



*New Redland
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol, BS16 1QU
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 117 344 4007
Fax +44 117 344 4005*

Developing Inclusion Means Ending Segregation

Response from the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education to 'A Focus on Change' – Consultation on a New Strategic Plan for the Disability Rights Commission for 2004/5 to 2006/7

CSIE shares the DRC's view in its consultation document that as education is key to social inclusion for disabled people and has a crucial role in transmitting values and culture in society, it merits being a priority area for the DRC's work. We feel that as this pivotal role of education continues to apply, it should continue to be a priority for DRC strategic planning.

In continuing to prioritize education, it will be important that the Commission makes clear that the education being referred to is inclusive education and that it is only inclusive education – not segregated 'special' education – which has the potential to deliver the DRC's core goal of greater participation by disabled people as equal citizens. It is our view that this position upholds international human rights agreements and standards and the principles of freedom, equality, justice and the dignity of the individual on which they are based.

Prioritising inclusive education will also enable the DRC to further develop the valuable work it has started on promoting and monitoring the new anti-discrimination duties on schools and colleges. If properly implemented, the new duties have the potential to build the capacity of mainstream education to respond to the full diversity of pupils and transform the life chances of disabled children and young people.

In developing inclusive education for all it will also be important for a revised strategy plan to acknowledge that the development of a fully inclusive mainstream education service necessarily involves the phasing out of segregated special education, both as a pressing human rights issue and from the standpoint of the effective use of resources.

The need for capacity building in the mainstream to respond to the full diversity of pupils and an end to segregation should both be highlighted as equally important goals in the revised strategy plan as well as the phased and properly planned transfer of resources from segregated settings to the mainstream to facilitate the change.

The DRC's consultation response to the DfES *Report of the Special School Working Group on the Future of Special Schools* acknowledges only a short-term and reducing role for special schools and calls for their ongoing evaluation in the context of working towards a more inclusive mainstream education service. It has many useful insights and recommendations to inform the DRC's strategy on education.

Outlined below are suggestions for targets that might be usefully included in a DRC strategy plan regarding developing inclusion and ending segregation in education. Also suggested are investigations which the DRC might wish to consider conducting or commissioning in the interests of developing a fully inclusive, fully supported mainstream education service.

TARGETS FOR:

- increasing numbers of pupils in mainstream schools
- for reducing numbers of pupils in segregated settings
- for the eventual phasing out of segregated settings

INVESTIGATIONS INTO:

- transfer of resources from segregated settings to mainstream
- development of mainstream support and access to cater for the full diversity of pupils
- pupils' experiences of inclusion

The overall vision of the revised DRC strategy plan should be of an inclusive society, including an inclusive education service, in which all people, including disabled people, are equally valued and where barriers to any citizen's participation is tackled as part of an ongoing process to resist marginalisation, exclusion and segregation. The role of education, based on inclusive principles, in promoting and sustaining such a pluralist, moral democracy is vital.

CSIE, September 2003