

1981 Act

The legislation of 1981 was introduced without funding. Some people think that this was a cynical response to a clear need (Fish 1989). Many teachers will probably agree with this sentiment. However it is important to move them away from the 'we can't do anything because we haven't got any means' frame of mind towards one which says 'I feel angry that there are inadequate resources provided for children with special educational needs. What can we do about it?'

Use the overhead transparency masters to introduce a workshop on the background to the 1981 Act. Master 1 (page 20) provides the original Warnock definition of special need, including the 2% and 18% definitions.

The next two overhead transparency masters (Masters 2 and 3 on pages 21 and 22), give the 1981 Act definition of special need and highlight the crucially important concept of integration. The information in the historical overview will provide you with the notes and background context to amplify the overhead transparency masters and to underline the key concepts of integration, 2% and 18%, and the definition of special need.

If these masters are presented as a short, informative lecture with the accompanying handout (Handout 1, page 23) so that staff do not have to make notes then this can be followed by a structured discussion organised as outlined below:

- 1 Organise the staff into random pairs. Random pairs ensures a good mix of the staff. If colleagues are not made to work in random pairs, then friend relationships may interfere with the purpose and value of the exercise. Give out the discussion prompts below so that each person in the pair has a different prompt slip. Pairs now discuss their prompts. If you have enough staff, pairs can then join other pairs with different prompts again to discuss in fours.

What is the principle of integration?
What do you understand by 'the medical model'?
What is the philosophy underlying Warnock and the 1981 Act?
What are special educational needs?
What prompted the 1981 Act?
What is a statement? How does a child get one?

Developing SEN policy

1	Already in place	Urgent priority	Long-term priority
Basic information about the school's special educational provision: the objectives of the school's SEN policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
the name of the school's SEN coordinator or teacher responsible for the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
the arrangements for coordinating educational provision for pupils with SEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
admission arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
any SEN specialism and any special units	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
any special facilities which increase or assist access to the school by pupils with SEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
2	Already in place	Urgent priority	Long-term priority
Information about the school's policies for identification, assessment and provision for all pupils with SEN: the allocation of resources to and amongst pupils with SEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
identification and assessment arrangements; and review procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____
arrangements for providing access for pupils with SEN to a balanced and broadly based curriculum, including the National Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____ Date: _____	Term: _____

5 Classroom teacher's responsibilities

This chapter deals with the responsibilities of individual teachers. However, experience suggests that it may be more productive for you to work with a group of teachers from one curriculum area. In this way your effect on classroom practice is likely to be more enduring. The difference between special needs and subject specialisms is that many teachers think they know nothing about special needs, whereas for most subjects they do have experience, even if it is only as students when they were at school. For this reason the skills and knowledge of the key functions in relation to special needs (see below) are presented as activities in this chapter so that you as SENCO can, if you so choose, present these aspects as training sessions for all the staff. Alternatively, the exercises can be used as open-learning material by staff members or, indeed, by you as SENCO.

The key functions are:

- observation for identification
- assessment for diagnosis
- teaching and learning styles
- recording to evaluate
- working with a support teacher.

Also included in this chapter is an activity based on OFSTED criteria for the integration of children with moderate learning difficulties in secondary schools.

On completion of the activities, you and your colleagues should feel confident that you have a sound understanding of the ways in which the structure of the Code at Stages 1-3 requires teachers to reappraise their approach to teaching and learning for all children in their class.

Observation for identification

Observation is the most effective way of identifying children with special educational needs because, if carried out in a systematic, non-judgmental manner, it eradicates prejudice, low expectations and bias due to class, gender or ethnic group. The research carried out into 'school effectiveness' (Hopkins 1987, Hopkins and Reynolds 1990, Hargreaves and Hopkins 1991) and the HMI reports (1989-1990) show that some teachers consistently underestimate children's abilities and consign children from certain social classes to a diet of simple, boring and alienating work on the assumption that they need 'practice in the basics'. Observation is a particularly useful tool for ensuring that the identification of special needs is led by evidence rather than intuition or expectation.

Whilst many teachers find observation time-consuming and hard work when they begin, they also find that the results surprise them. It is certain that with observation, practice makes perfect. The more that teachers observe, the more they will learn to see and the faster and