. Seven schools noted that they included it within other activities, such as hosting a disability awareness day or extra curricular teaching of British Sign Language. Again, some schools noted that due to the inclusive nature of their school it cut across all school activities.

### Table 4.4: Activities that include disability awareness work*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>School assembly</th>
<th>Classroom based teaching</th>
<th>Social activities</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Missing data exists where totals do not equal 83.

### Resources and materials used

Teachers were also asked to identify the resources and materials that were used in school in the teaching of disability awareness in other subjects or in other contexts. Their reporting reflected a similar pattern to that reported in relation to citizenship. Out of the 83 questionnaires received, specific or targeted units of work were again reported as the most popular. Half (42) of respondents reported using units of work, a third reported (27) using stories and novels and the same proportion reported using drama and performing arts. Just over an eighth (12) reported using games and a tenth (8) reported using disability equality trainers. A very small proportion (4) reported that their schools had used other resources, with the examples given corresponding with those listed above in the section on resources linked to teaching within citizenship.

### What students told us about learning

In the national survey, young people were asked to tell us if they had learned about particular groups of people. We were interested in finding out if they had learned about the rights of people who have been marginalised but in particular if they had learned about the rights, circumstances and experiences of disabled people and people with learning difficulties.

Young people were asked three different questions in relation to learning. Firstly, they were asked ‘in the past year, have you learnt about any of the following groups of people in lessons or activities at school’. Followed by a question on whether they ‘would like more lessons or activities at school about these groups of people’. The groups of people listed included: people from ethnic minorities,
Coverage of learning about disabled people and people with learning difficulties

Of the students who responded to the question, just under a third (31.5%) of young people said that they had learned about disabled people in the past year and over half (54.1%) said that they had not. The remaining 14.4% said ‘don’t know’. The pattern regarding learning about people with learning difficulties was similar. Under a third (27.5%) said that they had learned about people with learning difficulties at school in the past year and over half (58%) said that they had not. The same proportion reported ‘don’t know’.

The reported learning about disabled people (31.5%) and learning difficulties (27.5%) can be compared with that for the other groups specified in this question. The percentage of young people who reported learning about other specified groups at school in the past year ranged from 51.8% (religious minorities) down to 10.1% (gypsies/travellers) so reported learning about disabled people and people with learning difficulties fell towards the middle of the range (Figure 3).

Further analysis (16) determined that:

- Young people in particular areas and schools were significantly more likely to report having learned about people with disabilities and learning difficulties in lessons or activities at school over the past year.

Figure 3: Percentage of young people reporting having learnt about specific groups of people in lessons or activities at school in the past year (N=81483)

The relatively high percentage (14.4%) of ‘don’t know’ responses to this question should be noted, flagging it up as a difficult question for young people to answer.

(16) Cases where young people had answered don’t know were excluded from this analysis.
• Young people who reported being disabled or having learning difficulties were also significantly more likely than those with neither to report having learned about disabled people and people with learning difficulties in lessons or activities at school over the past year.

It is unclear why this is the case. In terms of the variation in school and area, this could reflect school or local education authority policies. With respect to the latter finding, it may be that schools are more likely to incorporate learning about disability or learning difficulties where pupils are in attendance or it may be that those who are disabled or have learning difficulties are more likely to remember having learned about disabled people or learning difficulties.

The only other significant difference identified was that young people who reported being entitled to free school meals were significantly more likely than those who reported not being entitled to free school meals to also report having learned about people with learning difficulties. There was no significant difference between these two groups regarding reported learning about disabled people. There were no significant differences according to any other characteristics – including age, sex, ethnic origin, religion, family economic status measured by the number of adults within the family in paid employment – for which there was data available in the dataset.

**Interest in learning more about disabled people and people with learning difficulties**

Young people were also asked to say whether they would like more lessons or activities at school about disabled people and people with learning difficulties. Of the young people in mainstream schools who responded to this question, over half (51.7%) said that they would not while 14.4 per cent said that they would like more lessons or activities at school about disabled people. The remaining 28.2 per cent responded ‘don’t know’ to the question. The pattern regarding wanting more lessons or activities about people with learning difficulties was similar. Again, more than half (55.7%) said that they would not while 16.1% said that they would like more lessons or activities at school about people with learning difficulties. The same percentage (28.2%) responded with ‘don’t know’.

Reported wanting to have more lessons or activities at school about people with disabilities (14.4%) and learning difficulties (16.1%) can be compared with that for the other groups specified in this question. The percentage of young people who reported wanting to have more lessons or activities at school about all specified groups fell within a small range from 17% (gypsies/travellers) down to 8.5% (older people) (Figure 4).
The high percentage (28.1%) of ‘don’t know’ responses to this question should be noted, flagging it up as a difficult question for young people to answer.

Further analysis determined that some groups of pupils were significantly more likely to report wanting to have more lessons or activities at school about disabled people and people with learning disabilities. This was the case for young people:

- In particular areas and schools
- Who reported being disabled and/or having learning difficulties
- Who were among the younger age groups in the sample
- Who were female
- Who reported having particular religions.

**Young people’s perspectives on learning**

A number of young people highlighted the importance of learning about prejudice to effectively tackle it, with some young people offering suggestions on best approaches to teaching in this area. From the comments provided, it would appear that at many schools, children and young people are currently receiving limited opportunities to learn about people who experience prejudice.

“Learning about them may help to stop prejudice”

“It’s not their fault, we are all the same, it doesn’t matter what we look like or what we do”

“Prejudice just shouldn’t happen”

“Help people understand that it’s ok to be different”

“People need to learn more about discrimination in order to stop it. Discrimination is unfair and unacceptable”

“This makes children more open minded and understanding”

“I think we should learn more about it so when we go out in the real world
we are aware of it and prepared for it”

“We should be taught that prejudice is wrong from an extremely young age”

“I think that if people are going to teach about it, they should tell it like it is – don’t hold back, give situations – maybe use role play”

“It should only be done by people who have experienced it”

“We should get people in to talk during class about these issues”

“We don’t spend very much time doing it, only a few lessons”

“Update learning (watching modern videos/DVDs) the ones that have been used before are too old”

“We learn a bit but not enough”

Young people also talked about the importance of learning about disability to reduce the mistreatment faced by those who are disabled.

“There should be more about disabled people as my Mum is disabled and people often take the Mickey out of disabled people”

“People should learn about other people with learning disabilities to know how it feels for them” (from a young person with a learning disability)

“Disabled people are the same as everyone”

“I would like to learn about disabled people, because then we can learn what it is like to be disabled and understand their actions”

“I hate it when people laugh at disabled people – it’s totally unfair”

“I have learnt about these groups of people through a GCSE course I take, which only a small group of people take”

“We should be taught not to be prejudice against handicapped/disabled people and that they are not people to be scared of”

“We should be taught, I think, about people who are disabled and other people, then we could understand them more”

“It is important to learn about people with disabilities so we understand how and why they need to be helped”

“We should learn more about disabled people”

As the older sister of a child with Autism I often see him picked on and discriminated against. I feel this is because his teachers treat him negatively because he is a low achiever. If teachers were more positive towards him, instead of always excluding”

“I want people to learn about disabled people because not many people understand things and it upsets me because my mum is”

“People with learning difficulties experience prejudice as people see them as different and be different towards them”

“I would like for us to learn about disabled people that don’t look like they are (e.g. mental disorders or M.E. sufferers)”

“I think people are well out when they dis disabled people”
Findings: Reflections on overcoming obstacles and developing good practice

In the questionnaires sent to both primary and secondary schools, teachers were asked a series of questions relating to the achievement of good practice in the development of disability awareness within schools.

Where schools did include the teaching of disability awareness within the National Curriculum, they were asked if they felt their school represents an example of good practice. They were then asked to identify what they felt had contributed to their achievement of good practice.

Additionally, these respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to explore their experience of developing good practice in this area. Interviews were undertaken with 7 schools (including 3 primary schools and 4 secondary schools) including a mix of independent and Faith schools from a number of LEAs. Interviewees included Head Teachers and Heads of relevant subject areas, such as Citizenship and PSHE.

In the questionnaires, all respondents were asked to identify what they felt were the most significant barriers to developing disability awareness among pupils and to identify what would help their school to (further) develop the teaching of disability awareness within the National Curriculum.

A description of the perspectives offered in the questionnaires and the interviews is presented here. Each section brings together an analysis of the data gathered from primary and secondary schools, as the themes were similar.

Factors that enable teaching and learning

The factors that teachers identified as contributing to their achievement of good practice varied but together constitute what might be described as a 'whole school' approach.

Teachers referred to their schools being inclusive as a whole, which meant that developing disability awareness and promoting equality was an integral part of the life of the school. Reference was made to the overall ethos of schools, which involved the “inclusion of pupils within all aspects of school life… valuing everyone’s contribution”, “respecting and valuing both needs and contributions of
all in society”, or “each individual is recognised or valued”. The commitment that underpinned the development of an inclusive school was considered as important.

*We work as an inclusive school we try to achieve this in all areas with all pupils and adults (PS)*

*Being an inclusive school where disabled pupils have equal access and opportunities to achieve in the curriculum (SS)*

Staff teams were identified as a factor that could be enabling, especially if staff members were knowledgeable, skilled and committed to an inclusive ethos. For example, one teacher referred to the importance of “a willingness to embrace inclusive practice. Well-trained staff who have the skills and confidence to embrace change”. Another respondent made mention of the importance of facilitating the development of knowledge and awareness among staff by providing disability equality training. However, it is important to note that Disability Equality Training will not automatically lead to inclusive practice. In terms of implementation, the Disability Discrimination Act (DfES 2006b) identified the following factors as important characteristics of schools with good inclusive practice

- vision and values based on an inclusive ethos
- a ‘can do’ attitude from all staff
- a pro-active approach to identifying barriers and finding practical solutions
- strong collaborative relationships with pupils and parents
- a meaningful voice for pupils
- a positive approach to managing behaviour
- strong leadership by senior management and governors
- effective staff training and development
- the use of expertise from outside the school
- building disability into resourcing arrangements
- a sensitive approach to meeting the impairment specific needs of pupils
- regular critical review and evaluation
- the availability of role models and positive images of disability.

The levels of awareness among pupils, parents, staff and governors were identified as an enabling factor. Higher levels of awareness were linked to the presence of disabled pupils within the school and to establishing links with disabled young people or adults beyond the immediate school community. Inclusion of disabled pupils within all aspects of the curriculum was considered to have a number of positive effects on pupils and staff’s perceptions and attitudes. For example, respondents referred to the;

*the fact that there are disabled pupils within the school shows other children that they are just like themselves (PS)*
practical experience of children with disabilities within the school community (SS)

the fact that amongst our population both adults and children have disabilities means we address awareness everyday (SS)

From day one children are accepting and inclusive – led by staff (PS)

Some respondents also made reference to disabled pupils taking the lead in presenting at assemblies in relation to their own experiences and achievements. The links that were made with disabled young people or adults outside the immediate school community included: partnership arrangements with local special schools where pupils from both schools shared in curriculum activities; involving disabled rights organisations in presenting at assembly or providing disability equality training to pupils and staff; facilitating pupils engagement with older people in the local community.

I feel the most significant aspect of disability awareness is not teaching it like French or sociology but developing day-to-day working alongside children and colleagues on joint education projects. As far as we can in KS1 or 2 we work the year through with children from the local special school (PS)

In relation to teaching, reference was made to the flexibility of the curriculum and to the potential offered by PSHE, Citizenship and RE for the exploration of rights and equality, and prejudice and discrimination. Citizenship, in particular, was referred to as significant by a number of respondents. One respondent referred to working across these three curriculum areas and to the potential offered in “collapsing the time-table. This allows us time to explore disability and equality”. One respondent referred to what they saw as a “creative and thematic curriculum”. The “reflective programme of PHSE” was considered to be enabling. Others talked of engendering learning in different ways, rather than within classroom teaching, such as through guidance work, assemblies, extra-curricular activities.

The availability of good quality, free resources and the ability to use a range of different resources was also identified as an enabling factor. Schools referred to resources that they had themselves developed or adapted as well as to resources that they had identified.

Factors that act as barriers to teaching and learning

In the main, the barriers that were identified represent the converse of the factors that were identified as enabling to teachers.

One key theme to emerge similar to those identified as enabling was that pupils and staff have limited opportunities to meet or get to know disabled children or adults. Many teachers situated this as a barrier and linked it to the low incidence of disabled children and young people attending their schools. For example, teachers made reference to there being: “hardly any disabled children in the school”; “no children or parents with a disability in the school”; “[a] lack of
awareness and understanding. [with] Little or no contact with disabled pupils in our school."

Some contrasted it with their previous experience or identified it as a barrier because they had experienced the opposite:

```
At this school we do not have many pupils with a disability whereas at my previous school because we had a base for pupils with disabilities, mainstream children accepted these other members of our school (PS)

We are fortunate to have physically and learning disabled pupils who are well-known throughout the school. If we didn't, lack of experience would be the biggest barrier. As it is, knowing them as friends is the biggest advantage (PS)

I think children generally do not get the opportunity to work with and meet people with disabilities often enough (PS)

Children respond best when the learning situation is made relevant to them. Unfortunately we have very limited links with the ‘disabled community’ (PS)
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Low levels of awareness and knowledge among teachers about whether, how or what to teach in the promotion of disability equality were also identified as a barrier. This was discussed in general.

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Knowledge of staff of disability awareness. Lack of training/experience (PS)

Lack of information about particular disabilities and the problems its sufferers face (SS)

What to do – training (PS)

Lack of knowledge/awareness (SS)

Two staff told me that this survey had already made them realise a gap in their schemes of work and they intended to search for units of work (SS)

Teachers’ lack of knowledge (PS)
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But it was also discussed in relation to a lack of ideas on how to incorporate learning across the curriculum. Teachers mentioned “not knowing where to place it in the curriculum”, having “minimal understanding of how to promoted disability equality in the curriculum”, and of their “need to develop a more relevant curriculum”. Two respondents related it to a concern about how practice was evolving:

```
The concern of teachers that they are taking the ‘right’ approach (PS)

It is taught, but is in its infancy so therefore I currently question ‘good practice (SS)

We need to tighten up on objectives and make sure it is taught – it is discussed but it is more hit and miss rather than strategically built in (PS)
```
Teachers associated low levels of awareness with a lack of training, and one respondent considered that “training opportunities to develop disability awareness in schools are very few”.

Limited time was also a factor, and was mentioned in relation to the inability to plan or to take time to identify or develop resources. Another significant theme to emerge was teachers’ experience of the curriculum as overloaded or overstretched with limited time to incorporate other themes. Teachers drew attention to this in relation to specific subject areas, mainly PSHE, where they felt there was limited time available or competing priorities to cover within the available time:

- Lack of time given to PSHCE in timetable. Other ‘stuff’ that has been put into PSHCE curriculum has pushed other stuff out (SS)
- Curriculum time – PSHECE time is stretched across too many (all valuable) strands of delivery. Extra curricular time – again the demands stretch delivery of any one theme too thinly (or not at all delivered) (SS)
- Curriculum time within PSHCE (SS)
- Lack of time in PSHCE where we teach this (SS)
  
  I can only speak from PSHCE point of view, but there is a lack of time in order to cover disability in any great detail (SS)

They also drew attention to time in relation to the curriculum as a whole. Teachers talked of a “crowded timetable”; “curriculum overload of coverage”; curriculum restraints/time”; “time constraints of curriculum”.

- Curriculum time available to really raise awareness. We do have some time but not enough to make it a focus of our teaching (SS)
- Lack of time to teach the topic (SS)
- Constraints of the timetable; pressures of meeting new directives. As a church school 10% of our timetable is by law given to religious education (PS)
- Demands of the National Curriculum (PS)
- Depth of the curriculum we have to teach (PS)
- Pressure from a need to constantly meet standards who does not allow for quality time to be spent on disability issues (PS)
- School curriculum is already overloaded with main targets schools have to deliver. Disability is an important area which needs to be developed (PS)
- We have a tightly planned curriculum – time to review and broaden it to include opportunities for disability awareness has not been a priority for us (PS)

The lack of resources to facilitate teaching was also identified as a barrier.

- Currently, a lack of resources (SS)
- Just need time and ideas/resources to write scheme of work for CPSHE. It is an area we know we need to address, we just need time and ideas (SS)
- Lack of appropriate resources (SS)
In addition to the converse of themes identified as enabling, the pervasiveness of negative stereotypes in the mass media and the wider community was a theme that emerged. Teachers talked of prevalence of “negative stereotypes”, “lack of positive disability awareness in the media” and of the problem “media organisations that encourage diversity rather than a manufactured ideal that doesn’t really exist”. There was a perception of a “lack of knowledge and understanding in the community” and a suggestion that there should be “more opportunities for the wider community to share in learning”.

Teachers also talked of the attitudes of pupils and teachers as a barrier. These included references to “prejudice”, “social deprivation leading to set views” and the existence of “anxiety by other pupils/adults could be a barrier”. Teachers also made reference to apathy on the part of pupils and staff. For example, one considered that there was a “general apathy and an unwillingness for pupils to see beyond themselves”. Another respondent referred to a need for commitment:

*Being able to incorporate diversity and disability within the context of the National Curriculum. That it should not be seen as a discrete aspect but part of the mission of the school (PS)*

**What would help to achieve better practice**

The things that teachers identified as being helpful for the achievement of good practice were often potential solutions to many of the barriers that had been identified. In summary, teachers referred to the following as things that would be helpful for the achievement of good practice: training; guidance and support; resources; opportunities to have contact with disabled people (pupils or adults in community) and the visibility of positive young role models; and wider awareness and commitment across school community and the community at large. With respect to the latter, teachers felt that it would be helpful if people understood why promoting disability awareness and equality mattered.

In terms of training, teachers were keen to have access to disability equality training for staff to allow them the opportunity to become more confident in approaching the topic and to assist them to develop ideas for teaching it within schools. Teachers wanted:

*Information about where to get disability awareness training that would not cost the earth for staff INSET (SS)*

*Some inset input for staff on disability awareness (PS)*

*Staff need to be trained and be familiarised with disability awareness themselves in order to develop the teaching of it within the National Curriculum (SS)*
The opportunity to deliver INSET training to staff regarding disability awareness (SS)

[its] Inclusion in staff induction (PS)

Additionally, teachers also talked of having access to guidance and support as things that would be helpful to them. Some mentioned that it would be helpful to have “good practice shared by other schools” or “outside help – experts coming in”. They talked of the need for guidance on how to incorporate it into the National Curriculum and how to integrated it across the curriculum. For example, teachers said they wanted:

Advice on how to make this a cross-curricular issue, involving the choice of resources and planning (PS)

Advice on how much curriculum time should be given over to it – senior management need to justify any time spent in terms of formal targets – not just “it would be a good thing to do” (SS)

Ideas of how to incorporate disability awareness (SS)

Advice on who/how to teach it (SS)

Guidelines – ways to implement the teaching of disability alongside the NC (PS)

Ideas of how and where to slot in (PS)

Professional development/guidance on how disability awareness can be integrated into the curriculum in general (PS)

Some cross-referenced links/ideas that lead to greater awareness in a range of curriculum areas (PS)

A specific unit planned within the PSHE curriculum (PS)

In addition to guidance, many respondents discussed how information about targeted resources would be helpful. For example, one respondent suggested “If publishers sent us examples of books, workshops, units of work, we would be very keen to involve them” while another felt that mail outs to schools of new resources would help them to become aware of what was available. Emphasis was placed on the need for resources to be available for free or at low cost, be easy-to-use and flexible, and for them to be up-to-date and appropriate in content. Teachers referred to a range of resources as helpful, including units or schemes of work that were mapped to the curriculum and materials that could be adapted for use in classroom teaching, assemblies or circle time.

Hassle free, easy to use resource/unit of work.(SS)

Detailed and informative BUT positive resources (SS)

Always welcome new resources, talks, visiting speakers (SS)

Perhaps some structured resources that could be used in KS3 and KS4 (SS)

High quality DVD exploring the issues (SS)
Resources – mapped to the curriculum (PS)
Explicit units in PSHE (PS)
Easy-to-use resources – interactive and up-to-date (PS)
Resources – stories for assembly/circle time to initiate discussion (PS)
More child friendly literature (PS)
We would also value posters and clipart positive images to put up around the school (PS)
Additional resources – possibly more youth focused materials e.g. interactive net products (SS).

Teachers also referred to resources in the form of speakers or visitors who could facilitate classroom learning through talks or presentations at assemblies.

Qualified speaker to deliver information, or some resources ie. Games, units of work (PS)
Inexpensive or free of charge visitor for assembly (PS)
The names of suitable local contacts who might give talks to students e.g. classrooms or assemblies (SS)
Speaker service? (SS)

In addition to teaching resources, one respondent referred to the availability of an audit tool as a resource that would be helpful in planning and monitoring the teaching of disability awareness across the curriculum.

Having more time was also identified as helpful to developing good practice, and two respondents suggested that if the promotion of disability equality were compulsory it would lead to protected time within the curriculum. One respondent felt that this should be specified clearly in “National Curriculum sow’s [schemes of work] and directives that state disability awareness as compulsory schemes of work and in guidance on the curriculum”. Another felt that it should become compulsory but most importantly have funding allocated.
Key findings and considerations for the future

Key findings

The following section presents and explores key findings from the teachers’ survey and the pupils’ survey together with the key points that emerged from the review of literature.

Coverage and nature of disability awareness teaching

Overall, the findings of the teachers’ survey appear to present quite a positive picture of the coverage of disability awareness in the teaching of the National Curriculum.

Over two thirds of primary schools that responded reported that it was included in the teaching of the National Curriculum (NC). Although few schools taught it across all subjects of the NC, it was included in a number of subjects by a majority of schools at both KS1 and KS2. Across the sample, all subjects of the NC had been used to teach disability awareness. A promising finding as it demonstrates teachers’ ability to incorporate disability equality in all subjects of the NC.

However, it appears as though teachers saw some subjects as lending themselves more readily to teaching disability awareness than others. At KS1, the subjects that were most often reported as including disability awareness were PSHE, Citizenship and PE. A similar pattern was reported for KS2, with PSHE, PE and Citizenship being the subjects most often reported. However, as neither PSHE nor Citizenship are statutory subjects at KS1 and KS2, and PE arguably has a lower status than other statutory subjects, this may have a more limited impact than other subjects could have. Bearing this in mind, it is perhaps quite promising that a considerable proportion (around a quarter) of respondents reported the inclusion of disability awareness in the core subjects, English and Science, at KS1 and KS2.

Despite these encouraging findings, it is also the case that a quarter of primary schools reported that they did not include disability awareness in the teaching of the NC.

From the responses received from secondary schools it was more difficult, as
envisioned from the outset, to get a handle on the level of coverage across the formal curriculum. The questionnaires focused upon teaching in Citizenship. Citizenship is a statutory subject at KS3 and KS4. The majority of teachers that responded reported that disability awareness was included in the teaching of Citizenship, although not at both key stages. Of those, over a third reported it was included at KS3 and KS4, a similar proportion reported it was only included at KS3 and about a fifth reported that it was only included at KS4. Teachers were less able to determine whether it was taught in other subjects of the curriculum, with high proportions reporting that they did not know. Among the remainder, about a quarter responded that it was included in other subjects at each key stage. Of the subjects that they listed, religious education was the subject most often cited as including disability awareness work.

From the separate survey of pupils, aged 14-16, it would appear that disability equality is not taught to all pupils. The survey did not collect data on the nature of learning, only whether pupils had or had not learned about disabled people or people with learning difficulties, so we do not know how this took place and whether or not it was in a form that could be considered as disability awareness or involving the promotion of disability equality. Pupils were asked if they had learned in the previous year, so it may be that some referred to their experiences at KS3 and some referred to KS4.

Under a third of pupils, who answered the question, had learned about disabled people. A similar proportion reported that they had learned about people with learning disabilities. For both groups, over half reported that they had not. Given that this survey included a large, representative sample of pupils aged 14-16 in England, this finding is one that should raise questions about the coverage and nature of teaching of disability awareness in secondary schools. Although the reasons for pupils lack of interest are unclear, pupils’ responses on whether or not they wanted to learn more should also serve to raise questions about who is more motivated to develop their awareness, and about how teachers can engage pupils who may not be interested/motivated. The survey showed that pupils in particular areas and schools, who reported being disabled and/or having learning difficulties, who were younger, who were female and who reported having particular religions were significantly more likely to want to learn more about disabled people and people with learning disabilities.

From the data collected in both the teachers’ and pupils’ surveys, it is not possible to explore in any meaningful sense the nature of the disability awareness undertaken.

**Resources, approaches and activities**

The teachers’ survey included open and closed questions about the types of resources and approaches that they had used in classroom based teaching, as well as questions about the incorporation of disability awareness work into different activities that take place within schools. Teachers in primary and secondary schools reported similar patterns on their schools’ usage of resources and in the type of activities that incorporated learning about disability. Their responses also reflected the span of resources, approaches and activities that were identified in the review of literature. Schools used stories and novels, drama and performing arts, games, and specific units of work to develop disability awareness.
awareness. They used disability equality training to a lesser extent. Schools also reported working with disabled pupils, parents, teachers and others within their local communities to develop awareness.

In primary schools, the use of stories and novels was cited most frequently as a method used to teach disability awareness with almost three quarters of schools that taught disability awareness referring to their usage. Drama and performing arts were also used often, with just under a third of schools citing their usage. Stories and novels, and drama and performing arts, were also a popular method in secondary schools, although the most popular method (in Citizenship and across other subjects in the NC/activities in school) was to use specific, targeted schemes or units of work.

In both primary and secondary schools, a majority cited school assemblies and classroom based teaching as including disability awareness work. In both primary and secondary schools, around four fifths reported using school assemblies. Two thirds of primary schools and four fifths of secondary schools identified classroom based teaching as a method that they used. Smaller numbers identified social activities as including disability awareness work.

Again, from the data collected, little is known about the nature or quality of resources and approaches used by schools. It is also not possible to know how effective these are in promoting positive attitudes or how they have been experienced by pupils who have participated in classes or other activities.

**Perspectives on learning and teaching**

Both the pupils’ and teachers’ surveys yielded qualitative data that tell us something of their perspectives on learning about and teaching disability awareness, respectively. This was also supplemented by the data obtained from in-depth interviews with 7 teachers in different schools.

From the qualitative responses made by pupils to the question on learning about prejudice and discrimination, it is clear that pupils see the subject as relevant and of value to themselves and to society in general. Pupils highlighted the importance of learning about prejudice to effectively tackle it, and offered some perspectives on what they considered to be good approaches to teaching in this area. These included references to taking a real approach (‘they should tell it like it is – don’t hold back, give situations...’), spending more time on exploring issues, to using contemporary resources, and to involving people who had experienced it. These comments were made in general, not specifically in reference to prejudice against disability and disability discrimination. Among the sub-sample of respondents who did refer to disability specifically, their perspectives sometimes offered a personal dimension with pupils referring to the importance of learning about and tackling disability discrimination due to their own or disabled family members experiences.

Teachers were asked a series of questions relating to the achievement of good practice in the development of disability awareness within schools. In these questions they identified factors that they felt enabled or inhibited teaching and learning. Their responses on enabling factors connected closely with the elements that have been identified in the literature as contributing to a whole school approach. Teachers referred to an inclusive ethos; staff teams that are
knowledgeable, skilled and committed; higher levels of awareness across the whole school community; having links to disabled people within the school community or beyond; seeing the NC as flexible and the potential in particular subject areas; and the availability of good quality resources as enabling factors. Interestingly, the inhibiting factors that were reported were often the converse of these factors. Teachers referred to the low incidence of disabled pupils attending schools; low levels of awareness and knowledge among teachers, contributing to them not being confident in approach; lack of ideas on how or what to incorporate into subjects across the NC; the limited time available to plan or within curriculum subjects that were already overstretched; lack of resources available to facilitate teaching; and the existence of negative stereotypes in mass media and the wider community.

These are quite divergent responses, and raise questions about how such differences in perspective and experience can occur now that all schools are under a duty to promote disability equality. Why do such barriers exist in some schools while others appear to have environments that are conducive to teaching about disability awareness? Teachers were also asked to identify solutions to the barriers that they had encountered or perceived. These, again, concur with the issues identified and guidance offered in the literature. Among the suggestions that teachers made were – training, guidance and support; resources; opportunities to have contact with disabled people and the visibility of positive role models; and wider awareness and commitment across the school community and the community at large. With respect to the latter, teachers felt that it would be helpful if people understood why promoting disability awareness and equality mattered.

Considerations for the future

Many of the considerations for practice, policy and research that are outlined in the following sub-sections are not new. As illustrated by the above discussion, many of the topics identified in the synthesis of relevant publications connect closely with the findings from the survey of teachers. However, hopefully, bringing these together here at a point in time when disability equality should be a central part of school planning and practice will assist schools to make significant developments and progress in the inclusion of disability awareness in the teaching and content of the National Curriculum.

Implications for research

There is very little evidence available to tell us if schools are, and if they are, how they are, incorporating disability equality into the teaching of the NC.

The study reported on in this report was an exploratory one, and brings together a number of data sources. However, it does have a number of limitations. The data was collected at different points in time - the pupils’ survey took place in the summer term in 2005; the teachers’ survey took place in the summer and autumn terms in 2006. The former took place prior to the introduction of the DED, and
the latter took place as the Duty was being introduced to secondary schools but before it has been introduced to primary schools. As previously noted it is unlikely to be representative of what is happening in all schools. Schools that are taking disability more seriously are more likely to have responded. However, the study does provide us with some understanding of how schools are approaching the teaching of disability awareness and what teachers see as impacting upon its occurrence and effectiveness.

With these limitations in mind and the key findings, two topics in particular stand out as requiring further exploration. Both relate to furthering the quality and effectiveness on teaching disability equality in class.

The first connects with findings from the pupils’ survey. Given the high proportion of pupils that reported that they did not want to learn more about disabled people and people with learning difficulties, there is a need for research to explore the reasons behind this and to identify what can motivate or engage pupils in learning about disability, discrimination and equality.

The second relates to an issue that emerged from the literature and in the analysis of data collected from teachers. Teachers called for guidelines on what makes for good and poor practice in the teaching of disability awareness. The literature review identified little evidence to demonstrate what is effective in the promotion of positive attitudes towards disability. There is a need for the piloting and evaluation of different approaches within schools to assess the impact of these upon pupils’ attitudes and behaviours.

**Implications for policy**

Teachers highlighted a number of issues that they felt would further the development of disability equality in schools. Despite it being a legal requirement of schools, some teachers referred to a need to increase pressure on schools for disability awareness to become a priority. This could be progressed in part by increasing awareness in schools of the Disability Equality Duty. However, teachers referred to the limited time that is available in the curriculum and to the demands that are placed upon each of the subjects included within the NC. The topics and activities that are prioritised are those that students are assessed upon, and/or schools are inspected upon. Consequently, for it to become an activity that is firmly embedded into the teaching of the NC, as well as the wider duties of DED, it needs to become part of the performance target and inspection regime.

Teachers were also clear on what they felt would assist them to develop their practice. National guidelines on disability equality and the NC should be made available to teachers in order to assist the development of good practice. This would also be assisted by the availability of more resources. Therefore, a range of schemes/units of work should be commissioned and made available free to schools to support teaching.
Implications for practice

Teachers themselves have reported, in this study, a wish for the opportunity to build their own confidence and for their colleagues within schools to have the opportunity to critically evaluate their own views and beliefs.

Good quality, regular disability equality training (DET) should take place for all staff within school. Teachers referred to their needs in relation to being able to distinguish good and poor practice, being confident in approach, and to being confident of other teachers’ approaches in their school. DET would contribute to meeting these needs.

The development of disability equality in the teaching of the NC should take place as part of a wider strategy, with schools working towards a ‘whole school’ approach and the fulfilment of the requirements of DED. To aid school development, head teachers and staff teams should consider the CSIE Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2000), and explore how their schools can begin to evolve within the three dimensions.

All schools should undertake an audit of the materials and resources that they use to ensure that they are not discriminatory and to ensure that they include promotion of positive attitudes towards disability.

A designated member of staff responsible for the co-ordination of disability equality content and teaching in the curriculum would have value and may assist schools to achieve the above.


Education Authority


Appendix

Terminology

A number of terms are used throughout the report, and are defined here for reference.

DDA refers to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, unless ‘1995’ is specifically stated.

‘The duty’ or DED refers to the Disability Equality Duty that was introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. More information about the duty is provided on pages 16 and 17.

A number of terms are used to refer to teaching and learning about disability equality. These include ‘disability awareness’, ‘learning about disability equality’ and the promotion of positive attitudes towards disability. These are intended to encapsulate or describe incidents or activities where pupils, students and teachers are learning about disability, equality and discrimination. These terms are intended to refer to learning that takes account of disability within a social model context/framework. Disability equality is the preferred term when using a social model approach.

‘Disablement’ is used to refer to the process by which people with impairments are excluded or discriminated against.

National Curriculum or NC is used to refer to the current framework in place in England. More information on the NC is provided on page 13 to 16 and can be found at www.nc-online.gov.uk