

# Inclusion

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



Assignment: demonstrate your growing understanding of, and reflect upon, how a particular aspect of a schools work impacts upon the following areas: - The diversity of pupils' backgrounds - The importance of equality of educational opportunity - Challenging stereotypical views - The inclusive learning environment

Within schools it is mandatory that they demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion. They aim to eradicate stereotypes in our ever progressing and diverse society, allowing children to form a better sense of self and develop with little prejudice. As a result schools aim to educate and produce upstanding citizens who have the ability to form own opinions of society and tolerances. " The DCSF published Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion in July 2007, which set out broadly how schools could contribute towards promoting community cohesion under three broad areas of: teaching, learning and curriculum; equity and excellence; and engagement and extended services. " (DCFS, 2008) We can respond to pupils' diverse needs by setting high expectations for girls and boys. During my exemplar visits to Highfield St Matthews and St Philip Westbrook I saw no evidence of any discrimination between genders. Both schools promoted cultural diversity through the RE curriculum which encouraged children to respect and understand other world faiths. Teachers were also encouraged to discuss, share and celebrate their own culture. The diverse artwork at St Philips Westbrook shows strong links with South African culture juxtaposed with links to a school in Cumbria, resulting in the embedding of children's understanding of our culture and those across the world. What is School Diversity? " We use the term School Diversity to describe the way in which the education system is structured to enable

schools to differentiate themselves according to their individual ethos, special character and areas of specialist expertise" (DCFS, 2010) At both of the exemplar visits; high expectations are standard by responding to pupils' diverse needs in the inclusive classroom. These needs can be for special educational needs and pupils with disability. Schools and teachers need to plan so that all can take part fully and effectively in the lesson. Learning styles need to be differentiated to suit the needs of the children. At St Philips, pupils are aware of their own learning styles; this enabled the teacher to adapt the lessons to suit the child, although the teacher must be careful not to focus on one type of learning style which may be a disadvantage to others. Teachers need to vary subject content to help accommodate pupils' diverse needs. In a literacy lesson the content was changed significantly to enable a child to work with a Teaching Assistant on his specific needs and targets. We need to respond to pupils' diverse needs as regards to their equality of educational opportunities. Both schools we visited had set high expectations for all races, gender and disability; these expectations are set by both the school and the class teacher by planning and monitoring work. It helps to build the pupils' self esteem by setting attainable and challenging work and targets. " We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education we provide in our school. In accordance with our Christian ethos and School Mission Statement we respect the equal human rights of all our pupils' and educate them about the equality. " (Highfield St Matthews Prospectus, 2009) I currently work in an inner city school classified as ' disadvantaged'. It is the school's policy to be committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and inclusion for all

individuals, irrespective of race, gender, disability and special educational needs and will positively pursue through pastoral support programmes and the curriculum. " The Trinity aims to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of all pupils and to provide an environment in which the teaching and learning, attitudes and well being of every pupil matters" (The Trinity equal opportunities policy, 2009) The Trinity Primary school has made provisions to provide equality for the children in the school. There is wheelchair access and a lift to the upper floor allowing the children to access all aspect of the school building. As a staff cohort we have undergone specific Dyslexic training, informing us of the needs, supports and expectations for the children. The school uses cream coloured paper to support any children and parents who are dyslexic. The use of matt laminated signs and visual aids allows the children to access the intended information more clearly; these specific adjustments can make a difference. From as early as the Foundation Stage, equality is promoted through our role play and construction areas. These areas focusing on fire stations, hairdressers, restaurants, to enable both genders to have the opportunity to learn through play and gain a greater understanding of roles and appreciation of other cultures. " Schools should prepare children for the outside world, and the world of twentieth century Britain is multiracial and multicultural, of the different groups that make up that society and the contributions made by those groups. " (Pete Farrell, 1990, pg7). Appropriate resources are used to ensure that each pupil acquires the skills and understanding necessary to cope at each stage of personal development with the demands of self, family, school and society. Displays and notice

boards are used to demonstrate that all pupils are valued and expected to participate in all aspects of schools life. Such displays will reflect the schools commitment to cultural diversity and the avoidance of racial, sexual and social stereotyping. The school also provides and encourages opportunities to learn about World Faiths. This was evident from both my exemplar visits. “ When planning, teachers should set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve, including boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils from different ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Teachers need to be aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths which will influence the way in which they learn. Teachers should plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively. "(National Curriculum, 2010) At St Philips Westbrook, I noticed how every class had a role play area set up that challenged stereotypical views. They were neither centred towards male or female and were unprejudiced. Alternatively we already have predetermined stereotypical views. Children have these on entering school from grandparents/ parent and the media; therefore it is important to give all children the opportunities to explore regardless of their background and upbringing. “ Their awareness of the differences between pupils in their learning preferences to help sustain each pupil’s motivation by making use of their preferred activities when appropriate, and also by providing additional support and encouragement when making use of their non-preferred activities" (Kyriacou C 1998 p41). At our visit to St Philips

Westbrook Primary School it came to light that as trainee teachers, we need to be aware that all children need to be set suitable learning challenges. By looking at the diversity of pupil's backgrounds, sometimes we need to look at the wider community and try to make the content relevant to the children and be aware that there could be gaps in some pupil's education. For example, the school where I work has a large number of children from the travelling community. All class teachers are aware that sometimes these pupils will need some extra support to reach the National standard. It is important when planning a curriculum that it meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children, this greatly lends its hand to Mind Friendly Learning, thus allowing the children to progress at their pace and gain the knowledge and skills they need, giving clear and attainable goals. This is done through setting suitable learning challenges, overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils. An ongoing assessment of each child enables the teacher to plan their work and for some children, programmes of study from earlier key stages are put in place to suit the child's needs. " To respect and treat pupils as individuals according to the needs of the individual child, recognising that children learn at different speeds and in different ways". (Potts, Armstrong and Masterson pg 78). From a discussion with my Head Teacher she has found that there is a noticeable change when children are entering the Early Years over recent years and that children of 4 and 5 are coming into school without the basic social skills necessary for school. We are addressing this by encouraging parents to work closely with us focusing on the children's language and social skills through home readers, story sacks and in- house

parent, teacher and child holistic sessions, as a result creating a better relationship with the families and building trust and support networks, allowing teachers to tackle more sensitive issues in the child's home. "...if they're not fed, if they've not had a good nights sleep, if they don't feel good about themselves, you can forget learning. " (Potts P et al 1995 pg 252) After further reflection on my visit to St Phillips Westbrook Primary School I have a deeper understanding of what it means to be included regardless of differences. ' As a Christian community inclusion is at the centre of our work and we seek to provide an inclusive environment whereby each child is valued, supported and encouraged to develop a caring, well balanced and valuable member of the wider community.' (St Philips inclusion policy). The National curriculum states that, " Inclusion is about the quality of children's experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school" (DfES, 2004: pg 25) Through observing across schools and key-stages, I became more aware that children were being taught as a whole class and if needed, extra support was given for children with additional needs to work on their targets with a teaching assistant. On further observation it seemed children of a lower ability gained more direct teaching on a lower teacher pupil ratio; however we must also be aware that children of higher abilities/gifted and talented also need stretching in order for them to achieve their learning goals. In conclusion, for successful learning to take place I believe that everybody needs to feel welcome and comfortable within the classroom environment. I have recently learnt how a male homosexual colleague was treated at a school because of his sexuality. Being in a Catholic primary school did highlight some barriers for him. As a non-faith

teacher and homosexual he was unable to accompany his class on church visits or during the parish priest's visits. This is an example of a school not being supportive of our adult society's diversity or, supporting inclusion. It certainly shows how it is not just the children that we need to consider. This person felt totally excluded. This made him unhappy and uncomfortable. This unhappiness would eventually be imparted on the children in his care. The ideal learning classroom would be inclusive, diverse, welcoming, challenging and comfortable. It has come to light that the integral part of inclusion and diversity is the children. They play the main part in acceptance, tolerance and understanding of others through directed teaching. ' The aim of the Every Child Matters programme is to give all children the support they need to: - be healthy - stay safe - enjoy and achieve - make a positive contribution - achieve economic well-being.' (DCSF, 2008) Through the underpinning of the ' Every Child Matters' published document children are entitled to equality regardless of the colour, creed, race, gender or differences a goal we all aim to achieve.