

"COUNT US IN"

INCLUSION - The MAVISBANK Perspective

THE INCLUSIVENESS OF A SCHOOL
COMES FROM ITS AIMS AND VALUES,
CLIMATE AND ETHOS, AND THE EXTENT
TO WHICH THE NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN
ARE BEING ADDRESSED

The term "Inclusion" for most staff will probably mean the inclusion of children and young people with additional support needs in mainstream schools, since that aspect of Inclusion is the one most talked about or discussed in the newspapers, very often in negative terms. However, there is much more to Inclusion than this "presumption of mainstreaming" as it is referred to in the original document STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS ACT 2000. Various documents too numerous to mention have been produced on the subject of Inclusion by the Scottish Executive, HMI as well as North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire's Strategy for Inclusion relates directly to its policy Raising Achievement for All and there is a copy available for each staff member.

The HMIe document on Inclusion is entitled "COUNT US IN" and I have used that title for this in-service because it is a good indication of what is meant by Inclusion.

All schools are required to adopt an Inclusive approach to education, whether mainstream or special.

So, what is INCLUSION if it's not just about Mainstreaming? INCLUSION is about the entitlement of ALL pupils to receive a high quality experience from the Education system.

INCLUSION is about the school adjusting to the needs of the child, not the child fitting in to the school-not one size fits all.

INCLUSION is about treating all pupils as individuals.

INCLUSION is about valuing everyone -pupils, parents, staff.

INCLUSION is about ALL agencies working together for the benefit of the child.

INCLUSION is about effective communication among key agencies

INCLUSION is about consulting and working with PARENTS

INCLUSION is about creating a CULTURE of INCLUSION -

i.e. creating a

SECURE, ACCEPTING, COLLABORATING, LEARNING

community in which everyone's

BACKGROUND, LEVEL of ABILITY, CULTURE & RELIGION

are valued.

NB INCLUSION & EQUALITY is one of the five NATIONAL PRIORITIES in EDUCATION.

There is no single route towards Inclusion that will suit all schools. However, there are certain significant features which all schools can embrace in order to develop an Inclusive approach to education e.g

- creating an ethos of achievement for ALL pupils within a climate of high expectation
- promoting success by removing barriers to learning
- providing opportunities to experience success and achievement
- acknowledging the rights of all children to an education aimed at developing their personalities, mental & physical abilities to their fullest potential

- acknowledging the importance of working in partnership with and fully consulting parents
- developing effective inter-agency working i.e. joined-up working.

The HMI publication "How good is our school" which we have all used for audit purposes asks a series of questions relating to all aspects of self-evaluation.

How are we doing?

How do we know?

What are we going to do now?

Discuss within your class teams the features of an Inclusive approach to education addressing the above questions.

One member of staff should act as scribe and another can provide feedback at the end of the discussion time.

In the column headed "How are we doing" allocate a score of 1-6. Add comments if you feel so inclined!

Sheila M. Harkness February 2005.

Our pupils access , with appropriate support, such activities as sensory horseriding, disability skiing, speedboats etc. They also attend senior proms at local high schools as well as Art, Music and Technology lessons.

Our pupils also promote inclusion by sharing their learning experiences with pupils from local high schools and secondary schools thus educating mainstream pupils about members of society with complex additional support needs

Reviewed: John Lochrie, Eileen McDonnell May 2010, January 2015
Date of next review: January 2018