

## ENGLAND: New 'BESD' guidance due in May

The long-delayed DCSF BESD Guidance, in the main (but not entirely) replacing the 1994 Circular 9/94 is scheduled to appear on Teachernet on 6th May.



Ed Balls

## White Paper pledged on alternatives to PRUs

A Government White Paper will set out alternatives to pupil referral units to which the most disruptive students are sent, including work-related study programmes, Ed Balls Secretary of State for Children, told the NASUWT annual conference. Balls is 'determined' to improve the overall quality of PRUs - and to offer alternatives, including 'vocational centres'.

**SCOTLAND and WALES:**  
see pp15-18.

## Tories bid to improve behaviour in schools/ protect staff

David Cameron



On 7th April, accompanied by Michael Gove, the Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, David Cameron launched 'Giving Power Back to Teachers', a document that lays out measures to deal with violent and disruptive pupils. The proposals claim to restore the authority of headteachers, make it easier for teachers to deal with violent incidents, and protect teachers from false and malicious allegations.



Michael Gove

*Teacher unions and false allegations - see p8.*

## Have your say and help the SEBDA response - the DCSF/DH CAMHS Review

Late in 2007, Ed Balls, Children's, Schools and Families Secretary and Alan Johnson, Health Secretary, announced a review of how CAMHS have developed in recent years in England. How much nearer to comprehensive CAMHS are you in your work setting and area, since National Standards Framework Standard 9(see p35)? What is working well? Where are improvements still much needed?

To help create a widely-informed SEBDA response to the consultation; please do one of the following:

- complete and return the enclosed questionnaire in provided stamped envelope to Ted Cole;
- use the same questionnaire on [www.sebda.org](http://www.sebda.org) and e-mail to [tcole@sebda.org](mailto:tcole@sebda.org);
- send your views in an e-mail to [tcole@sebda.org](mailto:tcole@sebda.org).

If easier, you could send me a copy of your comments on the official consultation form, soon to be found at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/CAMHSreviews](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/CAMHSreviews)

I sit on what the DCSF/DH call the 'Expert Group' and have been asked to represent special schools and PRUs. *Ted Cole*



**Further details and the Review's KEY QUESTIONS - see pp35-37.**

## Speech, language difficulties and behaviour

Very much in the news are SLCNs (speech, language and communication needs) and how these often link to behaviour difficulties - the theme of the SEBDA UK 2008 Conference (see p9). The interim Berrow report on SLCNs, commissioned by DCFS and DH is outlined in Social Scene, p29.



Staff from the Meadows School, Co. Durham at the SEBDA UK National Conference.

## Doug Dawson retires

Member of SEBDA S. East Committee, Doug Dawson, retired from the headship of Furness School, Kent, on 4th April, after six years in post. During that time, the school (the only remaining residential SEBD maintained school in Kent) made great advances in class and in care provision. 'Value added' scores placed the school in the top 5% nationally and its care reports were excellent. The school also benefited from major refurbishment. We wish Doug and his wife (who also worked at Furness) every happiness in Northumbria.



**Paul Cooper retires as our journal Editor, see Chairman's Report (p3).**

**Accredited training in SEBD at master's and first degree level - see p40 for further details on the highly-respected SEBDA/University of Leicester specialist courses.**

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## SEBDA who's who

President:	Professor HARRY DANIELS, School of Education, University of Bath
President of SEBDA Scotland:	Professor Pamela Munn, University of Edinburgh
President of SEBDA Cymru:	Professor Ken Reid, Swansea Institute of Education
Vice-Presidents:	JOHN CROSS, ALAN FOX AND MARION BENNATHAN
Chairman:	JOAN PRITCHARD, 30, Roan Court, Macclesfield, SK11 7AQ Tel/fax: 01625 420 310 E-mail: j.h.pritchard@btinternet.com
Executive Director and Editor of <b>SEBDA news</b> :	Dr TED COLE, SEBDA, 211 The Triangle, Exchange Square, Manchester, M4 3TR E-mail: tcole@sebda.org
Training and Development Manager:	BARBARA KNOWLES, SEBDA, 211 The Triangle, Exchange Square, Manchester, M4 3TR Tel: (0161 240 2418) 210 510 Fax: (0161) 838560 Mobile: 0771 108 4319 E-mail: barbara.knowles@sebda.org
General Secretary:	SUE COOK, The Meadows School, Spennymoor, Co. Durham, DL16 7QW Tel.: 01388 811178 E-mail: s.cook100@durham.org.uk
Treasurer:	BOB LAW, Head, Goldwyn School, Great Chart, Ashford, Kent Tel: 01233 622958 E-mail: bob.law@sebda.org
Editor of <b>SEBDA International Research Journal</b> (published by Routledge T & F) <b>'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties'</b> :	Prof. PAUL COOPER, School of Education, University of Leicester, 21 University Rd, LE1 6RF
Education Officer:	Dr JOHN VISSER, Associate Professor, School of Education, University of Birmingham. E-mail: J.G.Visser@bham.ac.uk
Social Services Officer:	CYNTHIA CROSS, W. Wickham, Kent E-mail: ci.cross@virgin.net
Chair SEBDA Scotland:	MARGARET GIBSON, Burnhouse School, Whitburn, W. Lothian 01501 678100
SEBDA Scotland c/o Harmeny Education Trust, Mansfield Rd, Balerno, Midlothian, EH14 7JY	
Chair of Professional Development Group:	JOAN NORMINGTON

## The SEBDA Mission

The Association exists to serve the interests of children and young people experiencing difficulties in their social, emotional and behavioural development.

This aim will be achieved by:

- promoting understanding of their needs;
- supporting those who work with them;
- providing training and education to increase knowledge, understanding and skills;
- engaging with policy-making agencies and service providers to inform and influence their decisions;
- identifying and disseminating good practice;
- facilitating and promoting multi-disciplinary co-operation.

## The SEBDA Inclusion Policy

For children and young people with SEBD inclusion means

- maximising their access to and engagement with the social and educational settings most appropriate to their present and future needs and aspirations.
- providing environments where they experience
  - a personal sense of security
  - respect and being valued
  - supportive relationships
  - sharing their lives with positive adult role models
  - clear, humane and flexible boundary setting
  - successful achievement boosting their self-esteem
  - opportunities to obtain academic and/or vocational qualifications
  - chance to develop and to exercise personal responsibility.
- making available effective support services and facilities whose purpose is to help the young people overcome potential and actual barriers to their healthy social, emotional and educational development.

For many young people with SEBD, inclusion is best promoted by their attendance at mainstream schools with their neighbourhood peers. However inclusion is more than placement in 'ordinary' classes where young people with SEBD can feel isolated or rejected or in on-site provision with little access for the children with SEBD to the social and educational activities of the school.

**Where occasionally mainstream schools are unable to address the needs of some young people with SEBD and the latter do not feel included, then inclusion can be better promoted in special schools, units and other alternative forms of education and training.**

# Chairman's Report

Joan Pritchard



Joan Pritchard

I hope you have all had a well - earned Spring break. Easter was interesting was it not – I woke to a 'white world' on Easter Sunday morning!

Those of you who were able to join us at our Annual National Conference in Harrogate will agree that it was a big success. Thanks must go to John Visser, our Education Officer, who put the programme together on our behalf and also to Barbara Knowles who dealt with all the minutiae of organisation so efficiently and effectively.

You will see from the contents of this newsletter that our process of development continues, thanks to our Director, Ted Cole and our Training and Development Manager, Barbara Knowles. Our executive team has also been strengthened by the addition of Joan Normington who has agreed to be the chairman of our Professional Development Group (PDG). Your National Council supported this proposal with gratitude and enthusiasm.

We are now well settled into our new head office. It is an excellent venue for meetings, with good transport links. If you are in the area give Barbara a ring and arrange to call in and see her.

Some readers will already be aware that Professor Paul Cooper has felt it necessary to resign from his position as our Journal Editor. This is very sad but we do understand. He has been our editor for thirteen years, which is a long time. During that time he has transformed the journal from what was very much an in-house one to the internationally recognised journal it is now. He will be a very hard act to follow. We are relieved that he has offered to continue until June to ensure a smooth transition. I am sure all members will want me to express our thanks and appreciation for the commitment Paul has given to the journal. He has found time for us despite all his other heavy responsibilities at the university.

I am delighted to be able to report that after much consultation with both Routledge Taylor Francis and other colleagues, Professor Harry Daniels, of the

University of Bath, and Ted Cole, our Director, have agreed to take over as joint editors. The Executive and National Council were pleased to endorse this proposal. I know they will work with Paul to ensure a smooth transition so that we can all continue to enjoy and benefit from our excellent journal.

Another exciting activity is the work we are doing in order to advance the planning for the SEBDA international conference planned for September 15, 16 and 17, 2010. Keble College, Oxford, is the venue and the working title is 'SEBD: Impact and Progression'. So watch this space and ask us any questions you may have.



Keble College

I look forward to meeting as many members as possible at our AGM on June 14. It is your chance to have your say. Do come if you can – we provide a free lunch!

# Director's Report

Ted Cole



Ted Cole

It has been another busy period nationally in relation to our sector (see the many and diverse items covered in the pages of this newsletter) but also for the Association. I am settling into my altered work pattern, doing more from my home-office interspersed with regular trips down to HQ at The Triangle in Manchester for face-to-face meetings with Barbara, Joan and others.

**Admin. and Finance:** Barbara Knowles has been magnificent in bearing the burden of conference and professional development administration as we decide the optimal support staff arrangements (balancing affordability, efficiency and availability of suitable candidates). At the moment I am liaising closely with Marie Armstrong, who is continuing to do the bookkeeping. We are working on the 2007 accounts with our auditors, Dodd and Co. These should be published soon and will show another fairly healthy state of affairs compared to the past - although we could do with a substantial injection of funding to allow us to take our activities to the next level, to increase significantly our impact on our sector.

When the accounts are to hand, I can submit my report to Esmee Fairbairn Foundation for 2008 and put in for the third tranche of their promised funding.

**National Conference:** Attending the national conference with someone else having done all the administration (Barbara) was a pleasant 'first' for me, and allowed me to catch up with old friends and make the acquaintance of new in more leisurely fashion. I give a full report of the conference later in this issue. There were a few disappointments but overall it was a highly successful professional (and financial) event.

**Representation: the CAMHS Review:** following on my completion of writing the mental health and BESD training materials for the Care Service Improvement Partnership and the (now defunct) N. West Regional SEN Partnership, I agreed to participate in the DCSF/ Department of Health 'Expert Group'. I have been allocated the role of representing special schools and PRUs. I have so far been to two meetings and have sought to fight our too-often neglected and overlooked corner (e.g. see Ofsted publications on EBD). I will be in touch with other bodies in our sector and with SEBDA members to try to gauge the latest picture (see coverage to the rear of this SEBDA News). I do need your input to give me as wide a view as possible. Please share your experiences and opinions with me.

**SEBDA around the UK:** Barbara is meeting with members of the Welsh Development Group to look to the future. We are concerned about our lack of recent activity

in Scotland and are planning a survey of members' opinion there and I shall be discussing the situation with our President, Professor Pamela Munn and committee members.

**Accredited training:** We are taking a strategic look at what SEBDA can and should offer (see Barbara Knowles' report). Joan Pritchard continues to lead on our University of Leicester courses. I am delighted that Joan Normington has agreed to become Chair of the Professional Development Group. Advertising for the 2008/09 distance education courses is underway and enrolments arriving.

**Journal:** Finally - and very importantly - after 13 years' sterling service, taking the journal from a self-publication to an international research journal, accessed at more than 14000 sites of higher education worldwide, Professor Paul Cooper is resigning as editor. Many thanks to Paul for his tireless, voluntary commitment - and thanks also to Barbara Hall, his editorial assistant. As the Chairman has described, our President, Harry Daniels and myself are taking over the reins - a daunting but exciting task. As well as wanting your input for 'SEBDA News', I shall now be seeking out academic articles for the journal, to be peer reviewed and hopefully published in 2009 and beyond. Time to turn that impressive dissertation into an academic paper (with our support, if needed...)?

# FROM THE EDUCATION OFFICER'S DESK



John Visser

## Speech, Language and Communication

I am writing this shortly after SEBDA's successful conference in March reported elsewhere in this newsletter. The

conference theme was planned some twelve months ago with a focus on issues around communication skills particularly in speech and language. Good to see that the forward thinking of SEBDA on the importance of this issue is reflected in the Bercow Review ([www.dcsf.gov.uk/bercowreview](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/bercowreview)). Launched last Autumn it has been consulting with parents and professionals. One of its themes relates to vulnerable children and young people. The review group have for example gathered the views of young offenders. The Review Group's interim report is available via the website. Watch out for the final report due in July. In the light of all we now know about speech, language and communication and SEBD (even though there is still much more to know) the recommendations this report makes could have long-term benefits for children and young people with SEBD [see fuller outline of the content of this report in Social Scene on p29 below].

## Visiting Auschwitz

Did you catch the DCSF announcement in February of funding for students to visit Auschwitz? The funding supports the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust. As Ed Balls, Secretary of State, points out 'The Holocaust was one of the most horrific and profound events.... Over 60 years on there are still lessons we can learn...' Unfortunately the funding is only available to 6 forms and FE colleges. How sad given that too many young people with SEBD don't continue their education into years 12 and 13. Should we be lobbying for funding for year 11 SEBD pupils?

## Sex and relationships

Also in February the DCSF announced a review of 'Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Schools. Can I urge readers to go on the DCSF site and engage with this review, particularly as its first aim is 'how to ensure that young people are provided with good SRE **irrespective of what schools they attend**'. This is an important area of the curriculum for the vulnerable children and young people in specialist SEBD provision. Let's make sure

the review does not lose sight of or miss out altogether their needs.

## SENCOs

On 25th March DCSF launched a consultation on the role and work of SENCOs. It is often forgotten that SENCOs are to be found in all schools including specialist SEBD provision. If the Regulations governing the work of SENCOs are to reflect the roles carried out in specialist provision then those of you who work as SENCOs need to engage with the consultation. Visit the DCSF web site and look at the consultation document.

## Exclusions and PRUs

From 1st April new regulations on exclusions from PRUs come into effect giving management committees a statutory role. The regulations and guidance are available on the DCSF web site.

## Fabricated Illness

It is not an unusual occurrence for parents and children with SEBD to collude over absence and to send in 'false' sick notes. In 2002 the then DfES issued guidance on this and highlighted the more important issue of 'sick notes' being issues to cover possible abuse issues. This guidance has been updated and is available on the DCSF site. Search for 'Safeguarding Children in whom illness is fabricated or induced'.

## Looked After Children

As well as relearning the latest data on 'lengths of stay' for children looked after, the DCSF has also launched 'Care Matters: Time to Deliver'. Besides moving on the Every Child Matters agenda the document highlights practical steps local authorities need to take. Amongst them the need to ensure that these children and young people have all the 'normal school photographs' and obtain passports. Full version of the document available at: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/childrenincare](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/childrenincare).

Many SEBD schools and PRUs know the value of providing children with a photographic memory of their time in education. Perhaps there is an opportunity here to share this 'expertise' with colleagues in mainstream provision. Looked after Children are also to receive personal educational allowances.

## CAMHS

This report has already highlighted a number of government reviews. Back in December the government announced one more. This time a review to 'ensure

that the educational and emotional needs of children and young people with mental health problems or at risk of developing them, are being met.' The government acknowledges that there are 'gaps in the current CAMHS systems' and is anxious to see more tier 1 and tier 2 provision. The review wants to see 'services working better together'. Your Education Officer is 'watching this space!' (See p35-37 below).

## Children Centres

Ofsted published a report on the work of Children's Centres in January (available on the Ofsted under published reports). HMCI praises the work they do in the overall services they provide, but points out that evidence is yet to emerge on their beneficial effects on academic attainment. There is also some concern that they are not attracting the most vulnerable families and individuals.

## Anti-social behaviour

I end this report with an item with which I started my career. My first experience of specialist provision for what was then called 'the maladjusted' was an intermediate treatment centre attached to a mainstream school. Its aim was prevention. It provided for young people who were 'at risk of becoming maladjusted' a range of after school activities as well as a place within the school where they could go for 'respite counselling' and an alternative curriculum'. So it was with a sense of déjà vu that I greeted the announcement by DCSF in March of the Taskforce Action Plan which will 'build on the success in tackling antisocial behaviour in three areas:

- Touch enforcement (we had 'boot camps' in the 1980s)
- Non-negotiable support (we had parenting court orders)
- Better prevention to tackle problems before they become serious ('intermediate treatment'?)

I do hope that lessons have been learnt from the previous incarnations of these 'laudable' aims, SEBDA in its previous forms has published in its Journal various articles highlighting the successes but also the pitfalls of this approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEBD.

## Finally

As the Easter holidays were so early for many of you I trust you are able to pace yourself through what will be for some an eighteen week summer term!

# More English Education News

## Exclusions from Pupil Referral Units:

### New Regulations and Guidance

The Education (Pupil Exclusions and Appeals) (Pupil Referral Units) (England) Regulations 2008, replacing the 2002 regulations, come into effect on 1 April 2008

Currently, local authorities can review fixed period exclusions but not permanent exclusions. The new regulations will provide that this review function is to be a duty of management committees, not local authorities, and that management committees can and, in some circumstances should, review both permanent and fixed period exclusions. The regulations can be accessed via:

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi\\_20080532\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20080532_en_1)

The guidance on exclusions from schools and PRUs will be revised to reflect the new regulations before 1 April and will be available on-line via

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/exclusion/guidance2007/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/exclusion/guidance2007/)



Ed Balls goes to school

## Teacher training plans - making every teacher a 'Master'

On 7th March, Ed Balls, England's Secretary of State for Children, announced new teacher training plans. His press release said with admirable ambition (orchutzpah?) the aim was 'to take our teaching workforce to the top to give our young people the world class education they deserve'. Balls was speaking at the conference of the Association of School and College Leaders when he announced ambitious plans to introduce a new Masters qualification 'specially designed for teachers called the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL).

The programme will start this September but in time will be open to all teachers. Balls expects every teacher should complete the MTL over the course of their careers, beginning by rolling out the programme to teachers in the first five years of their careers to build on their initial teacher training and induction. More experienced teachers will be trained and act as in-school coaches to teachers on the programme. This role might be recognised as part of their own Masters' programme. Funding will be through the Teacher Development Agency including the costs to schools. Balls hopes to 'incentivise take-up in those schools facing the most challenging circumstances'. The TDA is to develop the programme working with ASCL and 'the other social partners'.

[Editor: we wait to see the content and funding arrangements for another laudable government initiative - and whether the new training will use and actually improve on what exists in so many universities and colleges already.]

## The Byron Report

### Safer Children in a Digital World:



Dr Tanya Byron

### Internet safety training for children's workforce

Near the end of March, the government accepted in full the proposals of TV child psychologist Tanya Byron to stop children accessing unsuitable games and websites. They include requiring training in e-safety for all who work with children and young people as part of the forthcoming *Children's Workforce Action Plan*. Byron's report, *Safer Children in a Digital World*, also says all video games should display the same age ratings as films.

Teachers will learn about children's safety online in their initial training and Ofsted will assess schools on how well they protect children from harmful digital media. Extended schools will also be expected to work with internet provider UK Online centres to teach parents about the risks to children from the internet and video games aimed at adults.

Despite the Prime Minister's commitment to reducing the number of QUANGOs, a UK Council on Child Internet Safety will be formed with the aim of policing and educating government, children's services and parents about the risks of digital media.

## Rising levels of 'unauthorised absence' but targeting persistent truants helps

(BBC web-site, 26.2.08) DCFS figures show truancy rates in England's schools at their highest since 1997. An estimated 63,000 pupils truant every day, equating to 1% of all school sessions missed without a valid reason. Between 2004 and 2007 over 30,000 penalty notices were issued to parents because of their child's high level of unauthorised absence. And more than 19,000 parenting contracts were agreed to improve attendance, ministers said.

Children's minister Kevin Brennan said the rise in truancy rates could be partly down to the efforts being made to tackle it. As head teachers "get tougher" on truants, more instances of absenteeism are categorised as unauthorised.

However, overall absence, including children off sick with permission, has fallen from 6.68% to 6.49% between 2006 and 2007.

About 7% of pupils account for a third of all absence in secondary schools but "the evidence shows that targeting is working, with 436 schools with the biggest share of persistent absence having reduced it by almost 20 per cent in a year," Brennan claimed.

## Annual inspections for 'inadequate' or merely 'satisfactory' schools

(from BBC web-site, 8.2.08)



Christine Gilbert

Christine Gilbert, HMCI, told a head teachers' conference in London that struggling or merely 'satisfactory' schools (45% of the total) could face annual checks by Ofsted.

A parental or pupil complaint could also trigger an investigation. Even schools judged to be "good" but showing signs of slipping could receive "monitoring visits" every year or every term. However, the best schools would be left for up to six years between inspections. The new system would come into force from September 2009 and includes plans for inspections without warning. Under current rules, schools are inspected every three years and receive two days' notice of a visit.

## 'Failing school' numbers unchanged in three years

(BBC web-site, 11.2.08) The number of schools in England that are judged to be failing has barely changed for three years, figures show. At the end of 2007, 245 schools were in "special measures" against 243 in 2006 and 244 in 2005, 1.1% of the total. Of the 245 that were in special measures at the end of the autumn term, 181 were primary schools, 47 secondary, nine special schools and nine PRUs.



Jim Knight

## Thousands to be excused compulsory education or training to 18

(Times Ed. Supplement and BBC web-site, 22.2.08) Jim

Knight, the schools minister, said that some of the country's most vulnerable 16- and 17-year olds would have **reasonable excuses** not to participate - casting doubt over his previous claim that the new Education and Skills bill would 'effectively' create 100% participation (by 2015). Teenagers who could be excused included drug addicts, those with learning difficulties, temporary or long-term health problems,

and teenage mothers and young carers. Mr Knight stressed that these groups will not be formally exempt from the law and that LAs should be trying to provide them with an education'. An exemption could mean an easy way out of helping them and could deny them opportunities'.



Kevin Brennan

## Bring back outdoor pursuits to counter raising a generation of 'battery-farmed' children

(D. Telegraph, 6.2.08)

Kevin Brennan, Children's

Minister, announced that the Government is to cut the red tape that makes schools reluctant to organise visits and school trips. Under the new measures no risk assessment of a trip should take up more than three pages of A4 paper. Brennan is quoted as saying: 'One thing you can do to stop children being involved in road traffic accidents is to never allow them out. Of course, that will produce a generation of battery-farmed children if we all follow that approach.' In 2003 NASUWT is said to be

the first to advise its members against trips. It warned that there had been 11 deaths and 7000 'near misses' on school trips over the preceding three years.

## Learning and Skills Agency to be scrapped (BBC web-site, 17.3.08)

The government's £10.4bn skills agency, the Learning and Skills Council, is to be closed down - with most of the funds to be transferred to local authorities. The plans have been announced by the government in a White Paper setting out the funding mechanism for the raising of the school leaving age to 18. Local authorities will now be responsible for commissioning courses and training for older teenagers. They will also be held accountable for ensuring that youngsters stay on to 18 (see the White Paper, 'Raising Expectations: Enabling the System to Deliver').

## Increasing parental confidence in SENs assessment: the Lamb Inquiry

Brian Lamb, Director of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, is to lead an inquiry into how best to increase parental confidence in the special educational needs (SEN) assessment system.

The Lamb Inquiry is to consider various ideas including

- making the provision of educational psychology advice "arm's length" from local authorities;
- sharing best practice in developing good relationships between the authority and parents, through effective Parent Partnership Services and other local mechanisms;

The final report will be submitted in September 2009.

## Behaviour contracts for the young

(BBC 18.3.08) Children as young as 10 years old are to be asked to sign a good behaviour contract to stop them going off the rails. About 1,000 of the "most challenging" children will be expected to stick to the order, or risk a criminal record. There will be 20 pilot projects launched over the next three years under the Youth Taskforce Action Plan - based on the model of the existing Family Intervention Projects. Youngsters will sign up to a contract which will be monitored by an "assertive and persistent key worker".

# A Review of Progress since the 2005 Steer Report



Ed Balls

At the NASUWT annual Conference, Ed Balls said more needed to be done to tackle bad behaviour in schools and that he had asked Sir Alan Steer to review progress since the Steer Report of 2005. Sir Alan's findings would be used to frame the government's plans. Taking forward a Steer recommendation, Balls said that all schools should form partnerships with others and one of their key objectives, he said, would be to identify children at risk of exclusion or truancy and to intervene to help them get back on track. Academies would also have to do this. At the moment, 97% of schools are involved in such a partnership.

## EXTRACTS FOLLOW FROM ALAN STEER'S INITIAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS:

### 'Behaviour review: an initial response 26 March 2008'

#### 1. Introduction.

1.i Progress in implementing the recommendations of the Practitioners' Group has been very positive and it is pleasing to see Ofsted report that the number of schools having inadequate behaviour standards is at the lowest level ever recorded...

#### 2. Practitioners' Group recommendations: progress made.

2.i Considerable progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the 2005 report Learning Behaviour and this I welcome warmly. Action has taken place on nearly all of the 72 recommendations... including some ... within the 2006 Education Act. [Areas addressed include]

- The introduction of statutory powers for teachers on the 'right to discipline';
- The changes relating to school exclusion and the conduct of independent appeal panels;
- The consolidation of the programme Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL);
- The new guidance relating to bullying...

... 2.iii Now more than at any time in the recent past we have the opportunity to further the ideas of the Practitioners' Group. The Children's Plan in its aspirations and plans directly supports Practitioner recommendations and beliefs. It provides a moral, but practical context, which is likely to have a profoundly positive impact on the development of children and their behaviour

in school and society. Further important research and review is also taking place...

#### 3. School behaviour partnerships.

3.i The Practitioners' Group in recommendations 3.6.1. and 3.6.2. strongly supported the principle that all schools needed to work in collaboration in order to promote good standards of behaviour in their schools. This remains my opinion.

3.ii While Local Authority returns indicate that over 9/10ths of secondary schools are involved in behaviour partnerships, informal soundings make me sceptical that all of these schools are actually engaged in meaningful partnership working. Outside the early pathfinder partnerships, credible evidence is lacking on the impact partnerships are making where they do exist. I will return to this issue in my final report.

3.iii Good collaboration between schools is often prevented by what are perceived as unfair practices operated by a minority of schools in admissions and exclusions. Where these practices take place they damage partnership and damage the development of good behaviour standards in the area. I warmly welcome the changes since 2005 relating to school admissions

and recent announcements of measures to strengthen further the implementation of the Admissions Code. These need to be applied consistently to all schools, including Foundation schools and Academies. A school that permanently excludes a child should expect to receive a permanently excluded child on the principle of 'one out, one in' as recommended by the Practitioners' Group. This should not affect the protection given to schools in special measures.

3.iv It remains my firm view that all secondary schools – including new and existing Academies, Foundation schools and Pupil Referral Units – should participate in behaviour partnerships. This expectation should now be enshrined in legislation (or, in the case of existing Academies, in a clear formal commitment by each of them to participate).

#### 4. Emerging new issues.

4.i In 2005 the Practitioners' Group worked within a tight timescale and within a specific remit. As a result some issues could not be considered. Other issues have arisen since 2005 as a result of the ongoing debate and social change.

#### 4.ii Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

In my opinion the behavioural problems experienced by some children are caused by mental ill health. I share the concern of my many of my headteacher colleagues at the apparent variation in the provision and standards of CAMHS. I therefore warmly welcome the review of CAMHS being led by Jo Davison and look forward to the findings of her group...

...4.iv Future action needs to take place to assist the implementation of good SEN practice throughout the system...

...4.v Schools need to be able to rely on high quality **Alternative Provision** as part of their behaviour management strategies... Whilst some alternative provision, such as some Pupil Referral Units, is of good quality, the system is not currently arranged to ensure a high level of accountability and performance across the board. I therefore welcome the announcement in the Children's Plan of measures to increase accountability in this part of the education sector...

4.vi **Cyberbullying...** I welcome the inclusion of guidance on cyberbullying in the recent anti-bullying document, Safe to Learn. I also welcome the actions of DCSF in working with Childnet and in establishing a Cyberbullying Taskforce...

4.vii When schools review their bullying policies and strategies they need to ensure that Cyberbullying is given prominence...[it

involves children and parents]...

4.viii ...However, it has been helpful for professional associations to remind us that cyberbullying also affects staff...

#### 4.ix Safer School

**Partnerships.** Where these partnerships exist there is evidence that they are effective in improving behaviour and attendance. The extension of these partnerships should be encouraged and be given greater priority by schools and the police.

#### 4.x Parental responsibility...

some school leaders perceive the Children's Plan as emphasising the rights of parents while being less clear as to their responsibilities with regard to schools and the education of their children. It might be helpful to place a new emphasis on parental responsibility. Clarifying parental responsibilities should be seen as being supportive rather than being punitive and is closely linked with the provision of support to families as specified in the Children's Plan...

#### 5.i Parent Support Advisers...

I welcomed the government support in December 2005 in funding a two year pilot in providing Parent Support Advisers in 20 Local Authorities. I warmly welcome the commitment to continue this work...

5.ii However I am concerned that funding provided to Parent Support Advisers over the next three years (£33.5m, £34.5m, £34.5m) will not have the impact that the Government would wish if it is spread too thinly...

5.iv It is important for the success of this initiative that examples of good practice are developed over a sustained period and are disseminated...

5.v ...It would be helpful for the Department to highlight the importance of Parent Support Advisers with the Directors of Children's Services and through the National Strategies.

#### 5.vi Learning, Teaching and Behaviour.

It is widely accepted that the application of consistent good practice in Learning, Teaching and Behaviour enables children to make significant improvement. It is a concern that there remains such variation in practice within schools, between schools and between school phases. This is to the detriment of children and to teachers.

5.vii ...Ofsted has placed a greater importance on the link between learning and teaching and behaviour in its guidance on school self evaluation, but the situation remains that many schools do not have a Learning and Teaching policy and that

where they do exist, there is not always a requirement that they are followed by all staff.

5.viii The S.E.N. Code of Practice identifies a clear link between consistent good practice in a school and its ability to meet the needs of the children.

*"effective management, school ethos and the learning environment, curricular, pastoral and discipline arrangements can help prevent some special educational needs arising, and minimise others". (paragraph 5.4)*

5.ix It is my view that the development of collegiate professionalism with regard to consistent good practice in schools would have the most significant impact on achievement and behaviour standards. ...

#### 5.x The spread of good

**practice.** Creating change in schools requires that the issues concerned are supported over a period of time and that they relate to school priorities. Schools need to be able to visualise what the change would look like and the benefits it would bring. Teachers welcome examples of good practice if these are presented regularly and come from credible sources [e.g. to do with '6th day' exclusion]...

#### 5.xi Social harmony and Building Schools for the

**Future.** The design of new school buildings must be influenced by the need to promote social harmony and good behaviour; and it is helpful that practical issues such as bullying in school toilets are starting to be addressed through BSF guidance. It is important that BSF fulfils the aspiration contained in the Children's Plan that schools need facilities that enable them to be at the centre of their community.

#### 5.xii Access to and the provision of services...

For some children and families, accessing those services may be very difficult. Targeted support needs to be available in these circumstances and this should generally be based in schools. I regard Parent Support Advisers and other members of the school work force who have similar functions as having a critical role in facilitating access to available provision.

5.xiii **Power of search.** The right of teachers to search pupils for dangerous weapons was enacted in the 2006 Violent Crime Reduction Act, and it would be helpful to review how well these powers are working.

**Conclusion** [there follows a re-statement of the Steer Group's Core Beliefs - see the original report].

# THE TEACHER UNION SPRING CONFERENCES

## School is 'the last moral force' says Dunford (BBC web-site, 9.3.08)

Poor parenting and the erosion of family life are leaving schools as the only moral framework in many children's lives, says a headteachers' leader. Schools were increasingly expected to "fill the vacuum", John Dunford told the Association of School and College Leaders annual conference, in Brighton. Dunford also said that the fixation with celebrity damaged the efforts of schools to make pupils think they had to work hard to succeed.

## False allegations, human rights and the General Teaching Council

(TES, 21.3.08) GTC is seeking new powers from DCSF to suspend teachers from the profession's register while they are under investigation for alleged inappropriate behaviour. Teaching unions warn that the right to be presumed innocent would be replaced with a presumption of guilt and the move could worsen the damage to teachers' reputations caused by malicious allegations. NASUWT demanded an end to 'unnecessary and unreasonable' suspensions at its Easter conference in Birmingham. They also called for the powers of the GTC to be downgraded so that is merely a regulatory body, along the lines of the British Medical Association. Chris Keates, NASUWT general secretary said, 'Where false allegations are rife for teachers, the GTC would be making a bad situation worse.' GTC's Alan Meyrick defended the move saying it was important for the GTC to be able to suspend teachers in a very small number of exceptional and particularly serious cases, where it was considered important in the public interest.



Mary Bousted

Meanwhile Mary Bousted, the ATL general secretary, said that often the first teachers knew of it was when they were called into the head's office and suspended and - 'In too many cases, the very fact that the allegation is made is the end of their careers.'



Michael Wills

Apparently, Michael Wills, the justice minister, has written to Jim Knight, the school minister, asking him to consider whether the treatment of teachers who are subject to allegations is

consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights.

## Blacklist and charges for pupils who make false allegations?

(BBC News web-site, 19.3.08 and 'The Independent', 20.3.08) These were the wishes of the leaders of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, at their annual conference. There should be a blacklist of pupils who have made malicious allegations of sexual abuse or assault against teachers, and this register should be made available to any school to which the pupil subsequently moves. The ATL also wants charges brought against children as young as 10 who make false allegations.

This issue has been raised at most recent union conferences. The NASUWT union says it has had 2,316 allegations brought against its members in recent years, of which 2,231 have been concluded. Only 105 or about 5% had resulted in any action



Sharon Liburd, ATL solicitor

being brought against the teacher. Too often when a pupil makes an allegation, the teacher is suspended from work and is not permitted to talk to colleagues or pupils while the matter is investigated - which can take months. Wolverhampton teacher Brenda Walters told the ATL conference: "Whereas the pupils or students are relatively unscathed and remain on site, the effects upon the teacher or lecturer can be catastrophic and stressful in the extreme."

ATL solicitor Sharon Liburd said she was dealing with several allegations a month - and in 75% of them the Crown Prosecution Service took no action against the teacher involved for lack of evidence. But in the interim, the teacher was in limbo until called on by the police, who quite often first interviewed the pupil while "rumours are running rife" in the school community. "It's a sad sign of the times that parents often go to the police first and often to the press saying, 'I want that teacher sacked';" she said. She said a teacher's life could be destroyed as a result.

Schools Minister Jim Knight said he would discuss with ministerial colleagues whether more needed to be done.

## Teachers' drugs and weapons finds increase

(BBC web-site, 23.3.08) A growing number

of pupils are taking offensive weapons and drugs into a hard core of schools in troubled areas, research suggests. The proportion of teachers finding weapons on pupils on a weekly basis had almost quadrupled from 2001 to 2008. Warwick University, interviewing 1,500 teachers for the National Union of Teachers, found those finding drugs on pupils weekly had doubled. Highlighting the research at his union's annual conference, the NUT general secretary Steve Sinnott said the picture that was emerging was one of polarisation taking place within schools, within the problems in a minority of schools.

## NASUWT Conference - teachers continue to be ground down by drip drip of low-level disruption: ban mobiles in all schools

('Daily Telegraph', 27.3.08). This was the view of Tim Cox, a member of NASUWT's ruling executive. Low level disruption too often escalated into major incidents, partly because teachers are still ill-trained in behaviour management. The union wants mobile phones to be banned from classrooms as they become 'potentially offensive weapons in the hands of unruly pupils'. Schools should not bow to parental pressure for children to keep their mobile phones in school, despite mounting concern that some pupils are taking compromising pictures of teachers on camera phones and posting them on social networking websites.

## Ulster teachers and children's suicide

(BBC web-site, 14.3.08) The Ulster Teachers' Union is calling for more suicide awareness training for teachers. The lack of such training was discussed at the union's annual conference. Spokeswoman Jacquie Reid said suicide is now the biggest cause of death among young people in Northern Ireland. Ms Reid said the north-west of Northern Ireland in particular had experienced a "remarkable increase in suicide rates".

## In memoriam: Steve Sinnott, NUT, dies of heart attack



Steve Sinnott

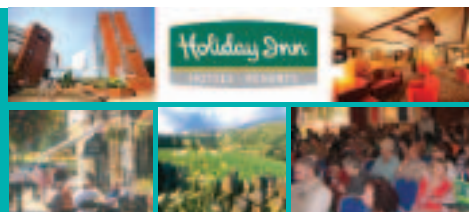
death was "a tragic loss".

Steve Sinnott, general secretary of NUT, has died aged 56. The National Union of Teachers, led by Mr Sinnott since 2004, said his sudden



# 'The Voice IN the Child': the SEBDA UK National Conference/Study Course, 2008

A PERSONAL VIEW FROM TED COLE



Delegates at National Conference

Another year, another successful national conference - over 150 participants joined us at the Holiday Inn, Harrogate and the vast majority left happy with the content and the wider conference experience. We are grateful to John Visser, who did so much of the early work in enlisting speakers and workshop presenters; and also to Barbara Knowles, who handled the complexities and stresses of the administration with such aplomb. It was good to meet old friends and to greet 'first timers' at the annual study course. Delegates had journeyed from all over England, with a few participants from Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Our particular thanks to senior staff, who brought along groups of their staff.

An excellent deal, negotiated by Barbara Knowles, allowed us to enjoy the comforts of a hotel for the first time in the 55 year history of the event. This was a change appreciated by most - although we have to report that there were some justified comments on slowness of check-in, price of drinks and quality of the conference dinner. There was also mixed reaction to some of the conference content, in particular some dissatisfaction with presentational style and content of some workshops (found too theoretical or not allowing for the existing knowledge of participants). However, the positive feedback certainly won the day (see box) - and from a personal point of view, I attended excellent workshops (by Marguerite Watt and Mike McKeon) and got a lot out of key-note speeches.



**Dr Jodi Tommerdahl, University of Birmingham**

After words of welcome from Conference Chair, Joan Pritchard, Jodi gave an energetic, engaging, indeed riveting overview of the links between speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and SEBD, noting at the outset that this was 'more than a co-incidence'. We need to be aware that SLCN starts early - EEG studies of children at risk of language disorder show abnormal brain waves in the very first months of life. SLCNs are clearly associated with some children's lack of access to learning, poor social relationships, low self-confidence and feelings of hopelessness about the future. Boys are affected much more than girls with perhaps 5 -7% of children having SLCNs at some point in

## YOUR VIEWS

(based on 66 evaluation forms received):

33% said that overall the conference was 'excellent' and 56% said it was 'good';

56% said the organisation was 'excellent' and 35% said 'good';

45% said the venue was 'excellent' and 39% said 'good'.

'A great conference, with a really good buzz. Jodie Tomer Dahl – outstanding presentation (and this was a unanimous assessment) – at just the right level. Very informative and thought-provoking. A really good choice of theme, everyone felt as if they had learnt a lot about the links between SEBD and lang. We had a long discussion about the next steps for us as a school. There is a real need for on-going training. It feels as if this conference has whetted our appetites and now we need to have a few suggestions about assessment tools and resources and we'll be off (DB, Head)

'Very interesting, useful information, pertinent issue' (SB)

'My first SEBDA conference, I feel invigorated and ready to explore new strategies, very informative and enjoyable' (SW)

'Thank you once again – really motivating and thought provoking'

'Well planned and organised'

'Hotel accommodation was pleasant experience, language focus new and interesting.'

'Great to meet new colleagues'

'An excellent weekend, my head is full of thought to take back to work.'

'As ever the diversity of delegates added much to the excellent sessions.'

'Thank you, fascinating and beautifully organised.'

their development. Recent research indicates that children with impaired expressive language show significantly more difficult behaviour than their peers. Others 'are often brilliant at covering up their language problems' with compensatory social skills.

Jodi took us through the difference between 'language without speech' (when you lose your voice you cannot speak but still have

language, because you can still think - language is essentially a mental process) and 'speech without language' (think of what parrots do!). Those of us who know little about SLCNs, like the present writer, were helped through the basics of a linguistic approach, with clear explanations of phonetics and phonology (sounds); grammar (word order, tenses); morphology (word structure); semantics (meaning); and pragmatics (context, politeness). Grammar, apparently is usually completely developed in a child by age three. Pragmatics can be a real problem for some of the children with whom we work (e.g. how to interpret the poster 'Baby sale today!' - we need to understand and be familiar with the context of language).

Language for a surprising number of children can be like an 'AM' radio station, where reception comes and goes, is clear then fuzzy then inaudible then clear again in unpredictable cycles. Very bright children can have disabling SLCNs. Jodi advised that children with weak language skills may find traditional teaching methods out of their reach - and understandably respond with challenging behaviour. We needed better and more regular access to speech and language therapists in schools.

The audience's evaluation of this session was excellent.

*Recommended reading: Deirdre Martin and Carol Miller (2003) Speech and Language Difficulties in the Classroom 2nd edition.*



Jonathan Stanley

### The Wills Laslett Lecture: Jonathan Stanley, National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child

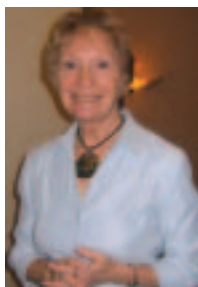
Jonathan gave a thought-provoking and demanding lecture late in the day, in keeping with the traditions of the Wills-Laslett Lecture. His talk evoked a good response from many in the audience. He contrasted the language and style of communication of those who now run our child care systems (engaging with children with SEBD) with the language (and possibly beliefs and values) of our forebears in our Association. The language of 'commissioning' (with its talk of procurement, purchasing, contracting, competitive or 'best value' tendering) leaves little room in LAs for consideration of the essentials of good child care and parenting. He believed that the five outcomes of the 'Every Child Matters'

agenda, which should be so dominant in what we do, tended to feature little in the considerations of 'the commissioners', apparently obsessed with finance and 'performance'.

In relation to the 6,500 children in English children's homes, it was deplorable that children benefiting from good residential placements were suddenly whisked away from these foster homes or children's homes because of financial considerations. He regretted the misguided '20 miles away from a child's birth family' rule, which could work against children's interests. It was against good child care for commissioners to be obsessed with 'bed occupancy' - many commissioners, or advisers favoured by government (e.g. de Loitte's) aimed for 100% 'bed occupancy' when good practice clearly showed that there was a need for leeway, a need to mix and match children in compatible groups if their needs were to be properly addressed and the 5 ECM outcomes allowed for. An 85% bed occupancy rate was optimal: 'When you bring people together it is not a mathematical calculation.'

He urged 'commissioners' to study and make allowance for the essentials of good residential child care such as essential listening and communication and the '8 pillars of parenting' (primary care and protection; secure attachments, making close relationships; positive self-perception; emotional compliance; self management skills; resilience; a sense of belonging; personal and social responsibilities). We had moved a long way in this lecture from SLCNs but the talk was very much about communication between the caregivers and how, were this improved, the SEBD of children in care could be better addressed.

*The NCRECC is hosted by the National Children Bureau, London: j.stanley@ncb.org.uk*



**Kate Ripley,  
Educational  
Psychologist,  
Hampshire**

This was another 'top notch' presentation, getting the Saturday off to a great start - full of challenging content, but

delivered with clarity and engaging humour. Kate cited studies indicating that an estimated 70% of children in PRUs and residential schools had SLCNs; also that 66% of children permanently excluded in Sussex had language difficulties. She regretted the tendency of professionals to focus on treating challenging behaviour rather than look at the SLCNs which so often helped to explain the tantrums, other behaviour problems and attention/arousal difficulties. She noted that language and behaviour problems in three year olds left

over half these children with behaviour problems at age eight. She gave insightful case studies showing that when particular children understood what was being asked of them their behaviour difficulties went away. One - about 'David' and his mother - was from some years ago. Kate quipped: 'You can tell how long ago it was, because it was her, the Mum, who was on medication...' She noted one study showing 64% of young offenders had difficulties with expressive language.

She outlined the need for adults and children to have 'personal narrative' skills, put crudely, the ability to engage in 'small talk', to pass the time of day, to make initial connections with people you do not know very well - or to explain away situations verbally e.g. children with such skills can get out of trouble at school in a socially acceptable way when explaining to teacher why they have not done their homework.

We were introduced to the importance of 'Feelings-State-Talk'. A toddler falls over and the caring adult - or caring child, brought up by such parents - with skills in FST, say with empathy 'Oh dear, you've fallen over and have hurt yourself.' They get inside the mood of the child. Too many children come to school with too little FST. FST varies enormously between families; one generation can pass on an abundance or a great paucity of FST to the next generation, socially disadvantaging them.

Kate then went on to an interesting sketch of language as a key self-regulator of people's behaviour. Low verbal ability hampers so many children with SEBDs' ability to evaluate, prioritise and choose appropriate responses to events in their lives. Most children with good language skills, will, in a milli-second, make an appropriate and pro-social response to a situation - but too often, not the child with SEBD and SLCNs.

Kate ended with two slides saying:

- Language is the key factor in self-regulation which supports the development of emotional literacy, fosters positive relationships and facilitates all social encounters;
- 'The limits of my language are the limits of my world' (Wittgenstein).

### **Professor Geoff Lindsay, University of Warwick**

Geoff Lindsay, the well-known trainer of educational psychologists, writer and researcher on a range of issues relating to special/additional needs, gave an essentially optimistic final presentation, which rounded off the conference neatly.

He outlined his important research project, a longitudinal study which started ten years ago, conducted with colleagues, but particularly Julie Dockrell of the Institute of Education, London. He has been following

the careers of a largish group of children, now young people (n=69; 54 had statements of SEN) with language difficulties from primary to post-16 year old. Perhaps surprisingly, given the very real barriers SLCNs can place in the way of the development of children, the outcomes for many of their sample are quite encouraging - subject to the essential prerequisite: such children must have access to appropriate specialist intervention through their childhoods.

Geoff's various graphs showing assessments made using the Goodman Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) at 8, 10, 12 and 16 years showed mixed outcomes which, on the positive side, indicated reducing hyperactivity as observed by teachers; the children not feeling they experienced much bullying (Geoff expressed well-founded doubts about the validity of much 'bullying' research, given adults' broadening concept of what constitutes bullying; adults see bullying where sometimes children see it as 'just part of life' - a topic for a different article); behaviour difficulties tending not to get worse; emotional symptoms were seen to increase at home but *not at school*; the self-esteem of children in special schools closer to the norm; a recovery of scholastic competence after age 16; academic outcomes modest but 'not as bad as might have been expected' and better than some early researchers in this area led us to believe.

## **Five key themes**

**[from the Bercow review of SLCNs  
- see Social Scene p 29]**

**The interim Bercow report, mentioned by various speakers at the Harrogate conference, identified five key themes:**

- **Speech, language and communication are essential life skills and a fundamental human right - they should be a priority for all in the system;**
- **Early identification of problems and intervention are essential to avoiding social and economic problems later in life;**
- **Services should be a continuous process from an early age - not just the odd sessions or for very young children - and designed with the needs of the family in mind, making them easy to access;**
- **Joint working between services and with families is critical. Local authorities, primary care trusts and other services need to cooperate more; and**
- **The current system is patchy - there is in effect a 'postcode lottery'.**

75% of the sample were continuing their education, mainly in FE colleges. A number of the sample had gone to MLD schools and were quite positive about the help they had received there [ editor: not a surprise to those who have studied the older research in relation to MLD schools]. Why was the picture not as bleak as might have been expected? Geoff suggested that it was in part due to 'compensatory interactions', helped by

additional support given in schools over the last two decades e.g. by TAs; also, perhaps controversially, because the standards agenda had led staff to expect more of children with SLCNs. In all, this was a measured researcher's presentation which left this writer and the vast majority of the audience reflecting on another good and enlightening 'key-note'.

## The workshops

### Our thanks to the following workshop presenters:

- Debbie Bailey, Alex Doe and Ben Ensom (Beckmead School, Croydon): **'Using therapy to communicate in an SEBD school'**.
- Andy Croft (writer in residence, Co. Durham): **'What Rhymes with SEBD?'**
- Alison Marshman (Worcestershire): **'Using Circle Time to Promote Emotional Health and Well-being.'**
- Barbara Pavey (University of Birmingham): **'Reading, Writing, Spelling and Challenging Behaviour: developing good practice.'**
- Frances Toynbee (N. Yorkshire): **'There's nowt better than a decent lesson with all your mates'.**
- Marguerite Watt (Worcestershire Children's Department): **'Communication Development with ICT: The Language for Learning Programme.'**
- Sue Cook, Emma Reed, Harry Smith and Shaun Ingyon (Meadows School, Co. Durham): **'Developing language and promoting cultural diversity through the use of story sacks.'**



Marguerite Watt...



the Worcester L4L Programme...



and 'Visual Timetable' Friend

- Karen Grandison (University of Birmingham): **'Pupils who refuse school: What can they teach us?'**
- Jane Johnson (dance and movement specialist): **'Movement Speaks - Step into Confidence!'**
- Lauraine Leigh (dramatherapist): **'Hey, you at the back there. Can you hear me? Listening with our different professional skills to the voice IN the child.'**
- Ann Loadman and Christine Brace (Sunderland LA): **'The role of puppets in reaching children with SEBD'.**
- Mike Mckee (Newham LA): **'Why doesn't he get it?'**



Mike Mckeeon



Well worth reading

**A good bookstall was provided by Worth Reading - note that SEBDA members can obtain discounts on books published by their sister company, Worth Publishing (including their popular books - 'Attachment in the classroom' by Heather Geddes and 'Inside I'm Hurting' by Louise Bomber).**

There was also a good display provided by ICan, who also contributed in various ways to the conference, with Melanie Cross (author of 'Children with EBD and Communication Problems') in attendance.

## Finally looking ahead to 2009 - dates for your diaries:

### PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT:

The 2009 National Conference/Study Course will be on

**Friday 27th and Saturday 28th March, 2009**

Theme: **Well-being, Mental Health and SEBD**

The Conference will be looking at this important area in the light of the government's review of CAMHS (due to report Autumn 2008) and changes to the national curriculum. We plan our usual mix of speakers and interactive workshops.

**Venue: The Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol**

**We are grateful to Routledge Taylor and Francis and to Priory Education Services for sponsoring the event:**



# Recently in the English Media

## 'Guardian' feature on successful heads includes Claire Lillis.

(29.1.08) It was good to see Claire, Head of Ian Mikardo (SEBD) School, Tower Hamlets and active in SEBDA London, featuring in this report on 'great heads'. Claire had won the 2007 'urban leader teaching' award. It was noted that she had appointed a social worker specialising in child protection as one of her deputies and also has two psychotherapists on staff: one for pupils and one for staff. All of the staff of 30 have psychotherapy supervision. Claire is quoted as saying: 'I know that a child isn't going to stab me because they have a relationship they don't want to damage, not because they fear sanctions.'

## Young deaths on the streets

(Sunday Times, 30.3.08) This article reports on alarming urban violence between knife and gun carrying youth in some areas of our major cities, which led to 37 murders in the last year in which victim and killer were both under 18. It focuses on a fifteen year old girl from Stockwell, S. London, who has lost no less than seven friends either killed through shootings or stabbings. Police say this is highly unusual, involving 'a bizarre set of circumstances.'

## White working class boys failing

(BBC web-site, 31.1.08) Government figures show only 15% of white working class boys in England got five good GCSEs including maths and English last year. Among white boys from more affluent homes - 45% achieved that level of qualification. Poorer pupils from Indian and Chinese backgrounds fared much better - with 36% and 52% making that grade respectively.

## School blanks out faces of pupils

(BBC web-site, 5.3.08) A primary school, in Clacton-on-Sea, is blanking out children's faces on pictures published on its website "for safety reasons". The headteacher said blurring children's faces underlined warnings the school gave about the potential dangers for youngsters on the internet. However, Chris Cloke, the NSPCC's head of child protection awareness, said: "Anyone posting photos of children on the internet needs to carefully consider the risk this poses to children. However, in this case the impulse to protect children's identity may have gone too far."

## MMR 'does not trigger reaction'

(BBC web-site, 5.2.08) Children with autism do not react differently to other youngsters to the MMR jab, a study shows. London's Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital found no difference in the immune response to the jab in a study of 240 children aged between 10 and 12. Fears about a link between the two were

first raised in 1998, prompting a drop in uptake of the vaccine, but that research has now been discredited. Studies since have shown there is no link and that has been confirmed again. The research, partly funded by the Department of Health and published in the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, is the largest of its kind.

## 'MMR doctor' accused of serious professional misconduct

(BBC News, 27.3.08). Dr Andrew Wakefield, whose 1998 paper in the *Lancet* (later 'disowned' by the journal) is thought to have prompted widespread media and parental concerns about the triple MMR vaccination and its possible links to autism, is defending his alleged irregular research methods at a hearing of the General Medical Council.

## Police urge cannabis regrading

(BBC web-site, 5.2.08) Senior police officers told government advisers that cannabis should be upgraded from a Class C to a more dangerous Class B drug. The Association of Chief Police Officers said reclassification would end confusion over the drug's status. Police said the reclassification would help them target organised crime gangs who are profiting from the booming trade in herbal cannabis cultivated in the UK. The reclassification would be accompanied by stiffer penalties, something that Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Home Secretary Jacqui Smith were believed to support. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs was reviewing the classification of cannabis because of concerns about a link with mental illness [but later decided not to re-classify it]. Cannabis use has fallen since it was defined as Class C four years ago.

## Cigarette display ban considered

(BBC web-site, 24.3.08) Displaying cigarettes in shops could be banned in England under government plans being considered to cut smoking and discourage children from starting. Ministers are also considering tougher controls on vending machines in pubs and restaurants.

## 'Working memory' impairment hurts 10% of pupils?

(BBC web-site, 28.2.08) One in 10 children might have a "working memory" impairment that causes them to do less well than expected at school, research suggests. A Durham University team identified the problem in 10% of more than 3,000 schoolchildren, across all ages. They say teachers rarely identify it, tending to label pupils as being unmotivated daydreamers. Working memory involves such things as remembering verbal instructions, new

names or telephone numbers. The common characteristics of sufferers are:

- Low abilities in literacy and numeracy
- Frequent failure to complete learning activities
- Frequent failure to remember instructions
- Normal social integration with other children, but
- Very reserved in groups, rarely volunteer information.

500,000 in English primary education could be affected.

## Handwriting under threat

(BBC 11.3.08) The art of handwriting is being threatened by the rise of the machine, research suggests. One in three children struggle with their handwriting and almost one in five slip into text message language when they do put pen to paper, according to a recent survey. Meanwhile, one in five parents surveyed for *My Child* magazine's Write a Letter Week said they last penned a letter more than a year ago. Professor Rhona Stainthorp, who is conducting research into children's writing abilities, says there is growing evidence those who write faster and more legibly get better marks. This is because poor handwriting itself is hampering a child's ability to express himself.

## New offence of corporate manslaughter into force this April

(TES, 22.2.08) Headteachers are said to be worried by this new threat to school trips/ outdoor activities. The offence is defined as 'a gross failure in the way activities were managed or organised that leads to a death'. Fines could be up to £1m.

## Unequal pay: LAs hit schools with unexpected backpay bills

('Guardian', 15.1.08) Schools are being told by their councils to cough up to the tune of around £1bn to pay the backpay arising from the 'single status' agreement reached in 1997. The latter recognised that generations of LA employees had been paid less for jobs primarily done by women, compared with work of equal value primarily done by men. Ten years on over half of LAs had not worked out the extent of the discrimination or worked out fair pay and conditions for a range of jobs - but are now belatedly facing up to the situation. Not having savings to draw upon,

headteachers are said to be making support staff - most of whom are women - redundant, to meet this situation.



Home Secretary Jacqui Smith

## Burger bars face ban near playgrounds

(‘Sunday Times’, 20.1.08)  
The campaign for healthier eating is believed to be undermined by easy access for pupils to burger bars. The Government wants planning permission denied for new fast-food outlets near schools. McDonald’s is selling more burgers than at any time since it arrived in Britain 34 years ago. Visits to McDonald’s in Britain increased by almost 10m last year and sales are growing at close to the fastest rate since the late 1980s.

## Airport-style metal detectors for schools

(‘The Independent’, 21.1.08).  
A Home Office initiative to install metal detectors in hundreds of inner city secondary schools (particularly in London, Liverpool and Birmingham) was announced, shortly after Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, made her oft-quoted remark about feeling unsafe to walk alone in London at night. Ms Smith said schools could ‘build on’ schemes by the British Transport Police to install metal detectors in busy railway stations. Apparently metal detectors have been used to good effect in some American schools for twenty years. *[There was much press coverage in this period of too easy access to cheap alcohol by teenagers and associated drunken violence and extreme anti-social behaviour.]*

## Do Wi-Fi networks in schools and other public places damage children’s health? Probably not but more research needed

(‘The Guardian’, 18.3.08) In May 2007 A BBC Panorama programme suggested that Wi-Fi wireless networks could be harming children’s health, reporting that wi-fi laptops emitted much higher levels of radiation than, for example, a mobile phone mast. Links were made with people experiencing headaches and other symptoms. Later statements from BECTA and the Health Protection Agency sought to re-assure workers in schools. The BBC also later concluded that the Panorama programme had probably been unbalanced. There are calls for further research in this area.

## Call to scrap ‘mosquito’ device

(BBC web-site, 12.3.08) A high-pitched device used to disperse teenagers is being challenged by campaigners, who say it is not a fair way to treat young people. There are estimated to be 3,500 of the devices, known as ‘the mosquito’, in use across the country. Their sound causes discomfort to young ears - but their frequency is above the normal hearing range of people over 25. The devices have proved popular with councils and police who use them to disperse groups of youths engaged in anti-



Mosquito

social behaviour. A new campaign called “Buzz off”, led by the Children’s Commissioner, and backed by groups including civil liberties group Liberty, is calling for them to be scrapped. Sir Al Aynsley-Green, the Children’s Commissioner for England says they should be scrapped as they infringe the rights of young people. Liberty director Shami Chakrabarti said the device had no place in a country which values its children.



Tax on Alcopops

## Tories plan ‘alcopops’ tax hike

(BBC web-site, 7.3.08) The Conservatives say they will raise tax on super-strength beer, cider and alcopops to tackle binge drinking if they win the next general election. Tax on alcopops would be trebled, but money raised would be used to reduce tax on low-strength beer and cider. The Tories’ want to hit the drinks they believe fuel yobbish behaviour, without penalising “sensible” drinkers. A spokeswoman for the Government responded by saying that there was no provision in European law for a separate tax on alcopops. She added that their sales were going down.

## Teachers ‘lacking abuse training’

(BBC web-site, 7.3.08) Three quarters of teachers believe they have taught children who have been physically abused, research suggests. But only 43% of the 2,000 teachers polled for the Times Educational Supplement said they were properly trained to spot abuse signs.

## ‘Building Schools for the Future’: Millions being wasted on new school buildings that fail to consider children’s services?

(‘The Guardian’, 18.3.08) Ty Goddard is Director of the British Council for Schools Environments (BCSE). The BCSE website gives case studies of various types of newly built educational centres. This article reports Goddard as saying: ‘I’m not aware of any guidance yet on the co-location of services within ‘Building Schools for the Future’ and requiring consultation of the people who use the space they want and need.’ This has to change - stakeholders are having their views overridden or ignored.

He fears valuable opportunities to make new-build schools fit for their many new purposes will be lost and professionals with genuine expertise will be alienated. There is a need for an advisory council on schools that can tell the secretary of state ‘without fear or favour’ what is going on. ‘Please do not fall in love with how a school looks. What’s more important than anything else is the process by which space is designed to serve teaching and learning, and the

children’s services that integrate with that.’ Procurement processes embedded in Building Schools for the Future are, he says, wasting enormous sums that could be spent on pioneering new facilities: ‘Bid teams spend millions on designs that are never used and the capacity needed within a local authority to cope with the Byzantine processes required in the procurement for Building Schools or the Future is just unrealistic. The government has said there’ll be a procurement review, which is welcome, but what I’ve seen so far is tinkering at the edges.’

He goes on: ‘If you want to carry on personalising and pacing learning to different children’s needs, you have to get sharper about acoustics, air quality, furniture, take account of what engineers tell you - and that’s where the culture change has got to come. The classroom has served us well, but now we need a ‘classroom-plus’ school - teacher and community and child centred.’



‘Classroom plus’ schools

## Human rights lawyers challenge exclusions

(‘Times Educational Supplement Cymru’, 21.3.08) The difficulties heads have in excluding pupils may be exacerbated by two human rights law firms, who are taking joint court action, arguing that heads should be allowed to exclude pupils only if their evidence of wrong doing meets the normal standard of proven beyond reasonable doubt. One case involved a 14 year old boy excluded for dealing cannabis and in the other a boy was excluded for carrying a knife. Neither the cannabis nor the knife was found and the lawyers are challenging the credibility of witnesses to the alleged offences.

## Veteran head laments ‘loss of childhood’

(‘The Independent’, 15.3.08) Tony Storey, OBE, Britain’s longest serving state school head - 37 years at The Hayfield School, Doncaster, is retiring at the age of 69. He spoke to Education Editor, Richard Garner: too many children, even in primary school, and encouraged by their parents, were trying to be young adults. He criticised modern curriculum trends and praised the value of outdoor education, which encourages adventure and involves sensible risk taking: ‘If something went wrong or they became homesick on residential trips, you’d put an arm round them to comfort them - although I suppose you could be accused of being a paedophile now.’ He is concerned by his 21st century successors, saying too many are ‘clones’ coming out of the National College for School Leadership with certificates to prove their leadership skills; ‘The walk around in their pinstripe suits and clutching their mobile phones - it’s quite frightening.’

## Testing puts a brake on pupil

**happiness** ('TES', 21.3.08) A TES survey of 2109 professionals revealed 75% believing the current test and exam regime hinders their pupils' enjoyment of school.

## A quarter of school defy ministers over reading

('The Independent', 15.3.08) Ed Balls, Children's Secretary, reports that a quarter of schools are still not teaching children to read with traditional methods (i.e. stressing phonics) despite a two year government campaign.

## Labour MPS try again to outlaw smacking

('D. Telegraph' 16.2.08) About 50 MPs have circulated a letter to colleagues arguing for this. DCFS said 'Almost 70% of parents were opposed to a ban. We will not ban smacking'.

## Pregnant women 'must drink no alcohol'

(various papers, 27.3.08). The Government body NICE has altered its previous guidelines which said that it was safe to drink small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy to this new position, endorsed by the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson. However, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists continue to say that there was no evidence that drinking small amounts does any harm.

## Educational Psychologist training - funding reforms flounder again?

('Children and young People Now', 9.1.08) Plans to revise the system came unstuck due to legal restrictions on how money is distributed. Last year the funding regime collapsed after a move from national to local level funding descended into which the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) described as an 'administrative nightmare'. The local-level system resulted in money being diverted to other council services and confusion about whether trainees' tuition fees would be paid. As a result fewer education psychologists were able to start training. In late 2007, LAs reached a deal with DCSF to return to a national approach, with the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) managing the funding. However, it then transpired that rules on how government money is handled prevented the CWDC taking on this role [*perhaps a way forward has now been found?*].

## Attack on Councils' plans to end Principal Educational Psychologist posts

('Children and Young People Now', 23.1.08). The Association of Educational Psychologists warn that the delivery of children's services could be at risk if plans to remove principal educational psychologist posts proceed.

# Reviewing Primary Education



Esmée Fairbairn Foundation sponsoring the primary review

## THE CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY REVIEW:

### 'A shattering failure of our masters'

'The Independent' (29.2.08) offered a critical leader containing this quotation, in the light of the various reports which form part of the Cambridge review. The latter claims to be the biggest investigation for 40 years. One of its reports claims 'a decrease in the overall quality of primary education experienced by pupils because of the narrowing quality of the curriculum and the intensity of test preparation'. The Independent leader says that the idea of a core national curriculum, as established by the 1988 Education Act was a good one but the project had been abused: 'At the heart of the problem is the meddling of successive education secretaries and various Whitehall departments in the curriculum, and the ever greater demands being made of teachers.'

The leader expands on the page 1 banner (in sensationalist tabloid style): 'Failed! Damning official report says political interference has stopped our teachers teaching, prevent children learning and set back the quality of education for a generation.' The policy of micromanagement from the centre has led, it claims, to teachers 'no longer being able to think on their feet, adapting lessons to particular needs. Instead the school day is choreographed from Whitehall.' A DCSF spokesman answered the critics, who include Steve Sinnott of NUT, by describing the review as 'recycled, partial or out of date. We do not accept these claims...The Government does not accept our children are over-tested.'

## Celebrity 'rammed down children's throats'

('The Guardian', 18.3.08) Prof. Robin Alexander, drew on the findings of the University's primary education review to tell a conference, that adults, via the media and advertising, are possibly to blame for a decline in children's happiness because they control a commercial work which 'rams celebrity down children's throats'. He reported widespread anxiety among adults about a perceived loss of innocence among children - although children themselves retain an optimistic view on their lives.

## Questions about primary school quality

(BBC web-site, 29.2.08) A narrowing of the curriculum has led to a decrease in the quality of English primary schooling, says the Cambridge review. "High stakes" testing of pupils has led to a system "focused on literacy and numeracy at the expense of the broader curriculum", it suggests. The government has defended its policies and denies that children are over-tested at school. The findings, from four primary review research reports, form part of an in-depth assessment of the current state of primary school education in England. One, compiled by Dominic Wyse from the University of Cambridge and Elaine McCreery and Harry Torrance at Manchester Metropolitan University, looks at the effects of an increasing government control of the curriculum between 1988 and 2007.

## DCSF 'Independent Review' of the Primary Curriculum

The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families has asked Sir Jim Rose to carry out an independent review of the primary curriculum. You are invited to provide evidence and comments to Sir Jim Rose on any of the five main aspects of the review set out in a questionnaire [see DCSF web-site].

## And finally...

### 'What Jamie Oliver has done for school dinners, Jeremy Paxman could do for underpants.'

(BBC Radio 4, 22.1.08) So mused presenters on 'Today' in the wake of Paxo's complaints to M & S about alleged decline in standards of their underwear.

**Prune DCSF pot plants!** Visitors to the sumptuous and glassy interior of the DCSF ('Dept of Curtains and Soft Furnishings?'), Great Smith St, London, first have to pass through what they might

mistake for Kew Gardens. It therefore comes as little surprise to learn (Times Ed., 28.3.08) that Ed Balls and Co. spend no less than £78,000 per annum on pot plants. This is three times the amount spent by the next 'greenest' department, the Ministry for Justice. Tory MP, Mark Hoban, had dug around to unearth these figures. He said, 'I think headteachers who find it increasingly stretching to manage their budgets will wonder whether the DCSF has got the right spending priorities.'

# Scottish News



Fiona Hyslop, Education Minister

## Educational psychology services extended to 'post school'

(from Scottish Govt web-site, 19.2.08)

Education Secretary Fiona Hyslop said that in building on their current nursery and school focus, educational psychological services would now cover the post school sector in all council areas (up to age 24). Post School Psychological Services are currently only delivered in 20 authorities. The move will ensure that all young people who need additional support, particularly at points of transition, are better served by effective partnership working with organisations such as colleges, Careers Scotland and training providers.

The roll-out across Scotland will extend the service to the remaining 12 council areas: Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Argyll & Bute, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland. The Scotland-wide scheme will cost approximately £1.4 million next year and will be funded centrally from the Scottish Government until 2010-11.

The roll-out of PSPS is a key action point in 'More Choices, More Chances', the Scottish Government's strategy for reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment and training.

PSPS provides consultation and assessment with young people who have additional support needs and, through multi-disciplinary working, supports and advises organisations.

## Continuing Government support for 'Schools of Ambition'

(from Scottish Govt web-site, 7.3.08) Fiona Hyslop confirmed that the Schools of Ambition scheme, involving 52 schools, is to be supported with £11.5 million over the next three years. Under the scheme, schools are supported through a three-year transformational programme, each receiving around £300,000 funding and additional support and challenge throughout. The schools are a mix of 'already high performing schools wanting to reach even higher', those that need to improve after poor inspection reports, and those that recognise they can 'move their performance up several gears'.

Participating schools are encouraged and supported to share emerging learning with their immediate colleagues and are committed to sharing with the wider community. A series of conferences, seminars and publications will be used to promote the lessons learned from this initiative.

## 'A Curriculum for Excellence' (ACfE) attacked by education directors and heads

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 14.3.08).

David Cameron, Vice-president of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, said the initiative required more decisiveness and leadership, calling for a shake-up of the management board (mainly peopled by civil servants). Larry Flanagan, EIS, called it 'the least resourced curriculum development I have ever experienced' although billed as the 'the most fundamental curriculum development ever.' Brian Cooklin, president of the Headteachers' Association of Scotland said: 'It needs clear leadership. Who's in charge? No one knows. There are a number of agencies doing different jobs, but no national direction or leadership in terms of a communications strategy.' Teachers want to know of the Curriculum's content and how to timetable it: 'People are past the stage of wanting bland assertions and statements'. Warnings were also given that teachers and parents do not feel involved in the development and there have been delays in disseminating information about it.

Professor Brian Boyd, in a later issue, defended the introduction of ACfE, saying bringing it in needed time.

## Standard grade to be axed

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 21.3.08).

TESS believes Fiona Hyslop, Education Secretary, and cabinet colleagues plan to bring in new qualifications to replace Standard grades at General and Credit levels and Intermediates 1 and 2 (levels 4 and 5 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework). Standard grade at Foundation level (level 3) would also disappear. The replacements will include the best features of the existing courses, would be unit-based and aimed at those who cannot, or do not wish to, take a given subject at Higher. There will also be exams in literacy and numeracy for all pupils in the December of S4.

Ms Hyslop wants to see the first three secondary years used for a broad general education, before pupils start selecting their choice of exam subjects in S4. She wants flexible and personalised learning in a range of qualifications in S4 -S6, which could include schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh's award. Elsewhere in this issue, the TESS editor notes that there has been talk of axing standard grade for at least five years, without decisive action.

## Exclusions from schools 22.6% higher in 2006/07 than in 2002/03

(from Scottish Govt web-site, 29.1.08).

Scotland's Chief Statistician published a range of statistics relating to exclusions from Scottish schools (see Table below). About 23,000 different pupils (three per cent of pupils) were excluded during the year. Various factors such as deprivation, having additional support needs and being looked after by the local authority increase the likelihood that a pupil will be excluded.

59% of those excluded, were excluded once in the year; 18% twice; 10% three times and 5% four times. 10 times more boys than girls were excluded from primary schools and 4 times more boys from secondary schools.

Table : Exclusions by type of exclusion, 2000/01 to 2006/07

	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Total all exclusions	38,656	37,442	36,496	38,912	41,974	42,990	44,794
Temporary	38,334	37,110	36,204	38,736	41,703	42,726	44,546
Total removed from register (1)	322	332	292	176	271	264	248

The figures showed a 14 per cent rise, compared to the previous year, in exclusions due to physical assault, though numbers are a very small proportion of the total exclusion figures.

**New guidance being written:** The government is currently preparing best practice guidance on exclusions and will consult on this later this year. Guidance on exclusions was last issued by the previous administration in November 2003. This marked the end of the national target to reduce exclusions by a third, removing pressure from teachers to artificially reduce exclusions.



Maureen Watt

Schools Minister Maureen Watt (on 29.1.08) said exclusion must always be a last resort. During a visit to Tulliallan Primary in Fife, where exclusions have been eradicated by promoting positive behaviour, Ms Watt said: "This government is extremely concerned about increasing exclusion rates and the further increase in violence as a reason for exclusion. We need comprehensive and reliable evidence to inform policy making. That's why we are consulting CoSLA about the best way to achieve this."

### Praise for Tulliallan Primary, Fife:

During the latest HMIE inspection of Tulliallan Primary, inspectors said: "Pupils' behaviour and manners were exemplary. The school used a highly effective system for managing pupils' behaviour and pupils promoted and demonstrated respect and tolerance towards each other."

### Single national body to improve services for vulnerable children

(from government web-site, 18.1.08) A single national body is to be established bringing together the various bodies involved in supporting, organising and delivering the Children's Hearings system, to improve the support given to vulnerable young people across Scotland.



Minister for Children and Early Years Adam Ingram said: "Bringing together the work of the Children's Reporter service, the delivery and administration of Children's Hearings and the recruitment, training and support provided to

Adam Ingram

Panel members into one body will ensure a stronger, more consistent service and better delivery across the country." He will work with CoSLA and other key interests on the detail of the changes. Isobel Hutton, CoSLA spokesperson on Education, Children and Young People welcomed the proposed national body.

### The History of Children's Hearings:

'The Children's Hearings system is Scotland's unique approach to dealing with children and young people in trouble or at risk. The system was created in the 1960s after it was recognised that young people appearing before the juvenile courts, whether they had committed offences or were in need of care and protection, had common needs.

The system is founded on the principle of local people from the children's own communities making decisions about how best to address children's needs. There are 2,700 volunteer panel members who are recruited through an annual national campaign supported by local campaigns. Panel members are carefully selected and undergo continuous training.'

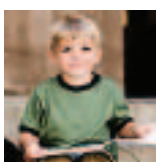
### 'Year of the tightened belt' says

TESS ('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 22.2.08) A TESS survey found that at first glance there seemed to be a generous deal for education for the coming year - with increases up to 16% in some LAs. However, much of the extra cash will be eaten up by pay and price rises and additional costs of transport, energy and

special needs. In practice, according to John Stodtr, general secretary of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, school spending is being squeezed and education authorities are being forced to make efficiency savings of 2%. Councils are also facing major new burdens such as implementing single status and equal pay agreements.

### Teachers' jobs at risk in some LAs

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 28.3.08) A combination of falling rolls and tight staffing allocations are leading to possible job reductions in Aberdeen, Renfrewshire, Highland, Borders and Glasgow. Some schools have apparently been 'overstaffed', a situation that will be less likely to continue. LAs seeking 2% efficiency savings appears to be common. Harlaw Academy, Aberdeen, is thought to be about to lose seven or eight teaching positions.



Active Literacy

### North Lanarkshire - 'reading scores soar when worksheets thrown out'

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 4.4.08). TESS reports in detail the encouraging results from North Lanarkshire's Active Literacy programme. The proportion of struggling readers was significantly reduced after three years of the intervention in primary schools. Traditional tales, magnetic boards and other tools are part of an active literacy programme that is making reading fun and is raising standards.

### New guidance on disclosure checks could reduce community use of/ parental involvement in schools

(Times Ed Supplement Scotland, 8.2.08). New Scottish Government advice means that anyone working or meeting regularly in a school - even when no children are on the premises - is legally obliged to have a disclosure check. The U-turn on this issue follows a re-examination of recent child protection legislation by officials and the terms of the 2003 Protection of Children (Scotland) Act. Before, the advice only required police checks when someone was appointed to a post or position where normal duties included childcare. The U-turn was criticised by the manager of the Scottish Parent Teacher Council, which has led a long-term campaign to make the disclosure system less restrictive, warning that there would be a huge impact on parental involvement.

### Abolish setting and narrow the attainment gap

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 14.3.08) - so argues Brian Boyd, Professor at University of Strathclyde and member of the ACfE



Kathleen Marshall

### Half children in care 'pushed out' at 16 - 'Sweet 16?'

(BBC News, 26.3.08 and TESS, 28.3.08) The report 'Sweet 16?' by Kathleen Marshall, children's Commissioner, says many youngsters vulnerable to homelessness, drugs, drink and unemployment, are being "pushed out" of the care system at aged 16 before they are ready. Ms Marshall claimed that, in many cases, children were being seen as a "troublesome burden" rather than "a vulnerable person to be nurtured, cared for and listened to". She added: "At just 16 years old - the very time that they need help to cope, adjust and find their place in the world - many are all but completely abandoned with little, if any, aftercare." The commissioner warned that leaving care early could bring children into "highly inappropriate settings" such as bed and breakfast accommodation or homeless hostels.

The report made 23 recommendations, including a call for "strong action" to change the culture that assumes 16 is the age for leaving care. It also recommended workers be trained and informed about young people's rights, so they can pass this information on to youngsters. The report also called for more semi-independent living units to be provided and for a ban on the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and homeless hostels to house those leaving care.

Figures showed that in 2007 there were more than 14,000 children in care in Scotland - 26% more than in 1999 and the highest number since 1982. Children should remain in care until 18 if it is in their best interests.

**Similar worries about children in care being 'pushed out' at 16 became big news in England in mid-April (BBC news, 17.4.08).**

review group.

### Independent research needed on value of restorative practice

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 7.3.08). Chris Holligan, education lecturer at the University of West of Scotland writes: "We simply do not know if restorative practice will deliver what it claims. The jury of the research community is out on that; what is needed is not research funded by government directly (that is the route of conflict-of-interest, especially when the work is conducted by organisations



depending upon a regular flow of external money), but truly independent research. Until that is produced, this initiative may be doing more damage - to the victims of bullying and violence.' He later writes that the practice could be 'deeply disabling for individuals, while claiming to be inclusive.'

### Respectme - Scotland's anti-bullying service, annual conference

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 7.3.08). Researchers from Queen Margaret University, joined colleagues from York University, in looking at nearly 2000 pupils in 14 north of England secondary schools. Nearly three quarters of pupils were found to play a role in 'bullying': sometimes as perpetrators or victims but most commonly as bystanders. More girls than boys were reported in the role of bystander.

### SEBD School gets poor assessment/ new SEBD centres in Glasgow

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 7.3.08) Cartvale School, Govan, for 10 to 14 year old pupils with SEBD was found 'unsatisfactory' by HMIE in its pastoral care, accommodation and facilities and other key areas. Pupils were not making sufficient progress in their social and emotional development. The build was not fit for purpose, staff morale was low with frequent turnover. Glasgow City Council said



immediate and robust action is being taken.



Maureen McKenna

Maureen McKenna, head of education services, said the council planned to model its multi-agency support for Cartvale on the separate learning centres for pupils with SEBD, it is creating in each of the five strategic planning areas in Glasgow. The first of these centres open in August at Ladywell School in Partick for secondary youngsters and Greenview School in Possilpark for primary children.



Susan McVie

### The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime

('Times Ed Supplement Scotland', 7.3.08). Ewan Aitken talked to Susan McVie, Senior Research Fellow at Edinburgh University and co-director of this longitudinal study of youth offending. This project is tracking an entire year group who entered Edinburgh's secondary schools in 1998. Susan has been interviewing these young people for ten years now, trying to make sense of their life-choices, why they have chosen to break or not to break the law. Labelling is thought to be a key issue: those labelled as white males from poorer areas are more likely to be seen as potential criminals and

so are picked up more by the police. Mrs McVie advises schools: avoid using pejorative labelling comments such as 'you are just like your brother' or 'I knew your sister'. School exclusion is the strongest indicator of conviction by the age of 19. Her findings suggest that 'really good teachers who can manage difficult kids end up in management, far away from the kids who need them.' Schools are often the one place of stability in a young person's life. She is critical of ASBOs as another form of unhelpful labelling.



### Youth work has huge amount to offer schools, in support of 'A Curriculum for Excellence'

('TES Scotland', 7.3.08) Anne Gibson (seconded from HMIE for 2 years), is the newly appointed national development officer for schools and youth work. TESS reports her concerns about cultural challenges getting in the way: teachers have to recognise that informal learning has a key role to play and youth workers possess skills worth tapping into: 'We often give up too easily on young people when the going gets tough. Youth workers can get in there and target groups with low self-esteem who lack confidence, who have relationship issues and who are experiencing difficulties at home. They know the drug misuse families, and they can provide advice, support, counselling and just be there for them.' Her first task as national development officer will be 'mapping' what is happening and then making good practice public knowledge. She wants inspirational examples flagged up in HMIE's Journey to Excellence programme and on the LTS website. These would include Alva Academy in Clackmannanshire, which funds a full time youth worker.

### Responding to the Active Schools Programme in N. Lanarkshire playgrounds

('TES Scotland', 7.3.08) There has been a huge rise in N Lanark schools organising playground games, with the figure rising from 33 to 121 (out of a total of 127 schools). The rise coincides with the authority's enthusiastic response to the national Active Schools programme. There are 46 Active Schools co-ordinators in N. Lanarkshire, encouraging children to get involved in physical activity, but they delegate that task to older primary pupils. It is increasingly common for P6 and 7 'playground leaders' to take young children for lunchtime games. Popular games include 'bounce tig', 'dragons' tails' and 'poison'.

**Parents reluctant to use child care** ('Children and Young People Now', 9.1.08). Less than half of parents in Scotland currently used childcare and 43%

of those who do use it for less than 10 hours a week, a survey says. Parents are sometimes not taking advantage of free childcare available to them. More than a quarter of respondents from a sample of 1000 said they trusted a family member more as a child care provider.

### Gangs and dangerous streets deny access to learning

('TES Scotland', 4.4.08) Gordon Shaw, head of a high school in Easterhouse, told a lifelong learning conference that some young people were virtual prisoners in their small communities, not allowed out by parents or afraid to cross the 'turf' of gangs from neighbouring areas, on the way to work experience or college. Colleges need to make 'satellite' provision to reach such youngsters on such people's own safe patch. He also referred to 'a generation of parents who, because of drug addiction or alcohol abuse, don't know what parenting is', referring to parts of the east end of Glasgow,

### Ten years are needed to deliver SNP pledge on class sizes

Scottish Government officials warn (Times Ed Supplement Scotland, 22.2.08). This revelation was seized on by Rhona Brankin, Labour's shadow education secretary, who noted that Labour had pointed out at the time of last year's election that SNP promises on class size were undeliverable and disingenuous (the phrase 'as quickly as possible' had been used).

### Dylan Wiliam - good planning achieves more than marking or small class sizes

(TESS, 28.3.08) Prof. Wiliam, of the Institute of Education, London University, after years of research on this topic, wrote to TESS. He said 'The research evidence on class-size shows that if you reduced class size from 30 to 20, you get an extra one two students passing a test. But if your classes are already down to 23, then you have already had most of that benefit. Reducing class-size further to 20, will increase your costs by 25%, once you've paid for all the new classrooms you'll need - for a negligible increase in student achievement...

...Marking the work of students is hugely expensive of teachers' time, and has little impact on student achievement. Far better for the teacher to spend time outside lessons planning good questions to use, so that the students' thinking can be corrected before they leave the classroom, and with the whole class in one go, rather than one at a time, after they have gone away...

...At the moment, teachers don't have enough time to work collaboratively to plan good lessons, which is why I suggested reducing teacher contact time to 15 hours, as a quid pro quo for larger classes. [see item in Welsh section below]

# Wales



Prof. Dylan Wiliam

## Class size not as important as good teaching

('Times Educational Supplement Cymru', 21.3.08). Work by Bangor-born Professor Dylan Wiliam, deputy director of London's Institute of Education, to an extent reiterates what other research has indicated for many years. Wiliam and colleagues have spent three years looking at class sizes in the UK and the USA. Good teaching and formative assessment are the vital factors for children over seven. Groups of 8 to 10 teachers meeting once a month for at least two years can be the most effective way of spreading good practice (as a part of formative assessment): 'Simply telling teachers what to do doesn't work' said Wiliam. However, children under seven need classes of 15. Wiliam allows that bad behaviour can act 'as a spoiler in a class of 30 pupils or more.' Instead of reducing class sizes, he suggests a different strategy:

The Welsh Assembly Government (echoing pledges in Scotland) made a commitment in its 2007 'One Wales' document to deliver radical reductions in class sizes, particularly for younger pupils.

## Prospect of strike divides teachers in Wales (as in England)

('TES Cymru', 4.4.08) The NUT one-day strike in protest at a pay offer of 2.45% in 2008 and 2.3% in 2009 and 2010 was scheduled for 24th April. TES Cymru claimed 'there was nowhere near the appetite for militant action as there was in the late 1980s.' Geraint Davies, policy officer for NASUWT Cymru said that 'Pay is so much better now than back then. The NASUWT Cymru believes what is being offered is fair in the current climate, but back in the Eighties teacher pay was very low.' The UCAC was overwhelmingly against a strike.

## Cash 'shortfall' for Foundation Phase roll-out

(BBC web-site, 20.3.08) A flagship programme to transform education for very young children in Wales could be massively underfunded, according to senior council officials. A report seen by BBC Wales' Dragon's Eye programme says the Welsh Assembly Government's funding plans are flawed. The document says millions of pounds for an early learning project called Foundation Phase will not be



Welsh Foundation stage

new money. Details are included in a report by the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW). Education Minister Jane Hutt recently announced funding of £107m over three years for the Foundation Phase. But the report by ADEW says only £41m of this is new money. The Foundation Phase had been described as one of the biggest changes in early years learning in a generation in Wales. It is designed to focus on learning through play for children aged three to seven, and improve staff to pupil ratios. It is currently being piloted and will be rolled out across Wales in September.



Jane Hutt

## Plea to stop children vanishing from Welsh schools' roles

The lead article in 'TES Cymru' (28.3.08) focused on a Welsh Assembly committee investigating the trafficking of children and women. The evidence for trafficking is said to be largely anecdotal but nonetheless very worrying. The Chair Joyce Watson, Labour AM, said schools must monitor the pupils on their rolls more closely. Jane Hutt, Education Minister, is to work with the Committee. The Assembly Government has issued draft guidelines for child agencies to recognise trafficked children. Cardiff has become the first LA in Wales to issue multi-agency protocols on child trafficking. Trafficking is thought to occur often near ports, with Ireland being used as a sea route for children brought into Wales illegally.

**Declining numbers of teacher trainees** ('TES Cymru', 28.3.08) Amid falling school rolls and a lack of jobs, trainees completing their initial teacher training fell by 7% last year. There was also a big than planned fall in students enrolling on first year training courses.

## The new Children's commissioner for Wales.

Peter Towler, formerly programme director for Save the Children in Wales, took up this post in March. Earlier in his career he worked in youth justice as



Peter Towler

Director of NACRO. His role is to act as an independent advocate for children and young people in Wales, championing their cause and promoting their rights and welfare. He is critical of the Westminster approach, which he sees as being out of step with the spirit of the UN Convention on the rights of the Child. See [www.childcom.org.uk](http://www.childcom.org.uk)

## Concerns over care staff

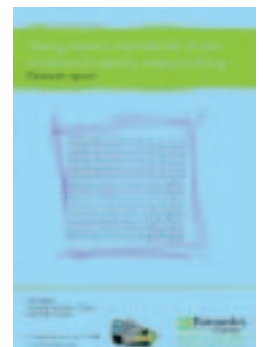
('Children and Young People Now', 9.1.08) The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) issued its first annual report since its formation in April 2007. In this it identified as areas of concern for children's homes: recruitment and suitability of staff; ongoing support and training; staffing levels; placement planning; behaviour and medication management; record keeping. In relation to fostering it identified recruitment and selection; foster placement agreements between placing authorities and carers'.

## Antisocial behaviour projects have positive impact

('Children and Young People Now', 30.1.08) Welsh Assembly Government projects to combat antisocial behaviour have reduced the number of incidents reported to the police. In Cardiff, a heightened police presence and support for park rangers reduced incidents of drug taking, sex in public and nuisance motorcyclists. Torfaen's Time to engage project involved young people at risk of offending taking on community projects, such as litter picking in return for rewards, reducing the ASB of those taking part apparently.

## Bullying

Worth a look - report based on small-scale study in S Wales on bullying of black and minority ethnic children by Barnardo's, called *Young People's experiences of, and solutions to, identity related bullying.*



The Barnardo's Report

# Recent Ofsted reports on successful SEBD schools



A visit to the Ofsted site predictably revealed some SEBD schools struggling to cope with their demanding roles, sometimes with acute staffing difficulties. However, there was also the good news, showing that the model of the special SEBD school can work as well as ever - if the correct ingredients are in place - and must be part of the continuing range of provision. Extracts from recent reports on three flourishing SEBDA member schools are given below [if I have missed your successful recent report, please let me know...]. **Ted Cole**



Children from Willow Grove take part in sporting activities with local Primary Schools.



The children took over the role of teacher on National Takeover Day.

Food technology is an important part of the curriculum



Dressing up as a Victorian Child

## 1.) Willow Grove Community Special School, Wigan

(SEBD; for age range 4-11)

Congratulations to SEBDA member, Valda Pearson and her staff on their impressive Ofsted, conducted near the end of 2007 (27th - 28th November). Willow Grove, Ashton in Makerfield, earned a Grade 1 for overall effectiveness. The reporting inspector wrote

“Willow Grove School is a haven of safety and security, friendship and nurture for some of the most traumatised and vulnerable children in the locality. It provides outstanding levels of care, guidance and support for children who have experienced fractured lives and emotional turmoil. The school provides an orderly, calm, welcoming and structured environment in which the children can begin to build positive relationships, develop trust in adults and start to work again on their education. As a result, they make outstanding progress in their personal development and particularly in their emotional well-being. In addition, their behaviour and enjoyment are outstanding: the children here are happy and they do not want to leave.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management: she is very well supported by her able deputies, the business manager and, increasingly, the middle management team...

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and there is much that is very good or better. The major feature of the teaching in this school is the care and deliberate attention that is given to teaching pupils how to interact with others and how to behave in society. This is underpinned by extremely good assessment of individual needs. For some pupils, the school's assessment reveals that, in part, the poor behaviour is linked to previously unidentified educational needs, such as moderate or specific learning difficulties. Whatever the outcome of the school's assessment, it puts in place a systematic and comprehensive programme of support, or initiates the move to a school better suited to the needs of the individual pupil.

When they enter the school, pupils' academic standards are very low. The school's detailed assessment procedures allow staff to identify the potential of individual students and establish a well matched education programme for them in the core skills. As a result, they make good progress. The curriculum is good... The academic curriculum is well planned, is closely aligned to the National Curriculum and offers a wide range of creative, enriching and practical opportunities for the pupils to develop their social skills... The school provides very good value for money.

**‘Personal development and well-being’ (Grade 1):** During their time at the school children make outstanding progress in their personal development and well-being.

Their behaviour, the reason for pupils being at Willow Grove, improves considerably during their time at the school. Behaviour in class and around the school is very good overall...

**‘Care, guidance and support’ (another Grade 1) ...** The inspector, Angela Westington HMI, wrote in the explanatory letter to the children: ‘I think your school is outstanding.’ She ends with: ‘By the way, you can tell the school chef that the meat pie and carrots were lovely!’

## 2.) West Kirby Residential School (secondary SEBD)

This non-maintained school is one of the very oldest special schools in England (catering for secondary aged pupils with SEBD), having existed for over 100 years. I visited the school eleven years ago as part of the national study of EBD schools and was much impressed. It had come highly recommended by Ofsted then, under Gareth William's leadership. It is good to see that more than a decade later, it is still highly praised. After his visit on 28 to 29th January, inspector Arif Hussain gave the school Grade 1 for ‘overall effectiveness of the school’. He wrote:

“This is an outstanding school providing exceptional value for money. Representative views from parents include, ‘We very much like the ethos of the school and its holistic approach to each individual child.’ Although attainment on entry to the school is very low, achievement is outstanding, given the

severity of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils come to terms with their difficulties and develop very high levels of self-esteem, which had been eroded due to previous disengagement in education. Progress is excellent across the school because the quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers develop excellent relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour particularly well. Consequently, pupils settle into learning routines very quickly and develop realistic and high aspirations about their learning. Stimulating presentation of work in lessons captures pupils' interest and so they enjoy working hard. The rich and vibrant curriculum meets pupils' needs very well. Pupils enjoy especially the chances to learn through practical experiences. Many pupils gain a good number of external awards and national accreditations of subjects during their time at this school. A high proportion of pupils gain very good grades at full GCSE level including English, mathematics and science.

The school works very effectively with outside agencies to ensure pupils' welfare and there are excellent links with other schools and colleges. For instance, almost all students in the sixth form attend colleges regularly to undertake vocational training courses, including construction skills, animal care, office skills and hair and beauty. These factors contribute to students' excellent preparation for the future.

Personal development is outstanding. Parents are very pleased, saying, for example, ‘The difference in my child is amazing. His independence, social and communication skills have improved and he is actually enjoying school for the first time in his life.’ Behaviour is outstanding. Enjoyment of school life is reflected in excellent rates of attendance across the school. Pupils develop very strong attitudes towards leading healthy lifestyles. Participation in sports is very good and the establishment of better sports facilities since the last inspection is helping to channel pupils' energies positively. Pupils adopt safe practices well. Managers frequently review the procedures to ensure that pupils feel free of bullying or name-calling. Pupils' contribution to the community is excellent. The school council has made many good suggestions leading to school improvement, for instance, regarding school uniform.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The impact is seen in exceptional progress made by the vast majority of pupils in many areas of learning, in their sense of well-being and in the very good reputation the school has in the community. The Principal provides

excellent leadership and together with a very effective senior leadership team ensures that the school remains a centre of excellence and that teaching is of the highest order. Governors have a firm grasp of educational matters and make an exceptional contribution to the school's work."

### 3.) Mulberry Bush, Witney, Oxfordshire



Congratulations to Andy Lole and team at the Mulberry Bush (one of the earliest supporters of our Association). Additional Inspector Sheila Nolan, found in March, 2008, that the school was in excellent shape. A Grade 1 was given for overall effectiveness. The AI wrote:

"Mulberry Bush is an exceptionally effective school that provides an outstanding quality of education and care for its vulnerable pupils. It very successfully achieves its aim of 'returning children to a stable home base and local school' through its multi-disciplinary approach to 'learning to live and living to learn.' Parents greatly appreciate the school's work. One commented that 'The school and staff are fantastic - supportive, caring and patient in helping our son.'

The school provides high quality care,

guidance and support for its pupils through a carefully integrated approach to education and therapeutic programmes. Residential care, psychotherapy, family support and education are very well co-ordinated to provide personalised programmes that ensure the best for each pupil. Mulberry Bush's greatest success is that, usually within a three-year period, pupils manage the transition to family life and schools local to their homes. Excellent boarding provision contributes much to this success, as does pupils' regular contact with their home bases. Because of the very close links between school and the boarding houses, pupils move seamlessly between provisions.

Mulberry Bush lays great store in maintaining a safe and secure environment where pupils can learn to trust adults and each other. As a result, pupils make great strides in their personal development so that it is good by the time they leave. Pupils' satisfactory behaviour and understanding of how to keep safe represent immense improvements from their starting points...

...Excellent teaching and purposeful individualised support allow pupils to learn successfully and grow confident in their academic tasks. The management of pupils' behaviour is exemplary, as is teachers' pursuit of interesting tasks to capture the pupils'

attention. Classrooms are lively and colourful with excellent celebratory and thought-provoking displays. Whole-school arrangements for pupils' academic guidance are also very effective. This information, coupled with that from individual treatment plans, is used carefully to inform lessons.

Mulberry Bush has sustained and improved its good practice noted at the last inspection. This owes much to the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the committed staff and the vigilance and expertise of the Trustees and the Director...

#### Effectiveness of boarding provision (Grade 1)

"Boarding provision at Mulberry Bush is excellent. Accommodation is bright, airy and cheerful and very well maintained. The most recent inspection of boarding provision in September 2007 indicates that all aspects are above the national minimum standards for this provision and almost all are outstanding. Pupils are safe, happy and well supervised, both indoors and out, with play spaces carefully managed. The very good teamwork between senior school and care staff managers ensures boarders' needs are met well in either setting".

**NB: Romans Field School, SEBD primary, Milton Keynes** - also well done on a good inspection in March, 2008.

## Jenny Mosley : SETTING UP AND RUNNING CIRCLES OF SUPPORT



*Before I felt grey, on the edges and nobody noticed me. And now – it's like a painting. I'm in the middle and painted in bright colours.*

**James Howlett - 9 years old.**



### Background to Circles of Support

Weekly circle times have long been used within schools to support teachers and children in managing issues affecting the whole learning community. Circle time has evolved over the years because it is found to promote better relationships, positive behaviour and self-esteem.

The 'Campaign for Learning' supports a great deal of research and currently supports several projects researching Jenny Mosley's Quality Circle Time model (<http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk>) (Learning to Learn in Schools, 2005).

Early results from the circle time research showed many different aspects of the implementation of these programmes, and amongst the comments from schools received were that:

- Attainment in numeracy and literacy was above expected level.

- Implementation of circle time programmes had a major impact on the class, all children had time to reflect on feelings and environment.
- Children more aware of their readiness to learn and of their resilience in coping in the learning environment when there were other things going on around them.
- Increased emphasis on choices helped modify some inappropriate behaviour.
- Research showed boys' scores had raised.
- Quieter children became more comfortable with speaking.

Circles of Support were designed to provide a more intensive circle time for children who may struggle to access or completely benefit from mainstream approaches. In many cases, these children need to regain or reinforce:

- their sense of self-worth,
- a feeling of control over their behaviour and actions,
- a positive new image,

- a programme to develop emotional and social skills,
- a guarantee of some success within school,
- the offer of some therapeutic time within school.

As early as 1988 Circles of Support were being researched in secondary school by Jenny Mosley (Mosley, 1988) and since then they have been used in hundreds of schools. More recently, the DfES released their Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme (DfES, 2005). Within this programme, small group work called Sliver Set is promoted with similar aims and methods.

### What we recommend is in place for all children before schools consider the introduction of Circles of Support

Schools can take very positive steps to minimise the need for intervention. We recommend the introduction of a whole

school system to support communication within school and also to promote children's social development and self-esteem. Such a system would:

- support all children with proactive weekly listening strategies;
- use agreed strategies and incentives to reinforce boundaries and values;
- routinely celebrate positive behaviour so that it is accepted and enjoyed as 'the norm';
- ensure the young person is offered daily positive lunchtime support. We advocate a Community Task Force so they are busy and engaged positively and not vulnerable to their own or others' behaviour.
- support and listen to staff within school so that no-one feels isolated or 'stuck';
- create an open forum within mainstream circle times where children can safely share their feelings and ideas;
- enlist the help of other staff to help manage the child's day;
- seek professional support and advice to help children with their needs.

## So, what are these smaller Circles of Support?

Structured circle times for small groups of children. They consist of a series of group meetings run by two adult co-facilitators for a group of children with varying needs. Two facilitators are recommended so that they can work together, plan together and take over from each other during the sessions if one of them becomes pushed to their limit. The sessions are led by the needs of the children most needing support and the overlying aim is for children to be able to enjoy the activities and to become actively engaged in a journey of social and emotional growth.

### CIRCLES OF SUPPORT:

- Involve a group of children including four or more children with greater social and / or emotional needs plus some children with good social and behavioural skills to act as role models (the group should not consist of more than ten children);
- Involve pre-interviewing each child, who then agrees to come to the group;
- Enlist two adult facilitators who plan the session, hold the sessions then find time for de-briefing and planning future sessions;
- Take place in a quiet room with a 'do not disturb' sign on the door;
- Evolve ground rules agreed by the children and adults to keep everyone emotionally safe. They might include no "put-downs";
- Have a pre-structured set of activities, carefully planned to meet the children's needs, that could be drawn up with the facilitators and circle representatives;
- Encourage advocacy within or outside the group as a guiding principle for the children and the adults.

## Guidance on setting up Circles of Support

As with many initiatives within school, the key to succeeding with something new is to plan carefully, keep all people in the news-loop and focus clearly upon the aims of the work. In brief:

### 1. Get everyone 'on board'

Enlist the support of all key people in the child's team around him or her so that everyone has knowledge of your plans. Hold regular meetings with the child's tutor or class teacher with the child present. He or she needs to see that the Circle of Support is part of a continuum of provision; otherwise they will stereotype their teachers as 'baddies' and small group facilitators as 'rescuers'.

### 2. Choose your circle of children carefully

Decide which children will be taking part in the circle. Ideally you need:

- Between two and six children with additional needs;
- Between two and four other children who may benefit from small group work but who have good social skills;

Mixing children from different classes and age groups works well. Children need to know why they have been chosen, so we recommend an interview with the facilitators first to empower the child and help them make a conscious decision to become involved with the group. Parents of children invited to attend the sessions should also be contacted to inform them and listen to any concerns.

### 3. Referral procedures

Decide upon procedures to enlist the children for the group. Children may be referred by teachers, other adults in school, parents or they may also refer themselves. All adults who work with the child should discuss their attendance and be aware of this intervention.

### 4. Adult facilitators

Decide which adults will be taking part in the circle. Ideally there are two adult facilitators (class teachers, SENCOs, behaviour support staff, teaching assistants or project workers). At least one adult facilitator should be in school for much of the week in case a child needs to refer to them between sessions. Facilitators should be good at planning sessions, enthusiastic, good listeners and able to respond positively to the children and co-facilitator. The facilitators should work well together, and be able to take over from each other within a session to give each other a break. It is important that the facilitators work with the teacher and do not end up on opposing sides so that the class teacher is seen to actively support the child's attendance at the Circles of Support.

### 5. Timetable the sessions

The sessions need to be timetabled into the week, to run at the same time as class circle times, or avoid them depending on

what the teachers wants. Each session lasts up to forty-five minutes, or a shorter period to start with. Intervention would normally run for one term, but some children may benefit from a longer run.

## 6. Evaluating Circles of Support

The question of assessing work of this nature is usually a fairly complex one. Many teachers are happy to see the results for themselves. Others may look at the results of all their strategies and hard work in terms of improved standards of behaviour or academic effort. Some may wish to evaluate the programme more fully and their school may have assessment tools that they are comfortable using. There are many evaluative tools available, the following are given a brief resume in "They're Driving Me Mad" by Jenny Mosley and Zara Niwano (2007):

- The Boxall Profile
- Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
- The Harter Self-perception Profile for Children
- Pupil View Questionnaire
- Draw and Write (Noreen Wetton)
- NFER Emotional Literacy – Assessment and Intervention
- Affirmative Statements
- The Mosley Behaviour Questionnaire for Pupils, Teachers and Parents / Carers (unvalidated)

It is worth noting that some questionnaires are validated and the results can be used more statistically. Others are useful for formative assessment. Before choosing a method, think in what ways the results of your evaluation might be used. The SEAL tool kit (DFES 2005) contains a series of useful "I can" statements suitable for formative assessment.

## Running Circles of Support

### 1. Planning the sessions

The most important activity at the start is careful planning of the sessions' focus by the facilitators. Schools often choose self-esteem first as a focus as this is a common underlying issue, however sometimes a focus such as anti-bullying, anger management or making friends is more appropriate. Children's needs are the most important factor here. You should also consider if children in the group have additional needs and the practicalities such as how children will get to and from the sessions. A series of session plans have been well documented and are ready to use in the book "They're Driving Me Mad" by Jenny Mosley and Zara Niwano (2007).

### 2. Sitting in circles

Circle sessions are built around a circle of chairs but some children are not yet good at sitting on chairs and feel restless, playful or self-conscious. Therefore you can start off with floor-based activities and games, but with the circle of chairs round the edge for security. It is beneficial if some of the session can be on the chairs to get children

used to using them. Some great floor-based activities can include using beach balls, giant board games, junk modelling, creating pictures or relaxing.

## 2. Structuring the session

A well-planned and carried out session will be pacy, full of ritual to help children feel comfortable and vibrant and imaginative to keep children engaged. We use a Five-Step model for a full Circle of Support.

Children who are not used to circle time sessions may benefit from using just three steps to start with until they are more familiar and able to participate for longer. A full session can last 50 – 60 minutes: but once again you may need to start off with shorter sessions to slowly build up relationships, motivation and participation. A shorter session could consist of:

- A Step One game
- A Step Two, warming up activity
- Back to a Step One game to finish

Children will feel more comfortable with the sessions at first if the session starts with the last game that was played in the session before.

## 3. The Five Steps Approach

### STEP ONE

#### Meeting up and playing a game

This opening game is a warm-up activity to relax and engage the children. Often the game will involve mixing the children up so they are sitting next to someone different. The games are fairly quick to play and help to energise the children hopefully without them getting too excited.

### STEP TWO

#### Warming up breaking the silence

This is a very straightforward and non-threatening opportunity for children to listen to others and speak. By passing round a speaking object, children are given the beginning of a sentence, for instance “my favourite game is...” and are asked to add their own idea. Children may say ‘pass’ and not speak if they wish. If children are very shy of their own ideas, you could tell them the day before what the round is going to be so they can think up their idea without being ‘put on the spot’.

### STEP THREE

#### Opening up – exploring issues that concern the class

This step is slightly more challenging, but hopefully children are more relaxed by now. Children are encouraged to put their thumbs up in a discussion about something relevant to the group. They can practice turn-taking and problem-solving. Children can be encouraged to ask for help “I need help because...” and others can offer to do something to help “Would it help if I ....?”.

Open forums utilise puppets, role-play, stories and other creative metaphors. Many circle time books and resources are available for these purposes.

### STEP FOUR

#### Cheering up – celebrating the positive

This is an opportunity for children to give

praise to each other and thank one another for what has been achieved in the session. This step can be used for children to learn a new game, playground activity or song.

### STEP FIVE

#### Calming down – bridging children forward

This step calms children down ready for their next school activity. The closing ritual at this step would usually be something gentle, like simple breathing and relaxation techniques using calm music or a rain stick. Children then learn how quiet times can be happy times.

## 4. Ending your circle

If you follow the five steps, your circle needs to be drawn to a natural close on a calming activity, like a simple relaxation exercise. However, if you are running a shorter session, you can bring it to a close with a small but calm, unhurried round along the lines of:

“One thing I enjoyed about today’s circle time is...”

“One game I would like to play again would be ....”

When the Circle of Support has finished, we recommend that at least one adult is available in case any children have a personal concern. If now is not a good time, perhaps tell children when you might be available for a short period during the day. It is really important to bring children and teachers and facilitators together every two to three weeks to thank the teacher for suggesting the children attends the sessions (which brings the teacher on board) and to ask the child what they would still like to learn.

## 5. Reflection time for facilitators

The facilitators need to build in time to reflect on the sessions and help to inform planning for future sessions.

## 6. Introducing ground rules to the Circle of Support

We have found that the best time to introduce rules is not during the first couple of sessions. The first sessions need to be a taste of enjoyment and engagement for the children. Children are more likely to follow the rules once they realise they enjoy the sessions and want to be a part of them.

It is best to brainstorm the rules with the children, and their own rules usually fall into the following categories:

- physical safety (being gentle),
- emotional safety (being kind),
- respect for each other (listen well),
- concentrate on the task in hand (work hard),
- respectful of the environment (look after things).

Children may need to be guided as to how to talk about other people in the sessions.

We usually have the rules that no-one may be named and talked about in a negative way. So the child may say “someone calls me names in the playground” but cannot name a name. Children can name themselves and ask for help and are then praised for their honesty – but cannot denounce others in the group. In one to one time or ‘bubble time’ they can be more explicit.

## 7. Introducing consequences

It is worth looking at introducing consequences to breaking the agreed rules. You can ask the children what they suggest, and their answers usually include the following:

- verbal warning,
- visual warning i.e. a warning card or a note on the board
- time out with a sandtimer
- lose the privilege of coming to the group next week

It is also well worth reminding children that there are rewards if they keep the rules, for instance:

- keep the privilege of coming to the group each week,
- use of encouragers, like a commendation at the end
- of the session for working towards their target.

Special incentives can also be used like offering a certificate or other forms of praise.

## 8. Ending a series of Circles of Support

Ending the sessions empathetically is an extremely important part of this intervention. It is best to ‘bridge’ children back into classroom circles times by gently re-introducing them. The child can feel a sense of loss from leaving the more intimate circles and there are steps that can be taken to minimise this. It is best if one of the small circle facilitators goes to mainstream circle time sessions. Games that are familiar from the small circles can be taught and played to the class, and a more confident child may like to help explain their new game to the class. For children who have experienced warmth and belonging in a way that made them feel special and good, this does need to be treated with care and the best place to start is by talking to the child and explaining the situation. Children from the smaller circle can be encouraged to become ‘the teacher’ in the mainstream circle by teaching the class new games and activities.

## Putting theory into practice – small Circles of Support are underpinned by experience within school and research

Exploratory findings from early action research projects conducted by teachers on

Masters courses at Bristol University School of Education over a decade suggest that small Circles of Support are invaluable for pupils. In particular:

- Year seven pupils were shown to have an increased perception of their own social acceptance (Lieberman, 2003) after a ten-week period of small circle work.
- In 1991, Kath Shaw set up peer support groups (Shaw, 1991) in response to the Elton Report. She describes how the school helped a number of Year 9 and 10 pupils with behavioural and adjustment problems.
- Franks (2001) looked at the cycles of negative attitude and behaviour that can arise in young people. This action research project worked with a group of 8 boys (mostly year 6) with EBD through a small Circle of Support. Each structured group session focused upon one aspect of emotions and feelings; this work was shown later to help these boys to express their emotions. There were also indications that the boys' behaviour in class showed an improvement.
- Young women, referred for having low levels of self-esteem, perceived themselves as being more competent and confident as a result of participation in Circles of Support (Morris, 1998)
- Small Circles of Support have also been used successfully in an action research project in Stirling, the Compass for Life project (Stirling Compass for Life, 2004) working with young men aged 14 – 25 years through a multi-agency approach. The intervention helped them become more self-aware and develop their thinking and perception of the world around them.

It is as well to note that deep-rooted problems experienced by children can take a longer period than most research projects last, before a measurable change can be noticed. Also that in short-term intervention studies of this nature children become more reflective and aware of their feelings so a self-esteem assessment too can indicate a lower self-esteem or social skills score due purely to their increased knowledge and experience of how they are feeling! In reality, their emotional literacy, resilience and ability to seek help might well have increased significantly.

We believe that Circles of Support across the country have already helped many children. SEAL small group work recommendations will also encourage this approach. We are always looking at new ways of studying and assessing such practical work and would love to hear from anyone who has any research ideas or projects.

However, for the teachers to look after their own self-esteem and energy levels is of paramount importance. We recommend that all teachers, especially those working

**I used not to have many friends 'cos they didn't know much about me ... but in the circles they got to know me, like my style and now I really am inside."** Pupil aged 16

**For more details of Jenny Mosley's Quality Circle Time model, the circle time shop and details of training programmes, see [www.circle-time.co.uk](http://www.circle-time.co.uk) or telephone 01225 767157.**

with behaviour that challenges, are encouraged to engage in small circles of personal or professional support for themselves. They need to find their own ways of boosting their self-esteem. This way, they may have the energy, creativity and resourcefulness to give the very best to the children in their care.

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# PEER MENTORING REPORT

from The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation



## Cath Mercer, Press Officer for the National Peer Mentoring Pilot.

In early March, the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) released the findings of an independent report on the National Peer Mentoring Pilot that took place from September 2006 - March 2008 in 180 schools across England. Its press release claimed that over the course of the pilot, more than 14,500 young people were actively involved, working together in schools to tackle issues such as attainment, transition, bullying, behaviour and attendance. 97% of all the participating schools reported improved pupil ability to cope with school life with 96% recording improved pupil confidence!

The press release continues:

"Peer Mentors in schools are providing 'a unique and vital level of support helping their mentees improve not just their grades but also their behaviour!'

"In many instances, results have been so positive that, with the support of the Head Teacher, the scheme has been embedded across the whole school. Having a Peer Mentor can offer vital support during pivotal landmarks in a young person's life such as dealing with a bully, bereavement, parents' divorce or illness. Mentees are aware and grateful of the benefits this additional level of support gives them, and many go on to become peer mentors themselves.

**"I was so happy to receive the news I had been chosen as a peer mentor**

**...we were taught skills such as how to communicate with others, what advice to give, the boundaries to set and through the training found myself becoming a much more confident and approachable person."**

*Sophie Y10 Mentor, Bramcote Park Business & Enterprise School, Nottingham*

Initially, the intended outcomes of the pilot were socially and academically quite specific. However, as schemes evolved, many went on to unearth, address and support a whole host of other emotional and social issues including self-harm, teenage pregnancy, language and culture.

At the outset of the pilot, 180 schools successfully applied to take part, these comprised of a broad mix of both urban and rural schools from ten regions across England. The suggested format was that 20 mentors were matched to 20 mentees

and training given to both parties to ensure effective and realistic outcomes from both sides. Report findings indicate that it is this matching process that is integral to the success of a programme, that same gender matches tend to work best and matches between pupils with similar interests and hobbies.

**“Surprisingly and significantly, we have witnessed that it is not always the high-achieving, most academic students that have proved to be the best peer mentors; more often it is those students with some life experience of their own who are most capable of listening, understanding and having true empathy with what the younger ones are going through”.**

*Deborah Wynn, Regional Peer Mentoring Coordinator, Manchester & Cheshire*

Also key to the success of a Peer Mentoring programme is the level of formalisation it is given in school. A well-publicised and ‘visible’ programme held at regular times in specific open venues (libraries, halls etc) with the support of all teaching staff works better than more casual arrangements.

Sherife Tayfun, Behaviour Support Programme Manager at Hornsey Girls School in North London has pioneered peer mentoring in her school to the degree it is now an integral part of the school vocabulary.



Beverley Hughes

**“The success of peer mentoring can play a part in challenging that negative stereotype and I would encourage all involved to tell their story and help redress the balance.”**

*Beverley Hughes MP, Children’s Minister, October 2007*

“The peer mentoring programme needs to cater for everyone so we need to think carefully about the language of the materials we use, cultural bias and influence, for example body language, all needs to be taken into consideration when putting our programmes together.”

With over half of Hornsey Girls’ students from ethnically diverse backgrounds and with over sixty different languages spoken in the homes of the students, a vital element of the peer support at Hornsey is to reach out to EAL students.

With Peer Mentoring still a relatively young concept in UK schools, marketing the programme effectively to both parents and other teaching staff has proven to be as important as marketing to the students themselves. Note books, diaries and evaluation meetings are also helpful for logging results and other ‘evidence’. Whilst the Peer Mentors felt confident and secure from their training, they still preferred that the scheme coordinator was ‘around’ during

the meetings to help with any issues that may crop up beyond their own capabilities, further reflecting how seriously these young people take their role in school.

*Read the Independent Evaluation of the National Peer Mentoring Pilot in full at [www.peermentoring.org.uk](http://www.peermentoring.org.uk)*

**The Mentoring and Befriending**

**Foundation:** Cath Mercer, Press Officer for the National Peer Mentoring Pilot explains that the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation is the national strategic body which operates across England offering support and guidance to mentoring and befriending programmes.

Comprehensive resources, training and publications can be found at [www.mandbf.org.uk](http://www.mandbf.org.uk);

T: 0161-787-8600 Fax 0161-787-8100  
1st Floor, Charles House, Albert Street, Eccles, Manchester, M30 0PW

Cath Mercer: T: 01477 549 859 M: 07765 960089 E: [cathm.mercer@btinternet.com](mailto:cathm.mercer@btinternet.com)

**Teacher- pupil relationships: feeling liked and valued /engagement through entertainment.**

**Peter Lloyd Bennett, Educational Psychologist**

After several years of teaching and working as an educational psychologist I continue to find the issues around what constitutes behaviour difficulties in pupils interesting and challenging. There is still no generally agreed definition of behaviour difficulties, behaviour which is tolerated in one classroom or setting may not be tolerated or found acceptable in another setting or classroom. The debate regarding the relative influences of nature/ nurture on behaviour difficulties is unlikely to be resolved by educational, psychological or medical research while processes in the education system identify certain pupils as having social emotional behavioural and attachment difficulties. I have never met a child or young person who exhibits challenging behaviour without the occurrence of environmental triggers even if those triggers are quietly being asked to complete a routine curriculum task or remain in a classroom with an adult and several other young people.

All children and young people, including those described as having behaviour difficulties, who I have met in mainstream and special schools respond to being liked and valued. Pupils’ learning and behaviour are inextricably linked in classroom environments and the importance of the teacher/ pupil relationship should never be underestimated. The increasing use of information technology in our daily lives promotes electronic communication and reduces interpersonal communication.

Young people who attend schools may have limited opportunities for face-to-face interpersonal communication outside educational communities. The maturational stage of development for pupils who transfer to secondary schools is one of the critical factors in their ability and willingness to engage with the curriculum.

Recent observations of Year 7 pupils suggest that an influential factor in the education of young people may be an engagement with being entertained. The source of engagement/ entertainment can be the curriculum, the teachers or interactions with other pupils. When teachers and other pupils are the focus of attention, learning through engagement with the curriculum suffers.

At the source of pupils’ learning and behaviour is the teacher/ pupil relationship and the positive emotional bond or lack of it between the teacher and the pupils. These issues of engagement through entertainment as well as teachers and pupils being liked and valued are rarely specified in educational research or government policies. These factors should be recognised as being at the heart of pupils’ learning and behaviour in all educational processes including processes that involve identifying certain children as having social emotional behavioural and attachment difficulties.

Peter Lloyd Bennett Chartered Educational Psychologist

[peter@lloyd Bennett.freemove.co.uk](mailto:peter@lloyd Bennett.freemove.co.uk)

**Children with SEBD and ‘high culture’**

**Gavin Weedy**



**Gavin Weedy, Head of PSHE and Citizenship at Goldwyn Community Special School, Kent crosses swords with John Humphries.**

I am sure that we [working in SEBD schools and PRUs] all have pupils who would love to think they were going to get “high” culture. But after explaining what it means in non-street-speak, would they be any less enthusiastic? I doubt it. Why has it taken the Government so long to realise what we already knew? Namely that access to high quality culture is a good thing - including for the children we work with?



I have been working for close on 21 years with SEBD pupils up and down the UK. In that time I have always invited pupils to share the experiences that I enjoy, relating to music, culture and the arts. Given that I am somewhat of an evangelist when it comes to opera and classical music this was the obvious place to start.

Working in residential schools, it was relatively easy to do this as the late nights could count towards extraneous duties and other staff were happy to accompany to get out for the night! We would think nothing of driving from Bude in Cornwall up to Bristol to see Welsh National Opera. Currently, I am taking pupils to the winter season at the Coliseum in London to watch English National Opera. This will be interspersed with trips to the Royal Opera House and The Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury. Earlier last term a great day out, was had at Glyndebourne.

I don't dumb it down: the children get what I get. They read the synopsis - with help if needed. We may research the composer, story or other material. We may not. They drive it forward. The point is to offer with enthusiasm the things YOU hold as valuable. If it is good enough for you, then why not for them? Believe me, sitting discussing the merits of operas in the vernacular versus translation is a truly wonderful experience with a pupil who

might have told you where to go if you asked them the time six months previously.

Ticket prices can be a major stumbling block but you can beg and scrounge and whine and look for pity at box offices. Failing that, write to the top brass at these establishments. Also many outfits do schools matinees etc. We had two boxes at Covent Garden for £6 each!

Granted you may get home at two in the morning and look like death warmed up, but what of the memories and inspiration for the pupils? We didn't get in this game to have an easy life, so it's just extending it that little bit further.

All of the London museums are free these days - grab a bus and drive there! Get a railcard. Let the kids organise it. It's not that far wherever you are! Take a chance, do the risk assessment (groan!), negotiate the cheap seats and go. Oh, and by the way, John Humphries ('Today' programme Radio 4) recently said to an interviewee, discussing behaviour difficulties and approaches to education: "Take them to the Royal opera? Are you seriously suggesting that?" Yes I b\_\_\_\_ well am! I can do SEBD too!!

**Further details from  
www.goldwyn.kent.sch.uk  
Tel: 01233 622958**

## Pupils' creativity and cultural experience

(BBC web-site, 15.2.08)

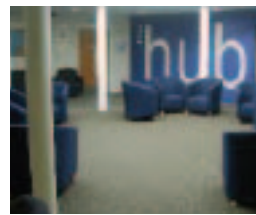
Assessments of children's creativity are proposed under plans to boost the "soft skills" employers want. Creativity has featured increasingly in the government's policies for England's pupils but progress is not measured. Ministers believe creativity not only has a benefit in its own right, but can also raise academic standards. The government says it is monitoring work by the exams watchdog on how best to measure children's creative abilities in schools.

The plans were revealed in the government's response to a Commons education committee report on an initiative called Creative Partnerships, which brings artists and other creative professionals into schools. The report says "Ofsted associate Creative Partnerships with improved literacy, numeracy, ICT, self-confidence, team-working and an ability to show enterprise and handle change." There is also evidence that active engagement with the arts can promote self-discipline, team work, help develop self-confidence and boost communication skills.

The government had pledged (reported on BBC web-site, 13th February) to offer children five hours of "high quality culture" a week, in and out of school.



## Residential and extended day provision for SEBD in Co. Durham



The new Windlestone

Pete Jonson, Head of Windlestone, has asked me to correct a perhaps erroneous item in the last issue of 'SEBDA News' about cuts in residential provision. Pete writes: 'There have been no significant cuts at all. Indeed Durham invested heavily in the rebuild of Windlestone with 20 boarding places of the highest spec, a combination of single and twin-bedded rooms with on-suite facilities. It has plans to re-build Elemore Hall school too.'

Durham also pioneered extended day provision in the sector in the 1980s. Of the 70 planned places at Windlestone, for example, 40 are resourced for extended day provision, 20 for residence and 10 for day. Despite the inclusionist agenda Durham

resources segregated specialist provision for 242 secondary aged students. All of the providers were inspected in the school year 2006-7 and all judged to be good.

Pete writes: 'I believe I am correct in saying that no Durham 'SEBD' student goes to out-of-county provision'. He points out that Windlestone also manages

- a 40 place alternative to school SEBD provision for young people in Key Stage 4.
- Stepping Stones a 10 place unit within the school for stated SEBD young people from mainstream schools in danger of permanent exclusion.

The Editor visited the Windlestone School web-

site. As well as accounts of the new school and residential school buildings, education, the school farm, horticulture, anti-bullying week, light pollution, theatre trips and the Y10 Princes' Trust project, there was the following insight into residential student minds -wrog season I know:

### What I want for Christmas is .....

#### A selection of wishes from students:

- a lifetimes supply of chocolate, and the world's best laptop
- a new PC and X Box games
- I would really like my Mum and Dad to get back together
- to go to all my family's houses and get loads of nice presents from them

- my real family and my other family to be all together for Christmas
- to go home for just a week to my Mams
- a MP4 player, a bike, & a Newcastle United top
- money
- a new Helly Hanson coat and Rockports
- to go back and live with my Mum
- a Nintendo Wii, a new mobile, new clothes, and loads more stuff

**and one from staff** [taking the editor back to his 'sleeping in duty' days at Eden Grove School]:

- a good night's sleep.

### Pete Jonson retiring

Pete, Head of Windlestone for just short of 25 years, is retiring at the end of the summer term, 37 years after starting working with young people with SEBD. Tim Bennett, moves from Manchester to take over as head, working for a term alongside Pete to ensure a smooth transition. Very best wishes to you, Pete in your retirement - and thanks for your support of the Association over many years. Best wishes to Tim and colleagues for the future!



## N.A.E.S 2008 National Conference

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## WANDLE VALLEY 'FOOD FOR LIFE' FLAGSHIP AND GREEN AWARD WINNER



Doug Bone, NAES Chair

**Doug Bone and staff,  
Wandle Valley School,  
Sutton, London.**

The Food for Life Partnership is a network of schools and communities across England committed to transforming food culture. The Partnership is led by the Soil Association together with the Focus on Food Campaign, Garden Organic and the Health Education Trust. Their goal is to revolutionise school meals, reconnect young people with where their food comes from and inspire families to cook and grow food.

The Food for Life Partnership is in the process of selecting 180 schools in England to act as 'Flagship Schools', those believed to be at the leading edge of improving school food culture. Flagship schools will be required to take the fast track to the Gold Mark of achievement and share their learning with other local schools and communities. Just six schools have been selected in the Greater London region, one of which is Wandle Valley. As the only Special 'Flagship' school selected in the region, Wandle Valley will serve as a pilot example of how such initiatives can and should be followed in schools for students with Special Educational Needs in mainstream and special settings.

To become a Flagship institution, schools require a clear commitment and enthusiasm to improve food culture in the school and in the wider community. Going for the Gold level of achievement in your school with the Food for Life Partnership Mark is a practical way to link to many of the DCSF objectives; particularly the Every Child Matters agenda. It is a brilliant way to involve parents in the life of the school, with all the benefits that this brings for pupil attainment. The Food for Life Partnership Mark also links together, in a practical way, diverse initiatives such as Healthy Schools, Eco-schools, Sustainable Schools and the Year of Food and Farming.

Hundreds of schools have already signed up to the Soil Association's Food for Life targets of 75% unprocessed, 50% local and 30% organic food. They have taken pupils on farm visits and have seen school meal take-up rise, bucking the national trend. Now the new 'Food for Life Partnership' will be adding cooking skills and grow-your-own projects into the mix to tackle the huge problem of food illiteracy among young people.

'Food for life' believes that the fall in school meal uptake, reported by Ofsted, is not an excuse to put junk food back on the menu. It should prompt a new focus in schools on practical food education and a commitment to work with young people and their parents to develop new healthy menus which children will enjoy.

Emma Noble, Food for Life Partnership Director said: "With obesity at record levels, a surrender to bad food habits to rescue school meal take-up is not an option. Luckily there is good evidence that pupils and parents quickly wise up to the value of healthy meals if they are involved in planning menu changes and able to visit local farms that supply food to the school."

"And there is no better way of getting children eating fruit and vegetables than helping them to grow their own in school gardens and cook with that food. Every school, urban or rural, can grow seasonal organic produce for cooking lessons and school dinners, and 'Food for Life' flagship schools will be demonstrating how." (from [www.foodforlife.org.uk](http://www.foodforlife.org.uk) website).



### Winner of Sutton's Green Secondary School Award

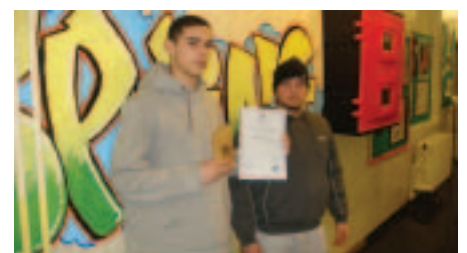
Wandle Valley has won Sutton's Green Secondary School Award. The School is one of the first in Sutton to draw up a Green Travel Plan. Staff are also encouraged to cycle to and from work. Pupils are set challenges with prizes to encourage them to walk to school.

This year it used the Tour de France to promote cycling with a cycling wall chart, completed in Art, and a competition where the school matched the race miles on a static bike.

PSHE co-ordinator Katherine Peck said as a special school it was especially nice to be recognised. She added: 'We are really pleased because we have been working very hard and our kids are trying really hard to do positive things and they do get very engaged.'

The prize was presented at an evening at the local civic centre and there were nine secondary schools involved but Wandle Valley Special School actually won the prize and will be going on to the National Events in the near future.

Again it is good recognition for special schools, there was no special category for special schools and we went under the category 'all schools'.





# Choice and Communication Difficulties:

Mike Mckean

*Mike's latest muse includes confusing train announcers on his journey to the national conference and various school-related communication difficulties - including the unexpected consequence of a teacher's imprecision prior to a PE lesson.*

Words can sometimes be very confusing. 'Choice Language' could be the use of obscenities. In class, making the 'right choice' could mean resisting the temptation to kick the student who has just mouthed "your mum" - 'Choosing Time', like 'Golden Time' a class reward for hard work in primary schools.

On the matter of choice, I was offered one recently, a choice of travel option that is. When organizing my journey to the recent Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association (SEBDA) conference in Harrogate. I was quoted on the phone, about eighty quid, for a return ticket from the metropolis to the green and pleasant environs of North Yorkshire. When I went to book the tickets through an online agency there was a shiny, flashing information bar that advised me that buying two single tickets might be cheaper than a return. So I explored the 'single ticket option', and immediately saved SEBDA 30 odd English pounds (I hope the conference organizers are reading!) Has the world gone mad? In my day a return ticket was always cheaper, but that was when the trains were run by one organization and a cup of tea did not require the acquisition of a second mortgage to pay for it!

On the train journey to the conference - 'The Voice in the Child' - my musings were interrupted by a piece of what I can only call 'Corporate Communication Difficulties'. There were some track inspections that were causing a delay. The 'Train Captain' started to announce this fact but struggled with his words. The Captain needed to communicate that we were 'running late' and that the operating company wanted to apologize for this fact. However rather than just say this, he struggled with his announcement, and finally reported in his best company voice, that the train had been 'Cautioned' and that our revised arrival time was... (20 minutes later than advertised).

This announcement made me smile as I had been preparing my conference presentation on the link between communication

difficulties and SEBD. I was particularly keen to find out what a person with language and communication difficulties would have made of the fact that the train had been cautioned. Would they have run to the window looking for a person dressed in black, waving a yellow card, much like the child I observed in a primary class who ran to a window to look for the 'cats and dogs' that were raining down on us that day. On another occasion I heard of, a reception class teacher briefly left her class to speak to a colleague in the corridor. On leaving the room she directed the children to 'get undressed for PE'. On her return, the class were all sitting naked, arms crossed on the carpet!

I was particularly thinking about ways of getting staff to be aware of how language use in the classroom can impact upon learning in general, and on the self-esteem of vulnerable students, in particular. I wanted to ask one of my fellow travellers, for whom English may not have been their first language, what they had made of the broadcast, and if, bearing in mind the complexity of the English that had made up the announcement, had they understood what it had meant? I could almost imagine a confused and bemused foreign traveler turning to a member of staff, asking for clarification and getting a rather short, but chirpy response of: "We're running late love, we'll arrive in Leeds at 12!"

It was all horribly familiar. If as the figures seem to suggest that at least 6% of the population has language and communication difficulties, this means at least one member of an average primary or secondary school class will have one. If you also take account of the fact that many students who have a communication difficulty are probably undiagnosed and instead have been labelled as having behavioural difficulties, then it will be no surprise that many teachers are finding pupils in their class who are not responding in the way that they might want or indeed expect. Such problems might be a child who keeps interrupting, perhaps one who is very 'quiet' and 'shy'.

Add to this scenario a child who may also have a learning difficulty or has learnt at least one other language before trying to speak English (with all its subtle complexities) and then you have a recipe for a communication breakdown. For those of us in the world of care and or education of young people with SEBD the numbers of students is even higher. We must remember, that if we are to listen to the 'voice in the

child', we must first understand how best to communicate with them.

During my workshop based on the work of a project we are developing in Newham, to raise awareness of these issues and to equip staff working with children with some strategies, we were discussing communication in class. I was remembering that when I was myself working daily with whole classes full of young people labeled as having behavioural difficulties, that I had found a group of students who I found difficult because they did not share my sense of humour. Because of this I found it harder to teach them in my lessons as well as those who did. One of the delegates pointed out that perhaps this was as good a way as any, of identifying students who potentially might have a language and communication difficulty. At this juncture I need to point out that having a child who doesn't laugh at your jokes is not a very scientific way of identifying language and communication difficulty. However it does 'signpost' a significant point, which is; that if any child is not responding in the way you want or expect, as a professional we should be thinking, 'Is there something in the way that I am communicating that needs to change?' It could of course mean that you as a teacher are not as funny as you think you are, and the 'voice in the child' in this instance is saying "You're a prat!"

We now have some very persuasive evidence of the link between communication difficulties and behaviour (see Melanie Cross' book<sup>1</sup> for an excellent discussion of this). We in the SEBDA community in general and in Children's Services in particular, I would argue, can no longer ignore this fact.

And finally a closing thought: "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves". (Carl Jung)

More Soon. Mike Mckean, Behaviour Support Teacher, Newham, London.

*[Editor: thanks to Mike for his entertaining and thought-provoking workshop at the national conference on language and behaviour difficulties - a very good reaction from those who attended]*

1. Cross, M. (2004) *Children with EBD and Communication Problems: there is always a reason.* London: Jessica Kingsley





# THE WISE OLD BIRD

## REFLECTIONS ON CONTROL AND RESTRAINT

### Joan Normington

At a recent SEBDA General Council meeting we had a free-ranging discussion about restraint which included reference to the Government's non-statutory guidance entitled *The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils*. The very title makes me uneasy – to me it sends out a wrong message even though it does link with language in the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Those of you who read my last column will know that I do not always see eye to eye with the DCSF regarding their terminology (amongst other things). I prefer to use 'restraint and control' which, to me, implies restraint and control in both in their use and the means applied. 'Positive handling' is a later arrival on the scene and is preferable to 'force'. Perhaps the terms I prefer are euphemisms and the DCSF is to be applauded for not hiding behind them. I do realise that not everyone agrees with me but ... it's my column.

It is not a new issue and we have all been faced by pupils screaming (or sneering) "You can't touch me!" Wrong! They have never been right – as teachers we have always been able to intervene physically to prevent harm to pupils and other people, to prevent serious damage to property, to keep pupils at risk in school and to stop crime. The latest guidance adds the prevention of "prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline" (paragraph 10).

I am in agreement with the right to restrain children and young people at times – they can be beyond their own control at times and it is scary for everyone. Someone has to intervene and, in effect, say 'this far and no farther'. There are some *caveats* that I suggest are worth your consideration. Firstly, it is necessary for all staff to be trained – most importantly in strategies and technique that can be used to divert and prevent any recourse to any physical measures. The better training packages available (preferably accredited - refer to BILD) place greater emphasis on this than on the physical techniques. They can supplement the teachers' own skills in classroom and behaviour management and can usefully be learnt by all teachers; as my granny used to say, "You've never done learning" and even the most experienced of us can gain something from these courses.

However, it is the physical element which raises the most anxiety in staff. My own belief is that all staff members should be trained. The idea of 'authorised' experts

makes me uneasy – what does it do to their relationships with children? How does it affect the confidence and morale of the 'unauthorised' staff? I know, I know – how can you do this and how do you afford it in a large school? You ensure that you have trained trainers on your own staff who can train the rest over time – that's how.

Once you have been trained it is not enough to sit back and heave a sigh of relief; you need regular practice and refresher courses. Restraint is not something you will be called upon to do every day and the skills are soon forgotten. Another *caveat* is that the colleagues you train with are not going to be difficult – they will obligingly place themselves so that you can easily get hold of them in your 'figure of four' hold. Your pupils will not. Try to encourage a bit of a struggle in practice but be careful.

Schools should have a care and control policy; either as part of the behaviour policy (my preferred way) or as a separate one. This should pay due regard to the LA's policy but be tailored to your own needs. It should be negotiated and agreed with all concerned - staff, pupils, parents and any other involved professionals. This may be a wide group of people in residential settings. Like all policies, it should be regarded as a working document and reviewed and modified with use and experience. Vitally, all staff should be well acquainted with the policy; you should know what you can do and when. You should not need to consult the policy when there is an emergency. Children in a rage will not wait while you look it up. Explain the policy to parents and keep them informed straight away of any incidents with their children.

Make sure that all incidents are recorded – there is a suggested format at the end of the DCFS document. To my mind, it is not enough to fill in the appropriate form, file it and forget it. There should be a genuine purpose to doing it otherwise it will be a scanty paper exercise only. The form can be used to help in the post-incident de-briefing for staff and pupils. Everyone involved needs support following such incidents – they are distressing (if not, you should be very worried) and relationships have to be re-established. In my experience, having to restrain a child or young person does not damage a relationship beyond repair - it may take a day or more before you are both ready to discuss it together but these discussions can be mutually beneficial. The 'trigger' can be identified, reparation made on both sides, and the knowledge so gained added to what you know about the pupils and yourself.

I have written all this to say this – any physical restraint or controls are a last resort only to be used when it is obvious that nothing else is going to succeed. You need to think so carefully before carrying on with attempts to restrain and you have not got the time when the need arises so all of you, I think, need to decide where your limits are and what you are prepared to do. I think that good training allows you to know that you can do it if you have to and how to do it – it should not give you a licence to tackle pupils unnecessarily.

Learn your pupils – learn to see the warning signals and try diversionary tactics, humour can be good, sometimes from a third person. Offer them planned alternatives before there is a need – a safe haven, somewhere to go when they feel their control going. Keep calm yourself and hang on to the knot in the end of your tether – if you feel your control going, get out. It may be that you back out and allow another member of staff to take over and defuse things. What do you lose? You can later find an appropriate time to have an open and honest discussion with the young person and together you learn the language of emotional literacy. I have never understood the need that some teachers have to 'win' all the time – are their egos so tender that they have to score over a fifteen year old? If so, they may well be in the wrong job.

The best way to avoid using restraint begins with the school itself. If the ethos is calm and purposeful, if all staff has high expectations of all the pupils and themselves, if the atmosphere is positive and caring, if the teaching and learning is of high quality then the chances of the children and young people losing control are greatly reduced.

None of the above is new or radical – just a very brief view of the way I feel about caring for and controlling our young people. I have always believed in control as until any of us knows what control feels like, how can we develop self-control?

The documents referred to above can be downloaded from:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk) There are many other related documents on the same site as I am sure you all know.

The BILD website is:  
<http://www.bild.org.uk>

Joan Normington  
12 March 2008



Joan Normington

# SOCIAL SCENE with Cynthia Cross

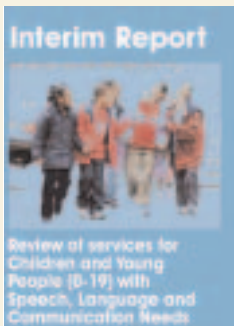
Participants at the SEBDA Conference in Harrogate heard a number of speakers refer to the government-sponsored speech and language review, led by the Tory MP, John Bercow. The first section of this varied Social Scene outlines Bercow's interim report and includes the report's 'Executive Summary'. Cynthia then highlights the extension of the review of physical restraint in secure training centres [STCs] and YOIs to secure children's homes before sketching the chronic problems at Oakhill STC. Attention then shifts to Nacro's claim that police are criminalising children to hit government targets; the Children's Commissioner's call for more humane treatment of children of asylum seekers; the frightening (and damaging?) growth in the use of tranquillisers with children; signs that Sure Start could be working for three year olds; severe doubts about the wisdom or practicability of the national child database ('the Integrated Children's System'). Finally a report, from think-tank, the IPPR is featured, which calls for 'Sure Start Plus' centres for 'at risk' 5 - 12 year olds, as a better way of cutting youth crime than ASBOs.

## 1.) The Bercow review of services for children (0-19) with speech, language and communication needs.



John Bercow

The Bercow Review, commissioned by the Department of Health and DCSF in September 2007, aims to improve services for children and young people from birth to 19 who have speech, language and communications difficulties, which could range from a delay in speaking to a severe stammer, or could be related to other disabilities such as autism or cerebral palsy.



The interim report says: "Children and young people must be given the support they need to overcome speech, language and communications difficulties so they enjoy the same

opportunities to learn, socialise and succeed as anyone else." Over 2,000 people responded to the Review's consultation, with almost 1,000 responses from families. Respondents highlighted that concerns about services remain. Some families feel their children are not a priority for local services and they have to struggle to obtain help. Information can be hard to find and services hard to access. Many feel agencies do not work together effectively or share a common language. Others found it difficult to maintain continuous support, especially as some professionals are stretched for time and resources – while others don't have the training to step in. [from the DCSF web-site, 20.3.08]

The final report and recommendations are due in July 2008.

The Executive Summary is reproduced next.

### "Introduction

1. This interim report presents the evidence contributed to the Review through the many responses to our "call for evidence", the visits we have made to local areas across the country and the meetings we have held with key stakeholders, including children, young people, parents, frontline professionals, service managers, academics, charities, voluntary organisations and professional associations. The report considers the important themes emerging from the evidence and sets out the more specific issues we will investigate further.

We have identified five key themes:

**Communication is crucial** - communication is at the core of all social interaction. Communication is a key life skill. Communication is a fundamental human right. For some children and young people, acquiring the ability to communicate is a difficult and ongoing challenge. Just as the nature and severity of their needs will vary, so will the type and extent of the help required to address them.

**Early identification and intervention are essential in order to avoid poor outcomes for children and young people** - in addressing delay and disorders, the most important facts we know are the value of early intervention and the danger of its absence. If a child receives the right help early on, he or she has a better chance of tackling problems, communicating adequately and making progress. If a child does not benefit from early intervention, there are multiple risks - of lower educational attainment, of behavioural problems, of emotional and psychological difficulties, of poorer employment prospects and, in some cases, of a descent into criminality.

**A continuum of services, designed around the family, is needed** - universal, targeted and specialist services are required to meet the range of needs and, as the Government envisages in its recent Children's Plan, children, young people and their families must be at their heart. As demonstrated above, support for speech,

language and communication needs (SLCN) is essential in the early years of a child's life. However, whilst this is often the crucial stage at which to intervene, older children and young people can also require support.

**Joint working is critical** - in planning, commissioning and delivering universal, targeted and specialist provision, it is critical that health services and children's services, including schools, work together in support of children and young people with SLCN. No single agency can deliver any one of the five Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people by working in isolation. Separate silos produce misunderstandings, cause divisions and can be bewildering or infuriating to parents for whose children services are delayed or denied as a result.

**The current system is characterised by high variability and a lack of equity** - the current system is routinely described by families as a "postcode lottery", particularly in the context of their access to speech and language therapy (SILT). Despite the hard work and commitment of many professionals in health and children's services, the SLCN of too many children and young people are still not being met.

**"Although there are some skilled professionals and very good facilities, the overall position is highly unsatisfactory. Access to information and services is often poor, services themselves are very mixed, continuity across the age range is lacking, effective joint working between the health and education services is rare and there is something of a postcode lottery across the country. Above all, local commissioners attach a low priority to the subject and this must change."**

John Bercow in the interim report.

2 Over the three main chapters of this report, we explore the five key themes: analysing the evidence, assessing the challenges and setting out our next steps.

## Chapter One: Families views of services for children and young people with SLCN

3. In this chapter, we hear of families' experiences of services. Whilst many children and young people have benefited from a range of services, such as those provided through Sure Start Children's Centres, to meet their SLCN, most parents tell us that information and advice are usually hard to find, needs are not always identified early and accessing services, particularly SLT, all too often involves a "fight". Parents see themselves as the unwitting victims of an incomprehensible relationship between health and education providers.

4. In order to address these important issues, the Review will consider:

What further action is needed to raise the importance of speech, language and communication (SLC) on the national agenda, including the merits of a national campaign comparable in scope and investment to the National Year of Reading.

How information and advice can be made more accessible to parents, including how services can be better signposted.

What support should be available to families at particular times, for example, when SLCN are first identified and when a child enters primary or secondary school.

How best to improve families' overall experience of "the system", including its accessibility, quality, continuity and transparency.

How the Ofsted Review of SEN in 2009 might contribute to improving arrangements for the provision of services for children and young people with SLCN, including the range of services provided through funding delegated to schools.

## Chapter Two: Joint commissioning of services for children and young people with SLCN

This chapter considers the important role of commissioners of services in meeting children and young people's SLCN. In particular, we identify that joint commissioning by health and children's services is critical. However, the evidence suggests strongly that, although Children's Trusts and joint commissioning arrangements are being encouraged by the Government, in reality, their establishment is not at all consistent. Moreover, provision for children and young people with SLCN is rarely identified as a priority for development, overall need in local areas is often not assessed and services are commissioned with little thought given to the desired outcomes for children and young people. In addition, we note the lack of services for young people, including vulnerable groups with high levels of need

such as young offenders.

The Review's next steps are to consider:

How to give full effect to the purpose of the Children Act 2004 through a comprehensive network of effective Children's Trust arrangements equipped to commission across agencies to deliver for children and young people with SLCN.

The value of an audit tool to help with local needs assessment for children and young people with SLCN.

The need for guidance for commissioners of universal, targeted and specialist services for children and young people with SLCN aged 0-19, throughout early years, primary, secondary and post-16 provision and the transition into adulthood, using a child-centred pathway model. This should include preventative services for those at risk of offending; services for young offenders and for the transition back into the community. The guidance should also reflect the circumstances in which regional commissioning may be appropriate.

What further research needs to be carried out to enhance evidence based case for cost effective investment in services for children and young people with SLCN.

## Chapter Three: The right workforce, leadership and accountability for services for children and young people with SLCN

7. In this chapter, we look at the make-up, functions and skills of the universal, targeted and specialist services for children and young people with SLCN. We analyse how the workforce is led at both national and local levels and we consider accountability, including the role of performance management arrangements. The evidence presented to the Review demonstrates that the universal services workforce clearly has an important role to play, but it does not yet have a complete set of skills to support the full range of children and young people's SLCN. The evidence also suggests that there might be a shortage of speech and language therapists (SLTs) in the workforce and that there are significantly different numbers of SLTs in areas with similar levels of deprivation. Both the total numbers of SLTs and their distribution should therefore be reviewed. That two Government Departments (Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families) and two sets of services (PCTs and local authorities) have leadership and accountability roles is clearly causing some confusion in the system, not least for parents "caught in the crossfire" between services.

8. The Review will therefore consider:

How to enhance the skills of specialists and to ensure that more of the children's workforce are trained to identify and meet SLCN.

Resources:

- The number of SLTs, their distribution across the country and their deployment through the age range; and

- Whether there is scope for improvement in the use of staff and facilities by local authorities and PCTs.

How leaders of children's services and health services work together at present and what steps might be taken, for example through Children's Trust arrangements, to improve collaboration to meet SLCN.

Accountability at national and local levels, including the role of performance management.

Whether local authorities' accountability for provision of SLT for statemented pupils should be reviewed.

## Conclusion

9. The Review will continue to build on the analysis set out in this interim report, with a particular focus on the specific issues identified for further consideration above. A final report, including firm recommendations on these issues, will be made to the Government in July."

## The government response



Alan Johnson, Health Secretary, welcomed the findings pointing out that though the number of speech and language therapists had increased by over a third between 1997 and 2006 under Labour, more needed to be done.

[from the DCFS web-site, 20.3.08]

## 2.) Review of Physical Restraint in secure training centres, YOIs and secure children's homes

Alan Travis, home affairs editor of 'The Guardian' (21.3.08) reported that the Inquiry into the use of physical restraints in child jails was to be extended to cover the network of local authority secure children's homes. The independent review was commissioned by the justice and children's ministries after the deaths of two young teenagers, Adam Rickwood and Gareth Myatt, in restraint-related incidents in privately run secure training centres (STCs).

The inquiry has focused strongly so far on the privately run secure training centres and Prison Service young offender institutions (YOIs). But the review team now wants to use research by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) on local authority secure children's homes.

The NCB research, which is due to be completed by the end of May, is to include a complete map of all the different kinds of restraint used in secure children's homes, and a critical analysis of injury reports and of notifications to Ofsted, the education watchdog, to identify evidence of harm arising from restraint.

The justice minister, David Hanson, said an action plan addressing the issues raised by the two coroners at the inquests into the deaths of Myatt and Rickwood would be published shortly. The use of two restraint holds which involve the deliberate use of pain was suspended by ministers last December on medical advice.

### 3.) Oakhill Secure Training Centre and overuse of RPI



[based on article by Alison Bennett in "Children and Young People Now" 5/13.3.08]

Oakhill STC should be closed down and restarted, the chief inspector of prisons has urged. Ann Owers made the call after inspectors found restraint had been used 757 times on young prisoners at Oakhill in the nine months before its Ofsted assessment. The inspection also found the highest level of restraint - which requires at least three members of staff, including one to hold the child's head - had been used 532 times. Owers said Oakhill's staff struggled to maintain order and safely control some of the children in their care and, although a new director was getting to grips with the issues, the task remained immense.

Frances Crook, director of the Howard League for Penal Reform, agreed saying she had visited Oakhill and was not surprised by the findings.

Imran Hussain, head of policy at the Prison Reform Trust, said restraint should only ever be used to protect staff or children from harm. Recently, NSPCC called for an end to the use of restraint and Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights recommended the abolition of its use on young prisoners.

Maria Ahmed reported in "Community Care" on 3/4/08 that the Oakhill director of children's services, Malcolm Stevens, had said we must lose the "boot camp" regime. Private companies responsible for the UK's four secure training centres "did not know what they were doing" when they took on the contracts, Stevens told "Community Care" that private companies had "miscalculated" the task and struggled with a child-centred approach. Stevens, who also oversaw the opening of Medway and Rainsbrook STCs when he was an adviser at the Home Office, made the comments following the latest negative inspection report on Oakhill STC. The Ministry of justice appointed him to improve the centre, which is run by

Group 4 Securicor, last July.

Stevens told 'Community Care', that ministers did not support the chief inspector of prisons' call to temporarily close the centre. He said that it will take time to turn the culture around but costs "were not an issue" as Group 4 Securicor had given "at least £1m" to improve the centre. "The culture we need to put in place at STCs such as Oakhill must reward achievement and reinforce success, as opposed to one that punishes and imposes sanctions for misbehaviour."

There was also a "direct correlation" between the use of force and assaults by children on staff, he said. "Ninety per cent of assaults on staff occur when they are using physical control on children. Reducing the number of times physical control is used will reduce assaults."

Stevens said the centre also needed to improve recruitment. Oakhill currently has 40 vacancies out of more than 220 posts.

### 4.) "Police criminalising young to hit targets" says Nacro

[sources: Nacro youth crime briefing paper and Alan Travis, 'The Guardian', 3.4.08]

A police drive aimed at thousands of low-level teenage offenders lies behind a surge in youth crime figures. Police figures suggest reported minor offences by young people soared by 39% from 2003-2006, and detected serious offences rose by 19%. But research by the charity Nacro says this rise has more to do with police criminalising minor teenage misdemeanours - previously they would have been dealt with by an informal ticking off. The charity says police, under government pressure to improve clear-up rates, are dealing with more teenagers through the criminal justice system.

The finding is backed by data from the Home Office and Ministry of Justice showing a 25% increase in 10-14 year-olds who have received a reprimand, final warning or conviction for an indictable offence, from 2003-2006. This compares with a 16% rise for those aged 15-17. Nacro says a government target, set in 2002, for criminal justice agencies to "narrow the justice gap" between the number of offences recorded and the official detection rate, lies behind the shift in police practice.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan, the chief inspector of constabulary, recently criticised such a target-driven approach and urged officers to use professional judgement instead of criminalising people.

Regarding misbehaviour by girls they note that the rise in detected offences probably reflected "a reduced use of informality in responding to girls' misbehaviour rather than a sudden expansion in female youth offending".

## 5.) Asylum process fails vulnerable children, says Children's Commissioner

[ "Children and Young People Now" 5/11.3.08]

Unaccompanied children seeking asylum in Britain are often left hungry, thirsty and confused during long and oppressive screening interviews with immigration officers, according to a report from England's children's commissioner. The report by the children's commissioner, Sir Al Aynsley-Green, *Claiming Asylum at a Screening Unit as an Unaccompanied Child* calls for changes to the process.

Aynsley-Green witnessed the screening process of unaccompanied children at Croydon ASU first-hand. As a result, he wants the process changed to ensure children are legally represented and have their basic accommodation, food and cleanliness needs met before undergoing long interviews with immigration officers. He would also like to see a responsible person accompanying the child during interviews.

Over 5,500 asylum applicants claimed to be unaccompanied children in 2006. Around 3,250 of these were accepted as children by immigration officers, while the rest had their age disputed and were processed as adults. The policy that led to these disputes is criticised in the report.

The children's commissioner wants all applicants claiming to be children to be given the benefit of the doubt when registering. Lisa Nandy, policy adviser for the Children's Society and chair of the Refugee Children's Consortium, welcomed the report.

## 6.) "Tranquillisers put children's lives at risk"

Sarah Boseley, health editor of 'The Guardian' (7.4.08) was one of various journalists reporting on this issue in recent months. She noted new evidence which has shown children's lives are being put at risk by a surge in the use of controversial tranquillising drugs which are being prescribed to control their behaviour. Boseley reported that anti-psychotic drugs are being given to youngsters under the age of six even though the drugs have no licence for use in children except in certain schizophrenia cases.

The number of children on the drugs has doubled since the early 1990s as the UK begins to follow a trend started in the US, but critics say they are a "chemical cosh" that could cause premature death.

The first comprehensive analysis, carried out by Ian Wong, professor of paediatric medicine research at the London School of Pharmacy, suggests the number of children

on the drugs has surged sharply. His analysis shows that between 1992 and 2005, 3000 UK children were given anti-psychotics. Twice as many prescriptions were given to children for the drugs in 2005 as in 1992, with the biggest increase in the seven to

12 age group, where the number of anti-psychotics prescribed trebled. The largest category of use by far is in cases of behavioural disorders and personality disorders, including bipolar disorder (manic depression), autism and hyperactivity. Although the drugs are not licensed for children, doctors can prescribe them on their own responsibility.

The increase follows a huge rise in the use of the drugs in children in the US. Yet nobody knows how the drugs affect a growing child's body or what may happen in the long term. The increase has come at a time when former psychiatric best sellers Prozac and its class of anti-depressants have gone out of patent. Wong says children on anti-psychotic medication are more likely to die earlier - something which may not be caused by the drug but which gives cause for concern. Some of the children of whose deaths he is aware had underlying incurable conditions such as Aids, so it is hard to establish whether the drugs played any part.

David Healy, professor of psychological medicine at Cardiff University, says the drugs may cause heart, circulation and breathing problems. "There is a real question over whether the drugs can kill for a number of reasons. One is that all anti-psychotics act on [the brain chemical] dopamine." He said dopamine was known to have a role in cardiovascular regulation.

A number of children in the US, given stimulants - which also act on the dopamine system - after being diagnosed with ADHD, have suddenly died, said Healy. He was asked by lawyers in the US to give an opinion on a child who was diagnosed when she was a baby first with ADHD, then depression and finally bipolar disorder (manic depression). "Having spent 75% of her life on one of these drugs, she dropped dead at the age of two," he said.

The drugs have potentially serious and harmful side-effects which need to be balanced against any benefit for the child or its parents. These include substantial weight gain and tardive dyskinesia (uncontrollable tongue and facial movements).

## 7.) Benefits of Sure Start begin to show.

*[extracts from report in "Children & Young People Now", 12/18.3.08]*

The first national conference of children's centre managers, gave a more encouraging account of the effects of Sure Start.. "We're



Beverley Hughes

Cathy Wallace wrote: 'It's been a bumpy road. Since the first Sure Start trailblazer in 1998, the programme has been dogged by criticism. Sure Start has been accused of everything from being a thinly-veiled "middle-class mums' club" to failing disadvantaged and ethnic minority families.

The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS), the independent study (based at Birkbeck College) following the programme's impact, has not always been favourable. Three years ago the study flagged up a number of negative effects, including failure to reach those whose need is greatest. However, the latest NESS report into the impact of Sure Start on three-year-olds and their families has shown several positive outcomes, such as children displaying more independence and positive behaviour and parents offering a better home learning environment (CYPNow, 5-11 March).



Professor Edward Melhuish, executive director of the evaluation, says there is a good reason it has taken this long. "It takes about three years to get up and running," he says. "It was apparent staff had a lot to learn in an area that had been a policy and practice desert. It is likely children are being exposed to more effective services now than in the early years of Sure Start."

In her speech to the conference, Beverley Hughes attributes this to one very strong factor: "Leadership is what's made the difference between centres that are already excellent and those that have yet to become so. It takes drive to sell the idea and create partnerships ... Early years services are equal with all other services for children and young people, including schools and colleges."

Hughes added: "In countries like New Zealand and Denmark they started this 30 years ago. We're less than 10 years in. That's the length of time it can take to build up a first-class workforce."

Cathy Wallace, in her report, goes on to note that the government is cautious about hailing the latest NESS as an overriding triumph (as was the BBC web-site, 4.3.08). Differences in methodology could account for some of the positive effects, says Melhuish. For example, the evaluation showed children in Sure Start areas are more likely to have had immunisations and less likely to accidentally injure themselves

on a journey;" said children's minister Beverley Hughes, "We're not at the end of the road. But the signs are positive."

than those in other areas. But the data for children in non-Sure Start areas was collected two years earlier, which could explain the difference.

## Sure Start young 'behave better' (BBC web-site, 4.3.08)

The government is enhancing Sure Start children's centres in the most disadvantaged parts of England, as research shows they benefit toddlers. A study called 'The Impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on Three Year Olds and Their Families' was carried out by the National Evaluation of Sure Start Research Team at Birkbeck, University of London. It found children behaved better and were more independent under Sure Start. Their parents provided a better home learning environment than in areas without such Sure Start centres but the positive effects were modest, researchers said.

## 8.) National child database plans ('the Integrated Children's System') in trouble

The government was warned a year ago that a major IT system to hold case information about children involved with social services was beset by "fundamental" problems, said Sally Gillen, in 'Community Care' (3.4.08). The purpose of the integrated children's system (ICS), to be used by all LAs, was to let all professionals record and share as appropriate, records such as child protection plans. It is made up of a number of "exemplars" (records), which track each case from referral to closure. But an evaluation of ICS, which was completed last May, funded by government but as yet unpublished, concluded there were "serious reservations about the design and use of ICS in its present form and we believe the ICS has yet to demonstrate the degree to which and how it is fit for purpose".

Researchers carried out a study between 2004 and 2006 at four councils - two in England, two in Wales - but it was never published in full. Instead, the Department for Children, Schools and Families wrote its own seven-page summary of the 200-plus page report, which it published on its website, minus the recommendations, in January this year.

The full report, seen by 'Community Care', urged the government to address "serious difficulties" in inter-agency communication and information sharing, in developing links with other databases and consequently of identifying early warnings of risks to children.

Frontline staff and managers felt it was hard to grasp key features of a case because the information was split into sections. Social workers interviewed as part of the two-year study, carried out by researchers at York and Southampton universities, complained the system was time consuming and prescriptive.



They also criticised the system as too complicated. One interviewee said it took 10 times as long to do a care plan under ICS, which meant they were being taken away from the “real social work” of interacting with children and families.

They complained that the ICS was promoting form-driven social work that could threaten the profession’s values and good practice. Researchers concluded that the system, based on a series of tick-box forms, was not tailored to individual children, and failed to ask important questions of some children while asking others that were irrelevant, resulting in “bland analyses”.

The report said: “The process was felt to diminish analysis and risk assessment. There were particular concerns about risk because it was unclear where the information would be located.”

Just one of the four councils involved in the research was able to fully implement the system and those using the ICS said they had problems entering and finding data, and with crashing systems.

Another report by the “Lifting the Burdens Taskforce”, set up by the government to review burdens on councils and the Association of Directors of Children’s Services also expressed concerns on ICS.



## 9.) IPPR calls for Sure Start Plus centres for ‘at risk’ 5 - 12 year olds



Sue Learner wrote about a new report from think-tank the Institute for Public Policy Research in “Young People Now” (20/26.2.08) The IPPR report, *Make Me a Criminal -*

*Preventing Youth Crime*, argues that prevention is the best way to reduce youth crime. It calls for the expansion of Sure Start to encompass children aged five to 12 from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The report claims that measures such as antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) do not work in isolation, particularly in the case of children under 12. Julie Margo, report author and associate director at IPPR, is

quoted as saying: “Asbos are becoming a symbol of cool rebellion - a badge of honour. This report makes the case for a more therapeutic and family-based approach to youth offending, as opposed to the present, more punitive system.”

Margo claims evidence shows the most prolific criminals start offending between the ages of 10 and 13. The IPPR’s proposed Sure Start Plus centres would target children aged five to twelve who are at the highest risk of offending later in life and would provide services such as parenting support groups and counselling.

Margo says: “In the UK we lack a single agency responsible for early intervention such as the ministries for youth and family that exist in Germany and Austria, although the new Department for Children, Schools and Families, working with the Ministry of Justice, may rectify this.”

She acknowledges the Youth Justice Board (YJB) is increasingly focusing on prevention and points to its youth inclusion and support panels (YISPs), which are made up of representatives from different agencies such as education and social services and which work with children aged eight to 13 who are considered at a high risk of offending. However, she feels these are not enough, even though an evaluation of YISPs carried out last year found that the majority of parents reported their children had not offended or been involved in antisocial behaviour during their time on the scheme.

However, Mike Thomas, chair of the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers, believes that another layer of support is unnecessary: “What we need is to build on the success of YISPs and make sure children and young people on the edge of the criminal justice system can access support from an even wider range of agencies,” he says. Thomas would like to see youth offending teams doing more work with partnership agencies to ensure this happens: “They get other services once they come into the criminal justice system. We want to make sure they get these services before they hit the criminal justice system.”

YISPs’ critics include Penelope Gibbs, director of the Prison Reform Trust’s programme to reduce child and youth imprisonment. She believes the problem with them is that they are time-limited programmes. “If Sure Start Plus is done in the spirit that Sure Start is, then it would be a continuous relationship over time. The fundamental difference between YISPs and Sure Start Plus is that Sure Start Plus would be very focused on children and their families in the same way early Sure Start is,” she says. Ultimately, though, the success of Sure Start Plus would depend on resources and unfortunately local authorities have limited budgets, says Gibbs.

## More social care news

[compiled by Ted Cole] ...

**DCFS Action Plan for young runaways promise** (‘Children and Young People Now’, 30.1.08). This is promised by a working group set up by Jim Brennan, junior children’s minister.

**Boarding scheme flops?** (‘Children and Young People Now’, 30.1.08) A Government scheme to send vulnerable children to boarding schools has produced a derisory result. Only 2 of the 10 Councils in the two-year ‘pathfinder’ scheme, have used it, sending only 5 children to boarding schools, over half-way through the scheme.

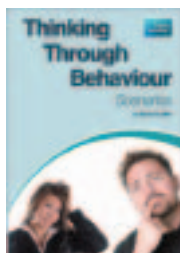
**Barnardo’s call for residential care overhaul** (‘Children and Young People Now’, 30.1.08) Pam Hibbert, Assistant Director of policy for Barnardo’s urged that residential care should not be seen as a last resort for children. We need a system that enables residential care to be a positive choice, that attracts the best staff and that supports and trains them properly. LAs should join together to make good residential provision.

**Children’s Fund projects face axe as funding switches to LA control and ‘ring-fencing’ ends** (‘Children and Young People Now’, 16.1.08). The page one lead in this issue claimed ‘life-transforming preventive work with vulnerable children’ was severely at risk. A survey by the National Council of voluntary Child Care Organisations revealed that 65% of local authority Children’s Fund managers said projects were unlikely to continue beyond March, with LAs taking control of the multi-million pound Children’s Fund from April. 38% of voluntary sector CF projects expected to deliver redundancy notices to staff before March. For seven years, the CF had funded a range of voluntary organisation projects.

## Bernard Allen: Thinking Through Behaviour - Scenarios

2008 ISBN 0-9547124-8-X £5.00

This is a useful and modestly priced self-published 30 page booklet for the managers (in particular) and staff of schools and care settings for children with SEBD, to be used when they review their policies on behaviour, including 'use of force', 'restrictive physical intervention', 'positive handling' or whatever blunt or euphemistic term is adopted. It stresses the importance of risk assessments, correct responses to actual incidents and the importance of accurate and formative recording of incidents. It presents ten useful scenarios to help focus thought on what staff would do when faced by practical dilemmas, to do with 'restraining, restricting and removing' young people. It presents practical examples and then places these besides highly pertinent quotations from the relevant English government guidance (which can sometimes give nuanced and even conflicting messages, depending on their provenance e.g. DCFS out to strengthen 'discipline' in schools, where removal is allowable to protect good class discipline, or DCFS out to protect children from abuse in residential care). Five exercises take you through 'Thinking Through Recording'.



As always from Bernard, there is so much practical good sense and thought-provoking comment, based on his long involvement in our field e.g.

"Guidelines which are designed with a view to 'covering' the hierarchy, rather than supporting the staff tend to be more about preventing action than informing it. When people lose confidence in the support they will receive from senior management there are two dangers.

The first is that staff feel unable to use their own judgement. They then develop a defensive mentality in which they unthinkingly and unquestioningly attempt to follow the letter of the law. Common sense gives way to an inflexible methodical paralysis.

The second danger is that an implicit understanding develops that the guidelines are unrealistic and unworkable and everybody just ignores them. Both these outcomes can put children at risk."

He also restates, what more settings and

professional organisations need to take on board: a 'no touch policy' is not permissible in England - and to deny staff the chance to comfort distressed children through appropriate touch is to fail to meet some children's deep needs and to deny staff a potent means of building and maintaining healing and helpful relationships.

The appendices give further quotations from the various relevant English government guidance documents from 1993 through to 2007 DCFS 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils.' Recommended!

## Bernard Allen: Safeguarding children Safeguarding Staff: A Simple Map Through the Complex Maze of Government Guidance: When are adults allowed to Restrict, Restrain and Remove Children?



2008 ISBN 0-9547124-9-8 £5.00

This is a more detailed exploration of the same issues as above, running to 53 compact and small-font pages, which can be visually challenging to read for the ageing and bespectacled (like me).

It is probably best to buy this alongside the 'Scenarios' booklet. Good value and well worth a read for senior managers - it is written with Bernard's usual brio and metaphors which usually work. Again there are many thought-provoking statements and a good overview of the conflicting and at times, supine 'guidance' (in terms of offering practical support to staff 'in the frontline', taking the risks and doing the good work) issued by different parts of government since the 1989 Children Act. Bernard writes (p.5) 'Most of us who have worked with children and young people have had near misses at some time during their career.' This book can help lessen the likelihood of near misses. Would more human rights lawyers and child protection workers would read this, to get a true flavour of the daily dilemmas and stresses facing bone fide staff, working with the most challenging of our young in recent decades - they might end up a little more understanding of the human rights of these dedicated staff who too often have to put their careers and livelihoods on the line.

Both booklets from: Steaming Publishing, St Leonards on Sea, E Sussex. Contact [gail@steaming-training.co.uk](mailto:gail@steaming-training.co.uk) or [www.steaming-training.co.uk](http://www.steaming-training.co.uk)

## Sue Jennings: Creative Puppetry with Children & Adults

I agree with the info given on the Speechmark website: 'This is a practical book on making puppets for anyone working with children, teenagers or adults.



The puppets can be used for both emotional literacy work and therapeutic play. The positive effect of puppet work with adults and children with special needs cannot be overestimated and the practical making of the puppets gives them a chance to explore and experience delight in their creations.' It is an attractive publication in the usual Speechmark style, with some explanatory text mixed with diagrams and worksheets - but quite pricy. £33 + £5 (for orders under £50).

## Adele Clarke and Jacqui Blades: Practical Ideas for Emotional Intelligence: A Speechmark Practical Photocopy Resources £35 + £5



This attractive but costly new title contains a range of useful photocopiable materials for professionals to use with young people to explore a range of EI issues. It contains sections on building up profiles of young people

e.g. through asking them to complete simple self-assessment forms 'about home and school', or writing storyboards or choosing from a wide range of 'who am I?' cards. It proceeds to 'Thoughts in my head', again with attractive photocopiable diagrams for students to add their ideas to. There are sections on 'who would I like to be', transitions, anger, body language, dealing with stress, self-harm, changes in family circumstances, self-harm, school refusal. In short an attractive pot-pouri of materials, likely to be useful for a range of professionals, working with children with SEBD. £35 + £5 (for orders under £50).

**Order from:**  
Speechmark Publishing, 70 Alston Drive, Bradwell Abbey  
Milton Keynes, MK13 9HG  
Freephone 0800 243755 (UK only)  
Email: [sales@speechmark.net](mailto:sales@speechmark.net)

## Worth a look: NCH research reports



### Growing Strong - attitudes to building resilience in the early years (2008)

This report, prepared for NCH by Brand Democracy, investigates what we already know and have learnt about building resilience in early years and uses this to explore the attitudes of parents to the issue of their children's emotional wellbeing. Based on the learning from focus groups run in London, Manchester and Liverpool, the report makes a number of policy recommendations that apply to central and local government, service providers, media and parents.

Download: *OLF Full report Growing Strong Attitudes* (PDF - 364 K)

Download: *OLF Report Growing Strong Executive Summary* (PDF - 162 K)

### Get happy: children and young people's emotional wellbeing



(2007) This report, prepared for NCH by researchers from the Institute of Public Policy Research (ippr), is the first in a number of research projects we have commissioned around the theme of emotional wellbeing. The research demonstrates the link between emotional wellbeing and social mobility, noting the growing significance of emotional wellbeing in determining life chances and the need to address these issues through proven services. Download: *Get happy - Children and young people's emotional wellbeing* (PDF - 541 K)

### 'Making and Breaking Children's Lives' review in SEBDA News Issue 14.

It has been drawn to my attention that one of the authors of this book, Craig Newnes has, apparently, links to the Church of Scientology and one of the contributors, Dr Sami Timimi has addressed a Scientology conference. Ted Cole.

# The DH/DCSF CAMHS Review

Continued from p1



By way of introduction to the Government's 2008 review of CAMHS - and its call for evidence - a reminder is given of the Government's National Service Framework (NSF) for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, introduced in 2004. This included 11 Core Standards. A highly relevant article, written by Marion Bennathan in 2005, is then included. Is her realistic but somewhat pessimistic view still accurate? Or has progress now been made?



As requested on page 1 of this 'SEBDA News', please let me know your views on the Key Questions posed through returning the completed questionnaire to me or emailing.

Ted Cole

### The Eleven NSF Core Standards for CYPs and Maternity Services

- Standard 1: Promoting Health and Well-being, Identifying Needs and Intervening Early
- Standard 2: Supporting Parenting
- Standard 3: Child, Young Person and Family-centred Services
- Standard 4: Growing up into Adulthood
- Standard 5: Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young People
- Standard 6: Children and Young people who are ill
- Standard 7: Children and Young people who are in hospital
- Standard 8: Disabled Children and Young People and those with complex Health Needs
- Standard 9: The Mental Health and Psychological Well-being of Children and Young People

## The State of CAMHS Support in 2004/5

**Marion Bennathan**, Vice-President of SEBDA (originally published in 'Nurture' Spring/Summer 2005 issue)

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, part of the *Every Child Matters* policy was set up to establish "clear standards for promoting the health and well-being of children and young people and for providing high quality services which meet their needs". A paper ('The DH Paper'), issued in 2005 by the Department of Health

Standard 10: Medicines for Children and Young People

Standard 11: Maternity Services.

The 2008 CAMHS review particularly looks at progress made in attaining Standard 9. This states:

**NSF Standard 9: The Standard for the Mental Health and Well Being of Children and Young People is:**

**'All children and young people, from birth to their eighteenth birthday, who have mental health problems and disorders have access to timely, integrated, high quality, multi-disciplinary mental health services to ensure effective assessment, treatment and support for them and their families'**

The rationale for NSF 9 was given in the original Government text in 2004, which included the following:

"2.1 The importance of psychological well-being in children and young people, for their healthy emotional, social, physical cognitive and educational development, is well recognised. There is now increasing evidence of the effectiveness of interventions to improve children's and young people's resilience, promote mental health and treat mental health problems and disorders, including those children and young people with severe disorders who may need admission.

2.2 10% of 5 – 15 year olds have a diagnosable mental health disorder...

2.3 Similar numbers of children and young people with less serious mental health problems will need some help. In most cases it will be provided by services in primary health care, social care, education (including early years) and the voluntary sector...

2.4 In a minority of cases, the nature and severity of the mental disorder may lead to a period of in-patient care. ..."

on Standard 9, concerns Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS).

### Present unsatisfactory state of things

Anyone who works with troubled children will be aware of the unsatisfactory state of support that schools can expect from CAMHS in many areas of the United Kingdom. At the launch of the DfES guidance *Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings* in 2001, a clinical psychologist bravely reported a survey he had carried out into what schools thought of the service provided by his clinic. The final

statistic was that 87% found the service of little help. My less methodical survey gets reports of 6 months, 9 months waits; of referral procedures that “seem designed to put hurdles between the school and the service”. You could think that a service as slow as this is no service at all.

The DH Paper acknowledges that this state of affairs is undesirable: “Waiting too long for a service is clearly unhelpful. The parent, child or young person may be less willing to take up a service when the wait has been excessive. Similarly there is a risk that a condition may deteriorate and become more difficult to treat”. (Para 6.6) Well yes, not to mention that the child may by then have been excluded from school.

### **What The DH Paper proposes**

But let's be positive. The authors consulted service users who made it clear that they want an easily accessible, well-publicised and quickly responsive service, based in centres where attendance does not stigmatise. This leads to the suggestion, by no means novel, that schools may be well placed to meet this need. The DH Paper sets up a sensible framework, flagging up the need for accepted procedures, for early identification, for rapid responses to emergencies and so on. It acknowledges the importance of developing specialist skills for particularly vulnerable groups, asylum seekers, some ethnic minorities, children with learning difficulties or looked after children.

### **Multi-professional work**

It then writes at length of the need for working across agencies, and notes that “the lack of understanding of the respective roles, duties, responsibilities and organisation of the different agencies and professionals and of their different language may lead to poor communication, misunderstandings and frustration”. As I read this a weary feeling assailed me. I have been here before. In 1973, Jack Tizard, Professor of Education in London, and a brave New Zealander not overwhelmed by authority, set the Child Guidance world in uproar. He reported his research: “Very many children dislike school, are bored with school or are unhappy there..... Contact (of educational psychologists) with schools was not great. ...The average teacher, indeed, doesn't get much direct help from any of the special services: contact with the school doctor is often fleeting or non-existent, remedial teachers often take children out of the class rather than help teachers in the class, educational advisers may visit only infrequently, and the psychiatrist and social worker not at all. In consequence, the average teacher lacks advice; and equally often lacks the skills to deal with particular problems.” (*Maladjusted Children and the Child Guidance Service*: London Educational Review 2,2,22-37.) Have we moved on? And will the proposals in The DH Paper bring about improvement? If the new CAMHS is to work

it needs to be required to do what The Paper proposes. And for that there are two central issues, funding and how to build up efficient multi-professional services.

### **What about funding? What about staffing?**

I read The DH Paper carefully but could find no mention of funding, nothing about staff shortages even though it is well known that child psychiatry posts are difficult to fill. The Royal College of Psychiatry, well represented on the Working Group which produced The DH Paper, shares this disquiet. In its September press release it welcomes the commitment to an improved service but warns that “child psychiatrists in many parts of the country do not currently have the resources, and funding will have to be found to train people in flexible ways to meet the need for urgent assessment.” “We welcome the recommendation that there should be 20 whole-time equivalents for teaching services of multidisciplinary staffing for specialist CAMHS teams and 15 for non-teaching services. This will go some way to enable teams to begin to provide for the comprehensive services that are being recommended, although recruitment remains a concern.”

### **Collaborative working**

The College also welcomed the emphasis on collaborative working by health, social services and education so that children and young people with complex problems have their needs assessed and met by coordinated services, commissioned in partnership. But it warns that this will not be achieved instantly. “These developments are part of a 10-year process and will not be available instantly.”

### **Is this good enough?**

Reflecting on The DH Paper I am not flooded by optimism. Funding is a serious issue, though perhaps it was cynical of a ‘Times’ journalist to suggest that NSF should stand not for National Service Framework but No S—ding Funding. Then what about multi-professional working failures which figure in just about every scandalous failure to protect children? I re-read the Journal of the Association of Workers for Maladjusted Children (now SEBDA), a special edition on multi-professional work which I guest edited in Summer 1988 (Vol.6, No.2). The Health Advisory Service had in 1986 published *Bridges Over Troubled Waters*, a thoughtful review of residential psychiatric care for children and young people. The report drew attention to the many sided needs of these young people, said that very few of them had recognisably psychiatric problems and commented sadly on “the lack of trust that was perceived between health, social services and education department.” They made 107 recommendations for improvement, none of which had been implemented two years later. Why? What stops us working together?

Reading The DH Paper, I feel like the countryman who, asked by a passing motorist the best way to Dublin, said “If I were you I wouldn't start from here”. Schools have to be partners in any campaign for better mental health. They have made enormous strides since Jack Tizard upset us all in 1973. There are well developed behaviour support services, there are emotional literacy campaigns, and best of all there are nurture groups. These, properly set up and with trained staff, are contributing directly to good mental health. Of course when a child or young person shows signs of mental illness we want a quick psychiatric response but we also have to recognize that prevention is better than cure. Marjorie Boxall had a splendid phrase: “nurture groups are about growth not pathology”. We want all schools to be as good for children's social and emotional development as they aspire to be for their intellectual attainments.

### **A more radical approach?**

In nineteenth century Birmingham, great health improvements in its crowded city centre came not so much from advances in medical knowledge as from Joseph Chamberlain's campaign to have clean water and good sewage systems. We might have had a more radical view on how to help our children to good mental health if the paper had acknowledged the role of schools and not been written almost exclusively from a mental health point of view. Of the 22 members of the working group, one is an educational psychologist, the rest are medical, para-medical personnel or health administrators.

It is too late to change that but there is a way forward. If CAMHS offices are set up in schools, there could be real improvement. Once people get to know each other and work together for common aims the barriers disappear. New ways of working are being developed in some parts of the UK. Nurture groups could take an active part in such developments.

So let's end on a positive note. In the 1988 article I wrote “One is tempted to think in one's darker moments that the holders of power in our society...do not have the knowledge or the compassion to do right by our children”. *Every Child Matters* is proof that this is no longer so. Then: “Is it that structures at local and central government level are not appropriate to deal with children effectively, splitting them into three parts, social, health and education, when we know there is just one child. Perhaps we need a Minister for Children”. Well now we have one. Perhaps things will get better.

*Marion Bennathan, still active in the Nurture Group Network, was a founder and first Director of 'Young Minds', from 1999 to 2002. She was Principal Educational Psychologist of the County of Avon, and Chair of its Child Guidance Service.*  
Email: [marionnurture@mistral.co.uk](mailto:marionnurture@mistral.co.uk)

# Further information on the CAMHS Review

**CAMHS REVIEW**

**Next steps to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people**

The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and the Secretary of State for Health have asked Jo Davidson and Dr Bob Jezzard to lead an independent review to see how we can improve services to effectively meet the educational, health and social care needs of children and young people at risk of, and experiencing, mental health problems.

There have been considerable improvements in the delivery and quality of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), but there are still areas of development needed to meet the needs of every child. The Review will take stock of progress to date and investigate what practical solutions those developing policy and delivering, managing and commissioning services can use to address current challenges and deliver better outcomes for children and young people.

**Key questions for the Review will be:**

1. What progress has been made so far in delivering comprehensive CAMHS?
2. How can mainstream, universal, targeted and specialist services be more effective in promoting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children, young people and their families/careers and in ensuring they get the support they need?
3. How effectively are current resources being used and what differences are they making?
4. How are care pathways defined and understood? What are the current issues relating to care pathways and how can they best be addressed?
5. What is required at national and regional level to realise the CAMHS elements of the Child Health and Wellbeing Public Service Agreement (PSA)? What are the issues that are preventing us improving emotional wellbeing and mental health?
6. What are the priority actions for national, regional and local stakeholders as well as for children and young people and their parents/careers that will help improve emotional wellbeing and mental health and child and adolescent mental health services?

Jo Davidson and Bob Jezzard will be reporting to Government in October 2008.

**Getting involved**

Further information can be obtained from [www.dcsf.gov.uk/CAMHSreview/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/CAMHSreview/). Alternatively you can send an email to [CAMHS.review@dcsf.gov.uk](mailto:CAMHS.review@dcsf.gov.uk)

**CAMHS**  
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

develop a national outcome indicator of children's psychological health.

The Expert Group (so named by DCSF/DH), meeting and communicating regularly, will review the findings from these and other evidence collections to inform the Review's recommendations.

The Review will lead to a report of the evidence on children and young people's emotional well-being and mental health issues, and the services to meet their needs, in England (scheduled for October, 2008).

The Chair, Jo Davidson, is Director of Children's Services, Gloucestershire. The Vice Chair is Dr Bob Jezzard (who has done much work on CAMHS for the Government).

## Recently in the media...

**DCSF 'Targeted Mental Health in Schools' Project.** ('Children and Young People Now', 30.1.08) Children suffering from mental health difficulties at school will be targeted in a bid to catch problems early. 25 areas in England have been chosen for this project. These areas include Gloucestershire where the LA and PCT will work in four groups of schools to develop existing well-being promotion services. In Leicester, a child intervention initiative brings professions together to identify problems at an early stage with the council and PCT using the money for a team of psychologists, family support workers and mental health professionals to work with schools. Also involved are Merton (school based therapists focusing on anxiety and attachment issues as well as aggressive or disruptive behaviour, self-esteem linked to eating disorders and conflict resolution); and Swindon (evidence-based group work being delivered in clusters of schools by CAMHS).

**Lack of CAMHS support for schools/ new government 'pilot'** (BBC web-site, 7.3.08) Many schools feel they do not get enough local support in dealing with pupils who have mental health problems, a survey shows. Of the 6,000 schools in England responding to the Audit Commission review, 40% said local mental health services were below satisfactory. Head teachers fear vulnerable children are slipping through the net because no-one is taking responsibility. A school mental health initiative will help resolve this, says the government, referring to the pilot, started in March in 25 LAs (see above).

## The Review will include:

(from terms of reference found at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/CAMHSReview](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/CAMHSReview) on 8.4.08):

**Call for Evidence** – to enable those from the third sector, professional groups and organisations and the public to identify key issues from their perspective, together with practical solutions to tackle persistent problems (e.g. access to services) and examples of good practice.

**Focus groups** – first, to identify what questions children and young people and their parents/carers would like the practice visit teams to ask of professionals working to improve the mental health and emotional well-being of children and young people. And second, to gain an understanding of children, young people and parents' / carers'

experiences and views on emotional well-being and mental health issues – especially in terms of what they think would need to change to provide high quality services that effectively meet their needs;

### Review of practice visits in 6-12

**LAs/PCTs** - one of the overall aims of the Review is to assess how LAs/PCTs currently address the emotional, behavioural and mental health needs of children and young people at risk of and experiencing mental health problems. This will be achieved by conducting visits to 6-12 Local Authority / PCT areas to review practice.

**Commissioning work on national indicators** – an externally commissioned project, led by DCSF/DH that aims to

## Training and Development Manager's Report

Barbara Knowles



### Partnerships

I am delighted to be able to report that we have established a new forum to develop the work of the Yorkshire and Humberside SEBD Partnership and that we will be working

with Nigel Ogley of North Yorkshire

and his colleagues to support work in this region. We will be holding a conference on 13th November in Harrogate on 'Working with Children With Behaviour Difficulties: Pursuing Happiness, Achieving Wellbeing', delivered by Adrian Faupel of Southampton University.

We have also been developing links with ICAN, the charity that helps children communicate and provides services across the country to support work for children with speech, language and communication difficulties. My thanks are due to Melanie Cross and Mary Hartshorne and her team for supporting this work. We hope to become part of The Communications Trust in the near future and to develop some joint projects with the Trust following attendance at their very successful conference on workforce development on 28th March.

SEBDA has delivered three popular, fully subscribed workshops at the NASEN North Conference at the G Mex in Manchester. Thanks are due to Sue Cook, our General Secretary and Janice Cahill from Stockport for agreeing to support me in this venture. We hope that this will be the first of many projects with NASEN.



Sue Cook



Jenny Morley



### Events

The February events were a great success; many thanks to Jenny Mosley for her inspiring keynote in Newcastle and to Adrian Faupel for delivering yet another very high quality day in Bristol. The National Conference was very well attended, the hotel venue and communication theme proving to be a popular choice.

Several delegates requested further information or follow-up events on the relationship between speech, language and communication difficulties and SEBD. All interested parties should contact me by email to look at future possibilities

We hope to continue to stage events which respond to national agendas later this year and again request suggestions for conference topics from our members. Please let us

know how we can support your work.

It was good to meet new faces at training events that I have delivered during the spring term in Warwickshire, in Barrow and in Lambeth.

We are happy to take bookings for the forthcoming year, please contact me for details of bespoke training and events delivered by our training team.

### Around the Regions/ Countries

SEBDA Council, held in London in March, 2008 heard the following reports:

**London:** a summer conference was planned at NCVO, Kings Cross, around the theme of attachment and SEBD. Speakers were to include Marion, Lord Ramsbotham and Robin Balbernie. Council wished Gerda Hanko a speedy recovery after her accident.

**South East:** Bob Law reported that the S. East Committee was meeting and another autumn training day was planned, perhaps on provision for those over 16. Now that she had retired, Nicki Clarke was to be more actively involved in SEBDA. Les Sage and Bob were looking to have a meeting in Belgium with special school heads from France, Kent and Belgium, at the Kent County Council base in France.

**North East:** The Jenny Mosley day in Newcastle in February had been very good - and helped to spread the word about SEBDA on Tyneside. Sue Cook was saddened by Bob Morgan's resignation but hoped to get other colleagues in the north east to revive the committee there.

**South West:** Alan Fox reported that another seminar was to happen at the University of Bath, with Harry Daniels presenting. A good Adrian Faupel day in Bristol had also happened.

**Wales:** April May Kitchener noted the success of the Autumn conference in north Wales. Discussions were now happening as to what to do next. Barbara Knowles was to attend a meeting in Wales soon.

**Essex and East, North West and Midlands:** nothing to report for this period.

**Scotland and Northern Ireland:** meetings were planned and a survey of Scottish members would take place to see what suggestions would emerge about the way forward.

### SEBDA Contacts

North West: Joan Pritchard, Macclesfield 01625 420 310 [j.h.pritchard@btinternet.net](mailto:j.h.pritchard@btinternet.net).

North East: Sue Cook, the Meadows School, Co. Durham, 01388 811178 [s.cook100@durham.org.uk](mailto:s.cook100@durham.org.uk);

Yorkshire and Humberside: Bev Talbot, William Henry Smith School, Brighouse; Joan Normington.

Midlands: Trish Rodsett, Lindsworth School, Birmingham 0121 6935363

Eastern : Diane le Count and Bill Whelan,

Essex Pupil Referral Services

London: Chair; M. Bennathan, [marionnurture@mistral.co.uk](mailto:marionnurture@mistral.co.uk); Treasurer: Cynthia Cross, [ci.cross@virgin.net](mailto:ci.cross@virgin.net)

South East: Nikki Clark and Bob Law, Goldwyn School, Ashford, Kent 01233 622958 [b.law@sebda.org](mailto:b.law@sebda.org)

Chair SEBDA Scotland: Margaret Gibson, Burnhouse School, Whitburn, W. Lothian

Contact for N Scotland: Kate Gall, Fraserburgh Academy E-mail: [kate.gall@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:kate.gall@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

SEBDA Scotland c/o Harmeny Education Trust, Mansfield Rd, Balerno, Midlothian, EH14 7JY Tel: 0131 4495002

## PDG REPORT

Ted Cole

As reported earlier in this 'SEBDA News', we are delighted that Joan Normington has taken on the role of Chair of the Professional Development Group. Joan has proved a very dedicated and popular tutor over the last few years, and has taken much interest in the development of our distance education courses. In recent months she has been looking at ways of developing our present materials.

Most of this year's cohort of students on the Leicester Courses, assisted by their tutors, have now handed in their first assignments and are working on their final projects, to complete these ahead of the September deadline. The quality of this work has often been excellent, with students really getting to grips with their various chosen titles and producing work of high quality - and of practical use to themselves and to their work-settings.

The enrolments for the 2009/2010 courses are arriving (see further details on back page - and full details on [www.sebda.org](http://www.sebda.org)).

As described above, please contact Barbara Knowles to discuss our new taught causes (with the option of accreditation at Edge Hill University at first degree level -levels 4, 5 and 6).

### DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:

## 2008 SEBDA AGM

Saturday 14th June 2008

10.30am at

NCVO, Regent's Wharf,  
8 All Saints' Street,  
London, N1 9RL

All members welcome  
Lunch included

Please let us know if you are attending.

Contact: [admin@sebda.org](mailto:admin@sebda.org)  
or ring: 0161 240 2418

## Why not join SEBDA for:

- three issues a year of 'SEBDA News' (our 40 page newsletter, containing the latest national policy and practice information on SEBD/disaffection, social care and mental health issues, posted to your address)
- four issues a year of SEBDA's acclaimed international research journal 'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties' (publisher: Routledge Taylor & Francis) posted to your address;
- SEBDA's members-only 'inner' web-site (includes access to all back numbers of SEBDA News and research journal);
- discount rates for SEBDA professional development events;
- 20% discount off Routledge Education resources (including David Fulton Publishing) ordered on-line;
- 20% discount off Worth Publishing resources;
- 12% discount off Behaviour UK products;
- 10% discount from 'Incentive Plus' (they offer a wide selection of resources for promoting social and emotional competence and positive behaviour);
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### I/we wish to join SEBDA\*

Please indicate type of membership

- Individual membership @ £49 a year Yes  No
- Corporate membership (3 copies of Sebda News/journals) @ £135 a year Yes  No

**Cheque enclosed made payable to**

**'SEBDA' for £.....**

**or please send invoice** Yes  No

**Send to: SEBDA, Church House,**

**1 St Andrew's View, Penrith,**

**Cumbria, CA11 7YF**

\*Please note full membership must be ratified later by the SEBDA Executive.



Working together for children  
LONDON REGION

SEBDA (REGISTERED CHARITY 258730) The multi-professional association for all who work for children and young people with SEBD

## Attachment Matters

The First Two Years of Life  
Stay With You for Ever  
- so when they go wrong what's to be done?

Tuesday 10th June, 2008:  
9.00am for 9.30am to 4.30pm

at National Council for Voluntary Organisations  
8, All Saints Street, Kings Cross, London N1 9RL

If you work with children and young people in trouble with the law, or failing in school and in society, or showing signs of serious emotional disorder, you should come to this conference.

Why, in spite of the admirable "Every Child Matters", "Sure Start", "The Children's Plan" and other government initiatives, do so many children still slip through the net?

The crucial role of early attachment will be explored - and the consequences when early damage is not spotted and escalates into adulthood, causing many wasted lives.

What could be done if enough of us got together to achieve change for the vulnerable youngsters we know so well?

Fees: (include lunch & refreshments)  
£100 SEBDA and Nurture Group Network members  
£120 non-members

MORNING: formal presentations from

**Robin Balbernie**  
Child psychotherapist

**Marion Bennathan**

Vice-president, SEBDA; former Director, Young Minds;  
and Life President, Nurture Group Network

**Lord Ramsbotham, GCB, CBE**  
Former HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

AFTERNOON: choose from four 2 hour workshops whose topics relate to attachment

To end, we shall come together, as guests of SEBDA London Committee,  
to toast the work we do with a glass of bubbly.

This is the third of our famously friendly and welcoming summer conferences.

The 2007 conference evaluation: overall value of the day: 64% excellent: 34% good.

Comments: "A useful forum for sharing and getting ideas and strategies"  
"Great to have time to network" "A fabulous day" "Great to meet with like-minded people who share a passion for improving the lives of children with SEBD".

BOOKINGS: CONTACT HEAD OFFICE ON 0161 240 2418



Working together for children

The Social, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties Association (formerly AWCEBD)

SEBDA (REGISTERED CHARITY 258730) The multi-professional association for all who work for children and young people with SEBD

in association with:



## 'Working with Children with Behaviour Difficulties: Pursuing Happiness, Achieving Well-being'

Adrian Faupel  
Friday 13th June 2008: 9.15 - 3.45

The University of Nottingham,  
School of Education, Jubilee Campus, NG8 1BB

For teachers and TAs in mainstream & special schools and PRUs; psychologists; lead behaviour professionals, behaviour support staff, learning mentors; youth, mental health, social or residential care workers

How do you support and promote the well-being and happiness of children with behaviour, social or mental health difficulties - and importantly, given the demanding nature of the work, the staff who work with them? Can you catch happiness and well-being? Can you alter the environment to encourage their growth?

These are important questions as the 'Every Child Matters - Change for Children' and Children's Plan agenda gather pace and as the UNICEF Report 'An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries' stays in the headlines. The latter placed Britain bottom out of 21 Western countries in the Child Well-being Table. The recruitment, retention and development of staff who work with children in specialist BESD settings, PRUs, LSUs and many mainstream classrooms also continue to be challenging.

Adrian Faupel leads another thought-provoking and highly relevant day at Nottingham University. In the morning he looks at the psychology of happiness and well-being. In the afternoon he examines the practical implications for the support of staff and for promoting the well-being of children with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties.

Adrian is one of the country's foremost writers and trainers on emotional literacy, anger and behaviour management. This day was very well received at the SEBDA North East and North West conferences in 2007.

What you said about other SEBDA Adrian Faupel days:

- 'A tremendous speaker, high-quality delivery. Experienced in research and developments in emotional literacy.' (GT, Kent)
- 'Inspirational. A lot of thought-provoking materials.' (PB, Ayrshire)
- 'An excellent overview, supported by good practical activities which can be used with staff and pupils.' (KG, Lancs)
- 'Very enjoyable. Ideas will be used!' (SC, N. Yorks)

Fees (Lunch included) Members of SEBDA: £110 for the day

Non-members: £135

Discounts for group bookings of 4 or more places

BOOKINGS: CONTACT HEAD OFFICE ON 0161 240 2418



SEBDA in partnership with the  
University of Leicester



## Distance Education Courses leading to Master's and First Degree Level Certificates in Professional Studies (SEBD): Sept. 2008 - Aug. 2009

### 'Understanding and Managing Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties'

Hundreds of professionals have had their levels of understanding and expertise (and sometimes careers) assisted by taking a SEBDA accredited course. For the last few years, these have been offered in partnership with the University of Leicester.

Course 1 (at Master's level - worth 60 transferable credits) is for qualified teachers (and occasionally other professionals with honours degrees). Course 2 (worth up to 40 transferable credits) is for teaching assistants, residential care workers, mentors and other professionals who would like credits towards a first degree.

The courses are offered via distance education, a residential weekend, e-mail and regional tutorial support.

The courses increase students' range of practical responses by widening their knowledge and understanding of:

- legislation and guidance relating to SEBD, past and current trends, approaches to providing for SEBD (including consideration of inclusion and SEBD) in education, care and other settings
- the impact of child development and developmental psychology
- the theories influencing approaches to working with children with SEBD
- working with families
- other services or agencies working with children with SEBD

Students follow a course of guided study geared to their individual needs, attend a residential weekend and tutorials; and carry out a series of tasks and written assignments, which make up an assessed portfolio of work.

For further details and application forms visit

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

To discuss: Ring 0161 208 2418