What difference would there be if children’s experience framed policy?

A report from Highland Children’s Forum.
Representing children in need in the Highlands
Highland Children’s Forum is a registered charity [SC031945] incorporated in 2000, created by the parent carers of children with additional support needs to ensure that the voice of these children was heard in the design and provision of services in the area. The Forum membership encompasses both individuals and many specialist groups that represent the concerns of specific conditions.

The Forum concentrates its activities on developing ways to hear the voice of children in need and to relay this to central policy authorities. It seeks to influence changes in policy so that the investments create services that better meet the needs and aspirations of young people. The Forum now acts as the consultee on a number of local authority and statutory bodies providing services to special needs children in Highland.

The work of the Forum is directed by a voluntary Management Committee elected by the membership. Because of its unique role it receives funding from the Joint Committee on Children and Young People through its “Changing Services” Fund. This funding allows for the employment of two part time staff. One is a specialist child consultation worker and the other acts as the development manager to the Forum. It also facilitates a partnership of children’s charities that has secured Unified Voluntary Sector Fund support for a collaborative base in Inverness.

Highland Children’s Forum

Listening to Children – Speaking with Policy Makers

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Foreword

Highland Children’s Forum appointed a Children’s Consultation Worker in May 2004. This innovative new post has enabled a dedicated, experienced fieldworker to gather views from Highland children in need, their families and the professionals that work directly with them. The result is a great deal of insight into the lives of Highland children in need and their families. Without doubt the most prominent topic has been that of inclusion, with all its varying definitions, the attitudes that surround the philosophy and how these are affecting the daily lives of children and families here in the Highlands.

Highland Children’s Forum (HCF) has prepared this report to summarise some of these views and experiences. This is but a drop in the ocean. Every child with an additional need and their family has their own story to tell, whether it be a positive heartening example of good inclusive practice, or a glimpse at how a service is failing to support a child in the way that they need to be supported.

The Highland Council and NHS Highland Joint Committee for Children and Young People, through their support of HCF, has shown their commitment to finding the voice of children in need. If these views and experiences are truly to be valuable, it is vital that this information is gathered in a systematic and meaningful way, creating a representational view that can be shared with those who serve children and families at every level. Most importantly is that these views and experiences must have a real influence on the delivery of services.

As Chair of the Highland Children’s Forum, and as a parent of a child with additional support needs, I hope that this report will allow those who provide services for children in need and their families to reflect upon their practices and deliver child-centred inclusive approaches to all children in their care.

Isabel Paterson

Chair of Highland Children’s Forum
Introduction

A report about children’s experience of inclusion

This report from the Highland Children’s Forum (HCF) on inclusion issues is written from information gained anecdotally from the Children’s Consultation Worker (CCW) during visits from June 2004 until September 2005. The visits included 10 school visits, 12 specialist playscheme visits, 6 mainstream playscheme/child care visits, 6 parent support group visits, 6 family visits and numerous seminars and events. These visits were in response to invitations and so HCF does not claim that these anecdotal case studies are representational of the experience of all children in need in the Highland area. However, these case studies, (which represent a small number of similar case studies taken) do reflect the real experience of those involved and should not be overlooked. Inclusion is a major issue for many children and one raised frequently during consultation.

Each person’s word was taken as their personal experience and no attempt was made to verify or substantiate claims. Contributions came from children, parents, professionals, learning support auxiliaries and voluntary sector service providers. No individual has been identified in this report (names have been changed) as confidentiality was assured; however, records have been kept of the visits.

There are many definitions of inclusion circulating amongst children’s service providers and this report seeks to explore the approach to inclusion in education and leisure proposed by policy makers, understood by service providers and experienced by children and families. Brief case studies will be used to compare real experience with the policy documents. Examples of and suggestions for good practice offered by teachers, children and parents are included.

Inclusion – some Definitions


“Scottish Parliament defines inclusion as ‘maximising the participation of all children in mainstream schools and removing environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers to their participation.’”


“Inclusive practice develops most effectively where there is a common understanding of the concept of inclusion. This understanding will recognise that inclusion is about valuing equally all aspects of diversity among learners and their families.”

The historical background of inclusion, discussing the medical and social models, along with a brief summary of the changes in law and policy are included for reference in Appendices 1 and 2.

One of the most important aspects of inclusion as described by the social model is that of consultation, listening to the voice of the child with additional needs and his/her parents. It is the role of HCF to consult with children in need across Highland and to represent their voice to policy makers. HCF hosted the voluntary sector consultation on the Children’s Services Plan “For Highland’s Children 2: 2005 - 2008”, in August 2004, thus facilitating a considerable contribution from a number of individual members and voluntary organisation partners to the development of that policy document.

HCF would welcome the opportunity to consult further and is beginning a research project which will provide a representative view of the experience of children in need in Highland. This research will continue throughout the time span of the For Highland’s Children 2 (FHC2) plan comparing children’s experience to the desired outcomes and targets of FHC2 and ensuring children’s experience contributes to the shaping of For Highland Children’s 3.
Policy makers

The general view is that inclusion is politically correct and necessary, that anything less is discriminatory. Inclusion and integration are sometimes used interchangeably, meaning educating children in mainstream through multi-agency working and partnership with parents. The Community School approach and School Liaison Group (SLG) method of working are seen as methods of delivery for inclusion. In Highland the intended thrust of FHC2 is to support vulnerable children and reduce the risk of their exclusion.

Teachers

The general feeling expressed by teachers is that inclusion has meant the integration of children with a range of needs in the classroom, but not always with the resources such as training or physical space, to meet these needs. There was a feeling expressed that under resourced integration can make achievement for all children in the classroom harder and that the challenging needs of a few children can distract from the education of others. Most teachers spoken to were committed to the ethos of inclusion but felt the practical issues made it difficult to deliver in reality. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and Additional Support for Learning Act (2004) have resource implications, but insufficient resources allocated. Improved physical space and smaller class sizes along with training and more preparation time were seen as significant resource needs.

Learning Support Auxiliaries (LSA)

LSAs were concerned for the social inclusion of children as much as the curricular inclusion. More information, training and more direction from the teacher would help to meet the child’s additional support needs. Some staff are not included in liaison group or other meetings, making them feel undervalued. Many reported a concern that disabled children moving into adulthood were going to experience social exclusion as facilities for their inclusion in adult society were insufficient.

Parents

Most parents expressed the view that inclusion meant having their child’s needs met; where those needs are met is not as important. Some parents had moved house to ensure their child or children could attend schools where their needs could be met. Some parents felt excluded from decisions about their child’s schooling or had felt their child was being discriminated against. The parents consulted wanted to be included as equal partners in decisions about support. Many parents find the experience of multi-agency meetings intimidating. Some parents feel they have to fight to be heard.

Children

Many children felt happy at school. Children did not always understand the concept of inclusion but were clear about what matters most to them. The biggest issue for the children consulted was fairness; some had felt unfairly treated by peers and teachers. Children also identified having loyal friends as essential to their feeling of well being. Children wanted to be liked; some felt disliked by their teacher, some reported being bullied by peers. Children wanted to be listened to and some wanted a choice in what and how they learned. Overall, being included in the playground seemed more important than in class.
Participation
Children’s Experience

John, (8), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
John faithfully attended football coaching after school in order to be allowed to take part in the Soccer Sevens matches, as this was the criteria given by the school for participation. However, when Soccer Sevens started John was excluded as there was not an additional adult to provide supervision for him. On another occasion John was told if he finished his work he could take part in a drama activity, however, in spite of completing his work, a lack of available adult support meant he was denied participation again.

Lilly, (5), Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)
Lilly was starting primary school, she knew no children and her speech was difficult to understand. The staff asked for a buddy system to help her. P4 pupils acted as buddies and supported the new P1’s in all social situations e.g. lunch, break. By linking Lily with a well established pupil she soon became known and her speech difficulties accepted by the other pupils. Her participation was maximised.

Mary, (13), Cerebral Palsy (CP)
Mary has not been allowed to take part in cookery as there was insufficient support to ensure her safety. While safety is of course a first priority, a lack of adults was the barrier that prevented her participation.

Colin, (7), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Colin was sent home each day for lunch due to lack of adult support, denying him participation in a useful social opportunity.

Mark, (10), Learning Difficulty
A classroom assistant spoke of Mark, who got 2 out of 10 four times in a row in a class test. On the fourth result, he cried in class. On another occasion there had been a science visit to the class which Mark had much enjoyed. The class was to write to say thank you which Mark was excited to do. However, he was presented with a worksheet to complete first about how to write letters. He struggled with this and was made to miss break time to complete it. When he was finally allowed to write the thank you letter, all enthusiasm had gone and he just copied his worksheet.

Alyn, (14), Learning and Physical Disability after an accident
Alyn was in hospital for about six months after his accident. The tutor who had worked with him in hospital accompanied him back in to the school environment for the transition period. 2 LSA’s were given moving and handling training and epilepsy medication training and are with Alyn all the time he is in school. In order to maximise his participation, Alyn gets to do some activities in a small group rather than in a class and was proud of his achievements, including making pizza.

Thomas, (15), Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)
Thomas has been excluded from mainstream school. He attends an off-site educational base, a part time facility which is set up to support education for young people with SEBD. While the support offered to Thomas has been excellent and he has had better attendance and behaviour there it is only part time and because Thomas is not at school the rest of the week, he can be disruptive in his community.

An option for young people excluded from school to attend this off-site facility full-time might maximise their participation.

“Feeling miserable, no one to play with” by Sally Primary 4
Participation

Good Practice/ Suggestions made

Good Practice/Suggestions

One school had taken on parent and community volunteers to support children’s participation in activities. The new Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 will require such volunteers to be properly checked, with disclosures and references. However, if schools had a list of suitable volunteers, this barrier to ‘maximising participation’ might be removed.

Training Issues

Schools have a budget for CPD (Continuing Professional Development). Also the Highland Council (THC) have Specialist Support Services who will run in-house training for schools. THC offer an annual training programme with many courses offered on Support for Learning issues available to all staff.

Personal Learning Plans

The introduction of Personal Learning Plans (PLP’s) could potentially enable all children to become willing participants in their education.

Some of the early years centres have successfully used the High Scope approach (plan, do, review) which involves children from as young as two in planning and evaluating their own learning; this might be one method of developing personal learning plans.

Noreen Wetton (1998) in “Confidence to Learn” makes suggestions for involving children in evaluating their own learning. This might protect children from being "retired from education" (Wetton 2004), attending school but not actively participating in the learning process.

Noreen Wetton (1998) in “Confidence to Learn” makes suggestions for involving children in evaluating their own learning. This might protect children from being "retired from education" (Wetton 2004), attending school but not actively participating in the learning process.

Scottish Parliament
Education Culture and Sport, Purposes of Education (2003) no.45&46

"Some submissions noted a potential tension between inclusion and the current styles of learning and examination... a sense of academic failure could contribute to people becoming disaffected, and therefore to dropping out of education.

Many submissions believed that promoting inclusion was not consistent with the attention currently given to league tables of examination results, which tend to concentrate schools’ and public attention on too narrow a range of outcomes."

We were the army. I got three boys in my squad” by Robin Primary 4

Support for Learning Team
Suggestions for case studies given (Page 7)

John (8) Planning and preparation are essential; pupils should not be offered activities until they can be made available. There should be fall back plans for unpredictable changes.

Mary (13) Full risk assessments should be carried out giving thought to how participation can still take place without compromising safety, e.g. using specialist equipment to ensure safety or modifying activities.

Colin (7) A range of social skills support activities can be used such as social stories to plan social events like lunchtime.

The amount of visual structure in place should be considered. Autism Outreach Service can be involved to train and advise staff.

Mark (10) Technology can be used to aid writing tasks; worksheets can be scanned into a computer. Work can be differentiated to allow pupils to show understanding and achievement using low and high aids.

Thomas (15) Consider whole school approaches to pupil support which involve other agencies in order to plan for complex issues.
**Environmental Barriers**

**Children’s Experience**

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**Michael, (11), ASD**

Michael went to the front of the lunch queue. The canteen person was not familiar with Michael’s difficulty and told him not to “Barge in”. Michael looked around the room for a ‘barge’ as in ‘long boat’. The children in the queue laughed and Michael became upset. The canteen person took this as a tantrum and became cross. Michael’s distress escalated.

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**Ewan, (16), hearing impairment**

Ewan sometimes missed important parts of class work if teachers mumbled or had their mouths out of view when speaking. Ewan was offered the opportunity to go to Dingwall Academy where there are others from the deaf community. Ewan visited the school and liked the atmosphere and facilities. He moved school and now has an interpreter when he needs one and gets extra tutorial support. He has moved from foundation level to credit level in just a few months.

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**Joseph, (8), ASD**

Joseph had been familiarised with the fire alarm procedure. The annual external alarm check meant the alarms going off several times without a fire practice being required. This caused great distress to Joseph, he hated the noise but also knew that it means “get out of the school” and no amount of explanation made him happy to stay. His mother was called to take him home.

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**Jamie, (14), AD/HD**

Jamie has a card written which he puts on his desk as a visual cue and written reminder about class rules like putting up your hand, to remind him not to shout out. The science teacher now speaks to Jamie directly first, one instruction at a time, if calling the pupils to the front for a demonstration, and by doing this the disruption of Jamie hurtling to the front of the class before he has heard what is coming next is avoided.

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**Colin (10) ASD**

Colin was managing in a mainstream classroom after the autistic base in the school was closed. However, a student teacher was teaching in the class one day and wanted to change the routine. Colin became very distressed but the teacher insisted on the changes. Colin’s distress escalated and this resulted in disruption to the whole class. Colin’s distress meant that he felt unable to return to the class and stayed in the time out room for the rest of the school term.

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**Rory (6) ASD**

Rory is very able with school work but very socially disabled. He cannot cope with the noise and stimulation of the classroom situation. His mother feels he is too able for specialist provision and too disabled for mainstream. His disability overshadows his abilities. He has been in a mainstream provision which allowed him to access the full curriculum while spending much of the day in a quiet room with LSA support and a teacher providing specialist teaching for short times over the week. This had allowed Rory to settle in to school and his behaviour had improved greatly. However, the funding for this support is not likely to continue and there is pressure to move Rory to a special school.

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**Relief Teachers**

One parent of a child with Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) reported that her son had eight different relief teachers in one term when the teacher was off sick.

A Depute Head reported that it was difficult when teachers were off sick, especially if this was a specialist teacher. Children with ASD or AD/HD can find any change difficult, but the unexpected change of routine and teacher can be very disruptive.
Environmental Barriers

Good Practice/Suggestions

The Caithness Early Years Autism Centre (CEYAC)

CEYAC practises whole school awareness for children with autism. This includes teachers, support staff, peers, other classes, canteen, administrative and janitorial staff. This moves towards removing the environmental barriers of misunderstanding and could be carried out for other difficulties children may have.

XL Club (Fortrose Academy)

The XL club is supported by the Prince’s Trust and a number of XL clubs run in schools across Scotland.

Pupils are identified who might benefit from a less structured and more life-skill based curriculum. The pupils are allowed to choose to opt in to XL and sign a contract which is also signed by their parents. The young people in Fortrose said they liked the contract, it made them feel committed and valued, determined to do well.

The XL club work on skills such as self-development, building self-esteem, outdoor activities, health and community issues.

One pupil in the group felt that he could concentrate better in classes after XL as he had had time out in a more relaxing environment. An English teacher had noticed an improvement in confidence in one student (who had previously been very withdrawn) after her involvement in XL.

The pupils as a group had raised £200 for the Tsunami appeal and were preparing to begin a litter campaign.

This XL group seemed a well formed team, working together with shared aims. The pupils seemed to have real ownership of the club and demonstrated a commitment to it. The skills in teamwork, communication and organisation gained along with the physical challenges overcome was raising the self-esteem and confidence of these youngsters.

I CAN unit in Obsdale Primary

I CAN is an accredited approach to supporting early years children with specific language difficulties in mainstream. The staff at the unit offer support and training to parents, nursery staff and primary one teachers as well as working directly with children. The staff seek to raise awareness of the long term implications of language difficulties for children and influence training and school policy to meet these needs.

Highland Deaf Education Service

The Highland Deaf Education Service (HDES) is based at Dingwall Primary and offers outreach services to other schools across Highland. HDES practises whole school awareness and teaches signing skills to families, teachers, Learning Support Auxiliaries and peers.

The pupils in Dingwall Academy can opt to take Deaf Studies and sixth years who have accessed this training can become buddies for younger children with hearing impairment.

Many social areas in school have lots of background noise making it hard for someone with hearing impairment to join in. There is a base in Dingwall Primary and Academy where pupils can build on social skills and signing with peers, away from this background noise.

HDES and the Deaf Support Bases in Dingwall have good relations with schools and this has allowed a flexible approach to integration and transition. Pupils from other schools are able attend Dingwall Primary on a part time or occasional basis allowing them to have signing peers. Teaching staff from the local school are able to come to the base in Dingwall to work with these pupils. Consequently teachers feel much more confident in coping with a pupil with hearing impairment in mainstream and communication is eased.

Support Needs Passports

Communication passports have been used to allow children with communication difficulties to have their needs expressed to others.

Using information from the PLP’s and IEP’s it might be possible to write a short support needs passport for children which could be given to relief teachers and others to ensure that a child’s needs and the preferred strategies for meeting them can be read by anyone working with or teaching the child. Someone could be designated to coordinate regular updating as required.
Structural Barriers

Children’s Experience

Jean, (primary age) Incontinent

Jean had to be lain down on the floor of the toilets to have her pads changed. As well as Jean’s loss of dignity this poses questions about moving and handling for staff.

Mary, (13), CP

Mary has limited mobility and was excluded from art as the art room was upstairs.

Lillian, aged 12, Visual Impairment

Lillian attended a small primary school and was very happy there. Before the move to secondary school Lillian visited the school out of hours to find her way around when there were no other pupils, she also came in to school over a lunch hour. Lillian was given a map of the school and had someone to show her around at the beginning. The school have put white strips on the edge of stairs, bright strips on self-closing fire doors and large numbers on classroom doors to make it easier for Lillian and she now moves around the school independently. Lillian’s lessons are printed out in large print in advance of her classes and she has support in class. Lillian is very happy at school and also takes part in a number of out of school activities including drama, piano and choir.

Keir, (8), ASD

Keir has a problem with transport. He finds travelling in the school bus with other children too stressful. It was arranged that he should travel by taxi but the taxi driver did not understand his condition and was not supportive. As a result the mother has had to arrange to do the transport herself.

Aidan, (6), Cerebral Palsy and Hearing Impairment

The authorities knew of Aidan’s needs two year in advance of his starting school, but the structural changes to the school only occurred the Christmas after he had started at school.

Alyn, aged 14, Learning and Physical Disability after an accident

Alyn was in a wheel chair when he returned to school and a stair climber was provided which the janitor operates. A room has also been set aside for Alyn to have physiotherapy. He has managed to walk 260 steps with his gate trainer thanks to this support.

James, (12), Asperger’s Syndrome

James’ secondary school did not have suitable ‘time out’ space for young people who require this. James sometimes does not cope in class, becoming distressed and agitated and is taken to a booth in a corridor in view of others; not a suitable place to calm down.

Highland Council
Education, Culture and Sport Service
Accessibility Strategy 2003—2006 6.1.3

Provision of intimate care

“For those who have little or no control over their bodily functions, there needs to be standard and recognised procedures to ensure the intimate care of pupils is administered in a dignified and helpful way which takes account of the wishes of the pupils concerned. This requires quiet, private areas where help can be given without disturbance.”

Alyn, 14, a self-portrait of feeling good at school
Glencoe Primary

The School Enterprise Project chosen by the children at Glencoe in 2002-03 was to raise money to build a path to ensure that a wheelchair using pupil could reach all the areas of the playground. In total around £2,000 was raised and it earned the school the Gold Award for School of Enterprise in Lochaber.

"Is the path exactly what Glencoe Primary needs? Yes!! .....If the path is created it will have many advantages and provide wheelchair access and not only improve the fire exit but can also be used as one....It will also help the drainage so we will not have gigantic pools of water lying in our way. Furthermore it will provide more play area."

By Primary Six pupil during the fundraising drive.

The pupils involved formed a committee holding interviews to appoint office bearers. Lots of creative ideas were used to raise the money required and it took a year and a half to complete the project. Donnie Munro from Runrig opened the path and a ceilidh was held to celebrate.

The path not only allows wheelchair access but is used as a circuit for fresh air and exercise. Pupils who get the taxi to school are encouraged to do a few circuits as a walk before class. Pupils are now planning to develop the path by making centres of interest along the path including raised flower beds.

The path has benefited all the pupils in the school and as part of the path building process a drainage problem for the school was sorted.

Grantown Primary School

Grantown Primary School was, at one time, blessed with a large library area. This was creatively used by the Learning Support team to provide space for pupils who needed a bit of time out, areas for pupils who needed some support for learning either individually or in small groups out of their classroom, and also it was somewhere for pupils of all abilities to undertake a particular aspect of work in a peaceful environment where they could ask for extra help if required.

Because the library was used by everyone, there was no stigma for pupils who accessed the additional support there.

Lochaber High School

The Young Engineers Club at Lochaber High School had two girls amongst its membership. These girls were aware of a pupil in the learning support department with profound and multiple disability who was in need of stimulation. The girls did some research and decided to design an A-frame with stimulating toys and objects which could be set in front of this young girl. The girls designed the A-frame so that the toys or objects could be changed.

While inclusion of this pupil with profound disability in most of the school activities was not possible, this did not deter other pupils from valuing her equally and problem solving to develop equipment to allow her participation.
Attitudinal Barriers

Children’s Experience

David, (8), AD/HD
David has been excluded from full-time education because his parents have chosen not to go down the route of treating his condition with medication. The school were only able to give David one to one support for about an hour a day and this was all the education David was offered unless he would take medication.

Dougal, (9), Asperger's Syndrome
Dougal said he sometimes felt missed out in the playground and some children called him a "Bit weird". However, he liked school and got on well with his teacher, he felt she listened to him and helped him. He also liked coming to the playscheme and out of school club and seemed to mix fairly well there.

Richard, (15), AD/HD
Richard complained bitterly about punishments in school and felt that teachers did not like him and gave him punishments without listening to his side of the story. He said one teacher disliked him so much he was always sent out of class almost as soon as he arrived there. He also felt that sometimes he did things without meaning to, but was treated as though he had done it on purpose.

Simon and Andrew, twins (8)
Simon and Andrew were asked if there were pupils in their school that needed extra help. They discussed this for a while, beginning by saying they didn't think so and then talking about children that got occasional support. After a few moments they asked if a boy who had a wheelchair counted. This boy had not come to mind in the first instance which may suggest he is so well included that he didn't seem to need "extra help", his additional need was a secondary consideration and did not come to mind straight away.

Other children spoke of children in the school who had additional support needs, recognising that it was good when everyone played with them and treated them fairly, but one girl pointed out

"It is hard to include people who are annoying."

Alex, (7), AD/HD
Alex reported being sent home and threatened with exclusion for bringing toy firing caps in to school. Another child had also brought these caps to school and had only been given a warning.

A Poem
By Rona Membury
Inclusion
Her childish eyes
target them from afar
strapped to a fence
from across the road
so tangible
like two plump bosoms
bobbing about in the wind
international beacons shouting
‘there’s been a party here
And you weren’t invited.’

Being Missed Out  - one sad face amongst happy faces  by Samantha Primary 4
Attitudinal Barriers

Good Practice/Suggestions

Cooperative Solutions
(Bill Sadler 2005)

Learning is not usually a solitary unsupported activity. It is dependent on a unique set of “partners in learning” focussing on the needs and aspirations of the key partner, the learner. Co-operative solutions to effective learning must involve a child-centred approach which begins with the child but looks at all the partners in the child’s learning: that is the family, friends and peers; relevant teaching and other school staff (including the lollipop person, or bus driver who always smiles at children as they board the bus); plus any social, community, business, health and voluntary workers who are actively involved. Inclusion needs to be inclusive of adults as well as of children.

Every child needs support to learn. Some children need additional support. Children need all the things described in “For Highland Children 2”; safety, health, nurture, inclusion, plus support to achieve, be active and become respected and responsible. Children’s diversity is to be both celebrated and accommodated. This means each will have a unique contribution to make through their individual capabilities and require a unique level of support.

This co-operative approach works well with Personal Learning Plans (PLP). PLP’s belong to individual children and can be written, drawn or just shared verbally. Importantly, the plan should belong to the pupil and the pupil should be encouraged to be aware of all the key partners in his/her learning. PLP’s need to be a celebration of a child’s capabilities, interests, aspirations, likes and dislikes along with learning styles and learning needs.

Bureaucracy must be kept to a minimum; the only things which should be written down are things which are needed to ensure learning is fully supported, good practice shared and something that works is not lost. The paperwork should be the servant of learning and not its master.

Children’s Service Workers

The Children’s Service Workers (CSW) can be a bridge between the school and the home. Although employed by Social Work the CSW’s are line managed jointly by social work and education. While based in the schools they are also able to do home visits thus supporting children both in school and through getting to know the family. CSW’s work with children individually and in groups building social, emotional and behavioural skills.

CSW’s may be in the position to help remove attitudinal barriers between home and school, where these exist, by increasing the understanding between the parents and the school thus strengthening their relationship.

Children at an out of school club gave their opinions on teachers

Good teachers:
- Don’t give rows for silly things like the noise your chair makes on the floor
- Enforce the rules fairly
- If there is an argument between children the teacher treats you both fairly, even if one of the children is often naughty.
- A teacher may need to shout but he/she shouldn’t do it without warning at least once.

Bad teachers:
- Take sides and blames things on the person he/she thinks is bad
- Pick on people in class that they don’t like
- Shout and bawl.

“Falling Out with Friends” Magnus Primary 4
Valuing Equally

All Aspects of diversity

A Secondary English teacher

The teacher reported the problem of teaching a first year class who were all at level A or B in reading and writing skills. She did not feel her training as an English teacher had equipped her for teaching English at this level. Three children in this class had ASD but she had only ever received one afternoon’s training about autism and did not feel this was sufficient to meet the needs of these pupils. The teacher also felt that she does not have the time to support the curriculum plans for the higher and standard grade pupils in her other classes and design a curriculum suitable for the additional needs of these particular children. She felt it was not possible to place equal value over this degree of diversity.

A primary school head teacher

This teacher spoke of the enormous strain put on teachers by the inclusion of so many pupils with additional support needs in each class along with all the usual pressures to deliver the curriculum and meet performance indicators. She suggested that to put equal value on meeting the diverse needs of pupils the pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) should be calculated on a “need count” and not a “head count”. Thus if a child’s level of need was such that he would have PTR in a special school of 8:1, then that child needs four times the amount of support and attention of a child without additional support needs and should count as four pupils in the head count in mainstream. While this would have incredible implications on the human and physical resources available for education, it would be valuing diversity equally and therefore be truly inclusive.

Glasgow University, Scottish Council for Research on Education (2002) Results 6.6

“Finally, although most researchers agree that there is a relationship between small classes and pupil achievement, especially in the early years, some claim that there are more cost-effective ways of providing young children with individualised attention when they most need it. Alternative approaches to organising within-class and across-year groupings, more one-to-one tuition from teachers and classroom assistants during the working day, and peer tutoring are alternatives which now need to be evaluated. At present there is no definitive evidence to show which of these is most effective. The current ‘trade-off’ of costs and benefits continues.”

Need count
(figures for Ireland)

The present pupil teacher ratios are as follows:

Mild learning disability: 11:1.
Moderate learning disability: 8:1.
Emotionally disturbed: 8:1.
Physically disabled: 10:1.
Children with severe or profound mental handicap are given a PTR of 6:1 and have 2 child care assistants per class of 6 children

Glasgow University, Scottish Council for Research on Education (2002) Results 6.6

“I don’t feel good when I am badly behaved and not doing my work. I have a game of snakes and ladders to help me settle down and get back to work. I could choose a friend to play with me. When I feel better I’ll get back to my work”

Adam Primary 5
Another aspect of valuing diversity equally is in the offering of fair and consistent rewards and sanctions while taking into consideration children's individual abilities and struggles. However this can present real challenges. Where a pupil has a difficulty in behaviour which the class understands (as in Isobel's story below) the pupils seem to understand a different treatment. However, where two pupils are guilty of the same offence and the punishment for the pupil with SEBD is harsher, (Alex page 13), children felt this was unfair.

**Isobel, (9)**

Isobel described two boys in her school who behaved badly. One boy bullied younger pupils and did not listen to the teacher and had run away several times. He had been excluded from school at the end of term. The other boy she described differently, his behaviour could be disruptive in the class and sometimes was directed towards others but he got to go to a special room with his helper and sometimes got to choose a game and a friend to go with him. Isobel had no problem with the different way the behaviour was dealt with seeming to understand that being fair might mean treating people differently if their needs were different.

Isobel also told a story with great compassion about a primary two boy whose brother had died. The boy had thrown his desk and was throwing things like crayons around and nearly hurt someone. The other children had had to move out of the classroom. Again Isobel had no difficulty in recognising that this was a particular behavioural incident that required a particular response.

**Alex, (7), ADHD**

Alex reported a system of "boost up" stickers. He had to work hard at his behaviour for a boost up sticker and had to gain 15 before he received a gold star. For Alex, this reward was not tangible, the effort and time scale expected was unrealistic and so the reward system did not serve the purpose.

**Jack, (8), Learning Difficulty**

Jack was unable to complete his work on time and was denied a cookery activity; someone with such difficulty completing a work task may have benefited from this more practical activity.

**Robert, (secondary pupil)**

Robert has excluded himself from school, feeling unable to leave the house and cope in school. The school arranged for a tutor to visit Robert at home. The tutor is working with Robert on vocational pathways such as access to a construction course.
Highland Council
ECS Service
Accessibility Strategy 6.1.1

“A major challenge to the success of inclusion policies has been the difficulties which many staff have in dealing with pupils who exhibit challenging and difficult behaviour. An understanding of the reasons for the pupils’ behaviour is necessary for teachers in particular to accept that a child is not simply being naughty, but requires specific interventions or non-confrontational challenges to be able to operate in the classroom environment.”

Better behaviour
Good Practice/Suggestions

XL Club Fortrose Academy
At the XL club the pupils set their own rules. This group had done this through discussion and at first had had no sanctions for breaking the rules, just saying sorry. However, some people said sorry very easily but continued to break the rules so the young people discussed sanctions they could impose on one another. Initially these were similar to school sanctions such as writing out proverbs or school safety rules. However, this has been refined so that now three warnings are given and then someone has to miss a session of the club. If the behaviour continues on their return they may miss more sessions, and a total exclusion is not out of the question if the behaviour merited it. The rules are frequently reviewed.

“If something isn’t working we all agree a new rule”

The present rules include respect (people and the room), listening, agreeing icebreakers, joining in, bringing your own food and not gossiping unless the person concerned says it is all right.

The young people are not only setting the rules but are responsible for enforcing them. The pupils have found this challenging.

Ross-shire Special Needs Playscheme
An example of good practice about behaviour was given in one of the special playschemes. Many teenagers with learning difficulty appeared interested but confused about ‘girlfriend/boyfriend’ issues and could be indiscriminate in demonstrating affection, unsure of the changing boundaries brought on by puberty. This playscheme had developed “Star Rules” which described acceptable touches and appropriate behaviour, and this had worked well in helping the young people.

Behaviour Unit at Dingwall Academy
There is a base in the school for pupils who require behavioural support or who are refusing to attend school. The unit works as an alternative to exclusion and allows pupils to access the curriculum while out of mainstream classes. Intensive work on behaviour is carried out and then there is gradual reintegration in to mainstream. It is recognised that many pupils with behavioural support needs often require learning support and the learning support team work closely with staff at the unit.

The school also practices ‘Restorative Methods’. One pupil had made derogatory remarks about some of the deaf pupils in the school. This pupil was sent to spend some time at the deaf base in the school. He was also spoken to by a deaf teacher about the what it feels like to be deaf.

...
Leisure Access

Children’s Experience

Charlie, (10), Down’s Syndrome

A local out of school care facility shares their activity plans with Charlie’s mum. Although Charlie’s mum does not require child care, she is able to bring Charlie along to join in the activities he enjoys without the need to book him in to day care for a whole session.

Ionutsa, (17), Learning Disability

Ionusta goes to the athletics club and swimming club. She also accesses P.E. from the local academy, although she attends a special school. She went to Glasgow to take part in the Special Olympic events there and won a gold medal for her butterfly stroke.

Dennis, (8), Visual Impairment

Dennis is home tutored. Dennis enjoys socialising with other children when he attends the local Cub group and accesses swimming lessons. Dennis also attends a summer playscheme which offers some mainstream activities such as walks with the Ranger. However, for some activities such as canoeing, Dennis has the opportunity to take part in a smaller group with specialist support.

Penny, (2), Cerebral Palsy

Penny attends the Birnie Centre Playgroup, but her mother was keen for her to have more social opportunities with children her own age in a mainstream provision. Penny now attends a family centre where day care and pre-school education take place. She has a one to one worker there and is able to join in with the activities she is interested in. Penny’s mother has accessed Direct Payments to fund this opportunity.
Leisure Access

Good Practice/Suggestions

Access to Out of School Clubs and Activities

There is a lack of equity in access to leisure for children with additional support needs which fails to value equally the diversity of these children.

Some out of school clubs receive funding from the Childcare Partnerships to provide additional support to allow children with such needs to attend, but this scheme does not seem to be available all over the Highlands. Some parents use Direct Payments from social work to access such leisure services. Many parents may not know about either funding opportunity.

Different kinds of specialist playschemes run in various areas in Highland over the school holidays. One of the most encouraging things about these groups was their confidence to offer real challenge to children, the acceptance of risk; there was not the over-protectionism that can occur in mainstream (as seen elsewhere in this report when children were denied participation if there was not additional supervision available). This was not a compromise on safety but about maximising participation. Most groups went on frequent outings with children accessing places such as the swimming pool, beach, woodlands, riding, canoeing, library and local youth clubs.

Many children and young people reported attending youth clubs or church groups, and enjoy them.

Ankerville Nursery

Ankerville Nursery are committed to inclusion and have children attending with autistic spectrum disorders, physical disability, learning disability and AD/HD. The nursery provides one to one workers for those with high level needs but works hard at involving all staff and children in helping and supporting one another. The nursery works closely with parents and schools to ensure the best care for the child. Individual Education Plans are used where appropriate. The nursery has also supported parents in accessing funding to allow their children to attend.

Capability Scotland

Capability Scotland offers various services to support children accessing social and leisure activities. In some schemes, Capability Scotland works with mainstream social and leisure groups to develop their facilities and capabilities to enable the inclusion of children and young people with additional support needs. In other schemes children and young people are given direct support to access facilities such as the cinema or swimming pool. These schemes have not yet been tried in the Highland area.

Capability Scotland have also developed a secure web chat-room for children and young people with disability, called Chatability. There is a Highland Forum within the Chatability service so that disabled children and young people in Highland can discuss issues that are relevant to them. (see references for web address)
Listening to Children

Children and young people, along with their families, need to be involved in describing their personal experience in a way that can be used to influence policy.

Individual children and young people, along with their parents and professionals, also need to be involved in the personal decisions about their care and education.

Andrew, (11), ASD

Andrew was about to go into the academy and he spoke about his confusion; his brother wanted him to come to the local academy with him, but his parents wanted him to go to another academy where there was a special unit for autism. He did not know what he wanted as he did not seem to understand what the differences in each might be.

David, (8) ADHD

David was informally excluded and was only getting part-time education at the local school. He was asked his views about going to a special school, at least some of the time. David was concerned firstly about how he would get there and secondly about what it would be like.

When these were explained he was quite keen to consider this option.

Simon, (10), ASD

Simon had been attending a specialist school but is now in mainstream four days a week. The move from specialist to mainstream has been led by Simon, he has chosen the pace beginning with a small amount of time and increasing it as he felt able. This child led integration demanded close partnership between both schools and the parents but had worked well for Simon.

CEYAC in Caithness practices similar integration at the pace dictated by the child’s ability to manage in the mainstream class, the teacher’s confidence in coping with the child’s needs and the parents happiness with the arrangements.
Listening to Children

One Pupil’s Story

Stewart, 17, Asperger’s Syndrome

Stewart has been in special school and mainstream. He says there is good mainstream and bad mainstream.

Stewart was at his local primary school. The only thing he felt was good about this school was that it was close to his home. He experienced bullying at the school and felt unsupported by the staff. Once Stewart had been called names and pushed around and he got angry and ran home from school. No one was at home and so he had stayed in his room and played his CD at its loudest setting which helped him settle down.

Stewart felt he had not been able to do his best at this school.

"I didn’t listen to the teachers; I spent most of the time worrying about what might happen at lunch time."

Stewart has also attended a special residential school. To begin with Stewart settled in well and both pupils and staff were welcoming. However, Stewart’s parents did not think he was being stretched academically, feeling he was capable of much more. Stewart was not always happy at school and struggled to accept some of the rules and restrictions (such as bedtime in the middle of watching a football match).

Stewart visited his current mainstream school with his parents and it was decided to move here. This school has a base for autism. Stewart has settled in this school and gets on well with pupils and staff.

In the base there is a games room where Stewart can go to play on the computer and a quiet room which he can use if he feels angry. He can choose to be alone in this room or invite a teacher in. Sometimes the teacher asks him to go in to the quiet room if she feels he is angry, even if Stewart does not think so. Stewart finds this annoying, but he says once there it is quite relaxing to not be working.

When Stewart first came to the school he was given a coloured map which helped him to find his way around. Stewart’s timetable is arranged to give him a longer lunch break and to include his chosen subjects. Some of Stewart’s lessons happen in the base, with teachers visiting him there, for some subjects he goes in to the classroom. His timetable is coloured to indicate whether he is in the base or in class. Stewart also has horse riding one day a week and is proud to have won some rosettes.

At this school, Stewart has improved his performance from foundation level to general level, which he is very pleased about. Stewart has been able to sit standard grade exams when he is ready rather than at a particular age.

Stewart is now happy at school.

Out of school Stewart goes to football training one evening a week and has been down to the Special Olympics in Glasgow with his team, where he won a medal and his team won a cup.

Stewart also has a support worker who takes him out one night a week, often with a friend who had been at the same special school.
Inclusion: a Range of Opinions


“There was no dissent from the importance of inclusion in its widest sense, both on the grounds of equal opportunities and because only this could ensure that everyone’s talents were made fully available to the community. There was general agreement .... that Scottish education has become more inclusive in the last couple of decades, but that a great deal more needs to be achieved. The notion of social inclusion as an active policy (rather than just the removal of educationally irrelevant barriers) was widely endorsed. .... It could be, however, that there are, in practice, limits to the success of schools in becoming inclusive in all their activities, because some of these activities might never suit all students.”

Highland Council
Accessibility Strategy p2

“Access to education is the most powerful influence on future employment, economic wellbeing, quality of life and an individual’s ability to achieve their full potential. Greater inclusion of disability into education in its broadest sense offers a powerful tool in influencing non-disabled people’s understanding of, and attitudes to, disability.”


“Schools need to buy in wholesale to inclusion if it is to work. Inclusion cannot rely on the interest, commitment and enthusiasm of one or two individuals. Without a shift in the whole organisation’s attitude and approach it will fail children …”

Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit
Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People p94

“The rhetoric of mainstreaming needs to be followed up by specific action to include disabled children.... There is widespread but often anecdotal evidence that families with disabled children are facing barriers to accessing mainstream services and activities”

Making Mainstream Work
Enquire (2005) p12

“Simply locating children in mainstream is not inclusion, which requires the physical and social structure of all organisations to be changed so that they can provide the support that every child needs in order to reach their full potential. The task is never complete, it is a continuously evolving process”

“Try to laugh and make new friends”
By Nicola Primary 4

“[Inclusion means] feeling accepted and being able to participate not just in the physical sense but also to the point where my disability is not an issue with my friends”
Miss Sutherland, TESS 2005

Oliver (1996) p86 (a main protagonist of the social model)

“Most importantly how can integration be achieved in an unequal society? What are the consequences of integrating children into an education system that reflects and reinforces these inequalities?”
Inclusion is subjective; it is only real if the individual feels included. There is no other mechanism to measure how well inclusion is working except by listening to children.

The FHC2 Children’s Service Plan has inclusion as its overarching theme in the seven objectives laid out by the Scottish Executive. It is important to create mechanisms to listen to the voice of children as a means of auditing how well FHC2 is delivering those objectives.

This report has shown that while there is good practice evidenced, there is still a distance to go before all children are valued equally and enabled to participate. Some barriers to learning remain.

The Highland Council Accessibility Strategy aims to remove structural barriers but this inevitably takes time. In the meantime, creative solutions must be found to ensure that children do not experience exclusion, some examples of which are seen in this report.

The Highland Council spends 50% more on additional support needs than is expected by the Scottish executive. However, further training and understanding is needed to effectively remove environmental barriers to inclusion.

The attitudinal barriers experienced by children and parents are much harder to remove. It is reasonable to hope that further training about children’s additional support needs would help to eliminate prejudice but changing hearts and minds to develop an inclusive ethos in every school is still a way off. Staff out with this ethos may not be motivated to attend the very training days which might promote inclusion.

Children’s participation is sometimes being prevented due to a lack of sufficient adult support for those children who require it. While this is a resource issue if more adult support is required to meet children’s needs in schools, it can be seen in this report that the creative use of volunteers could go some way to alleviating this.

Valuing individuals means understanding how each child’s diversity affects how he/she learns, behaves and responds to others. Personal Learning Plans and support needs passports could be used to help children tease out what their individual strengths and needs are; valuing that diversity is then about removing barriers and ensuring participation.

Integration, as proposed and resourced by the Scottish Executive at present is not delivering inclusion to all children. While it seeks to remove the social and physical barriers to participation for many children and enables equal opportunities for some, a diverse range of children still have some unmet needs in both mainstream and specialist provision.

Children’s View:
The children who contributed to this report were not using words like inclusion, integration, specialism or mainstream.

They were interested in being liked, being treated fairly and being able to join in.

Children’s View:
I feel safe playing with my friend Colin Primary 3/4

Inclusion that feels inclusive

For inclusion to be real, policy makers, teachers, parents and society need to listen to the voices of children and respond to their needs.

Valuing diversity equally, removing environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers and ensuring each individual can participate to their maximum potential may seem an impossible task, but anything less is discriminatory. It will not be easy or cheap.

Real inclusion will require the commitment of hearts, minds and resources at every service provision level.
Recommendations

To Maximise Participation

Recruit adult volunteers, using relevant disclosure procedures, to provide extra support to maximise the participation of all children in activities.

Enable each child to succeed, offering activities that may be challenging but are achievable for that child, rather than whole class activities beyond the capacity of some.

Ensure adults have the training and equipment to support the participation of the child/children in their care.

Promote the use of Personal Learning Plans to involve children in planning and reviewing their own learning.

To remove environmental barriers

Be creative in solutions and strategies, such as using cards as a visual cue for children who might benefit from this.

Increase awareness of inclusion ensuring the needs of children are understood by the whole school/out of school service.

Develop a Support Needs Passport system, so that the child could own a document containing information agreed by the child about effective strategies to meet his or her additional support needs.

Involve young people in setting rules to increase their understanding of one another’s needs, especially if the child’s own needs would make it difficult for them to understand the needs of others.

To remove structural barriers

Allocate a suitable time-out space where children can go to calm down if they are not coping.

While structural changes to buildings are being planned, creative solutions are needed for individual pupils to ensure their participation and dignity.

To remove attitudinal barriers

Ensure the ethos of inclusion is shared and practiced throughout services.

Deliver whole school awareness of the different needs and experiences of children with disorders that tend to meet with prejudice such as AD/HD, ASD and SEBD.

Emphasise fairness, ensuring both sides of the story are heard and that punishments while consistent, take account of the individual child’s behavioural needs.

Creatively use rewards and sanctions to ensure they have the maximum beneficial effect for that individual child.

Valuing Diversity

Carry out a training needs analysis within Highland to identify the required improvement in skills and understanding of staff to allow the confident delivery of inclusion in every setting.

Undertake an analysis to identify the time required by class teachers to prepare and participate in person centred learning for children in need.

Promote the funding available for inclusion in leisure activities, such as the High-Life Scheme, Direct Payments and Childcare Partnership support grants.

The silent voice...

Some children may be so used to being different, to not being valued equally, that they may not believe that inclusion is a possibility. It is essential to find and listen to that voice.

Children need to know that their voice matters, that their experience can shape policy and that they are of equal value to the community, whatever their needs or circumstances. All services should have clear procedures for listening to the otherwise silent voice.

Most examples and suggestions of good practice were made by adults.

This could be because children experiencing real inclusion have never considered any other possibility, being included is just being ‘normal’.

There will be examples of good practice all over Highland where diversity is valued equally and children’s individual needs are met in creative ways.

There is a need to gather together the best of this practice to share with others.

Most examples and suggestions of good practice were made by adults.

This could be because children experiencing real inclusion have never considered any other possibility, being included is just being ‘normal’.

There will be examples of good practice all over Highland where diversity is valued equally and children’s individual needs are met in creative ways.

There is a need to gather together the best of this practice to share with others.
Twelve Top Tips
By Bill Sadler of Co-operative Solutions

Celebrate and support diversity
Value equally each individual’s contribution in the classroom and encourage appreciation of individual differences. Provide, as far as possible, the level of support each requires. Everyone needs support to learn in the lifelong learning process, from the youngest pupil to the head teacher. Providing appropriate support in the classroom involves learning from one another: teachers, pupils, parents and support staff.

Focus on outcomes
Find ways of doing things, whenever possible, that engage everyone in the classroom. Teaching is not about getting everyone in the class to conform to a particular way of doing thing.

Give ownership of learning and learning strategies
Involves individual pupils in finding out how best they learn, what support works and what they are required to learn. Whether formally through Personal Learning Plans or informally through discussion facilitate the sharing of this information amongst pupils and other key partners in their learning.

Plan do review
As far as possible use a plan-do-review cycle at an individual pupil level, a teacher level and class level. This cycle works best when carried out in partnership with everyone closely involved. Record only what is necessary.

Be holistic
Try to see individual pupils in the round the child in the family and in the community. Inclusion is about involving all the relevant people in the child’s life both as problem solvers and as those who might impact on the pupil’s well being and learning.

Avoid labels
Describe difficulties and note talents rather than label pupils. A diagnosis can bring comfort to individuals through understanding the cause of his/her individual differences. However, a label does not define a pupil or the best learning support. Providing whole school awareness is not about separating out an individual with a label but about recognising that including individuals might mean considering different approaches.

Be positive
Recognise and acknowledge each individual’s strengths and capabilities; everyone is good at something and everyone can contribute something. Self-esteem is part of the foundation for reasonable behaviour and confident learning. This applies to yourself and colleagues as well as to other learners. Take time to recognise your own successes.

Share good practice
Share good ideas. Someone else might benefit from the creative thinking in your classroom.

Be creative
Think out of the box. Solutions might be simple or require more imagination. Involve pupils, parents and support staff in ideas of how best to engage every pupil in learning.

Be adaptive
Consider whether other pupils in the class may also benefit from an approach or different way of working which benefits an individual pupil. Equally, because two pupils have a similar difficulty does not mean that the same solution will be appropriate for both.

Face the challenge
Engage the least engaging pupil in order to facilitate the learning of the whole class.
In order to understand the experiences of children and young people and their families, it is useful to set the approaches of professionals and service providers in an historical context.

The disability rights movement emanated from the formation of the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in the 1970’s who disputed the definition adopted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) of disability being an impairment impacting upon everyday living to one proposing that everyday life impacts on impairment to make it disabling (Drake 1999).

The disability rights movement led to a move from remedial education to the recognition of additional support needs. This change has been accompanied by a gradual move from specialist education (which is seen as discriminatory) to integration into the mainstream (which is rightly seen as offering equality of opportunity for many children with impairments).

Social Model

The social model, also described by Oliver (1996), grew from a "distinction made between impairment and disability" (p30) proposing that society disables people with physical impairment. The social model is based on the opposite premises from the medical model, seeing the causes of impairment as social or environmental; the barriers of society preventing participation of people with impairment. Secondly, that people should not need to undergo treatment to make them more like other people, this undervalues who they are; impairment is part of a person and this should be acceptable to the rest of society. Thirdly, people with impairment are the best people to make decisions about their needs, not professionals.

Medical Model

The medical model of disability as described by Oliver (1996) is based on three premises, first that disability/impairment has biological causes and so is a 'personal tragedy' for the person involved. Secondly there is an assumption that impairment or disability is a malfunction, a distortion of 'normal' and efforts should be made where possible to 'normalise' the person through treatment. Thirdly that the professional is the person best placed to decide on the action required.

The social model does not fit all people with impairment. Some people with impairment can also suffer illness and people with illness can become impaired and both these groups may benefit from medical treatment. However, the core of the social argument remains that diversity is found amongst people and impairment is just another aspect of that diversity; it is only the barriers put up in society which cause disability.
Scottish Law

Appendix 2

As it Relates to Inclusion

**Children (Scotland) Act 1995**

Children (Scotland) Act (1995) describes the rights and responsibilities of parents and the welfare of the child. One of its key themes is the voice of the child "Each child who can form his or her views on matters affecting him or her has the right to express those views if he or she wishes".

**Disability Discrimination Act (1995)**

Disability Discrimination Act (1995) seeks to support the social model by requiring that barriers to anyone accessing services should be viewed as discrimination, the Act "makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled pupils and prospective pupils in admissions, in education and associated services and in exclusions".

**Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001**

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 described the duty to provide an education for those with disability, ensuring that the clause of previous law "incompatible with the efficient education of other children" was not used as an excuse to exclude children with disability from mainstream.

**Education (Scotland) Act 2002**

Education (Scotland) Act 2002 presents disability strategies and pupil’s educational records to ensure accessibility for the disabled.

**Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003**

Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, while seeking to protect children, has administrative implications for all children’s services statutory or voluntary.

**Anti-social Behaviour (Scotland) Act (2003)**

Anti-social Behaviour (Scotland) Act (2003) will have particular repercussions for families where children have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties but there is still active debate on whether the measures in the Act will meet the needs of the children and young people concerned.

**Additional Support for Learning Act (2004)**

The new Additional Support for Learning Act (2004) recognises the diversity of all children and accepts that most children will require additional learning support at some stage; children who require significant support for their learning from other services in addition to education will have a Coordinated Support Plan to ensure agencies work together. The New Community School Approach and School Liaison Groups advocated by Scottish Executive continue this child-centred multi-agency approach, where the professionals work around the child’s needs.
The importance of social inclusion can be seen in that 36% of the children put playing with friends as a factor in feeling good in school and 26% of children listed playing in the playground. 19% of the children were involved in the school curriculum when feeling good at school.

Pupils in Merkinch School were asked to draw themselves feeling good in school. They were then asked to write or tell what made them feel good at school. The following graph describes the children’s responses (NUR = No Useful Response)

The children’s view on feeling good at school

Feeling happy reading a book.
“Maths makes me feel good”
Ruari
Primary 5

Feeling happy making new friends

“Maths makes me feel good”
Ruari
Primary 5

Feeling happy because some books are funny.
“Getting work right”
Danny
Primary 6

The importance of social inclusion can be seen in that 36% of the children put playing with friends as a factor in feeling good in school and 26% of children listed playing in the playground. 19% of the children were involved in the school curriculum when feeling good at school.
Pupils in Merkinch School were asked to draw themselves feeling not so good in school. They were then asked to write or tell what made them feel not so good at school. The following graph describes the children’s responses.

24% of pupils listed being missed out or falling out with friends as the reason for feeling not so good in school. However, if the responses about being hit, bullied, called names and so on are grouped together 30% of children put being hurt by other pupils in some way as a reason for feeling not so good.

Girls were much more concerned about falling out than boys (14% compared to just 4%), and were also more likely to put being missed out or being bullied than boys.

However, 32% of boys compared to 17% of girls felt not so good about reading, writing or maths. 20% of girls felt not so good about the work being too hard, too much or getting work wrong compared to 12% of boys.
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Acknowledgements

Thanks to all children, parents, professionals and other carers who shared their experience
Thanks to the playschemes, schools, out of school clubs and vD@ntary organisations that invited HCF to visit and meet with children
Special thanks to Merkinch Primary School, SNAP and Ross-shire Special Needs Playscheme for the art work