

## **Introduction**

Education Scotland's role is to **provide leadership in inclusion, wellbeing and equality** by:

- developing, promoting and supporting more effective and innovative practices;
- contributing to the fulfilment of statutory duties in relation to inclusion, wellbeing and equality; and
- providing evidence-based advice to influence national policy development and implementation.

Our focus is on supporting services to deliver on expectations within *Getting it Right for Every Child* to ensure children and young people receive the right help at the right time from the right people. Our aim is to reduce inequity in educational outcomes for all learners and improve practices to better meet the needs of diverse learners.

As part of Education Scotland's **scrutiny** approaches, HM Inspectors of Education evaluate the quality and improvement in Scottish schools using the quality improvement framework *How Good is Our School? (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*. This framework includes a key quality indicator entitled: Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion.

## **Scrutiny Evidence**

Education Scotland scrutiny evidence is collated from inspections of both mainstream and special educational establishments.

Across all sectors approaches to identify the needs of children and young people requiring additional support have been found to be effective. Staff are improving their understanding of barriers to learning for children and young people, and how they can overcome those barriers. Contributions from a range of partners, including health professionals, are effectively supporting professional learning and providing targeted interventions for individuals and groups of learners.

As a result of the Attainment Scotland Funding, an increasing number of support staff are being deployed to support children requiring additional support. Supporting and improving children's and young people's wellbeing has been found to be a high priority in schools/settings.

Staff have been found to be improving their knowledge and understanding of children and young people's needs, particularly in relation to the socio-economic factors which affect their lives. However, this knowledge needs to be used to greater effect to ensure staff plan learning activities that better meet children's and young people's needs.

Overall a majority of special schools are making positive improvements to their approaches to planning to meet children's and young people's needs. However, staff

in special schools need to take better account of the range of children and young people's needs to ensure they experience learning of an appropriate level of difficulty at all times.

There is evidence that across sectors, planned learning is too often not differentiated well enough, and does not sufficiently involve children and young people in planning their learning. The focus on whole-class approaches to learning does not always take sufficient account of the range of children and young people's individual needs. It was found that staff in all sectors need to consider how to plan learning more effectively to better meet all children and young people's learning needs.

## **Mainstreaming**

Education Scotland worked closely with Scottish Government to help develop guidance to education authorities on their duty to provide education in a mainstream school or early learning and childcare setting unless certain exceptions apply: "the presumption of mainstreaming."

Presumption of mainstreaming guidance aims to encourage a greater understanding of the legislation and to take a child-centred approach to making decisions about placement. This requires Scotland's teaching workforce to be well trained and with the required skills to help all learners reach their full potential. Education Scotland has an important role to play in building teachers' skills in additional support needs in general. Education Scotland's role in Scottish education involves having working relationships with local authorities and universities, and includes regular engagement with specialist teachers and managers of additional support. Education Scotland's Inclusion Team has written a suite of e-learning modules on the subject of additional support needs including autism. Some of the modules have been developed in partnership with Edinburgh City Council and Queen Margaret University. The modules are now available via Education Scotland's website. Education Scotland provides learning seminars on a range of themes. This has included a recent national Additional Support for Learning Summit where there was sharing of innovative programmes on: dyslexia approaches; Compassionate and Connected Classrooms and Personalised Learning (learning for life) in secondary schools.

Education Scotland continues to deliver a range of support to increase the capacity and confidence of practitioners in meeting the needs of particular groups of learners including those with dyslexia, children and young people from Service Families, gypsy traveller pupils, as well as refugees and asylum seekers and offender learners.

## **Supporting local Authorities**

Education Scotland is now supporting local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives (RICs) to review, develop, plan and implement their policies and practices for inclusion, wellbeing and equality. Our Inclusion specialists work in close partnership with RICs, local authorities, schools and practitioners to provide direct support within schools.

This support includes the following areas:

- Equality and Diversity (Race, tackling sectarianism, disability, LGBTi, gender)
- Corporate Parenting
- Promoting positive relationships and behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Attendance
- Exclusion
- Inclusive education
- Empowerment of Children's Rights and participation
- Getting it right for every child
- Universal support entitlements and guidance
- Targeted support entitlements
- Additional Support For Learning and staged intervention
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Safeguarding

## **Conclusion**

As noted during the Committee, the allocation of resources to support inclusion is the responsibility of local authorities. Local authorities are regularly reviewing the effectiveness of their support for learners and will use Education Scotland inclusion staff working within the regional improvement teams for professional advice and to seek good practice. Although there are many demands on local authorities services the evidence from Education Scotland scrutiny states that "children and young people's additional support for learning needs are being identified well in most schools/settings." Education Scotland is fully committed to supporting practitioners to deliver on presumption of mainstreaming by providing high quality, accessible professional learning, advice and guidance.