

## **Key Facts about CSIE**

- CSIE is a national charity (327805) and a registered company (2253521).
- Founded in 1982, CSIE has been at the forefront of developments in inclusive education for 40 years.
- The Centre works to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in education for everyone regardless of ability, age, culture/ethnicity, gender identity, impairment, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background. It promotes the celebration of difference.
- CSIE activities aim to raise public awareness of children's rights and transform education, so that everyone can be safe, included and learning in schools and other educational settings in their local community.
- In addition to lobbying & campaigning activities, we deliver talks and training, support schools to advance equality holistically, offer consultancy nationally and internationally, engage in research and produce a wide range of resources, some of which are used throughout the world.
- CSIE has developed a reputation for being at the forefront of educational change. Its staff are regularly invited to speak at conferences and other events, as well as contributing to national policy discussions and to important publications on inclusive education.
- CSIE has recently restructured and is seeking to recruit two Equality Officers to work in close collaboration with CSIE's Director in three local authorities (currently Bristol, Calderdale and Solihull).
- CSIE receives no regular funding. Its income comes from the sale of resources and services, charitable grants and donations, and fundraising activities.
- Our recent achievements include:
  - International Award (Innovative Practice Award 2016 from the Zero Project) for CSIE's practical and user-friendly toolkit "Equality: Making it Happen".
  - Research on school placement trends of all local authorities in England since the 1980s. The most recent report (2019) confirms significant differences in the proportion of children and young people which local authorities regularly place in mainstream, special or other types of schools (<https://bit.ly/3c3cpzf>).
  - Screenings in Bristol and online of the film "Intelligent Lives", followed by lively debates about inclusive education, attracting attendees from over 23 countries.
  - Being selected as one of 200 charities (out of 14000 members) to attend a reception at Windsor Castle in April 2019, to mark 100 years of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).



## Our Core Values

Our passionate commitment to disability equality as a human right and our particular work ethic are best conveyed through the following core values:

**Integrity:** think, speak and act with honesty, clarity, authenticity and transparency

**Collaboration:** work amicably with others in a spirit of negotiation and nonviolence

**Creativity:** make complex ideas accessible and find imaginative solutions to complex challenges

**Reflection:** learn from experience and empower others to do the same

**Respect:** connect with others in ways which honour their identities, remembering that everyone is of equal value by virtue of being human

**Joy:** maintain a positive outlook, good sense of humour and enjoyment in our work

**Care:** approach people with empathy and compassion, and approach our work with rigorous attention to detail and relentless pursuit of quality



## CSIE's Theory of Change

### Vision

CSIE's vision is that all children are safe, included and learning in their local school<sup>1</sup>. This vision applies to all children, irrespective of their background and personal characteristics, especially ability or perceived ability. We refer to this as good quality inclusive education<sup>2</sup>. It gives children: optimum opportunities for learning from their peers and from educators (this applies to the curriculum as well as personal & social development); and a sense of belonging in their local community. It can also offer powerful experiences for educating people away from prejudice and, therefore, can be an important step towards an inclusive society, where minority groups are no longer harassed, marginalised or excluded, but are valued and celebrated for what they bring to society as a whole.

This vision is consistent with national law (the SEND Code of Practice confirms the presumption of inclusion in the Children and Families Act)<sup>3</sup> and the international call for all children to be included in their local school, e.g. in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, CSIE supports the call to decolonise the curriculum and suggests that institutional change needs to go deeper. People's identities are multi-faceted, as people from all ethnic backgrounds may also be, for example, gay, lesbian, trans or disabled. CSIE addresses equality holistically and remains alert to the possibility that different aspects of a person's identity can have a cumulative effect on the risk of discrimination. Most aspects of equality are reasonably well addressed in education, but disability equality is consistently overlooked and there is evidence of institutional prejudice against disabled people, which remains largely unacknowledged. Many disabled children are not welcome in their local school and their segregation is widely considered acceptable, as education practice remains out of sync with the national and international legal call to develop more inclusive schools.

A recent Ofsted report<sup>4</sup> confirms that, despite legal changes to improve education for disabled children, long-standing issues remain and have been highlighted and intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic. Such a vicious circle, where many disabled children are segregated from their peers allowing for prejudice and discrimination to persist, leads to

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document 'school' is taken to mean any provider of Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Further or Higher Education and 'child' refers to any child or young person up to the age of 18.

<sup>2</sup> We acknowledge that attending one's local school is not in itself a marker of inclusion; the current reality is such that for some children attending a local school can be a regretful experience.

<sup>3</sup> We acknowledge that a documented legal call may not be reflected in current national policy or priorities.

<sup>4</sup> Ofsted (2021) SEND: Old issues, new issues, next steps. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-old-issues-new-issues-next-steps>

wider social inequalities: in 2019-20 there was a 9% increase in disability hate crimes recorded by police in England and Wales (from 7,786 to 8,469)<sup>5</sup>.

For these reasons, CSIE addresses equality through the lens of disability. Disabled children have a legal right to a good education within their local community. Equal opportunities in education can lead to improved educational outcomes and, therefore, better life chances. Recent research<sup>6</sup> confirms that the benefit of including disabled children in ordinary schools is twofold: a) it leads to improved educational outcomes not only for disabled children but for non-disabled children as well; and b) it better supports the social and emotional development of all children, disabled and non-disabled.

### **Who has the power to make this happen?**

- *Central Government and national institutions* (Government, Education Committee, Department for Education, Ofsted): laws and national policy, including statutory guidance; funding for education; responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education, adherence to laws and statutory guidance, and implementation of policy.
- *Local Government*: legal duty to make suitable arrangements for every child's education; local policy; and, for local authority schools: decisions on allocation of funding; vision, strategy, training and support for schools.
- *Multi Academy Trusts*: for Trust schools: decisions on allocation of funding; vision, strategy, training and support for schools.
- *Individual schools*:
  - *Senior Leadership Teams* have the power to transform schools by establishing inclusive values, ensuring staff receive relevant training and support, and keeping the door open for disabled children from the local community, working in collaboration with parents as partners to ensure best outcomes for their children.
  - *Governing Bodies* hold schools to account and, therefore, can be instrumental in ensuring inclusive values and policies are agreed and implemented.
  - *Teachers and Learning Support Assistants* have the power to create more inclusive schools, if there is a critical mass that shares this vision and is supported to change practice. (This is in line with the "Longitude" story, where one man single-handedly solved the problem of establishing longitude at sea and, even though he encountered considerable resistance from the establishment and the scientific community of his time, his idea and his invention caught on because enough individual captains valued his timepiece and bought one for themselves<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, in education, if enough educators understand disability equality as a human rights issue and make changes to their own practice, the whole landscape will eventually change.)

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<sup>5</sup> Home Office report: Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2019-20. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/925968/hate-crime-1920-hosb2920.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925968/hate-crime-1920-hosb2920.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Alana Institute (2016) A Summary of the Evidence on Inclusive Education. Available at: [https://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A\\_Summary\\_of\\_the\\_evidence\\_on\\_inclusive\\_education.pdf](https://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A_Summary_of_the_evidence_on_inclusive_education.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Sobel, D. (1998). Longitude : the true story of a lone genius who solved the greatest scientific problem of his time. London: Fourth Estate.

- *Parents:* The system affords parents an opportunity to hold schools to account for disability discrimination. In practice the power of parents is limited because the process is complex and parents rarely choose, or feel able, to follow this route.

## Core principles

### i) *Equality and respect*

We believe that everyone is of equal value, by virtue of being human. Age, (dis)ability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, or socioeconomic background have no part in determining personal worth. We believe that diversity should be celebrated and utilised as a rich learning resource, always mindful of the impact of other people’s attention on an individual.

### ii) *One school for all*

We recognise the uncompromised right of every child to a good education in their local community, as enshrined in national and international legislation<sup>8</sup>. We believe that the best location for this is an ordinary school with an inclusive culture, where trained teachers facilitate children’s learning and participation.

We are aware that schools’ admission processes are not always explicit; anecdotal evidence suggests that sometimes families of disabled children are made to feel unwelcome or are told that the school cannot meet their needs<sup>9</sup>.

We believe that schools’ selection procedures, for example on grounds of faith, perceived ability or socioeconomic status, may operate against the principle of equal opportunity. We also believe that the existence of separate special schools is a remnant from a previous era, when disabled people were thought to have no place in mainstream society, and may possibly still retain some of that function in some people’s minds.

### iii) *Beneficiary agency: “Nothing about us without us”*

We are committed to working in close collaboration with our beneficiaries and others who have first-hand experience of the issues we are seeking to address. We are particularly committed to engaging with the voice of disabled people, disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) and parents who want an inclusive education for their disabled children, so that our work is consistent with the “nothing about us without us” imperative.

## Beneficiaries

*Ultimate beneficiaries:* disabled and non-disabled children, all of whom will benefit from inclusive education. Society as a whole will also benefit, as inclusive education can pave the way for greater social justice.

*Direct beneficiaries:* disabled children, who often face discrimination, including institutional discrimination, in education.

*Indirect beneficiaries:* non-disabled children, whose educational experience will be enhanced by inclusive education; parents who want an inclusive education for their disabled children, who will no longer have to fight for this.

<sup>8</sup> Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>9</sup> Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2014). It might be better if you looked elsewhere; an investigation into the schools admission process (available at <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/it-might-be-best-if-you-looked-elsewhere>)

## **Additional stakeholders**

School leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, who will be better equipped to work in inclusive schools.

## **What levers for change can we pull, to influence the behaviour of those who have power to make inclusion happen?**

The biggest barrier in advancing disability equality in education is that most schools do not see inclusion as a human rights issue and do not see any need to change their policies, practices or cultures. The way teaching & learning are organised in schools continues to be shaped by long-established and little-reviewed practices (such as conventional patterns of 1:1 support from teaching assistants) and outdated perceptions of disability; this gives rise to institutional prejudice and the widespread belief that some disabled children cannot be included in ordinary schools. Other barriers are connected to national policies: for example the narrative of “parental choice” of school, whereby some options are not available in some areas, leaving some parents to agree to a school placement which does not reflect their choice; or the standards agenda and league tables which create competition between schools, effectively providing a disincentive for schools to include disabled children. Finally, another barrier is the process through which school places are allocated; the Children’s Commissioner report referenced above suggests that some schools deny admission to disabled children in unofficial, and potentially unlawful, ways.

Our experience tells us that, following a successful awareness-raising event, stakeholders become more willing to change their practice because they understand the significance of inclusion in principle and the benefits of effective inclusion in practice for disabled and non-disabled children, and for society as a whole. CSIE’s work, therefore, focuses on raising awareness about disabled children’s right to a good inclusive education in the community in which they live, and on supporting local authorities, schools and other educational settings to develop more inclusive policies and practices.

In light of all the above, our activities focus on:

- a) raising awareness about disability equality in education and campaigning for the development of more inclusive education; we do this through talks, training, resources, responses to consultations, networking and a strong online presence;
- b) supporting schools and other educational settings to build capacity to include disabled children; we do this through direct engagement with schools and other educational settings, as well as through research, talks, training, resources, networking and information exchange;
- c) offering consultancy nationally and internationally; we do this through offering advice for national agencies, working with local authorities to support inclusive school development, assisting schools and other educational settings to review and develop their inclusive practice, and contributing to international projects.

In autumn 2021 we introduced a focus on three geographical areas, to enable the various strands of our work to interact and strengthen the impact of one another; for example, informing parents about disabled children’s rights in education is expected to have a stronger impact in an area where we have also worked with professionals on increasing schools’ capacity to include disabled children.