

# STRIVING FOR INCLUSION: EVALUATION OF PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES (SEBD) IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN A SCOTTISH COUNCIL

PAUL HAMILL AND BRIAN BOYD

---

## SYNOPSIS

In 1997, a Council in Scotland embarked upon a restructuring of its provision for secondary age pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). In 1999, the Council commissioned researchers from the University of Strathclyde, Faculty of Education, to undertake a study during school session 1998/99 with the aim of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of this new approach. The findings of the study were wide ranging but, in particular, evidence emerged to show that while no two schools organised provision in the same way, the establishment of in-school support bases was the dominant model. However, the rationale, organisation and effectiveness of provision varied considerably. It was also evident that the key departments at council level did not share the same degree of commitment in relation to the new initiative. There were also unresolved issues in respect of the empowerment of the professionals working in schools. Many of these issues are particularly relevant in the light of the Government's New Community Schools initiative which embodies a multi-agency approach.

## INTRODUCTION

As a result of local government re-organisation in Scotland, this Council emerged from the former Regional Council having inherited a Youth Strategy. In June 1996, an inter-agency review took place and the Council agreed to examine this strategy. Two key aims emerged i.e.

- to develop a new inclusion initiative focusing upon young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) specific to the needs of the Council;
- to reduce the reliance upon the use of residential provision outwith the Council.

At the same time, the principles which had underpinned the Youth Strategy were re-affirmed, namely that, where possible, young people experiencing difficulties should be supported within their community and those at risk of exclusion from school or of being placed in care should be jointly assessed by education, social work and psychological services. Although the Council emphasised its commitment to include young people with SEBD within their own community, it was also recognised that residential care might, as a last resort, be the most appropriate provision for some young people who were at risk and for whom life at home was not a viable option. Two principles underpinned the emerging initiative, namely:

- the promotion of an inclusive school and community ethos;
- the raising of educational attainment among all young people including those identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The Council was aware of the need to review practice in relation to residential provision, particularly in the light of current thinking on the rights of young people

as outlined in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. This Act emphasised that Councils must take into account the fact that rights apply to all young people without exception and that the welfare of young people must be the paramount consideration in making decisions which affect them. The general concern within the Council was expressed by one head teacher as follows: "When young people leave the area they become disenfranchised". Two other factors which had to be taken on board were the financial implications for the Council and the permanence of exclusion. The Pupil Support Officer who was one of the key council personnel responsible for making the vision a reality summed up the situation as follows "Finance is a big problem. There are considerable costs incurred when young people go out of the authority and they often stay out".

As a result of the review process the Council drew up a three-point plan which provided the basic framework for action:

- (i) the devolution of funds to mainstream secondary schools to enable them to develop their own in-school support systems;
- (ii) the opening of a new school within the community for the most challenging young people, with a clear educational focus;
- (iii) the return from residential schools of as many young people as possible and the placing of them in their local secondary school or in the newly established school catering for the most disruptive young people.

At the beginning of Session 1998/99, when this new approach had been in place for only one school year, the Council sought an independent research study focusing upon perceived strengths, weaknesses and in particular its impact on young people, parents and the staff in all of the secondary schools. The overall aim was to focus upon the evolving strategy particularly the effectiveness of the new Pupil Support Bases set up in the majority of mainstream secondary schools, to feed back good practice and to indicate areas which could be more effectively developed.

#### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS

##### *Raising Attainment*

In 1997 the UK Government signalled its intention to focus on education. It was clear that Councils and schools would be under twin, and some would say conflicting, pressures to raise educational attainment, as measured principally by examination success, and to reduce exclusions of young people from school. There were conceptual difficulties, inherent in both of the government aims. Firstly, was 'attainment' the same as 'achievement' and were examination results the best way to measure either? Secondly, was inclusion simply the absence of exclusion and might the reduction in the number of young people excluded from school have an adverse effect on the attainment/achievement of the others? The aims of the new initiative highlighted a further difficulty when the Council emphasised their intention of raising the educational attainment of "all young people including those identified as SEBD". Inherent in this statement was the implication that the attainment of this group of young people had not been given a high enough priority in the past. Indeed, was it justifiable to assume that this group of young people identified as SEBD was the same as those likely to be excluded from school?

##### *SEBD – a Deficit Philosophy?*

From the outset the very phrase "identified as SEBD" was problematic. In 1994, the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum in its report entitled Special Educational Needs within the 5–14 Curriculum had listed the characteristics of

young people categorised as likely to experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties i.e.:

- low self-esteem;
- lack of motivation;
- lack of concentration;
- difficulties with learning;
- poor interpersonal skills;
- feelings of helplessness.

Young people with SEBD are often seen in terms of problems, their own and those they pose to their teachers and their peers. But many working in this field have been careful to avoid deficit models (Garner and Gains, 1996; Montgomery, 1998; O'Brien, 1998) arguing that problem behaviour is the result of a "complex interaction between contextual factors and aspects which the individual brings to the situation" (Cooper, 1993). In terms of the research study it was important to examine these 'contextual factors', in terms of the ethos of individual schools. In addition, the extent to which the new initiative, which enshrined the Council's vision, had engendered a sense of commitment across all the agencies and professionals involved to its stated aims had to be examined.

#### *Parental Involvement*

The importance of the role of parents in the education of children with special educational needs has been highlighted in a number of studies (Reid, 1987; Cooper, 1993; Thomas, 1992; Herbert, 1993). In particular, Cooper has focussed upon the link between underachievement and social disadvantage, arguing that young people with SEBD are likely to have experienced some or all of the following: lack of parental interest in schooling, inconsistent and ineffectual parental discipline; parental indifference, hostility and rejection; parental neglect; parental absence; violent or aggressive parents. This is not to say that individual parents are always to blame but rather that these factors are more likely to be positively correlated with social disadvantage.

Indeed, it is all too easy for professionals to blame parents or 'home circumstances' for young people's challenging behaviour. Evidence to support the existence of this culture of blame will be discussed later in this article when the teacher questionnaire data is presented. However, the impact of poverty on family dynamics cannot be overstated. As Innes (1999) says:

'A society in which having children is a participating factor for poverty and disadvantage alongside long-term illness and unemployment, is not one that supports and values children and parenting.' (p2)

A study by McCormick (1999) concluded that among the factors which appear to inhibit stronger home-school links are:

- lack of self esteem among parents;
- mutual mistrust between home and school;
- lack of confidence in parents' own ability;
- dreading to have to approach the school;
- anxiety among teachers about parental involvement in the classroom;

- scepticism that parents want to be involved;
- negative attitudes towards the value of education for ‘people like us’. (p 5)

This study found all of these attitudes were present to some extent among parents of young people with SEBD, and among a percentage of teachers. These parents could be among the fiercest critics of the education system and yet the strongest advocates for the in-school pupil support base catering for the needs of their children.

#### *Ethos and School-Focussed Factors*

The ethos of the school has been a focus of attention since Rutter (1979) and his colleagues defined it as the quality of relationships within a school and identified it as a key characteristic of ‘effective’ secondary schools. Since then, Mortimore (1988) has come to similar conclusion in relation to the primary sector, while others, writing with disaffected young people in mind, have pointed to the ways in which schools can be both part of the problem and part of the solution (Reynolds and Sullivan, 1981; Booth and Coulby, 1987; Fogell and Long, 1997). In the DES (1993) report “Education for Disaffected Pupils” HMI have added their voice to the argument that school factors impact significantly on pupil behaviour and listed the following as being associated with positive behaviour:

- an appropriate curriculum;
- interested teachers;
- orderly classrooms;
- a reward culture;
- appropriate lessons;
- fair sanctions;
- feedback on pupil’s work.

The acknowledgement of the importance of these contextual factors has served to shift the debate away from the child deficit model, at least among policy makers but not necessarily among the professionals who have to put policy into practice. While some writers remind us that there is a minority of young people whose behavioural difficulties may have an inherited or ‘constitutional’ element (Farrell, 1995) and that psychiatric, biological or genetic factors may contribute (Cole *et al*, 1998), the weight of evidence seems to point to significant school-focussed factors. It is now widely accepted that good child care and effective teaching can make a significant difference to a young person’s likelihood of presenting as SEBD (Booth and Coulby, 1987; Hewett, 1998; Munn, 1998) although it is important to acknowledge that there is no single cause of SEBD (Grimshaw and Berridge, 1994). In the present study, evidence from interviews with parents and from shadowing pupils, confirmed both of these findings. The results of the teacher questionnaires used in this study suggested that while many professionals accepted this intellectually, nevertheless the exigencies of dealing with classes of thirty pupils means that a significant number of teachers felt unable to effectively meet the needs of young people with SEBD.

#### *Culture of Achievement*

The Council was keen from the outset to raise levels of attainment among all groups including those with SEBD. Most official reports, emanating from HMI and other Scottish education bodies have reinforced this perspective in their titles. Thus influential reports such as “Higher Still - Opportunity for All” (1995) and

“Achievement for All” (1996) have emphasised the need to include all young people in national curricular initiatives, echoing the sentiments expressed specifically in the context of special educational needs. The Manual of Good Practice in Special Educational Needs (SOEID, 1999) recommends that: “All children and young persons should have an equal opportunity to achieve excellence and to have the highest achievements set for them” (p45).

The rhetoric of inclusion is there for all to see, culminating in the view expressed by the Commission on Scottish Education in the report *Learning to Succeed in Scotland* (1996) that effective schools were those where the “overall philosophy was child centred with no children written off as failures” (p61).

However, the essential dilemma in the Government’s current position in trying to raise attainment at the same time as promoting inclusion is highlighted by the view expressed by Innes, (1999): “What we choose to measure and how we measure it will influence the numbers that are considered important in the political and public debate, dragging us back to inputs and artificial targets and away from a debate about the substance of how we learn and what we are learning for” (p52).

Meeting the needs of young people with special educational needs, in this case young people with SEBD, in a target-setting regime is problematic, given what we know about the interrelationship of disadvantage, disaffection and, in some cases, disappearance from the mainstream system (Mittler and Mittler, 1994; Pickles, 1994).

#### *Rights of the Child*

In recent years, Inclusion has come to be seen as a human rights issue (Hall, 1997). Article 2 of the United Nations Charter on the Rights of Child is at the heart of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, placing the emphasis upon rights and ensuring opportunity for all. However, practice may fall far short of this ideal (Clough, 1998; Thomas, 1992; Vlachou, 1997; Allan 1999). Institutional prejudice, professional attitudes and resources, all combine to make inclusion difficult to achieve. Even more worrying for policy-makers are the misunderstandings which persist among professionals of key terms which are central to the debate such as integration and inclusion. Walker (1995) has listed the different ideas relating to both concepts, concluding that inclusion is a rights-based approach emphasising opportunity for all, while integration is often needs-based emphasising expert intervention and support. The inclusive school has been described in theory as one which is community-based, barrier-free, collaborative and egalitarian (CSIE, 1996). However meeting these criteria in practice can be challenging and the schools in this study had varying degrees of success as they strove to be inclusive.

#### *Inter-professional Relationships*

The Council’s model was to resource schools in such a way as to allow them to create the ethos and the systems to meet their specific needs. Some chose to create in-school support bases; others went for in-class help for young people provided by support assistants; others had a mix of both approaches. As they embarked upon their chosen strategy, Council managers were aware of growing concerns among teaching unions who feared a dilution of the profession by having non-professionals in the classroom. However, for the school managers, the problem was how to promote a collaborative culture within the schools where the contribution of all professionals is recognised and valued. Thomas (1992) has highlighted these difficulties while others have argued that for relationships between teachers and other professionals to work there must be mutual trust and respect (Hatton, 1995; Best, 1991). When the prevention of exclusion is the aim, there needs to be a holistic view taken of the child in a spirit of professional partnership (Hrekow and Barrow, 1993).

### *Curriculum*

The Council had made access to an appropriate curriculum a major part of its policy believing that the value and status of young people is inextricably related to this curricular access. The problematic relationship between the curriculum and the failure of some young people to learn effectively has been a subject of debate in Scotland since the publication of the HMI Progress Report on The Education of Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Primary and Secondary Schools in Scotland (SED, 1978). Drawing on concerns expressed in the Warnock Report in England and Wales (1978), HMI made the then radical suggestion that up to 50% of pupils in mainstream schools experienced some kind of difficulties in their learning, primarily as a result of an inappropriate curriculum. This echoed the conclusions of the Pack Report on Truancy and Indiscipline in Scotland (SED, 1977), which, in a section headed 'Curriculum and Organisation', made the connection between the failure to learn successfully and the likelihood to truant from school.

Meeting the needs of all young people involves skilful and complex curriculum planning (Solity, 1993), and while the concept of differentiation has been explored in Scottish education (Simpson, 1993), the demands it places on individual teachers cannot be underestimated. If there is a positive and supportive school culture, individual teachers will feel less exposed (Sebba and Ainscow, 1996), thus making the inclusive classroom more likely to become a reality. Most Scottish schools in the 1980s and 1990s had developed policies on equal opportunities, and this Council, like others before it (Roaf, 1992), saw inclusion within this context. However, the debate on inclusion was still ongoing as the Council embarked on its strategy, arguing from the moral standpoint for equality of access (Hall, 1997) but aware of the concerns of some professionals that ideological moves towards inclusion might be at the expense of meeting the needs of some children (Corbett, 1997).

### METHODOLOGY

The study took place over one school year. The aim was to gather evidence of a quantitative and a qualitative nature, but it was clear from the outset that it was going to be impossible to look at relative levels of attainment by gathering input and output data. It was possible to gather data on pupils designated as SEBD in terms of age, stage of schooling, gender and category of need (according to Council criteria). It was also possible, through the study of in-school documentation, to look at quantitative data on numbers and categories of pupil referrals within the schools.

At an early stage, it became clear that there were some misgivings among the teaching staff within the school about the nature and scope of the study. There was a suspicion that their voices would not be heard and that the study would be used by the Council to justify its strategy. A decision was taken to seek the views of all teachers within the eleven mainstream secondary schools and the one 'special' school for young people with severe SEBD by means of a questionnaire. Responses were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

However, the emphasis was on qualitative evidence and this was gathered, in the main, through semi-structured interviews with all of the 'stakeholders' within the Council's strategy, namely, pupils (those designated SEBD and their peers), parents (of those designated SEBD and of their peers), classroom assistants, teachers, Support Base co-ordinators, senior managers and key people within other relevant agencies and Council departments, including social work, community education, psychological services, the police and the reporter to the children's panel.

In each of the twelve schools, one pupil was 'shadowed' for a day as s/he moved from Support Base to mainstream classroom and back again. This classroom observation was undertaken with the permission of the staff involved. Finally, in-

school documentation was examined, both as it applied to the individual pupils who were the subject of the shadowing and in general in terms of school policy and practice on referrals to the Support Base.

Straus and Corbin (1990) have outlined a number of ways in which qualitative data can be analysed. The researchers' approach to analysis was to try to describe accurately the data in a way which reconstructs it into a recognisable reality. Belenky (1992) has referred to this process as 'interpretative-descriptive', allowing people's voices to be heard and analysing the data within a clear conceptual framework.

## EVIDENCE AND DISCUSSION

### *Meeting Needs*

Of the eleven secondary schools, nine created an in-school Pupil Support Base which was a physical entity, with dedicated staff. Young people were referred to the Base by class teachers if their behaviour was deemed to be challenging and disruptive and spent varying proportions of their school week in this context. Evidence from this study suggests that the work of the Bases attracted praise from most quarters. Parents of young people supported in the Bases were fulsome in their praise, often focussing on the quality of the staff: "If the base was not here I think my son would be permanently excluded." Some spoke specifically about being "totally involved" and often singled out the Base manager for particular praise "Mrs X supports (my son) and me. She is absolutely superb; I couldn't fault her". The young people themselves who were supported in the Bases spoke highly of the experience, but with a disarming realism: "I still get suspended but I would be thrown out of school more if it wasn't for the Base".

The majority of teachers supported the establishment of Pupil Support Bases, though for different reasons. Most commonly, they saw it as offering respite for the rest of the pupils when particular individuals were withdrawn from the classroom. Indeed, the teacher questionnaire data indicated that the need for such a Base was the most commonly held view across all schools - even those where a decision had been taken not to have one. School managers clearly saw the existence of Bases as a crucial element in their attempts to meet the expectations of the Scottish Office in relation to reducing the numbers of young people excluded.

### *Gender*

The pupils who used the Pupil Support Bases derived from a sophisticated Audit of Need carried out by the education department of the Council. There were four levels, each with a number of published indicators of need, ranging from pupils with greater than normal difficulty in setting to work through to those having extreme difficulty in maintaining placement within the mainstream setting. These levels were used to allocate resources to schools, and in 1998 were also used to allocate the additional funds, guaranteed for a three-year period, to support this initiative.

At the point when this study began, the majority of young people being supported in the Pupil Support Bases were boys, identified at audit levels three or four and presently in Secondary years S3 or S5 (Table 1). These levels indicated that they were likely to display particularly disruptive and challenging behaviour.

This gender imbalance is in line with the findings of other writers (Jones and Jones, 1992; DES, 1993; Garner and Gains, 1996; Munn, 1998) with boys being 3 times as likely to be categorised as SEBD than girls overall, and as much as 6 times more likely in the first year of secondary schooling.

Table 1: Pupils using Support Bases at September 1998

Audit Level	Female				Male			
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S1	S2	S3	S4
1			1					
2	2	2		5	6	10	14	4
3		3	6	12	3	8	17	24
4	2	3	3	6	14	11	21	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>

### *Referral Systems*

The route to inclusion in the Pupil Support Base varied from school to school. The authority had stipulated that referral systems should be ‘clearly documented’ and should have an established ‘decision-making process’ and ‘should have sufficient flexibility to allow for crisis situations’. All of the schools had whole-school discipline referral systems in place. Some had introduced very structured ‘discipline for learning’ policies while others had developed their own systems over a period of time. In all cases, there was a School Liaison Group (SLG) which considered referrals of young people whose behaviour was challenging. Documentary record-keeping systems existed in all schools, but the thoroughness and quality varied. The research team requested, by means of a pro-forma, details of all young people referred to the Support Bases. The information submitted by some schools was meticulous in its detail; in others it was sparse. However, in almost every case, the comments about young people were framed negatively, and where comments were recorded verbatim from classroom teachers, they were often judgmental and condemnatory:

“Unsettled and lacking in concentration, reluctant to follow simple instructions.”

“Virtually illiterate, failed to settle and had to be removed from class.”

It was not uncommon to find a pupil in Secondary Year 2 with over 100 entries in his or her personal record, listing misdemeanours and actions taken by staff. A small number of schools had begun to revise their systems, trying to put more onus on classroom teachers to indicate what strategies they had used to try to solve problems prior to referring the pupil. This approach was described by one head teacher as follows:

“We have revised our referral form. Rather than saying that a child is not behaving we are consciously requiring staff to look at the strategies they use.”

The most difficult issue for schools to address seemed to be how to deal with situations where pupils could behave appropriately in the majority of classes but were constantly being referred from others. School managers recognised this phenomenon but found it difficult to deal with. It seemed easier to focus upon what were perceived as problem pupils as opposed to examining the practice of some teachers and the relationship between the two.



### *Base Management Models*

There was a range of management models in operation across the schools operating Pupil Support Bases:

- **Guidance:** managed by a senior member of Guidance staff and staffed mainly by Guidance staff
- **Support for Learning:** managed by the Principal Teacher of Support for Learning and often run on a day to day basis by an assistant principal or senior teacher
- **Behaviour Support:** the appointment of Principal Teacher or Senior Teacher often signalled a separation of support for learning and behaviour support
- **Extended Support for Learning:** in the two schools where there had been a decision taken not to establish a Base, the responsibility was spread throughout existing support staff, including Support assistants and the emphasis was upon in-class support

There had been no attempt by the Council to impose a single model; indeed, different approaches had been encouraged. However, each model had its own ideological basis, and had implications for the kind of young people who were deemed to be able to benefit from support in the Base. Referral systems often reflected the dominant ideology, and the approaches taken in the Base. An issue for the Council was how to share good practice so that whatever model is chosen it is as a consequence of a clear understanding of the implications for the roles of people working to support the young people.

### *Learning Difficulties*

The needs of these young people were complex, diverse and wide-ranging. The question was to what extent did the provision meet these needs? There was a high correlation among these young people in relation to SEBD and learning difficulties, as others before have found (Garner and Gains, 1996). Indeed, additional data gathered from the schools indicated that some 92 of the 201 young people being supported in the Pupil Support Bases had identifiable learning difficulties. There was a view held by some of the Support Base staff that the young people's underachievement was closely associated with an inappropriate curriculum (Booth and Coulby, 1987; Montgomery, 1990; Cole, Visser and Upton, 1998) and while the Bases sought to mirror the mainstream subjects/disciplines, they often presented it differently, both in terms of the level of support offered and in terms of methodology. However, many Base staff could not see the logic in simply doing classwork in the Base setting, often believing it was inappropriate for the young people.

### *Ownership*

The issue of the role of the Support Base in the overall context of raising attainment and tackling social exclusion was bedevilled by a lack of clarity among those who were the 'stakeholders'. Classroom teachers often reported a sense of uneasiness in not knowing what went on in the Base. Base staff often felt powerless to influence the practice of classroom teachers and young people rarely had a voice at all. At an early stage, the researchers decided to try and ensure that the young person's voice was heard, through small group interviews involving individuals who spent time in the Bases and others who did not. In addition, pupil shadowing where the young person could be clearly observed in the classroom context was a central element of

the research methodology. Using an observation schedule adapted from the Improving School Effectiveness project (SOEID, 1997), one pupil in each school was selected from lists submitted reflecting the wide range of reasons for initial referral. Evidence from the shadowing process threw up some challenging questions for the schools, not least in terms of the rights of young people. The reality of secondary schools in Scotland is that class size, a crowded curriculum, pressure to raise attainment and meet Government targets and a school organisation which militates against the sharing of insights and expertise among teachers combine to make the experience of a young person over any one day less than coherent.

#### *Classroom Climates*

The shadowing of a number of young people (SEBD) over the course of one day revealed that:

- the behaviour, motivation and application to tasks of the young person and the others in the class varied significantly from class to class;
- in most classes, where there were examples of challenging behaviour, it was just as likely to involve a young person other than the individual (SEBD) who was the focus of the observation;
- teachers had very different strategies for working with the class and for dealing with the observed pupil, some were very skilful and successful and some much less so;
- pupil behaviour, contrary to popular myth, was less likely to be influenced by factors such as:
  - the time of day of the lesson;
  - the nature of the previous lesson;
  - the nature of the subject (e.g. specialist/classroom or academic/practical);
  - the gender of the teacher.than it was to be influenced by:
  - the attitude, approach and expectation of the teacher;
  - the climate of the classroom;
  - the number of young people in the class;
  - the role of the support assistant (where there was one);
  - the configuration of the school day (e.g. long morning, shortened lunch-break, etc.).
- few people in the school had any opportunity to gain the kind of insights into a pupil's day which shadowing can give.

#### *Listening to Young People*

Both young people with SEBD and their peers who were not perceived as disruptive were interviewed in small groups. The Manual of Good Practice in SEN (1999) emphasises that young people: "have the right where appropriate to participate actively in decisions about their education and welfare. Their feelings and view should be valued and respected." (p22). Rudduck (1995) has argued, in the school effectiveness context, that: "If our concerns are ultimately with the achievements and life chances of our pupils, why don't we take our agenda for school improvement, at least in part, from their accounts of experience (p1).

Young people, male and female, including those who were deemed to be challenging and those who were not perceived to be disruptive, from years S1 to S5,

were interviewed. All of these young people spoke of the curriculum and the huge variations in difficulty, relevance and interest across the subjects. Inappropriateness of the curriculum has long been identified as exacerbating behavioural and learning difficulties (Fogell and Long, 1997; Cole, 1998; Montgomery, 1998). Young people commented that “sometimes teachers go too fast” and “it changes too quickly; in one class your doing trigonometry and in another your doing a big essay”. The impact of teacher attitudes cropped up time and time again, both positively and negatively: “Mrs Y treats me like a person. She doesn’t look down on me. She respects me and I respect her” or in direct contrast: “She just looks at you as if you are useless and treats me as if I am thick”. Young people did not feel that everyone was valued equally. Fairness, as others have found (MacBeath, 1996), was high on pupils’ agenda: “If you’re brainy it’s OK for you in Mr X’s class. I’m not brainy and he makes me feel stupid”, or again from a different perspective: “Mrs Z is a great teacher. She listens to you and treats everyone fairly. She is strict but you can have fun as well”. The views of young people who were not disruptive were similar in relation to these issues but, significantly, this group were almost unanimous in arguing that seriously disruptive pupils were hindering their progress: “Sometimes you can’t learn because people disrupt and take up all of the teacher’s time”. Even young people with SEBD agreed that exclusion was fair if someone did something seriously wrong, but often saw themselves as victims: “If three people do the same thing I’m the only one who gets blamed”. All of the young people with SEBD saw the Pupil Support Base as supportive, remarking for example that “I can come here to cool off” or “I don’t see eye to eye with a teacher so I come here”. Very few admitted to coming to the base “for a skive”. The overwhelming feeling after analysing this data is that unless there are researchers involved, there may be no mechanism in the schools for the young person’s voice to be heard. It is very important to remember her/his perspective may be partial, but it is no less valid than that of any other stakeholder. Young people have rights as well as needs, but in few cases do they believe that the former are dealt with as effectively as the latter.

#### *Listening to Teachers*

Teachers were invited to complete a 46 item questionnaire, using the format of statements to be ranked on two 5-point scales, the first pertaining to the respondent’s present school and the second to their view of an effective inclusive school. In order to maximise the return rate, the researchers got the agreement of ten of the eleven schools to introduce the questionnaire to the staff during the school day so that staff could complete it there and then. This resulted in a 100% response rate from the staff present on the day, a total of 546 teachers in all. There was also a page for optional written comments, an opportunity taken up by 65% of respondents, ranging from 29% in one school to 85% in another.

In analysing this data, the researchers were interested in across school variations. While the data was analysed school by school, the remit was to look at Council-wide issues. Trends and patterns were of interest, though some deviation across schools emerged.

Of the 46 items, only 10 emerged as attracting agreement among a significant proportion of the staff (Table 2) using a 20% cut off for the strongly agree category and 50% for agree, reflecting the tendency of respondents to avoid the extremes. Only one item emerged as provoking uncertainty across most of the schools and all of the others failed to show significant across school trends. What emerged from the questionnaire returns was a concern about the whole area of SEBD, inclusion and raising attainment. The ten items which attracted strong agreement or agreement painted a picture of schools which saw themselves as open, caring places trying to celebrate success, but where there needed to be Pupil Support Bases and behaviour

support staff to deal with pupils with SEBD. They were places where teamwork was valued, where teachers discussed pupils' learning but where it was expected that pupils with problems would be referred upwards through the school hierarchy. The only item to emerge as causing uncertainty was whether behavioural problems were best resolved in the classroom.

*Table 2: Significant items in the Teacher questionnaire from 10 secondary schools*

<b>Strongly agree</b>		<b>no. of schools</b>
Item 21	Many of the causes of SEBD have their origins outside school	10
Item 22	Upward referrals the norm for behavioural problems	9
Item 27	Teamwork and collaboration are valued	9
Item 28	Parents are welcomed into the school	8
Item 30	A Pupil Support Base is essential	9
Item 44	Behaviour support staff are welcomed by classroom teachers	8
<b>Strongly agree (SA) + agree (A)</b>		
Item 9	This school has a caring ethos	7 SA + 3 A
Item 10	Pupil success is celebrated	5 SA + 4 A
<b>Agree</b>		
Item 6	Teachers discuss pupils' learning with other teachers	6
Item 31	Attendance at the Support Base is subject specific	7
<b>Uncertain</b>		
Item 3	Behavioural problems are best resolved in the classroom	8

Teachers' written comments on the questionnaires were often strongly worded and demonstrated a fear that inclusion, politically, was being defined as the absence of exclusions, so that they would increasingly have to deal with more disruptive young people. They saw this as part of a wider blame culture, singling them out as being unable to deal with problems which they thought had their origins in the home and society. The majority of teachers in the study, like their pupils, feel that exclusion should exist as a sanction, as a cooling off device and as a way of involving other agencies, or as respite for all concerned. But the most important issue in the context of this study was the widespread lack of insight admitted to by teachers into the work of the bases themselves or where they fitted into the authority's strategy. Evidence to support this view came directly from the teachers themselves. Typical comments were as follows: "Staff are not always aware of the programme of activities for pupils in the base". Many teachers expressed a lack of understanding in relation to the concept of SEBD itself "The Council's vision has never really been explained to us". Here, then, we have a teaching force which sees itself, rightly or wrongly, as caring, supportive and tolerant, but feels that, despite the Council's intentions, it has not been included in the process of change or given time to explore complex issues.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The new unitary Scottish Councils have the capacity, organisationally at least, to promote corporate approaches to policy-making to an extent which was impossible in the previous system where district and regional council departments were often

at odds with one another. This Council's new approach to young people with SEBD arose in principle from inter-departmental discussions but it was clear from the research study that not all departments or professional groups in the council share its underpinning philosophy or vision. Even where there was clear documentary evidence of consultation, individuals reported that they had not been involved. The old suspicions between education and social work were clearly evident and community education, psychological services and the police were part of a complex set of inter-relationships which rarely produced co-ordinated approaches on the ground. The Education managers had a clear vision and the will to make the strategy work. They had taken the decision to commission this research into current practice and were prepared to accept that there were areas for development which the Council needed to address. It seemed, however that many of their professional counterparts within the Council saw the initiative as education-led and argued that they had not been fully taken on board as equal partners.

Thus the history of multi-agency working, which has seen tradition, culture, professional boundaries, mythologies and working methods as barriers (Pickles 1994), seemed to be replayed in this Council. Much good work was going on in places, but it was patchy, dependent on personalities, and had not been supported by adequate training. Just as New Community Schools were being introduced by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) as a multi-agency model to address the problems of raising attainment and tackling social exclusion, this research offers some encouragement but also sends some warning signals.

One of the key findings of this study has been that the management of change is complex. While political realities often dictate that change has to move at a brisk pace, if attitudes are to be shifted and a new paradigm created, there is a risk in taking shortcuts. The number of exclusions in the Council (published after the study was complete) did show a significant decrease, and the working of most of the Pupil Bases was effective. Young people with SEBD were being supported in mainstream schools and they were positive about their experiences. However, staff in all professional groups were uncertain about the overall inclusion policy and what was expected of them. In addition their perceived lack of opportunities for training and staff development was a matter of concern.

The conclusions of this research study are that the debate about inclusion needs to be set firmly within the context of raising attainment and tackling social exclusion. Mortimore (1997) has claimed that schools can never overcome, by themselves, the problems of society, echoing Bernstein's view in 1970 that "education cannot compensate for society". This study of how one Council strove to become more inclusive may contain some messages for other Councils currently seeking to do the same. The Council must be credited as being at the forefront of developments aimed at promoting inclusive education. It has to be recognised that it is not always easy to be one of the leaders.

#### REFERENCES

- Ainscow, M. (1991) *Effective Schools for All*, London: David Fulton.
- Allan, J. (1999) *Actively Seeking Inclusion*, London: Falmer Press.
- Belenky, M.F. (1992) *Bringing Balance into the Classroom or Workplace* paper presented at the Wisconsin Women's Studies Conference Green Bay.
- Bernstein, B. (1970) Education Cannot Compensate for Society, *New Society*, 15, 344-347.
- Best, R. (1991) Support Teaching in a Comprehensive School: Some Reflections on Recent Experience, *Support for Learning* 6 (1), 27-31.
- Booth, T. and Coulby, D. (Eds) (1987) *Producing and Reducing Disaffection*, Milton Keynes: O.U. Press.
- Booth, T. and Swann, W. *et al* (Eds) (1992) *Curricular for Diversity in Education*, London: Routledge.
- Children (Scotland) Act (1995) Edinburgh: HMSO.

- Clough, P. (Ed) (1998) *Managing Inclusive Education*, London: Paul Chapman.
- Cole, T., Visser, J. and Upton, G. (1998) *Effective Schools for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, London: David Fulton.
- Commission on Scottish Education (1996) *Learning to Succeed in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Shepherd and Son Ltd.
- Cooper, P. (1993) *Effective Schools for Disaffected Students: Integration and Segregation*, London: Routledge.
- Corbett, J. (1997) Include/Exclude: Redefining the Boundaries, *Inclusive Education* Vol.1, No.1, pp 55–64.
- CSIE (1996) Bishopwood: *Good Practice Transferred - Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education*, Bristol: CSIE.
- Department of Education and Science (1978) *Special Educational Needs: Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People* (The Warnock Report) London: HMSO.
- DES (1993) *Education for Disaffected Pupils*, London: HMSO.
- Farrell, P. (1995) *Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties - Strategies for Assessment and Intervention*, London: Falmer Press.
- Fogell, J. and Long R. (1997) *Spotlight on Special Educational Needs - Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, Staffs: NASEN.
- Garner, P. and Gains, C. (1996) Models of Intervention for Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, *Support for Learning* Vol.11, No.4, 141–145.
- Grimshaw, R. and Berridge, D. (1994) *Educating Disruptive Children*, London: NCB.
- Hall, J. T. (1997) *Social Devaluation and Special Education - The Right to Full Mainstream Inclusion*, London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Hatton, E. J. (1985) Team Teaching and Teacher Orientation to Work: Implications for Preservice and Inservice Education of Teachers, *Journal of Education for Teaching* 11, 3. 228–44.
- Herbert, M. (1993) *Working with children and the Children Act*, London: BPS.
- Hewett, D. (Ed) (1998) *Challenging Behaviour Principles and Practices*, London: David Fulton.
- Hrekow, P. and Barrow, G. (1993) Developing a System of Inclusive Education for Pupils with Behavioural Difficulties, *Pastoral Care*, June 6–13.
- Innes, S. (1999) *Children, Families and Learning*, Edinburgh: Scottish Council Foundation.
- Jones, M. and Jones, E. B. (Eds) (1992) *Learning to Behave Curriculum and Whole School Management Approaches to Discipline*, London: Kogan Paul.
- MacBeath J.E.C. (1996) *Schools Speak for Themselves: Towards A Framework for Self-Evaluation*, London: NUT.
- McCormick, J. (1999) *Family Learning: Parents as Educators - Occasional Paper II*, Scottish Council Foundation: Edinburgh
- Mittler, P. and Mittler H. (Eds) (1994) *Innovations in Family Support*, Chorley: Lisieux Hall Press.
- Montgomery, D. (1998) *Reversing Lower Attainment: Developmental Curriculum Strategies for Overcoming Disaffection and Underachievement*, London: David Fulton.
- Montgomery, D. (1990) *Managing Behaviour Problems*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Mortimore, P. (1988) *School Matters: The Junior Years*, London: Open Books.
- Mortimore, P. (1997) *Can School Improvement Overcome The Effects of Disadvantage*, University of London, Institute of Education, London.
- Munn, P. *et al* (1998) *Exclusion from School and Alternatives*, Professional Development Centre, Moray House Institute of Education, Edinburgh.
- O'Brien, T. (1998) *Promoting Positive Behaviour*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Pickles, T. (1994) *Teachers and Social Workers Working Together in Challenging Behaviour in Schools*, London: Routledge.
- Reid, J. (1987) A Problem in the Family: Explanation Under Strain in Booth, T. and Coulby, D. (eds) *Producing and Reducing Disaffection*, Milton Keynes: O.U. Press.
- Reynolds, D. and Sullivan, M. (1981) The Effects of School: A Radical Faith in Gillbain, B (Ed) *Problem Behaviour in the Secondary School*, London: Croom Helm.
- Roaf, C. (1992) "Le Mot Juste: Learning the Language of Equality" in Booth T, Swann, W. *et al* (Eds) *Curriculum for Diversity in Education*, London: Routledge.
- Rudduck, J. (1995) *School Improvement: What Can Pupils Tell Us*, London: Fulton.
- Rutter, M. *et al* (1979) *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effect on Children*, London: Open Books.
- Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (1994) *Special Educational Needs within the 5–14 Curriculum - Support for Learning*, Dundee: SCCC.
- Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (1995) *Higher Still - Opportunity for All*, Dundee: SCCC.

- SED (1977) *Truancy and Indiscipline in Scotland (The Pack Report)* Edinburgh: HMSO.
- SED (1978) *The Education of Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Primary and Secondary Schools in Scotland. A Progress Report by HM Inspectors of Schools.* Edinburgh: HMSO.
- Scottish Office Education Department (1996) *Achievement for All*, Edinburgh: HMSO.
- SOED (1997) *Improving School Effectiveness Project*, Edinburgh: HMSO.
- SOED (1998) *New Community Schools*, Edinburgh: HMSO.
- SOEID (1999) *A Manual of Good Practice in Special Educational Needs*, Edinburgh: HMSO.
- Sebba, J. and Ainscow, M. (1996) International Developments in Inclusive Schooling: Mapping the Issues, *Cambridge Journal of Education* 26, 1, 5–18.
- Simpson, M. (1993) *What's the Difference?: A Study in Scottish Schools*, Aberdeen: Northern College.
- Solity, J. (1993) *Special Education*, London: Cassell.
- Thomas, G. (1992) *Effective Classroom Teamwork: Support or Intrusion*, London: Routledge.
- Straus, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* Cambridge: CUP.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) Article 2 and 23.
- Vlachou, A. D. (1997) *Struggles for Inclusive Education*, Buckingham: O.U. Press.
- Walker, D (1995) *Postmodernity, Inclusion and Partnership* - Unpublished M.Ed. dissertation.