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THE CONTEXT

In 1996 HM Inspectors of Schools produced a Report on *The Education of Pupils with Language and Communication Disorders* in which they commented that there was *insufficient information available about what happened to pupils with language and communication disorders at the secondary stages* (SOEID, 1996, para 5.24) and questioned whether the current level of provision for pupils with language and communication disorders, in Scotland, was satisfactory (para 5.25).

Mackay et al., reporting on their research into 'Educational Provision for pupils with disorders of language and communication in west central Scotland', published in *Scottish Educational Review* in 1997, concluded that:

The special needs of pupils of secondary age are a matter of concern. It is undoubtedly the case that the needs of many children will change as they grow older, and some children may cease to have special needs. Thus, a response to them through the provision of a communication centre, or other type of earlier support, may not be appropriate... Yet there will remain a proportion of pupils with persistent difficulties in communication that will remain with them always ... We believe (as does the HMI report) that this is an area for a more focused response to ensure that the special needs of these pupils are recognised and met.

Afasic Scotland shares these concerns and, believing that the time was now right to evaluate the provision available to pupils with persistent speech and language impairments who are of secondary school age, organised a conference which was held at Heriot-Watt University on 17th March 2000. This provided a unique opportunity for all those concerned with provision for this group of pupils, as well as representative pupils and parents, to come together at a national level to share information, opinions and concerns and to contribute to the creation of a realistic vision for the future.

Peter Peacock, Junior Minister for Children and Education opened proceedings by outlining the actions recently undertaken by the Scottish Executive in support of special educational needs in general, and in relation to speech and language services in particular. He stressed the need for all those involved – professionals, parents, the voluntary sector – to work together with the Executive to develop policies to take the work forward.

This volume records the proceedings, identifies the key themes which emerged and suggests a way forward for the future.

Ann Auchterlonie
Director, Afasic Scotland

THE CONFERENCE

Keynote Address 1

LEARNING AND LANGUAGE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Dr Carol Miller

Language is the main tool for teaching and learning and there are close, complex links between language and thinking. Most teachers would agree that their task is to help children to develop their language as a flexible tool for learning, through speaking, listening, reading and writing. Adults' language to children is therefore extremely important.

We also extend our language through using it. Talking with others, asking and responding to questions, can extend vocabulary and develop skills to use language in a wider range of situations with different people.

There are also important links between language, learning and emotion. Feelings may, or may not, be expressed through language. The way we feel can be linked with our ability to learn.

In a simple analysis, language can be considered to have three different aspects: content, form and use. *Content* refers to the ideas and concepts which we talk and think about. *Form* is the way which language is expressed, for example, through the sounds of speech, the parts of words and phrases that are called grammar, the marks on a page which make up writing or the movements of the hands which make signs. *Use* of language is the way that it functions for different purposes, with different people in different settings.

For most people, content, form and use are well integrated. Ideas can be put together in ways that others can understand, in a variety of circumstances. We can generally understand other people's communications even if they have a different accent from our own and are speaking in a different style.

People who are described as having speech or language impairments have difficulties in the content, form or use of language and often the difficulty is a combination of these. The difficulties may be in their understanding of these aspects or in the expression, or in understanding and expression combined. Children and young people with these difficulties may have problems remembering words or putting words together. They may be unable to use the parts of word that make a difference to meaning, the 's' on the end to make plurals or the 'ed' or 'ing' that tells us whether something happened in the past or is happening now. They may not understand about the rules of conversation, how to take turns or how to gain someone's interest. In summary, their difficulties may be in any aspect of listening, reading or writing.

Secondary Schools are large complex organisations. Teaching and learning are organised around subjects, taught by different people in different rooms. It is usually assumed that the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are in place and that students can increasingly organise themselves to learn effectively. There is also increased demand on social communication skills, including jokes, chat and gossip, so important for the development of relationships in adolescence.

If provision is to be evaluated and developed it will be important to take account of learning and language needs and to consider how these are to be characterised in secondary education. Otherwise, 'the gains made in recent years for primary age pupils will be lost' (Miller and Roux, 1997).

Reference

Miller, C and Roux, J. (1997) Working with 11-16-year-old pupils with language and communication difficulties in the mainstream school. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 13:3 228-243.

Keynote Address 2

DEVELOPING SECONDARY PROVISION: CONFRONTING THE ISSUES

Gill Edelman

This presentation covered a brief introduction to I CAN, the national charity for speech and language difficulties, including:

I CAN's Vision:

To create a society in which the special educational needs of children with speech and language impairment are recognised, understood and met

I CAN's approach is based on a set of core beliefs:

- educational entitlement
- integration of therapy and education
- early identification and intervention
- inclusion in mainstream for the majority
- specialist provision for children with severe and complex needs
- partnership

The key issues involved in developing secondary provision were identified as follows:

Secondary school creates new organisational demands on staff and pupils:

Staff:

- multiple teachers
- multi-disciplinary/agency teams
- specialists in subject/SEN
- timetable/access
- withdrawal/in class support
- 24 hr curriculum

Pupils:

- size, scale, pupil numbers
- multiple teachers
- increase in subjects and content of programmes of study
- need for self direction and organisation (locations, timetables, homework, equipment)
- need for focused work in these areas

Linguistic demands accelerate rapidly both in and out of lessons:

- new concepts
- new technical and specialist vocabulary
- pace of vocabulary acquisition
- dependence on interaction for shared learning
- teaching of modern foreign languages
- building new relationships
- language of peers (humour, irony, sarcasm, slang, pace of exchanges)
- participation in schools council

There are common areas of difficulty across provision:

- concepts/vocabulary relating to curriculum
- pragmatic aspects (comprehension of contextual information, selection and organisation of information, organisation of conversations)
- residual difficulties with phonology and syntax (NB impact on written language)
- problems with auditory processing and short term memory

Access to external accreditation is vital:

- enabling access to existing pathways vs. creating pathways
- selection of courses and assessment to match pupil potential
- seeking concessions (special assessment arrangements) for pupils

There is a strong need to plan and manage transitions:

- vital links from KS2 – KS3 (P7 – S1)
- importance of independence development and work experience
- use of family and community link workers
- planning provision post-16

Recruitment and development may be problematic:

- new area for many speech and language therapists / teachers
- joint planning and evaluation is key
- lack of network support
- need for access to specialist training

A PARENT'S VIEW

Jack Law

I am a parent of a child who attends a secondary school. My child is in 3rd year and is planning to sit some Standard Grades at the end of the 4th year. My child hopes to have a good job as an adult, with a nice house and good holidays every year. My child hopes to drive a posh car, to go to the cinema, to meet someone, to have friends, to enjoy life.

Who am I talking about?

Can anyone provide me with a label for my child? Is my child different or special?

In this context, in these terms, as a list of ambitions, my child is like any other child in this country.

So, why am I here?

I am here because the education system finds it difficult to allow my child to achieve his ambitions.

Why?

Because my child does not fit easily with the everyday functioning of the education system. In other words, the education system is dysfunctional for my child.

Now, clearly this cannot be the case because the educational system, with monotonous regularity spews out politicians and journalists, lawyers and doctors, teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, bureaucrats, bus drivers and factory workers.

But still my child may not achieve his ambitions.

I am sure that any parent faced with that realisation would try to find a way to make sure the education system would not fail their child.

That's why I'm here today – I am a parent, like any other parent – whose child is special and precious to them. But unlike the majority of parents I've had to argue and push and dig in and monitor my child's education since Primary school and through Secondary School.

Why?

Because the education system finds it extremely difficult to give my child the best chance of achieving his ambitions.

Let's look at experiences. I have spoken to a number of parents of Secondary School children to gather information before coming here today. What I am going to say is a composite. It is not just my experience. Some other parents here today may recognise some of the things I will say, others will not. Most of what I'm about to say reflects the negative experiences of our children, but not all of the experiences are negative.

A number of themes will come through (I hope) from this presentation which I hope will be carried through to this afternoon. Themes such as:

- Parental participation
- Communication
- Information
- Collective decision making
- Involvement of young people
- Understanding
- Planning
- Timing

My first experience of issues associated with Secondary School was in P7, when consideration had to be made about which school my child would attend. Now, for many parents, the most they have to consider is whether the school has a reasonable achievement record. In most cases not a matter which requires elongated consideration.

Our children are the subject of assessment – quite rightly – a discussion about Secondary School option – OK –, and, especially if you are a parent who is assertive, considerable delay in achieving a placement. Sometimes this delay can continue into the summer break. Now who amongst the parents here finds that tolerable? Think of the upset to parents and children if the decision about what Secondary School their child will attend is delayed until after the end of the summer term. Yet time and again we hear of this happening to our children.

SURELY a minimum standard for education authorities would be to have every child placed in Secondary School by, say, the end of May.

Our children are the subject of assessment. I used to think that assessment processes were relatively scientific, needs led and child focussed. Imagine my surprise to learn that assessments are as variable as the number of spots on a Dalmatian's coat. That they can be subjective, impressionistic and even wrong. For example I know of one child – on the basis of an assessment – being refused entry to a Secondary Unit designed to meet the needs of a child with speech and language difficulties, but who was subsequently assessed as suitable for a residential place in a unit for children with speech and language difficulties. Now the bureaucrat in all of us might well say – that's only one child – but what would the parent in you say – That's my child!

Is it any wonder that parents will often seem less than willing to accept the outcome of assessments?

Is it any wonder that parents become extremely assertive?

Is it any surprise that we constantly feel we have to be vigilant and alert to the possibility that the educational system will conspire against our children?

Surely it is not beyond the capabilities of the collective wisdom and experience of the professions to find a way to improve the assessment process by more effectively communication with parents and children, leading to a more participative approach to decision making.

So what is it like being in Secondary School?

Well, I suppose it's a bit like learning to grow up. It's learning that social relationships are tricky, that you are responsible for yourself, that you are good at some things, but not so good at others and that life is complicated and full of hidden dangers and difficulties.

But also that life is full of possibilities.
Would any one parent think otherwise?

But my child is different. Because the education system finds it difficult to meet his/her needs.

My child is different because he/she attends a special unit in the school.

My child is different because I can't be on the School Board.

My child is different because he/she is not invited to participate in school outings.

My child is different because I am not invited to attend Parents' evenings with the teachers.

My child is different because some mainstream teachers are uneasy about him/her being in their classroom unsupported.

My child is different because he/she is made to feel different.

I can hear some response already to these statements.

What does he want? On the one hand he wants his child to be supported in order that he/she can achieve full potential. And of course I do.

I can hear some of you saying – Well that has to come at a cost – and the cost is visible – in support terms, in space terms, and these costs will make a difference.

But this is my child who knows – by virtue of his/her daily experiences – that they are different.

Our children don't need their sense of difference reinforced.

In a sense, that brings us to the nub of the matter – the issue of integration – a favourite word for educationalists, speech therapists, social workers and psychologists. A more favoured version nowadays is – inclusion.

In other words – how can schools learn to make our children's experience the same as all the others who attend?

Well it seems to me that improving the awareness amongst teachers about what it actually means for a child to have speech and language difficulties would be a reasonable starting point.

Why not look at issues such as:

- Motor co-ordination
- Memory capabilities
- Impact on social functioning
- Impact on the maturing process
- Impact on the learning process

There will be others, but at least if teachers are aware and want to understand why its possible to fail to meet the needs of our children, then I would hope that strategies would be developed in schools to maximise the potential for our children to feel more included in the school.

Another helpful starting point would be the children who attend the mainstream school. How many times have we heard that children can be extremely cruel to each other? How many times have we heard the platitude that that's what children are like?

I'm sure every school represented here has a policy on bullying!

How many schools have a strategy on inclusion? No ... don't put your hands up.

How many schools actively work with all their pupils on issues associated with speech and language difficulties? I'll bet not many! Yet how many schools represented here today have children on their roll who have the kinds of difficulties Afasic represents?

We are all proud of Scottish Education – its breadth and its capacity to produce valuable citizens. The impact of Scottish Education historically is considerable. Its impact today – especially politically in Britain, is huge. Politicians and prominent educationalists speak with Scottish voices – the Scottish accent is omnipresent within the communications industry.

Teachers, speech therapists, education officers, psychologists participate in the communications industry. Some local government officers pride themselves on their ability to be open and transparent communicators.

I believe them!

But what I find difficult is that those who pride themselves on their ability to communicate suddenly become silent when the speech therapist leaves and there are difficulties in finding a

replacement, or where there are problems in finding space in the last school for our children to gain access to the full curriculum, or where there are funding problems which will have a direct impact on our children.

There is considerable rhetoric about parental participation in decision making processes. But can anyone here explain why parents constantly feel that decisions have been made before they are invited to meetings – that information is being deliberately withheld from them because it might not fit what the professionals consider what is best for their child – that information is withheld because parents might complain about the service?

Why are we like this? We weren't brought up to be like this. We don't act like this with all of our children (an issue which could be explored in another context).

We are like this because the education system finds it difficult to meet our children's needs and educationalists don't trust us with the information we need to make informed decisions for our children's futures.

For our children's futures...

How many parents here feel that they will need to remain vigilant and alert on behalf of their child possible into their late 20's because they know if they let go, even for a moment, the system could fail their child?

Can I make a few suggestions about communication?

- Find a way to keep parents informed about developments and difficulties in the schools.
- Keep parents informed of any changes in teaching, speech therapy or psychological services as they affect our children.
- Provide parents with all the written material that will be taken into consideration prior to review meetings (and I don't mean just a few minutes before).
- Make sure you find a way of communicating with parents in a way that makes us feel it is open and transparent.
- Ask us how well you are doing.

The theme of this Conference is New Language – New Voices

I hope the language is about inclusion. It's a language that needs to be learned by educationalists to enable communication between professionals, with parents and with our children.

New Voices – there are no new voices. It's the same voices struggling to be heard. It's the voice of the parents and the children.

New Language and New Voices also means New Listening – Parents matter, our children matter – listen to us.

I am a parent of a child with speech and language problems.
As a parent I have been making the same arguments for 10 years.
As a parent I have been making the same argument for 15 years.
As a parent I have been making the same argument for 20 years.

I'm not tired. I'll never give up. I won't go away.
So long as the education system continues to fail my child, fails to offer my child his or her best chance. I'll be there.

Please don't have me back telling the same story.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS SPEAK OUT

It was always the intention, from the start of planning for this conference, that children's voices would play an important part in the deliberations. To this end, three groups of young people with speech and language impairments were invited to share their experiences of the educational provision made for them. Some of their discussions were video-taped and played back at the conference. The young people were also invited to the conference, attending some of the plenary sessions and participating in their own workshops. What follows is a transcript of one of the videos and key points arising from the discussions of all three groups. Outcomes from the young people's workshops are also listed. The young people came from Inverkeithing High School, Kirkcaldy High School, Queen Ann Anne High School and St Columba's High School in Dunfermline, Hunter High School in East Kilbride and St Thomas Aquinas High School in Glasgow.

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS IN FIFE SECONDARY SCHOOLS Introduced by Jennifer Reid

The four young people you are about to meet are all in their second year of high school in Fife. They all attended mainstream primary schools but spent some time in one of our primary years speech & language classes.

Support for pupils in Fife secondary schools varies from school to school and from pupil to pupil. In these video clips we hope to share with you some of the young people's views on their school life, their social relationships, their special needs and the support they receive in school.

We asked them first whether they preferred primary or secondary school.

Andrew Tassie

Um primary ... because (you can) like it's much easier work. You can play football there much easily. You can find more friends and ... you can do stuff.

Richard

Both ... because at primary school I used to get more help because the class was smaller and there was more people but at Queen Anne like the teachers, the auxiliary, the auxiliaries I get in class (are) have to spread right over the class. Like usually they're not just for helping me but they're there to watch the behaviour in class.

Steffi

Secondary ... you get more range of subjects, History, English etc.

Andrew McGarry

High school ... because you've got more friends and ... more time to learn ... and better dinners ...

* * * * *

As young people with specific language impairment move from primary to secondary school, they must learn to cope with a complex timetable with many subjects, and many teachers. Different teaching styles may compound their difficulties in understanding the language used by teachers.

Steffi

My maths teacher's so quick but she doesn't even give you time to do all your work. Once you've done one questions she's on to the next question.

Richard

It's sometimes the teacher goes that fast ... the teachers go so fast and at Crossgates, like when I went there, it was much easier. There was a smaller group of us (and I could) and the teacher wasn't going zooming fast through the work. The teachers at Queen Anne have got a target to try and get us to do the work for.

* * * * *

The size of the class was frequently cited as having an effect on their ability to learn and make sense of the teaching.

Andrew McGarry

Well there's only a wee class in maths. There's only about eleven people. People like with spelling problems and everything in my maths class. So the teacher can help us all at once.

* * * * *

For support to be effective it must be tailored to individual needs but this is not always easy to provide in a secondary setting. Different subjects will throw up different challenges. The most challenging subjects are not necessarily the ones which spring first to mind, such as modern languages, which none of the young people rated as particularly difficult. History and modern studies, for example, rely heavily on the learner's ability to absorb new vocabulary – yet often these are not the subjects in which support is provided in class.

Andrew McGarry

When it's a hard subject like history ... and I'm stuck on questions ... and I say to the teacher, "Can you come and help me please?" And he says, "Well I've got a whole class to help." And that's when I need help.

* * * * *

In the clips which follow, the young people describe some of the ways they receive help, and the strategies they use to help themselves.

Richard

Mostly I need help in Science, English and Home Economics. Because sometimes I struggle reading the recipe because there's all different ingredients. And English well mostly writing. And Science we're working on booklets. And we've got to do all the writing and worksheets and things. Because we're doing electric. And we're doing boards. And after you've done the experiment you've got to draw it up. But you've got to write a paragraph. And there's other kids in the class that need help. And when I'm ready to write it up, usually I've not got anyone there.

Andrew Tassie

Just ask Mrs. Gormley or my friends and they tell me. She like tries to help me out about it and she breaks up the words for me if I can't read it right.

Steffi

I get Mrs. Tennant who's my key worker to come and she'll help me in Maths or sometimes in English. But I don't get that much help in English because it's easy, English, but it's Maths that I've got the difficulty with.

Richard

It's okay but my learning support auxiliary helps me a lot because she reads and explains the words.

Andrew McGarry

Because she sits with you and reads it all out to you ... and like you can understand it better.

Steffi

I get one of these spellchecker things or a dictionary or I ask the teacher to come and explain it to me again.

Andrew McGarry

Ken when I'm ready to do tests, I always get a reader and a scribe to help me.

Richard

Like I'm doing wee bits of work at home, just to catch up on subjects that I can do without any help.

* * * * *

The young people spoke a great deal about the support they got from their friends.

Andrew McGarry

Like sometimes I sit beside them and they like tell me the answer. And if I spell it wrong they'll come and spell it for me.

Richard

What I do is I've got friends in my class and they help. Like sometimes in RE if I've not got an auxiliary, one of them will sit next to me and they'll write it out but I'll say the answers and help them with their work. 'Cos like with the auxiliary I get ahead of the class, sort of idea, and I fill in and help with the bit of work I've done. And my friends help me on that bit.

* * * * *

We asked them if they considered they had to work harder than their classmates. Andrew Tassie thought not, but the other three thought they did.

Richard

I've got to keep working harder to stay up with the work because if I don't stay up with the work, (it just) I fall behind. And when we do tests I mostly get them wrong ... if I fall behind.

Steffi

Yeah ... because I have to get a good achievement ... because I've got the problem and they haven't. Most of them are not friends with Maths., or they just don't like the subject, but I've got the most difficulty.

Richard

Because everyone else was having a carry on and I was just carrying on and she kept saying to me to behave and (I was) just sit down and get back to work and everyone was having a laugh.

* * * * *

In the P.4–7 speech and language classes, children learn coping strategies to help them become more independent learners. One of the strategies taught is for the children to check their own understanding and to ask for explanations when necessary. Although a useful strategy, it does rely on a sympathetic environment.

Richard

I'll say to the teacher that I never understood the word but all she'll say is look over your book or something.

Steffi

I was in History one day and I was stuck on a question and the teacher explained it to us and I was stuck on this question and I put my hand up and this girl called me stupid for not remembering the question.

* * * * *

Many young people with specific language impairment have to cope on a daily basis with the consequences of speech that may be difficult for others to understand. We asked the two Andrews how people reacted to their speech. Were they always understood?

Andrew Tassie

But they do. If they don't understand me, I'll like tell them ... repeat it, yeah?

You may also have noticed how Andrew checks if the person he is speaking to has understood him.

*Everybody thinks I've got a cool accent, so that's okay for me.
And if it's someone that doesn't know you at all?
They just say, "Aye ... aye!"*

Andrew McGarry

I like try (to) act it out ... and they understand me better and I ken say what I mean and then start talking about it.

* * * * *

Asked if they were ever made a fool of because of their problems:

Andrew Tassie

*Not really. No ... Because I'm cool!
My sister's in sixth year, so if anybody messes with me, I just get her on them. So that's okay for me.*

Andrew McGarry

I was out in the playground and I was playing football. And I was shouting to my pal, and I mucked up because I was going too fast. And they started shouting everything at me.

* * * * *

Jokes often rely on verbal nuances that may escape the young person with SLI, and therefore interfere with their standing with their classmates. We asked our four if they ever failed to get the punchline of a joke.

Steffi

Yeah but there's a boy called Nick Cord in our class, and he's a good joke teller, but I get it every time.

Andrew McGarry

Mhmm. I go, "Can you say that again, I didnae understand it."

Richard

Sometimes. All I do is go, "Ha, ha. That was really funny."

* * * * *

As you have seen, all four have a remarkably positive attitude towards their education. They have found ways round some of their problems, but they have also suffered some difficult experiences and we are grateful for their willingness to voice their feelings on camera.

SUMMARY OF POINTS EMERGING FROM YOUNG PEOPLE'S DISCUSSIONS

Groups led by Rosina Latta, Kate McKinnon and Jennifer Reid

1. Learning difficulties

Students experienced a wide range of difficulties in the classroom which they articulated as:

- reading
- spelling
- anything which involves writing
- remembering things
- pronouncing long words
- getting mixed up
- understanding instructions

2. Social difficulties

Most students experienced some social difficulties, including

- bullying
- name-calling
- being made fun of
- being derided by other pupils because they attended a Unit
- not being picked for interesting activities
- difficulty in making friends in school
- difficulty in making friends at home
- having as friends only other pupils from the Unit
- having to leave friends made in Primary to come to a different school
- treatment which made them feel sad, angry, frustrated

3. Teachers sometimes made things difficult for them by:

- going too fast
- not giving enough time to complete work
- not explaining essential vocabulary
- not ensuring that they knew what to do
- being unwilling or unable to provide help when requested
- not providing books to take home for further study

4. Students sometimes felt demeaned by:

- being picked out for tuition in small groups
- having to do 'easy' work all the time
- having to use materials which are obviously labelled to indicate ability levels
- not being allowed to choose books from the library like everyone else

5. Students had devised strategies which helped them to cope

- ask the teacher, auxiliary or another pupil for help
- use a spellchecker or a dictionary
- going over things at home

6. Students wanted:

- not to be left out
- to feel part of the class
- to be given help when they needed it
- to be allowed to try more difficult work sometimes
- to be able to choose books which interest them
- to be treated fairly
- to be like everyone else

7. School subjects

Subjects they found particularly difficult were:

- History
- Geography

- Science
- Maths (though they noticed other pupils had difficulties here too)
They liked the following subjects, though they found them difficult sometimes:
- English
- Home Economics (apart from the writing)

They enjoyed, and appeared to have least difficulty with:

- PE
- Computing
- Technical Studies
- Modern Languages

It was noticeable that although students were able to comment on their experiences, they seemed to be at a loss when they tried to describe the help which is provided for them or what it is intended to achieve.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKSHOP

Led by Sandie Steele

The aim of the workshop on the day was to allow all the young people from different schools to get to know each other and to explore together their views on what makes the ideal secondary school. Following a series of ice-breaking activities, a circle-time formula was used to explore three issues the young people had identified as being of particular importance to them. Their main points – not without humour – are listed below.

THE PERFECT SCHOOL

- has no graffiti
- has no litter
- has music playing
- is light and bright
- has carpets and comfy seats
- is quiet and calm
- has lots of male student teachers
- has paintings on the walls
- gives less written work
- has more classrooms

THE PERFECT TEACHER

- helps you with your work
- explains slowly
- really cares
- knows everything
- isn't strict
- understands their pupils
- gives you support all day
- is a good person
- isn't a maths teacher

THE PERFECT PUPIL

- helps others
- looks after you
- likes learning
- is someone like me
- wants to learn something new
- is nice and quiet
- understands
- listens
- is funny

The afternoon session gave participants an opportunity to hear from a panel of service providers and to make individual contributions through the workshops.

PROFESSIONAL VIEWPOINTS

Introduced by Dr Gilbert MacKay

The Situation in Scotland

The beginnings of the current system

It is reasonable to say that the current system of provision for Scottish pupils with special needs began with legislation passed in 1946. That legislation required the Scottish Secretary of State to list categories of pupils who might need special support during the school years. The list was produced in Regulations of 1954. Among the categories were pupils with what were then called “speech defects”. The terminology may seem inaccurate and old-fashioned now. However, it is worth recognising that pupils with difficulties communicating — the pupils with whom Afasic is concerned — were given their place from the start of the modern system.

In the early days, intervention with pupils who had difficulty communicating focused on problems with creating the sounds of speech, with fluency, with finding the right words to say and with understanding the words of others. It is also worth recording that responding to the needs of pupils with autistic and dyslexic difficulties is not a new phenomenon. Practitioners throughout the UK — teachers, psychologists and speech & language therapists — have been familiar with their difficulties and have responded to them for at least the last 40 years.

Later developments

In the 1970s, British primary and early education experienced an upsurge of interest in language, in part because of pioneering work in the UK itself, and in part because of movements such as “Headstart” in the USA. That movement had roots in the conviction that many children were at educational and social disadvantage because of a linguistic environment that was not rich and stimulating enough, particularly in the early years. “Early intervention” was thought of a long time ago, and was focused on children of a younger age than seems to be the case at present.

The developments of the 1970s were encapsulated in one of the most impressive documents in British education, the Bullock Report of 1975 — “A language for life”. That document was influential in the appearance of a number of innovations which included, in Scotland, a number of “age 3 to Primary 3” units. These units were intended to help bridge the gap between pre-school and early primary school for children whose development of language was causing concern. From that date, there also appeared a small number of units, and one school, for primary-age children with other linguistic and communicative difficulties. With reference to the topic of this conference, it is worth noting that recognition of the special needs of pupils of secondary age has always been sparse at best and, more usually, non-existent. This situation compares adversely with the educational system in England & Wales, where the needs of primary and secondary pupils with difficulties communicating have been recognised, and responded to, for many years.

Forces for change

The need for a more concerted response to the needs of Scottish pupils with difficulties in communication was made clear in a report of the Principal Educational Psychologists of Scotland in 1988. Shortly afterwards, pressure from a variety of voluntary groups (including Afasic) influenced government thinking in 1991, when there were announcements of the creation of a number of new posts for speech & language therapists to work with children, and of a need to provide training for experienced teachers in the needs of children with difficulties in language and communication.

However, this period of growth in interest in communication has to be set in context. Since an HMI Report of 1978, there has been increasing recognition that all pupils should have a broad and balanced education. Some pupils will need special support to achieve this, but theirs should still be an “appropriate” rather than a “remedial” education. Such a policy seems incontestable, yet it has also been responsible for over-simplistic beliefs that what is good for the majority is also accessible by everyone. Inclusion as a slogan has been elevated to a tactic, without sufficient care being taken over its definition and the structures required to support it. Therefore, it is important, when planning provision for pupils who have difficulty communicating, to take account of the HMI document which responded to their specific needs — the report of 1996. This gives a measured account of the complexity of difficulties, needs and the system, and is the essential context within which decisions about best practice should be taken.

Barriers to change

The muddled quality of debates surrounding special provision, integrated education and the ever-elusive inclusion, makes it difficult to plan for services which respond to needs, and which also respect young people’s capacity to take decisions for themselves in open settings. In addition, the last ten years have seen pupils with difficulties of speech, communication and language at further disadvantage if their education authority has misused the term “communication” to describe pupils with autistic difficulties.

There have been barriers to change, too, in issues concerning the professions. For example, it is only within the last few years that courses have appeared to help experienced teachers and speech & language therapists to work more effectively with these pupils. The professionals themselves, and those responsible for their postgraduate development, would like better opportunities for cross-disciplinary education, to work collaboratively, and make capital out of both the differences and the commonalities in their separate professions.

From barriers to action — supporting secondary pupils

Pupils, parents and professionals all want to move forward. There are probably some overall principles which will help that process. We need to be clear about which pupils need support to make their communication more effective, the varieties of that support and the range of circumstances in which it should be in place.

My research in the west of Scotland has shown the self-evident — that provision for pupils of secondary age is still sparse, but we have models on which to build. There are now many examples of services for primary pupils, with different degrees of need for support, which should give pointers for the secondary system. The small number of secondary units and wholly-integrated secondary provision which do exist, are themselves useful benchmarks for the development of practice in other areas of the country. We should also remember the much longer traditions of providing specialised services in England & Wales, and learn from them too.

There is certainly a need for the continuance and growth of courses for professionals, for extension of innovations in collaborative working, and for research. The knowledge emerging from such activities must be fed back into the system by formal and informal networks of contact which, thanks to electronic technology, have never been easier to set up. Such networks would make use of the pool of knowledge and understanding which exists already among pupils, parents and professionals. That knowledge and understanding may be the critical resource in ensuring that practices, and a proper sense of direction, have the best chance of developing for pupils who offer some of the most exciting challenges to our educational system.

PROFESSIONAL VIEWPOINTS

Pauline Beirne: Speech and Language Therapy

It is incredibly difficult to condense this subject and highlight the key issues within the short time slot. I hope to bring a flavour of the pertinent factors in the organisation and delivery of services to children with SLI. As a disclaimer I should emphasise that these are my considered key issues – others may believe that I have omitted salient points.

The Glasgow Perspective

Margaret Orr and I work closely together to plan and provide a cohesive jointly delivered service. Margaret will give more consideration to the key issues from an education perspective in her presentation. In Glasgow, in terms of specific provision for both primary and now secondary age for children with SLI and communication disorders, there is certainly a well-developed, robust unit provision, developed in recognition of need, with due consideration being given to Speech & Language Therapy staffing.

There is also a commitment to the provision of outreach services and for children moving out of units. This allows for planned jointly developed programmes of input to support children in their mainstream setting.

It is crucial for the group of children/young people who require ongoing support within a focused provision that Speech & Language Therapists develop the skills required to support need within the secondary curriculum.

This has necessitated a steep learning curve – the need to develop skills in the post-14 curriculum and how to support Speech & Language Therapists within the Higher still framework plus the many social and emotional demands placed on young people within the secondary school. There are many challenges in inclusion for young people with SLI/CD's within a mainstream secondary – previous speakers have already highlighted these.

The options of unit *versus* part or total inclusion in mainstream appear to be simply defined. However, the philosophy of inclusion and the management of transitions are fraught with issues – many of which can be resolved with sound joined-up working. This requires good liaison and planning time supported by a school ethos and philosophy which enables effective integration into mainstream curricular activities, with the Speech & Language Therapist involved in joint planning.

The basis for good joined-up working is commitment to training and skill-sharing as well as the reduction of role barriers but crucially there is a requirement for fuller involvement of parents with an explicitness and openness in respect to the sharing of aims.

Many of these issues are being piloted in Glasgow within School Level Agreements where teaching staff and therapists agree a contractor for input covering direct sessional therapy as well as training, meetings, etc.

In considering 'concerns' I turned to the literature since one of my main interests in the organisation and delivery of Speech & Language Therapy to young people with SLI is collaborative working. It is depressing, when we consider that collaboration is vital to appropriate service delivery, to see this quote from the literature:

The present system is heavily loaded against multi-professional co-operation. If one were to attempt – with all the insights derived from research and common experience – to establish a process designed to keep the professionals apart, it would be difficult to conceive of any improvement on what we currently have.

Many of us have been working hard to overcome the barriers to collaboration raised by the system both at a strategic level and at a practical teacher to Speech & Language Therapist level.

These issues for joined-up working and delivery of unified services which are crucial for effective inclusion are working within units. The situation within mainstream, however, is more problematic.

Dessent's model cites some of the key organisational, professional, legislative, resourcing, attitudinal issues which can and do impact on collaboration and therefore inclusiveness:

OBSTACLES TO COLLABORATION - Dessent's example

Organisational/structural

- Different services administered by different agencies
- Large, complex agencies with multiple subsystems
- Lack of 'co-terminosity' in agency boundaries

Professional

- Separate training and conceptual background
- Different vocabulary relating to 'need' (medical/education)
- Different pay, conditions and status
- Interprofessional rivalry (power and decision making)
- Loyalty to own agency/service

Legislation

- One agency has principal 'ownership'
- Legislation 'overload'
- Discrete statutory responsibilities
- Poor transferability and cross-referencing of legislation

Resources

- Funding channelled to separate committees and agencies
- Limited 'corporate' budgets
- Resource constraints
- Lack of clarity about budget responsibilities
- Conflicting policy priorities
- Partnership work is time-consuming and expensive

Political/attitudinal

- Lack of political/managerial commitment to interagency co-operation
- Lack of officer faith in effectiveness of inter-agency co-operation

Pressures

- 'Innovation overload'
- Agencies dominated by internal priorities
- Restructuring

Dessent (1996)

Coterminosity is the biggy – Trusts and Education boundaries don't match, funding arrangements and inclusion/unit philosophies don't match – Speech & Language Therapists are attempting to deliver equitable services across different council boundaries. However, we know that if the time and commitment to good joint planning is available, to know each others strengths and weaknesses, and to share skills, it is for the maximum benefit of children in units and mainstream. This is ably illustrated by Lacey & Ranson:

Where there is a commitment to an holistic view of pupils ..., the effort involved in getting a team to work is repaid with time saved, resources expanded and with quality of the

service enhanced. This is not, however, achieved without considerable effort. Professionals need to understand each other's roles, experience and expertise. Time must be given to know the extent of the role ... to know about the strengths and weaknesses of the person filling that role. Only when this understanding is achieved will resources be used well so that pupils receive a unified response to their needs. There is no suggestion that specialisms are unnecessary but the greatest benefit for the child is derived only when the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding are shared. There is no short cut.

Lacey and Ranson (1994)

There will also be an increasing requirement for training and development for mainstream teachers to appreciate the full range of Speech & Language Therapy and its impact on learning. Speech & Language Therapists will require to be explicit about the range of skills they can bring to the joint management of pupils.

The resourcing issue is one area of concern for Speech & Language Therapy managers and parents in considering the movement to inclusion. Whilst the RCSLT gives us this quote as food for thought ...

Where children are focused within one special school, Speech & Language Therapists can concentrate their resources both in terms of contact with the individual children and in terms of teaching staff so that the provision of appropriate communication environments becomes more feasible. To spread the same children throughout geographically distant mainstream schools places considerable strain on the resources and organisation of Speech & Language Therapy services.

RCSLT 1998

... this should be considered within a strategy for inclusion (as recommended by HMI) which highlights the advantages of integration and when it is most effective.

Some advantages of integration:

- Children received models of appropriate behaviour and peer language.
- There was less dependence on adults.
- Progress could be reviewed and monitored in the type of settings to which most children would move.
- Language unit staff remained in touch with the mainstream curriculum.
- Mainstream teachers remained aware of the continuum of needs related to pupils with language and communication disorder.

Integration was most effective when there was:

- Commitment from senior staff, other staff and parents.
- A clear policy specifying the rationale for integration and how it was to be implemented.
- A clear definition of the purposes of integration which were taken account of in IEPs.
- Sufficient time set aside to allow specialist staff to consult with class teachers and each other.

HMI (1996)

Finally the vision: the vision is the easy bit to produce on paper, but harder to achieve in reality for many of the reasons already touched on.

Communication is at the heart – communication with parents, teachers and psychologists – working as a team.

Strategically, we have to give consideration to many of the higher level issues which will require to be addressed to impact on classroom work between professionals:

- Identified liaison and planning time
- Funding equity and management
- Availability of specialist Speech & Language Therapist
Coterminosity
- The false organisational barriers between professional groups and trusts which impact on services to children
- A pre-planned joint training programme (we are getting there in Glasgow) and the establishment of proper multi-disciplinary networks for delivery of services.

In short – everyone working together to best meet the needs of children.

Anna Boni: Educational Psychology

In this brief presentation I intend to explore the current range of provision within the City of Edinburgh Council open to young people of secondary school age who have significant speech, language and communication difficulties. I will focus on the range of difficulties presented by the young people within the different educational contexts and the factors which may influence the decision making process in choosing a particular context for a young person.

Edinburgh Education Department takes seriously the aims of integration and inclusion (as outlined in the Beattie Committee Report). The main features of any placement decision include:

- the views of the young person and their parents;
- the nature of the difficulties experienced by the young person;
- the primary school report, particularly in relation to the learning style of the young person and the type and nature of the support provided;
- the nature and extent of the curriculum differentiation and modification required, with particular focus on literacy acquisition and development;
- the therapy requirements of the young person;
- the social and interpersonal needs of the young person, particularly in relation to peer relations.

While this process can appear to be a logical one where criteria could be easily determined and applied, the reality can be quite different. There are softer, less tangible factors which impinge on the decision making process. These factors can in some instances complicate the process but, more importantly, they can also positively enhance it. These factors can include:

- the ethos and values, not so much of the school *per se* but of the staff group;
- the decreed learning and teaching goals of a school;
- the attitude of the school and their previous experience of inclusion or integration;
- the attitudes of the other students and, importantly, of their parents;
- the hopes and expectations of the young person and their family.

So, in conclusion, the simplistic matching process – of young people to provision – is not a reality experienced by many young people and their parents. However, it would be interesting to explore with the delegates what experience they have of the proposed “*Soft*” measures and what impact such factors had in their own situation.

Rosina Latta: Education

Background

Rosina Latta welcomed the decision to set up the first Secondary Language Unit in Scotland at Hunter High School in 1995 as an indication that a need had been recognised and as an acknowledgement that both special and mainstream provision have expertise to offer children with speech and language impairments.

Key factors for success

Rosina outlined key factors she has identified:

- ethos – providing a welcoming environment for the children
- raising awareness – all staff being made aware of the implications of SLI: teachers, office staff, janitors, taxi-drivers, etc.; through information leaflets and informal contacts
- planning with subject departments to meet the needs of individual children
- collaborative working between teachers, speech and language therapists, parents and others

Basic factors teachers need to be aware of

Rosina pointed out the range of difficulties in speech, language and communication which children can present; each one has his/her own cluster of strengths and weaknesses, which makes it difficult to make plans which will serve groups of children. Children with Asperger's syndrome, for example, can be particularly unpredictable; nothing should be taken for granted. However, there are some difficulties which are commonly experienced by the children she works with, and teachers need to be aware of these:

- sequencing
- written work
- word finding
- expressive language
- subject specific vocabulary

Teachers need to understand the impact of these and to find strategies which will help (e.g. the use of visual clues and demonstration). Subject teachers tend to be initially very wary and doubtful of their ability to help the young people to cope in a mainstream class. Their fears/doubts arise from:

- not understanding the implications of SLI
- concern that they would not understand a child
- concern that a child would not understand them
- lack of experience in working with another teacher in the class (and the difficulties for support teachers working in someone else's classroom)
- concern about a child's ability to cope with the secondary curriculum

However, collaborative working between teacher and support staff helps the teacher to gain confidence and together they can provide the correct balance of support a child needs. This collaborative working is becoming increasingly important as more children are being placed in mainstream provision.

The qualities most needed by those working with young people with speech and language impairments are flexibility, teamwork and an ability to find innovative solutions.

Challenges facing the young people

The children/young people:

- are entitled to access the whole curriculum but need significant support to negotiate appropriate choices
- find it difficult to process information quickly, to retain it, and reproduce it at a later date
- some have difficulty adjusting to the constant changes of teacher

In addition, they are likely to experience difficulty in making friends and may feel isolated. Self esteem may be low.

The challenges facing young people change as they move through the school. In S1 there are all the changes associated with transfer from primary school perhaps involving a move outwith the home area and leaving friends behind.

In S2 the work gets harder and a gap may open up. There's the worry about making good choices for S3/S4 and ensuring that the young person's curriculum will not be too narrow.

In S3 the usual teenage problems may make co-operation harder to achieve.

S4 brings work experience, standard grade, perhaps preparation for transition to college.

Rosina pointed out that despite the difficulties they experience, pupils have a right to express their own views about what they want to do in school and in work experience, etc.

Parents

Co-operation with parents is essential if the child's needs are to be properly addressed. They may need help to fully understand the nature of their child's difficulty and to be realistic about the implications. They should be closely involved in the discussions about their child's learning and supported where necessary.

Conclusion

To end on a positive note, despite all the difficulties, there are rewards. The levels achieved by last year's school leavers were gratifying not only for the young people but for their parents and teachers as well. Progress is being made. What's the next step?

Patricia McDonald: Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

Key Assessment Issues in relation to pupils with SLI - Implications for the Scottish Qualifications Authority

The Scottish Qualifications Authority is committed to the provision of qualifications for all, therefore access to assessment and certification is important. But equally important are the maintenance of assessment standards and the credibility of the Certificate.

Special assessment arrangements are amendments to standard assessment arrangements and/or course requirements. They apply to all qualifications administered by the SQA and to internal as well as external assessment. They are available to candidates who would otherwise be unable to demonstrate attainment because of a physical or learning disability or a sensory impairment. They are also available for candidates who have a temporary disability at the time of assessment.

Special arrangements are intended to enable candidates to demonstrate their level of attainment. They are not intended to compensate for lack of attainment. They should not give candidates an unfair advantage over other candidates; they should not reduce the validity or reliability of the assessment; they should not compromise the validity of the award; they should not mislead the user of the Certificate (e.g. a prospective employer) about the candidate's attainment.

Special arrangements should, as far as possible, reflect the candidate's normal method of working. The arrangements permitted, therefore, depend on the circumstances of the individual candidate and should be no more than is necessary to allow the candidate to demonstrate attainment.

Currently, special arrangements can involve:

- moderation of the language used in question papers, both internal and external;
- extra time for the candidate to complete the paper;
- provision of a reader and/or scribe;
- use of enabling technologies;
- signing of assessment material;
- referral of script to the Principal Assessor for special consideration.

As assessment arrangements vary depending on the unit or course concerned, a candidate's need for special arrangements may also vary. It is therefore important to consider whether the candidate needs the same arrangements for all assessments.

The flexibility inherent in school-based assessment means that it is often easier to meet the assessment needs of candidates in examinations which are conducted internally than in external examinations, although even here, arrangements are tailored to meet the particular needs of individual candidates.

It is up to schools to seek approval for the assessment arrangements which they feel will best suit their candidate, and to provide the information and evidence required to support their request. Schools should provide details on the precise nature of the candidate's difficulty and the effect this difficulty is likely to have on the candidate's performance in assessment. In the case of candidates with learning difficulties, it is expected that an educational psychologist will have been involved in the identification of the candidate's difficulties. Early communication with SQA is essential.

It is not necessary to have a Record of Needs to qualify for special assessment arrangements. Equally, a candidate with a Record of Needs does not automatically qualify for special arrangements.

Where special arrangements lead to significant modification of assessment requirements or the use of alternative interpretation of an outcome, an endorsement may appear on the Certificate. This takes the form of an asterisk beside the award and a statement on the back of the Certificate explains that special measures were in force.

Regarding, specifically, candidates with speech and language impairments, the key assessment issues for SQA are:

- How can we ensure equality of access to assessments for students with SLI?
- What are the principles, which should underpin appropriate assessment of pupils with SLI?
- What guidelines need to be developed which would ensure that assessments are delivered appropriately without compromising the credibility of the award?

Dr Michael Morton: Clinical Psychiatry

Mental Health Issues for Adolescents with Speech and Language Impairments

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services have an emphasis on promoting healthy development which derives from developmental psychology and paediatrics. Services for young people face particular challenges that make it hard to sustain such an emphasis in the face of the increasing burden of treating adult type mental illnesses, which occur much more frequently in older adolescents than in younger children. A developmental approach is central to the understanding of both adolescent mental health needs and speech and language difficulties. Acknowledging discussion about the terminology of disorders affecting communication, this presentation describes five key issues relevant to the mental health of young people with speech and language impairment.

1. It is likely that adolescents with speech and language impairments will have more problems with self esteem and self actualisation than the general population. This is an area for targeted mental health promotion. An emphasis on inclusion and tolerance of difference may be helpful.
2. Young people with speech and language impairments are at an increased risk of a wide range of behavioural and psychiatric disorders. This risk is likely to be further increased where speech

and language impairments are accompanied by other neuro-developmental problems. The provision of appropriate resources for young people may reduce the risk of problems such as school exclusion and depressive disorders.

3. A small group of young people with developmental vulnerabilities such as speech and language impairments may develop major mental illness. Communication impairments are characteristic of people with schizophrenia. The rehabilitation and educational reintegration of young people with early onset of schizophrenia and related disorders would be facilitated by an improved understanding of their language difficulties.

4. Psychiatric services for young people rarely have access to speech and language therapy expertise. This limits the development of assessment and treatment approaches that address the needs of the particularly vulnerable group of patients with speech and language impairments presenting to psychiatric clinics, some of whom may be misdiagnosed or inadequately treated as a result of this deficiency.

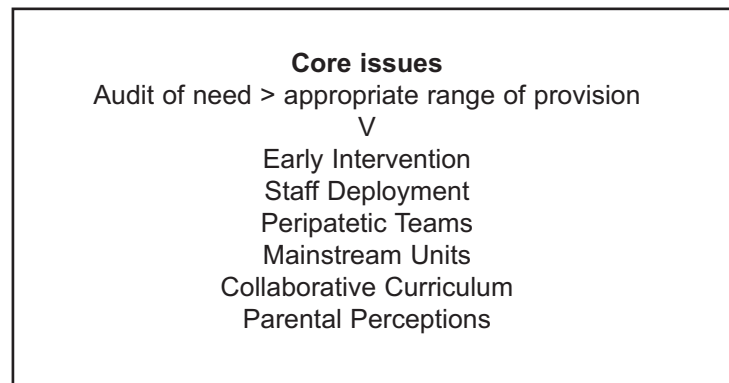
5. Adolescent Mental Health Services in Scotland are seriously under-resourced. It is not clear that there is an adequate evidence base to prioritise the needs of young people with speech and language impairments over those of other vulnerable adolescents but there is need for 'joined up thinking'. This should lead to a bringing together of mental health skills and understanding of speech and language impairments in properly evaluated initiatives to address the mental health needs of this group.

Margaret Orr: Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES)

Speech and Language Therapy Provision: Secondary Stages

The provision of speech and language therapy is a complex process whether at pre-school, primary or secondary, in specialist or mainstream provision.

As the conference is focussing on the implications for delivery in secondary education, the presentation will focus on issues which must be addressed at authority and school level within mainstream.



The presentation and workshops will aim to highlight the challenges in terms of the core issues for policy and practice at local authority and school level. The overheads will list the key points which are elaborated in this brief paper.

Audit of need

At authority level this requires a focussed collaboration between speech and language therapy and psychological services to determine the range of need and the range of provision required to address the continuum.

At school level, the range of need will be responded to by the formulation of individualised education plans which will be overseen by a promoted staff member.

Early intervention

This strategy need not apply only to pre-school or early stages primary. In terms of secondary provision, early intervention refers to primary/secondary liaison programmes which should ensure that the receiving secondary school – whether it hosts a specialist unit or is enrolling one pupil with speech and language difficulties – is well prepared both in terms of pupil profile information and appropriate teaching and learning arrangements.

Staff development

Appropriate programmes should cover specialist training (e.g. Post Graduate Qualifications); general awareness raising amongst school staffs; ongoing professional development via co-operative and team teaching; specific training opportunities for receiving class teachers. Inter-disciplinary training should be a fundamental characteristic of authority practice.

Peripatetic teams

The role and function of therapy teams will cover a range of interventions: direct pupil input; consultancy to unit teachers and mainstream staffs; contributions to drawing up individualised education plans; monitoring and assessment of individual progress; reviewing of joint practices. It is essential that their remits are clearly articulated to all the relevant parties.

A service level agreement between the local authority and the relevant trust, further refined between schools and the direct providers, should ensure clarity of operation, with the responsibilities of each party agreed and open to annual evaluation.

Unit provision

Unit provision within a mainstream secondary school should afford pupils the constructive blend of access to a wide curriculum and specialist support services as required. The support services will range from in-class support to tutorial input within the base. The fundamental aim should be to maximise pupils' independent learning potential and therefore ultimately the support should be as unobtrusive as possible.

In addition to unit staff, there will also be a role for school support for learning staff and close collaboration will be required between the head of unit and principal teacher of support for learning, overseen by the member of the senior management team with responsibility for special educational needs.

Collaborative Curriculum

In establishing individualised education plans, inputs will be required from teaching staff, psychological services and speech and language therapists. The plans should articulate the curricular targets and the inputs from the relevant professionals.

Parental perceptions

Parents must be clear on the purpose of the provision and operational guidelines which determine school practice. They must also be confident in robust inter-agency working which is characterised by effective liaison and a clear understanding of the associated professional roles.

WORKSHOPS

Conference participants had an opportunity to explore some of these points with the speakers who also chaired the workshops which followed. One of the workshops was chaired by Mr Ray Murphy, representing the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES).

SUMMARY OF POINTS MADE BY PARTICIPANTS

Group A

- Re Inclusion: Central government should consider enhancing core staffing; and
- Time constraints for staff. Need to provide time allocation for collaborative working and training
- Develop interdisciplinary training (teaching and SLT staff).
- Ensure adequate assessment and follow-up of children from nursery into secondary.
- Resources needed may not be available via NHS. There may be a need to rethink the clinical model.

Group B

- This is a whole school issue - school and staff need to show a commitment to Inset.
- Expectations of the child should be realistic, both in terms of management of the child and the long-term outcomes.
- Developing good collaborative practice.
- Flexibility of curriculum. Support available generally and for exams.
- SQA to be explicit in their recognition of speech and language impaired young people as a group and make provision for them.
- Funding and allocation of funding for SL Therapy needs to be looked at
- More input needed to initial training of teachers
- There is some good practice, but labels tend to frighten people off.
- Videos to be made available to all schools
- Consider grouping young people
- SEED to look at issues around disability/ability in connection with target setting.
- Training should be multidisciplinary
- Collaboration between voluntary and statutory agencies involved in SEN

Group C

- Time needed for
 - liaison with colleagues and parents
 - joint training & professional development
- Funding needed for continued provision of SLTs
- Growth of SLT remit has not been matched by growth in funding; more personnel needed
- Need for a clearly defined contract to facilitate collaborative working
- Need to plan around young person's perception of his/her needs

Group D

- Commitment to collaborative working.
- Joint training from undergraduate level onwards.
- Peer support and discussion groups for young people and parents.
- Influencing/linking with Special Needs Forum
- Resources!

Group E

- More understanding by SEED and LAs of financial implications.
- Pre-service training.
- Better interagency working
- Time for collaboration.
- Better advocacy.

Group F

- Funding / Resources. plus monitoring and reviewing resources long-term
- Inclusion:
 - definition
 - avoiding tokenism
 - education of society & educational establishment: include the child
 - what is driving inclusion?
 - attitudes towards inclusion
- Curriculum
 - social v. academic balance, broad based
 - two-way process
 - rigid; can be a barrier
 - training / staff development
- Time for:
 - preparation
 - collaboration
 - liaison
- Importance of informing policy makers.
 - who is to do it?

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Pauline Beirne

Pauline Beirne began working in 1982 in Inverclyde before moving to Dumbarton two years later as clinician in the Renton Language Unit in Alexandria. There she undertook Health Board funded research into intensive (as opposed to weekly) therapy for pre-schoolers with phonology and language disorders. In 1990 she became Head of Department for Lomond and Argyll Trust and then moved to Dunfermline. Since 1995 she has been Head of Service in Yorkhill NHS Trust, with responsibility for paediatric Speech and Language Therapy to children and young people from birth to 18 years.

Anna Boni

Anna Boni took up her first post as an Educational Psychologist in West Sussex in 1986 where she worked with a wide range of young people and their families, some of whom required additional support in specialist provision. Later, in Hampshire, she had responsibility for a specialist nursery where the early needs of children were assessed and action plans developed. A significant number of the children had speech, language and communication needs. Over the last six years she has worked in Edinburgh, initially as a senior psychologist and more recently as principal psychologist. She is also the current secretary of the Association of Scottish Principal Psychologists.

Gill Edelman

Gill Edelman is Chief Executive of I CAN, a national educational charity for children with speech and language difficulties. Gill joined I CAN in 1997 having worked for 18 years in the NHS. Gill is a qualified Speech and Language Therapist and Fellow of the Royal College. Her career has progressed from working as a practitioner into managing speech and language therapy services and on into general management within the NHS. She has extensive experience of inter-agency collaboration and led the team in the development of the Harrow Schools Speech and Language Therapy Service between 1988-1997. Her career has also included teaching, research and publication. Gill completed a MBA at Ashridge Management College in 1997 and has been delighted to combine her professional and managerial skills in leading I CAN's development.

Fife Schools

Four pupils from secondary schools in Fife attended the symposium and contributed their views: Steffi Cattanach from Inverkeithing High School, Andrew McGarry from Kirkcaldy High School, Andrew Tassie from St Columba's in Dunfermline and Richard Thomson from Queen Anne High School in Dunfermline.

Hunter High School

Five pupils from Hunter High School attended the symposium and contributed their views: Marco Dragoonis, Ian Horne, Sabrina Hunter, Craig Longworth and Barry Taylor

Rosina Latta

Rosina Latta has spent practically all of her teaching career in SEN establishments, having worked in most sectors from mild to severe and profound and physical disabilities. During her spell away from teaching to have a family she worked part-time with the Social Work department as a carer and tutor. She spent nine years as a class teacher and senior teacher in Richmond Park Language Unit before moving to Hunter High School to set up the first Secondary Language Unit in Scotland. She is now Principal Teacher in charge of the Speech and Language Department. at the School. The department now caters also for young people with mild communication disorders in the S1 to S3 age range. The present roll is 10.

Jack Law

Jack Law's son, who was diagnosed as having a speech and language problem in his pre-school years is now in his third year at a Secondary Language Unit in Glasgow. Jack is a parent member of Afasic's Scottish Steering Group and is a former chairman of Glasgow's local Afasic Group

Gilbert MacKay

By profession, Dr Gilbert MacKay is a teacher and Educational Psychologist. He was the first Educational Psychologist to be appointed to the Shetland Isles, and later practised in Lancashire, Banff & Buchan district of the former Grampian Region, and Renfrew Council in West Scotland. He has had a specialised interest in communication since 1973, and undertook research for the Scottish Office in this area between 1978 and 1981 at the University of Glasgow. He published *Early Communicative Skills* in 1989, looking at communication between birth and the two-word stage, and will produce (with colleagues) a new book on pragmatic difficulties later this year. He leads the communication sub-group of the Research School of the Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde.

Patricia McDonald

Patricia McDonald is Project Leader: Qualifications Strategy Unit at the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Prior to joining the Scottish Qualifications Authority, – formerly the Scottish Examination Board (SEB), she taught pupils with visual impairment in Uddingston Grammar School. She joined the SEB in 1989 as an Examination Officer with responsibility for special examination arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. In 1998, she joined SQA's Qualifications Strategy Unit as a Project Leader with responsibility Special Educational Needs. The Qualifications Strategy Unit provides strategic support and advice to SQA on the interface between national policy developments and the SQA's qualifications, policies and procedures.

Kate McKinnon

Kate McKinnon is the Co-ordinator of Speech and Language Therapy Services into Glasgow's five Language Units. She is also responsible for the service to the Language and Communication Units in East Dunbartonshire. The Language Unit Team of therapists has eleven therapists working primarily in units with support for integration also provided.

Carol Miller

Dr Miller is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, the University of Birmingham. She originally trained as a speech and language therapist and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. Since 1989 she has been involved in research and teaching on speech and language difficulties in education. She is jointly responsible for a distance education programme at the University of Birmingham for continuing professional development of teachers and therapists. Her research and publications include examination of the relationship between teachers and therapists and the framework for their work together. She is co-editor of the journal *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*.

Dr Michael Morton

Dr Morton is Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children at Yorkhill. He is Consultant for the psychiatric ward, one of the few child mental health resources in Scotland to have dedicated Speech and Language Therapy sessions. Dr Morton leads the Liaison Psychiatry Service for children whose difficulties bring them into paediatric services but who also have mental health needs, and works with the Neurosciences Unit where complex developmental and neuropsychiatric problems are assessed. Dr Morton undertook training in Edinburgh and Manchester. He took his first Consultant post in Dumfries before moving to Glasgow in 1996.

Ray Murphy

Ray Murphy worked as educational psychologist for over twenty years in Glasgow and Lanarkshire, becoming Area Principal Psychologist in 1993, and Principal Psychologist in North Lanarkshire in 1996. In 1998 he took up his present post as education officer with responsibility for special educational needs in North Lanarkshire. He therefore has a working knowledge of many aspects of special needs issues and service delivery.

Margaret Orr

Margaret Orr is Senior Education Officer with responsibility for Special Educational Needs within Glasgow City Council Education Services. Originally qualified in English and History, Margaret was Principal Teacher of Learning Support in Govan High School before serving as Adviser in

Special Educational Needs and then as Education Officer in Renfrew Division, Strathclyde. She has held her present post since local government reorganisation in 1996. Margaret is also Chair of the National Steering Group for Staff Training in Support for Learning and Special Educational Needs. She served on the Riddell Committee and is a local authority representative on the Children in Scotland Committee which orchestrates the work of Enquire, the national advisory body for parents.

Jennifer Reid

Jennifer Reid is Speech & Language Therapist in the Speech & Language Class (P.4 to 7) at Crossgates Primary School, employed by Fife Primary Care NHS Trust through its contract with Fife Council Education Department. She has specialised in children with specific language impairment since the early 80's, and has been engaged in school- and clinic-based work, teaching and research programmes in this area. Jennifer's publications include joint authorship of the 1996 report on the role of SLTs in education commissioned by the Scottish Office Education Department. Her primary interests lie in the development of innovative therapeutic techniques, the integration of educational and therapeutic programmes, collaborative practice between teachers and therapists and the application of IT within education and therapy.

Sandie Steele

Sandie Steele is an Education Development Officer within Fife Council. Her main responsibilities are Drama, Citizenship and Circle Time. A qualified Drama teacher, she has worked in Fife since 1980. Her primary interests lie in using Drama and Circle Time strategies to develop confidence and self-esteem in young people and, through encouraging purposeful interaction, to develop sensitivity towards the feelings, opinions and values of others.

St Thomas Aquinas High School

Six young people from St Thomas Aquinas Secondary Language Unit in Glasgow took part in the symposium and contributed their views: David McGowan, Christopher Hunter, Colin McKenna, Shona Comrie, Matthew Law and John Yarrick. Eighteen young people from around Glasgow attend the unit which takes pupils through from first to fourth year. The unit links closely to the mainstream school to provide an integrated support as well as smaller group work in the unit base. All the young people who attend the unit have moderate to severe language impairment.

Members of the Advisory Group

Gilbert MacKay	Research, Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde.
Kate McKinnon	Co-ordinator of Speech and Language Therapy Services, Glasgow
Anne Morris	Head of Service for Children and Young People with Sensory Impairments , Fife.
Jennifer Reid	Speech and Language Therapist, Fife Primary Care NHS Trust
Margaret Whitelaw	Parent, Glasgow.

TOWARDS AN ACTION PLAN

Conference consistently endorsed two basic principles on which provision of secondary education for children and young people with speech and language impairments must be based: **Educational entitlement** and **inclusion**. However, contributors also raised the need for clarity of understanding about the meaning of 'inclusion' and, working from their individual interpretations of inclusion, identified some of the factors which currently exclude children and young people, not from the mainstream setting, but from access to the learning opportunities to which they are entitled.

The conference was marked by recurrent themes identified by contributors and delegates as affecting provision and creating barriers to effective provision of secondary education for young people with speech and language impairments.

Key points recurring:

- Language is the main tool for teaching and learning and language is closely related to thinking, yet teacher's awareness of SLI is generally low and its implications for learning are poorly understood.
- Secondary schools place demands on students which disadvantage those with SLI. These demands are **organisational, linguistic** and **social**.
- Linguistic demands accelerate rapidly both in and out of lessons as the student gets older.
- Different aspects of SLI can create difficulties across the curriculum and in assessment of learning (e.g. understanding conceptual language, poor short term memory, phonological / syntax problems)
- Collaborative working by all staff working with the young person is critical.
- Planning should be the product of 'joined up thinking' by service providers.
- Parents should be both informed and involved.
- Young people should be involved meaningfully in planning and making decisions about their education.
- Young people with SLI are socially and emotionally vulnerable.
- Planning must be child (or young person) centred.

Major barriers to effective provision were commonly identified as shortage of Speech and Language Therapists with specialist knowledge of this stage, and inconsistent standards of collaborative working/planning at agency levels. Factors which inhibit collaborative working were identified as:

- organisational (e.g. relationships between NHS Trusts & Local Authorities)
- professional differences/interests
- regulations
- lack of commitment to or faith in collaboration
- resource implications of collaborative working not being identified or met (e.g. time for planning and liaison)
- conflict between agency policies and practice (e.g. a commitment to inclusion in mainstream) places organisational demands on Therapy services to provide support.
- poor communication with parents
- poor communication with young people
- lack of understanding of SLI

Implementing educational entitlement for young people with SLI in Secondary School requires action by Local Authorities, schools and the Scottish Executive.

Local Authorities should

- ensure that policies for meeting the needs of children and young people with speech and language impairments take account of the issues involved and the views of parents and young people, are adequately resourced and are translated into practice.
- work closely with the Health Trust to develop collaborative policies and practices which are led by the needs of children with speech and language impairments
- ensure that transition from primary to secondary education is planned and supported
- support continuing professional development for all staff

Schools should

- show commitment to meeting the educational entitlement of young people with SLI
- ensure that all staff in the school have knowledge of the implications of speech and language impairments
- plan and prepare to support the learning of a young person with speech and language impairment before entry to the secondary school and at each stage
- ensure that teaching staff understand and take account of the linguistic demands of the curriculum and the assessment process
- support teachers to acquire skills in working with young people with speech and language impairments
- promote joint in-service training of teachers and speech and language therapists
- support collaborative working in practical terms through e.g. allocation of time for planning and liaison with professionals, parents and young people
- involve parents
- involve young people meaningfully in planning and making decisions about their learning

The Scottish Executive is asked to consider

- how it can bring clarity to a shared understanding of inclusion
- the resource implications of implementing inclusion
- whether pre-service training of secondary teachers should include awareness of speech and language impairments and their implications for learning
- a programme of in-service training to raise awareness and understanding of SLI in Secondary Schools
- interdisciplinary training of teachers and speech and language therapists
- the need to ensure that SQA make assessment arrangements which take account of the needs of young people with SLI
- the financial arrangements for ensuring the provision of speech and language therapy for young people with speech and language impairments
- how it can best support schools to meet the learning needs of young people with SLI and to initiate research into the implications for them in Secondary education

Afasic Scotland will continue to promote the interests of children and young people with speech and language impairments, to help them make their voices heard and to support their parents. Afasic Scotland offers what support it can provide towards helping schools and authorities to take positive action.