Supported by

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

Making inclusion “normal”

Comparing the development of inclusive education in Finland and New Brunswick, Canada

Fellowship Report 2019 | Tara Flood

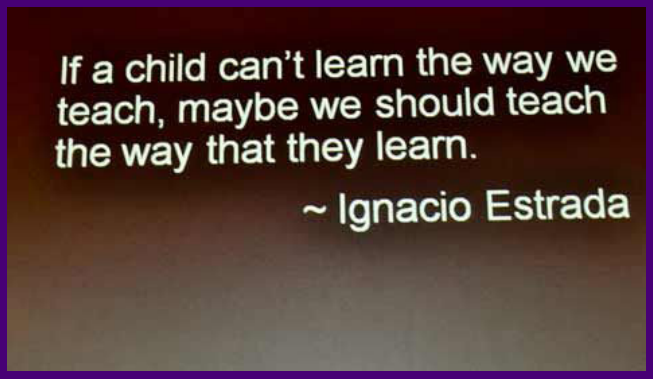
Words of Inspiration...

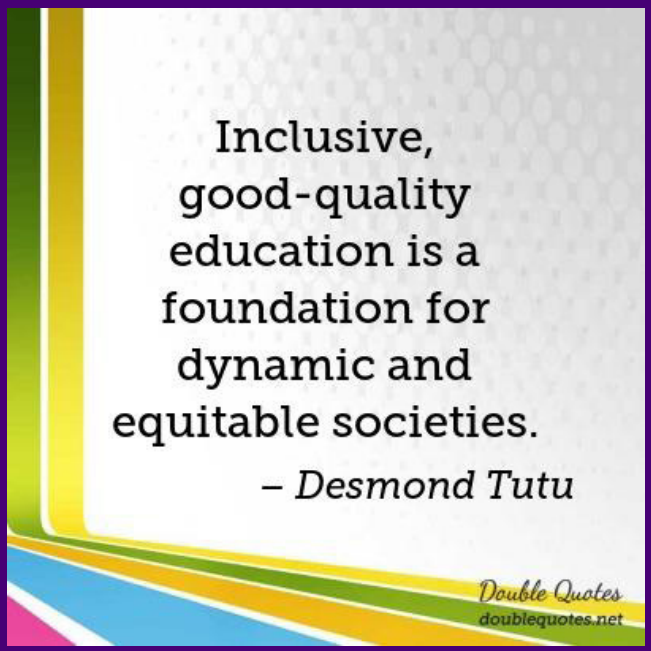
Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone.

— Diane Richler, Past President, Inclusion International

Inclusion is simple, but it's not easy

— Marsha Forest & Jack Pearpoint





Contents

Summary

During my Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship I visited Finland and Canada to compare the political, policy and practice drivers in both countries and determine the most effective approach to progressing inclusive education for Disabled children and young people in the UK.

I have used the data gathered to highlight the key elements required to inform the development of a comprehensive and co-ordinated framework for inclusive education that includes pragmatic ideas and proposals for legislative, policy and practice transformation. The current approach in the UK is focused on Special Educational Needs labelling which often leads to, at best, integration but increasingly segregation and rarely inclusion. So a different approach is required, one that working towards a human rights approach to inclusive education more in line with Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Specifically my aims for the project were:

— To discover how policy and legal frameworks have facilitated inclusive education and the effectiveness of any system transition arrangements. This will enable ALLFIE and our partners to develop a draft education system transformation plan for the UK to ensure it meets its human rights treaties obligations;

— To understand more about the effectiveness of tools that have been developed to build the capacity of teaching and support staff to embrace inclusivity. This will enable me and the inclusive education movement to begin a dialogue with education providers and bodies representing teaching staff (e.g. Trade Unions) in the UK with the aim of proposing more effective tools;

— To understand more about the support families/parents receive to feel confident about inclusive education as a choice for their child and how those impact on their aspirations for their child. This will enable me to inform the inclusive education movement about the contrast the UK experience with Finland and Canada and identify solutions for change;

— To discover what motivated policy makers in Finland and Canada to create an inclusive education system. This will enable me and the inclusive education movement to reframe our existing messages about the benefits of inclusive education.

Whilst in Finland and Canada I met with Disabled people's organisations (DPOs), parents of Disabled children, young people and adults, schools, NGOs, service providers and policy makers. During my time in Canada I took the opportunity to visit the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa to meet politicians and the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS), an NGO led by Disabled people based at Carleton University, Ontario. I also visited Toronto to meet leaders in and advocates of inclusion. Unfortunately I didn't have time to visit any schools during this part of my journey. With regard to the commitment to inclusive education, the picture in Ontario is mixed. It was good to hear, however, that of the 76 school board districts 69 have no segregated provision for Disabled pupils and students.

Tara in Toronto

I am now confident that I have a better understanding of the wider political and legal framework in each country and how that has encouraged (or not) the development of inclusive education, as well as the support and resources available to schools, community groups and families with Disabled children and young people to make inclusive education a reality for ALL pupils and students.

School visits were a core element of this project and in the main I haven't been disappointed. I met some amazing teachers and leaders in schools whose commitment to realising inclusive practice was inspiring. In both Finland and New Brunswick I saw real life examples of inclusive practice for Disabled pupils and students, particularly those pupils and students who in the UK are very unlikely to be educated in a mainstream school.

Key Findings

My findings focus on the critical concepts necessary to transform an education system so it is truly inclusive of ALL students:

The need for a legal framework that outlaws segregation and enables inclusion;
Resourced and welcoming schools that have the flexibility to be inclusive;

- Schools and classrooms to become common learning environments focused on mixed ability learning where knowledge and skills are equally valued;
- All students get the support they need to participate in all aspects of learning and school life;
- Training and support for teachers and staff to build confidence, skills and leadership in inclusive teaching;
- Structures that encourage collaborative decision making and problem solving between schools, pupils, their families and communities.

Recommendations

The recommendations from my Churchill Fellowship aim to encourage change in the education system at a legal and policy level as well as at school and teacher training level. I have also included recommendations focused on building parent and family demand for inclusive education, and funding for advocacy organisations who will inevitably take the lead as agents of change. I have used the learning from my visits to New Brunswick and Finland to create a Charter for Inclusive Education that can be used by my organisation, the Alliance for Inclusive Education, to shape its influencing work in the UK.

Tara with kids at Park St school

About the Author

Tara Flood is a disability rights activist and a survivor of special education. Tara has been the Director at the Alliance for Inclusive Education since April 2006. Tara has been involved with the UK disability rights movement at grassroots level, for many years, and she is committed to creating social and political change that will deliver equality for all Disabled people at a local, regional, national, European and international level. Tara has a Masters Degree in Social Policy: Disability Studies from the University of Leeds.

The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) campaigns for the right of all Disabled pupils and students (including those with Special Educational Needs) to be included in mainstream education and for the ending of segregation. Tara was involved in the discussions at the United Nations on the development of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is now working to get the Convention fully implemented, particularly Article 7: the Right for Disabled Children and Young People to participate in Decision-making and Article 24: the Right to Inclusive Education.

Tara works with organisations led by Disabled people, allied organisations, children's rights organisations, statutory agencies and Government departments, both in a personal and professional capacity, and is committed to the voices and experiences of ALL Disabled people being at the heart of discussions and decision making about our lives.

Tara takes a Social Model of Disability approach to her work, focusing on achieving equality for and with Disabled people by identifying and removing the many barriers that restrict or prevent Disabled people from having real choice and control in our lives.

Tara applied to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for a Fellowship in 2017 to visit Finland and New Brunswick, Canada for inspiration in terms of finding examples of inclusive young person focused education, bearing in mind that since 2010 the UK Government seems determined to row back on progress made here.

Whilst in Finland and Canada Tara met some amazing and inspiring disability and human rights activists, parents and families of Disabled children and young people, government representatives, academics, service providers, and community support organisations and visited some truly wonderful schools. In an attempt to capture her experiences she kept a Vlog which can be found on her InclusionistaTourista channel.[1]

Grankulla School, Finland

1. Tara took Sabbatical Leave from ALLFIE to complete her WCMT travels and added an additional 8 weeks off to tour through 19 countries on her way to Finland, hence why some Vlog entries cover subjects/holiday activities unrelated to the WCMT Fellowship. That said many of the issues raised relate to wider debates on inclusion and equality.

SECTION 1

Introduction

Why focus on inclusive education

In an inclusive educational setting, the culture of the education provider is transformed. Disabled and non-Disabled pupils and students are welcomed and valued, feel safe and confident that they will be supported to develop their talents, pursue their aspirations and make a contribution to the school whilst achieving their personal goals. Disabled pupils and students are welcomed and educated within inclusive education settings. Inclusive education providers adopt attitudes, approaches and strategies that ensure no learners are excluded or isolated from mainstream educational opportunities. Disabled pupils and students work alongside their peers on mainstream courses with flexibility of teaching and inclusive pedagogy and curriculum, learning and assessments that support ALL pupils and students to reach their full potential.

UNESCO's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[2], with its focus on 'leaving no one behind', provides an important incentive to build more inclusive and equitable societies. UNESCO is clear that an equal society needs to start with an inclusive education system.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education[3] calls for 'inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030'. It emphasizes inclusion and equity as laying foundations for quality education and learning. SDG 4 also calls for "building and upgrading education spaces that are child-friendly, fully accessible, and gender-sensitive and for providing safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all"'.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a comprehensive set of rights for children and young people under 18 years, including Article 28: the right to education 'regardless of race, gender or disability'. However the UNCRC is not clear that education should inclusive so in

2. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-liaison-office-in-new-york/unesco-and-the-un/agenda-2030/
3. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-liaison-office-in-new-york/areas-of-action/education/sustainable-development-goal-4-on-education/

2006 the UN published General Comment No.9, which provides clarification with regard to Disabled children and young people and the human rights protections set out in the UNCRC. With regard to Article 28: the right to education, General Comment No.9 states:

> "The Convention recognizes the need for modification to school practices and for training of regular teachers to prepare them to teach children with diverse abilities and ensure that they achieve positive educational outcomes."

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[4] (UNCRPD), agreed by the UN General Assembly in 2006, is unequivocal in its commitment to inclusive education as a human rights issue. Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education states that signatories to the Convention should ensure:

> "2 (a) That persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary and secondary education on the basis of disability;
>
> "(b) That persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality, free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;"

Defining Inclusive Education

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its General Comment No.4[5] to Article 24 outlines the core features of an inclusive education system, including a "whole person" approach [paragraph 12(c)]:

> "Whole person approach: offers flexible curricula, teaching and learning methods adapted to different strengths, requirements and learning styles. This approach implies the provision of support and reasonable accommodation and early intervention so that they are able to fulfil their potential. The focus is on learners' capacities and aspirations rather than content when planning teaching activities. It commits to ending segregation within educational settings by ensuring inclusive classroom teaching in

4. http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf
5. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/GC/RighttoEducation/CRPD-C-GC-4.doc

> accessible learning environments with appropriate supports. The education system must provide a personalized educational response, rather than expecting the student to fit the system."

The UNCRPD General Comment No.4 helpfully defined the difference between "segregation" and "integration" and that both are distinct from "inclusion".

Segregation[6] occurs when the education of "students with disabilities"' is provided in separate environments designed or used to respond to a particular or various impairments, in isolation from students without disabilities.

Integration is a process of placing "students with disabilities" in existing mainstream educational institutions, as long as the former can adjust to the standardized requirements of such institutions.

Inclusion involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences. Placing "students with disabilities" within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion.

In other words, if an education system provides a "one size fits all" model then it is not an inclusive system. Those students that do not "fit the system" are often pushed out into an alternate "special" segregated system. A genuinely inclusive education system which is fully accessible to all students – which caters for all – does not need an alternate segregated system.

6.https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/4&Lang=en

The benefits of Inclusive education

Separating Disabled pupils and students from their non-Disabled peer-group is discriminatory. It limits individual life chances and produces an unfair and unjust society. Our experience of education shapes both who we are and the type of society we want. From early years, children learn about inclusion and segregation from their experiences whilst at school. The experiences of segregation and inclusion cannot be underestimated.

Inclusive education benefits all of us. An inclusive education system provides opportunities for learning, friendship and growth within a diverse society which fosters respect, tolerance and understanding, and celebrates diversity.

Why I chose Canada and Finland

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust was set up for people in the UK to travel to other countries to investigate new ways of doing things and to bring back those ideas to inform and improve practice here in the UK. So in September 2017 I submitted an application to visit Finland and New Brunswick in Canada to investigate levels of inclusivity in their education systems.

I chose Finland because its education system is heralded as best in the world in terms of the value it places on the happiness and wellbeing of its children. According to UNICEF, Finland is at the top of the list in terms of having happy children. Alongside this and interestingly for those people who value academic attainment as a measure of success, Finland has also been, for a number of years now, at the top or close to the top of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)[7].

I chose New Brunswick in Canada because for many years it has had a very good reputation for being inclusive and is well known across the inclusive education movement here in the UK as taking the brave political decision in the late 80s to close all its special schools in pursuit of a fully inclusive education system.

7. http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-finland.htm

A note about language...

As a Disabled person committed to the Social Model of Disability (see footnote of page 7) I use Disabled person/pupil/student rather than person/pupil/student with disabilities. This is because disability is socially produced, the result of physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers that disable an individual who has an impairment/ and or health condition. I only use the language of Special Educational Needs (SEN) because this is how English law and policy are framed. However SEN labelling does not take a Social Model of Disability approach because it focuses on what is 'wrong' with the child/young person – the SEN labelling process is in itself disabling because it uses deficit model language and has a stigmatising impact on the aspirations for children and young people defines as having SEN. Where I have used the language of SEN or 'special' in this report, it is because this is the current language being used to describe a service, system, policy or approach in either England, Finland or New Brunswick.

SECTION 2:

National contexts

Inclusive Education: Understanding the current situation in the UK

According to UK Government statistics there are over 13.9 million people in the UK with a limiting long term illness, impairment or 'disability'[8]. Around 8% of children and young people are Disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Education is a devolved issue in the UK. In theory this means education law and policy is different in England, Scotland, the North of Ireland and Wales. However, whilst the laws related to education and Disabled pupils and students have different titles, each of the legal frameworks and practice is very similar. For the purposes of this report I will focus on the English education system to avoid confusion about law and terminology.

The UK has taken some proactive measures to end institutional discrimination, including the Equality Act 2010 and in England the Children and Families Act 2014 (which replaced the Special Education Needs and Disability Act), but it has stopped short of creating and embracing an inclusive education system.

Those Disabled pupils and students who require additional support/equipment to participate in learning (known in England as Special Educational Needs[9]) have to be assessed as eligible under the Children and Families Act 2014 for an Education Health and Care Plan (previously known as a Statement of Special Educational Needs). The identification and assessment process also sets out certain legal parameters with regard to the decision about school placement - which school a Disabled child will attend. Parents have a legal right to "state a preference" for a particular school, but the school and/or Local Authority can use the law to overturn the wishes of parents. Parents have the right to take a case to an SEND Tribunal but the tribunal process can often be expensive in terms of legal support, time consuming and antagonistic as parents seek to challenge decisions made about their child.

8. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-201617
9. https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs

Ironically the numbers of Disabled children in special schools in England since the UNCRPD was ratified, by the UK Government in 2009, have risen significantly from 89,390 in 2006 to 98,595 in 2013. Since 2014 the number of Disabled pupils and students in special schools has increased by a further 24%. This is a clear retrogression in terms of ensuring an inclusive education system.

Despite the UK Government rhetoric of developing inclusive and accessible communities in its "Fulfilling Potential: Making it Happen" strategy[10], the legal situation in England does not comply with Article 24. It is true that the Children and Families Act 2014 contains a principle that there must be a 'presumption for mainstream', but this principle is significantly undermined by Section 316 of the 1996 Education Act which allows Local Authorities and/or schools to refuse a mainstream placement to a Disabled child with SEN if this would be considered to be 'incompatible with the efficient education of other pupils with whom he or she would be educated or if it is an inefficient use of resources'. Despite a legally binding Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice it is still the case that this legal caveat is much overused and misrepresented by Local Authorities and schools.

The UK's long history of institutionalising Disabled children and young people into special education settings has proven resistant to change. Successive governments, 'special education' providers, a number of education professionals, medical and allied health professionals etc. have maintained the myth that "special is best for some", all in a vacuum from and against the objective research evidence which highlights the negative impact of separating Disabled pupils and students from the nondisabled peers.

This is often driven by a fear of systemic change (because segregation is what has been done for so long) and the power of vested interest seeking to maintain businesses built around segregated service delivery.

Decades of evidence have shown that segregated education disadvantages Disabled pupils and students by producing lesser learning and social outcomes in a "low expectations" environment focused on fixing /normalising them towards a disablist ideal. ALLFIE's *How Was School* project[11] sets out in stark detail the lifetime impact of separating Disabled people from their families and communities as children.

10. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fulfilling-potential-working-together-to-improve-the-lives-of-disabled-people
11. https://howwasschool.allfie.org.uk/

The government's latest destinations data, focusing on pupils finishing their GCSEs in 2012/13, shows that nearly half (45%) of young people leaving separate provision were not in education, employment, or training six months after the end of their compulsory schooling, compared to only 6% of students leaving mainstream schools, and 11% leaving special schools.[12] Furthermore, more than 50% of Disabled young people with learning difficulties entering the criminal justice system said they had attended a special school at some point in their education, and similar numbers had been excluded from school.[13,14,15,16] Thus, the evidence shows that Disabled pupils are at least twice as likely to be engaged in education, employment, or training if they attended a mainstream rather than a special school for Disabled pupils.

The majority of permanently excluded pupils educated in the segregated education sector, such as those in alternative provision, will go on to cost the state an extra £2.1 billion in education, health, benefits, and criminal justice costs. It is estimated that the cost of exclusion is around £370,000 per young person in alternative education settings, benefits, healthcare, and criminal justice costs.[17]

In 2017 the UN Disability Committee published its Concluding Observations based on the scrutiny of the UK Government in August that year. A key recommendation was the need for a comprehensive transition plan setting out the steps required to move from a "dual education system that separates out Disabled children" to an education system that has the skills, confidence and resources to support a diversity of pupils and students. Practical examples of inclusive education practice from countries where there is 100% inclusion will assist the development of such a plan because it helps build the aspiration required for a fundamental shift in thinking and practice in the UK.

---

12. Department for Education. (2018). Statistics: destinations of KS4 and LS5 pupils. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-destinations
13. Ministry of Justice. (2014). Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prisoners-childhood-and-family-backgrounds
14. Ministry of Justice. (2014). Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR). Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/surveying-prisoner-crime-reduction-spcr
15. Prison Reform Trust. (2010). Seen and Heard. Retrieved from http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/portals/0/documents/seenandheardfinal%20.pdf
16. Claire Parker, Ruth Marlow, Marc Kastner, Felix May, Oana Mitrofan, William Henley, Tamsin Ford, (2016) "The "Supporting Kids, Avoiding Problems" (SKIP) study: relationships between school exclusion, psychopathology, development and attainment – a case control study". Journal of Children's Services, 11(2), pp. 91-110,
17. Weir, D. (2017, October 19). The true cost of excluding a child: £370,000. Prospect Magazine. Retrieved from https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/politics/cost-of-excluding-a-child-public-money

Finnish Context

The Constitution of Finland[18] is the supreme source of national law of Finland. The original Constitution Act was enacted in 1919, soon after Finland declared its independence in 1917. The provisions for constitutional rights closely mirror the European Convention on Human Rights[19], including educational, social and economic rights in addition to political liberties.

- Under Section 6: Equality - Children shall be treated equally and as individuals and they shall be allowed to influence matters pertaining to themselves to a degree corresponding to their level of development.

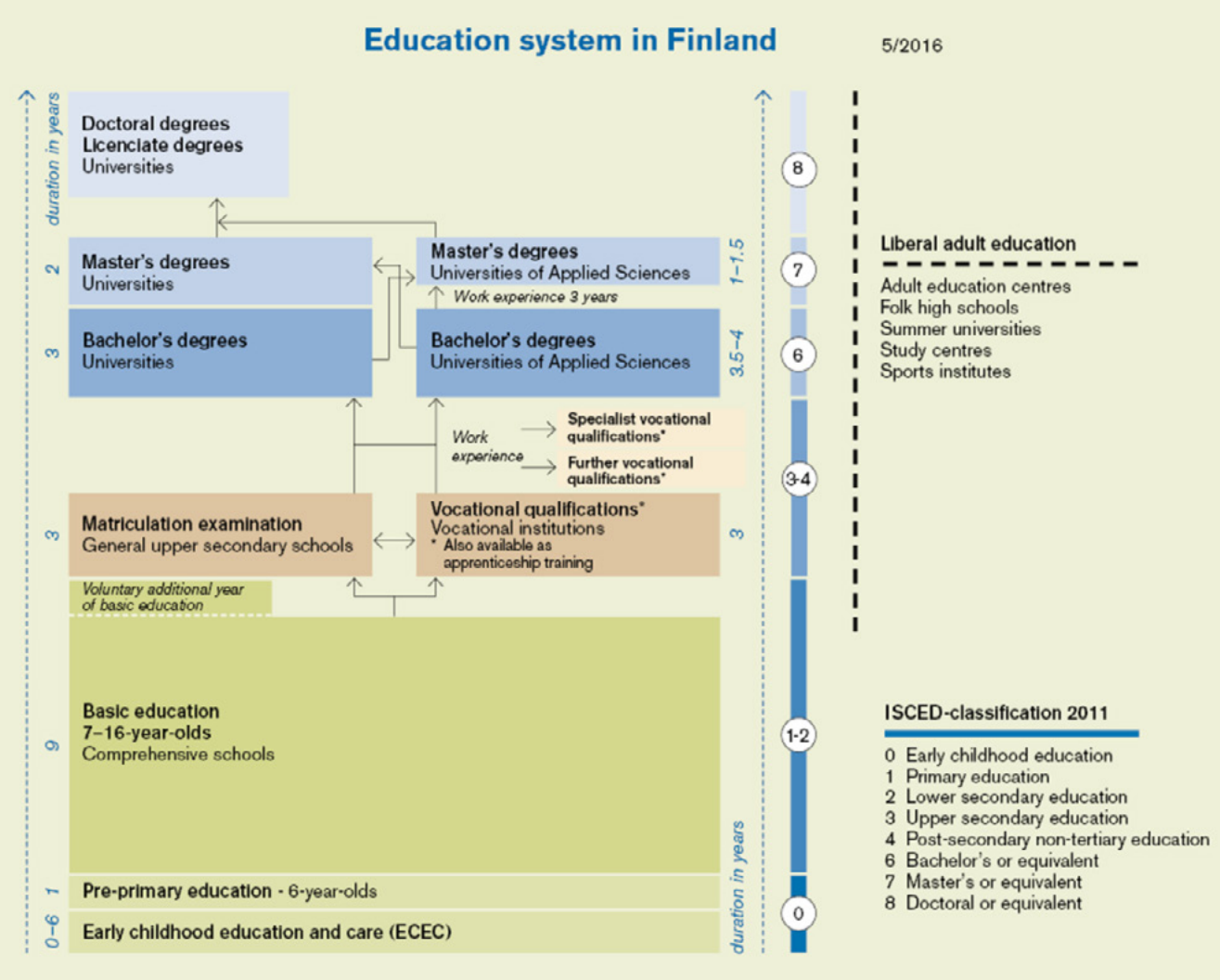
- Under Section 16: Educational Rights - Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge

Finland's population is 5.52 million[20]. 88.7% of the population is Finnish speaking. 5.3% of the population is Swedish speaking. The Swedish speaking community, despite being in the minority, has full legal status and funding for Swedish speaking schools and community services.

One of the basic principles of Finnish education is that all people must have equal access to high-quality education and training. The same educational opportunities should be available to all citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin, age, wealth or where they live.

The present education system in Finland consists of day-care programmes (for babies and very young children) and a one-year "pre-school" (or kindergarten for six-year-olds); a nine-year compulsory basic comprehensive school (starting at age seven and ending at age sixteen); post-compulsory secondary general academic and vocational education; higher education (University); and adult (lifelong, continuing) education.

18. https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990731.pdf
19. https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf
20. https://www.tilastokeskus.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto_en.html



In Finland education is free at all levels from pre-primary to higher education. In pre-primary and basic education textbooks, school lunch and snacks and transport for students living further away from the school are free for parents. At upper secondary level students have the right to a free meal, and in higher education meals are subsidised by the state. Adult education is the only form of education that is not completely free.

The Ministry of Education and Culture oversees all publicly funded education, including the development of the national core curriculum through the Finnish National Board of Education and the accreditation of teacher training programmes.

In 2014, Finland spent $13,865 (equivalent to £10560) per student in lower secondary school, as compared to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average of $10,235 (equivalent to £7760). Total spending on education represented 5.9% percent of Finland's GDP in 2014, compared to the average across OECD countries of 5.1% in 2014.

Every pupil and student has the right to educational support. The current thinking in Finland is that the potential of each pupil should be maximised. Therefore educational guidance is seen as essential. Guidance and counselling aims to support pupils and students so that they can all perform as well as possible in their studies and be able to make good and well informed decisions about their education and future careers. Guidance and counselling is seen as the work of all education staff. Teachers are required to treat children and young people as individuals and help them proceed according to their own interests and abilities. Pupils and students should also experience success and the joy of learning.

Inclusion in Finland

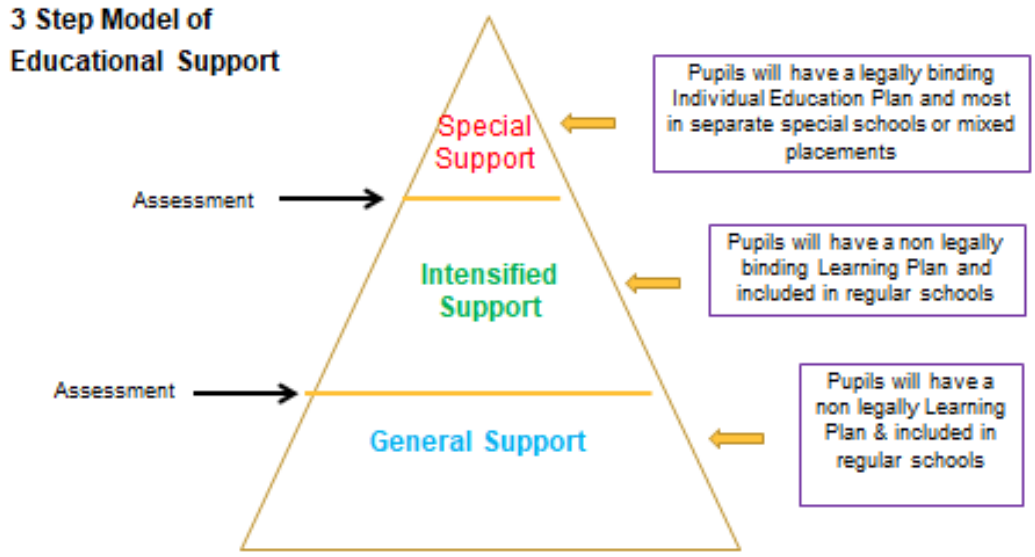
In Finland the vision is to provide support for Disabled pupils and students to be educated in mainstream education. All pupils of compulsory school age have the right to general support and access to high-quality education as well as guidance and intensified support.

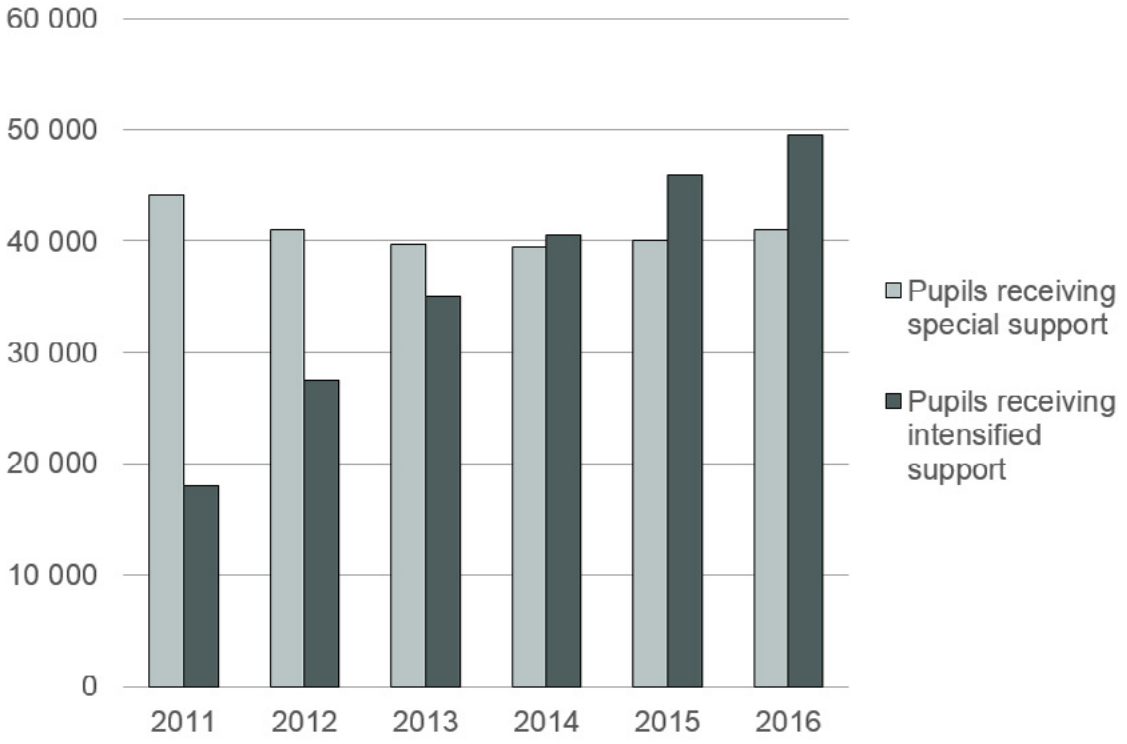
> "The climate in Finland is very positive for inclusive education. I see it in the children I meet in schools. Their views are much better than people of my generation."
> – Riia Palmqvist, Finnish National Agency for Education (with Tara, left)

Pupils who require regular support or several different forms of support in their learning or education have a right to be provided with intensified support, which is based on a pedagogical/medical assessment and follows the pupil's initial Learning Plan. Intensified support is offered when general support is not sufficient. Pupils are provided with special support if the objectives for their growth, development or learning cannot be met using other support measures. Intensified and/or special support can include "specialised" teaching, full/part-time separate special placement and/or an assistant, interpreting services or other support options[21]. The assessment process for special support replaces a non-legally binding Learning Plan with an Individual Education Plan which is legally binding in terms of the support services it contains.

21. https://vipunen.fi/en-gb/_layouts/15/xlviewer.aspx?id=/en-gb/Reports/Erityisopetus%20-%20Erityinen%20ja%20tehostettu%20tuki%20-%20Tukimuoto_EN.xlsb

There are approximately 10,000 pupils receiving special support. The main purpose of special support is to provide pupils with broadly based and systematic help so that they can complete compulsory education and be eligible for upper secondary education. Special needs support is also provided in upper secondary education. In vocational education and training, students requiring 'special needs' education are provided with an individual education plan.





Students receiving special or intensified support in pre-primary and basic education[22]

22. https://vipunen.fi/en-gb/basic/Pages/Erityinen-ja-tehostettu-tuki.aspx

Whilst the majority of Disabled pupils and students are in mainstream education with or without general, intensified or special support, 78% of pupils and students in receipt of special support are in separate special schools or a mix of both special and mainstream[23]. According to the Finnish National Agency for Education 160 of the pupils and students receiving special support are in full or part time settings called Hospital schools. Hospital schools are described as therapeutic environments and are particularly for young people with significant mental health issues or substance misuse.

Finland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in full in 2016, including a commitment to Article 24: the Right to Inclusive Education. Prior to ratification the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the New Comprehensive School programme, which included an initiative to encourage the country's existing special schools to become Development Centres with a new focus on building the capacity of local regular (mainstream) schools to become inclusive of a diversity of pupils, including Disabled pupils, but not exclusively. This initiative has had some success, but progress has been slow for a number of reasons that I will discuss in the next section of this report.

It is also important to mention the role that the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector is playing in shifting the aspiration of government, schools, families and wider society to be more positive about inclusion of Disabled children and young people in mainstream education. Threshold Association is the national organisation led by Disabled people and they work alongside the Vammaisfoorumi ry/ Finnish Disability Forum as well as parent-led organisations and service providers such as VAMLAS, VATES, KVL and FDUV representing the Swedish speaking community. These are all reasonably or well-resourced and are effective advocates for the rights and equality of Disabled people.

Tara with Janna, VATES

23. https://vipunen.fi/en-gb/_layouts/15/xlviewer.aspx?id=/en-gb/Reports/Erityisopetus%20-%20Erityinen%20ja%20tehostettu%20tuki%20-%20Opetuksen%20toteutuspaikka_EN.xlsb

Tara with Corina, FDUV

Tara with Paulina, VAMLAS

Effective lobbying by the NGO sector has resulted in the Finnish government publishing a National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2018/19[24] that includes a section on changes required to the Finnish Education system to ensure it is compliant with Article 24.

As Tuomas Tuure, who splits his time as the Development Coordinator of Threshold Association and the Advocacy Officer of Abilis Foundation, explains:

> "CRPD implementation as a whole has been a well-thought and well-planned process in Finland and having worked on both ratification and implementation in numerous countries I would like to commend Finland for having a very meticulous process where more than 200 individual pieces of legislation were changed and disabled peoples voice was well represented through the pioneering work of National Council on Disability, Finnish Disability Forum and advocates like Sari Loijas, Merja Heikkonen and the late Kalle Könkkölä."

24. http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/160834/STM_7_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

New Brunswick, Canada Context

New Brunswick is Canada's only officially bilingual province and one with nearly forty years of experience of a fully inclusive education system. About two thirds of the population are Anglophones (English speaking) and a third Francophones (French speaking). One third of the overall population describe themselves as bilingual. New Brunswick is predominantly a rural province with only about half the population living in urban areas, mostly in Moncton, Saint John and the capital Fredericton.

The population of New Brunswick is approximately 760,000 and is currently one of the poorest provinces in Canada[25], with a per capita income of $28,000 (equivalent to £21240) and is also one of the smallest provinces.

Education is a provincial matter so is controlled by the Government of New Brunswick. The New Brunswick education system is also bilingual and is split into 7 school districts – 4 Anglophone school districts and 3 Francophone school districts, although all Anglophone schools offer French immersion classes i.e. – classes that are taught entirely in French, but that sit within a English speaking school. Parents have the right to choose which course of learning they want for their child.

Each School District is managed by a Superintendent who has a number of responsibilities including the day-to-day operation of schools, the District budget, oversight of the district performance report and the placement of students.

> "Our job is to be there when a principal contacts us needing some advice and support to meet the needs of a child who may have just started at the school."
> – Catherine Blaney, Acting Superintendent, Anglophone West School District

Tara with Catherine Blaney and her team, Anglophone West School District

25. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-s-struggling-economy-ranks-near-bottom-of-report-1.2642653

The education system in New Brunswick covers elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. New Brunswick provides for 12 years of free education from 5/6 years through to 18 years. Types of school, both Anglophone and Francophone include:

- Elementary: Children usually enter Kindergarten from the age of 5. Elementary school generally includes Grade 1 through to Grade 5 or 6;
- Middle: children usually enter Middle school at Grade 6 for 3 years;
- Secondary (more commonly known as High school): encompasses Grade 9 through to Grade 12;
- Post-Secondary: includes vocational colleges and university as well as lifelong learning opportunities.

The seven School Districts in New Brunswick are also responsible for the implementation of policy and provincial curriculum.

Inclusion in New Brunswick

Early work on inclusion in education started in the local education authority (school district) based in the town of Woodstock in the early 1980s and was led by Gordon Porter. At the time the majority of Disabled children and young people were being placed in special schools usually run by parents and/or charitable organisations. He was a former school principal put in charge of developing a comprehensive approach to serving students with learning challenges in local schools as well as closing special schools and integrating the students who attended them into regular schools. Gordon was also active in the New Brunswick and Canadian Association for Community Living. His role as an education administrator and a volunteer leader of the New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL) and Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), helped shape and influence his focus on moving toward inclusion.

In 1986, the Government introduced the New Brunswick Education Act, better known as “Bill 85” to change the Schools Act. Bill 85 not only legislated for inclusive education, but also outlawed the segregation of Disabled pupils and students. This new law put New Brunswick ahead of any other province in

Canada, and among leaders in inclusion around the world. In New Brunswick inclusive education was clearly articulated in 2009 as follows:

> "a pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allows each student to feel respected, confident and safe so he or she can learn and develop to his or her full potential. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centred on the best interests of the student, which promotes social cohesion, belonging, and active participation in learning, a complete school experience, and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community. These values and beliefs will be shared by schools and communities. Inclusive education is put into practice within school communities that value diversity and nurture the well-being and quality of learning of each of their members. Inclusive education is carried out through a range of public and community programs and services available to all students. Inclusive education is the foundation for ensuring an inclusive New Brunswick society."

What is interesting about this definition is that it doesn't single out particular groups of pupils and students. This is because the education system is committed to the inclusion of ALL pupils and students. This broad definition comes, in part, from Canada's historical approach to segregating First Nation communities. Until the mid-90s it was common practice across Canada to segregate First Nation children into residential schools as a way of killing off First Nation languages, culture and history. Thankfully this barbaric practice ended and now First Nation culture, history and a number of First Nation languages are part of the curriculum in New Brunswick.

As part of the planned closure of the special schools across New Brunswick, some teachers from special schools and/or special classes within mainstream schools were transferred into the mainstream school system to support regular teachers who until then had little experience working with Disabled pupils and students. This had mixed success because despite a commitment from the government prior to and after the passage of Bill 85 to provide training on inclusive practices, this commitment started to fade in the early 1990s as schools struggled to realise inclusion and instead students experienced different degrees of integration. So in 2013 Policy 322 was introduced to set out and clarify "the requirements to ensure New Brunswick public schools are inclusive"[26].

26. https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/e/322A.pdf

Policy 322 helpfully re-defines schools and places of education as "'common learning environments". The Common Learning Environment is:

> "an inclusive environment where instruction is designed to be delivered to students of mixed ability and of the same age in their neighbourhood school, while being responsive to their individual needs as a learner, and used for the majority of the students' regular instruction hours" (Policy 322).

According to Section 6 of Policy 322 it is the responsibility of all school personnel to ensure that the common learning environment is:

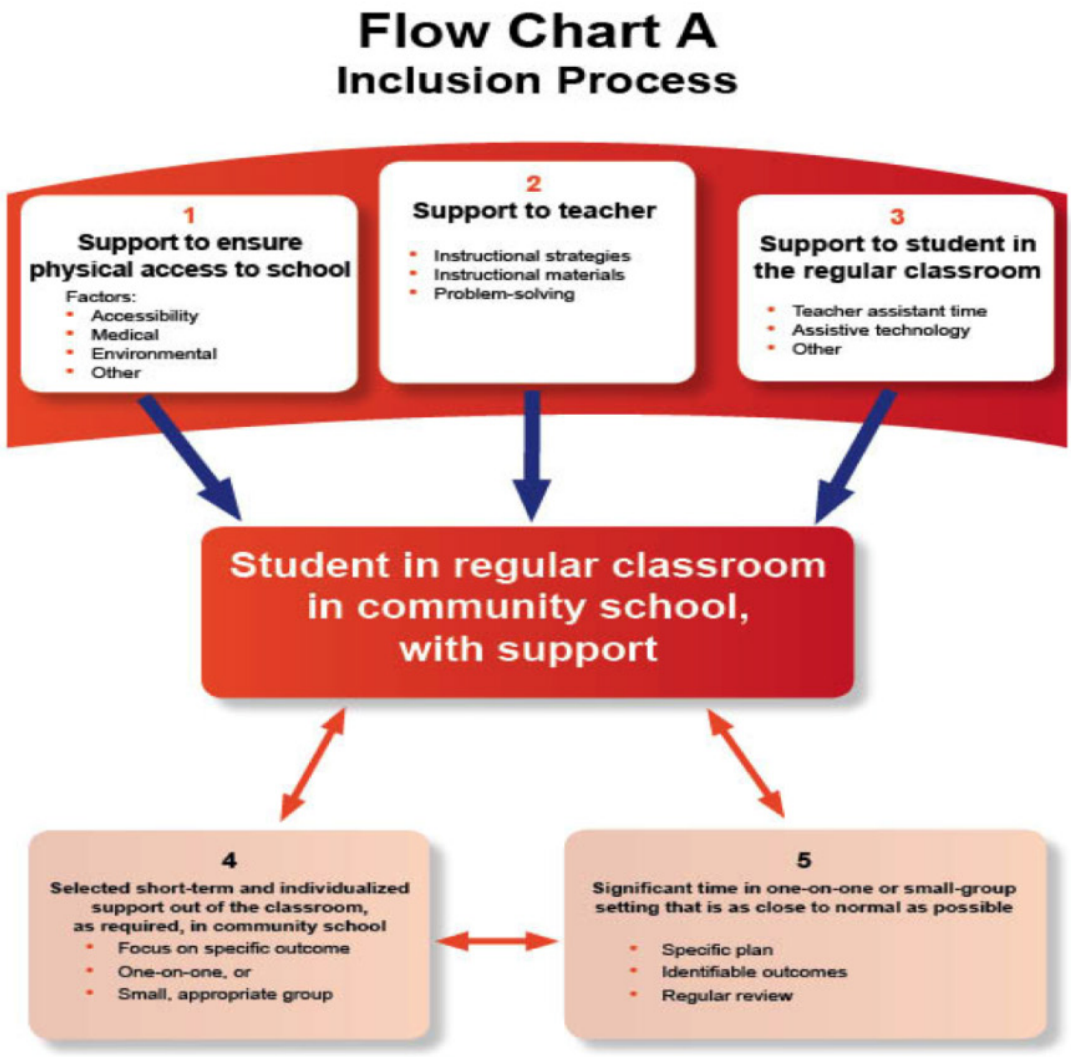
- enabling each student to participate fully in a common environment that is designed for all students. It is appropriate for the student's age and grade, is shared with peers in their neighbourhood school, and respects learning styles, needs and strengths;

- a common environment where student-centred learning principles are applied (e.g., Universal Design for Learning, learning outcomes, instruction, assessment, interventions, supports, accommodations, adaptations and resources);

- giving consideration to accommodations and implements them in a timely manner.

Policy 322 also allows for the flexibility to "vary" the Common Learning Environment if a student needs to spend time outside. This has to be justified and monitored and an individualized plan for the student must be created to return to the common learning environment.

The flowchart[27] below explains the implementation process adopted by schools in New Brunswick:



Schools in New Brunswick also have to follow closely the principles and practices of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This means that the curriculum, teaching practices and strategies, and student assessment are designed from the outset to ensure that all students can learn and actively participate in regular education programming.

To assist schools to develop the confidence and skill to embed UDL, School District Education Support Services have been set up to support school based staff by:

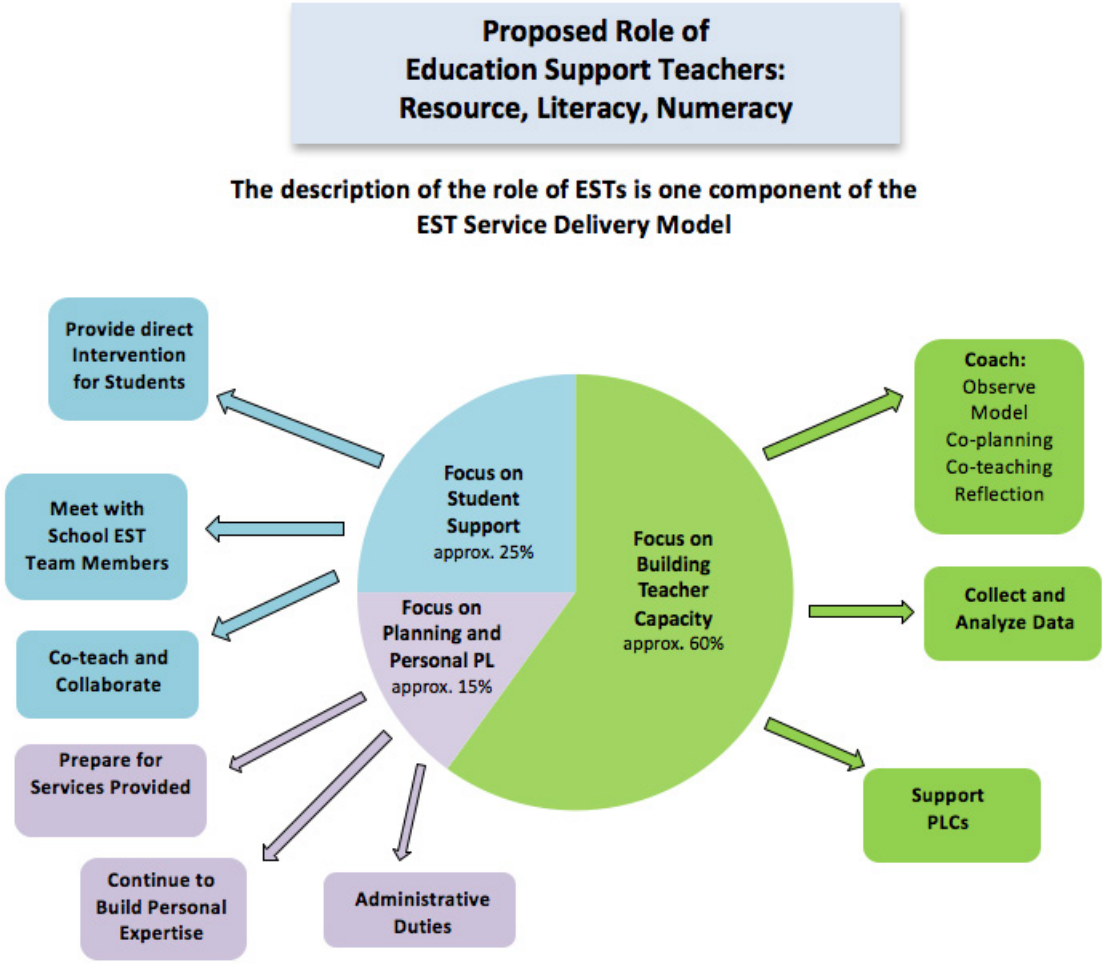
COACHING - COTEACHING - INTERVENTION

27. Gordon Porter 2018

This to ensure that inclusion is the responsibility of ALL school based staff and that ALL teachers have the confidence and skills to teach a diverse range of pupils. The Ministry have had to be quite prescriptive about how Education Support Teams work in schools to ensure that inclusion remains a shared endeavour. School based ESTs are staffed by Resource Teachers all of whom are qualified teachers with additional training in inclusive teaching practice.

Currently it is recommended that Resource Teachers' time is split:

- Minimum of **60 %** of time supporting teachers in the classroom;
- Maximum of **25%** of time "working with students";
- Maximum of **15%** of time on other tasks;
- **Flexible** – will vary over the school year.



New Brunswick also has an inclusive early learning and childcare sector that has made great strides over the last few years to have inclusive Early Learning Children's Centres. Early learning and childcare is delivered privately in New Brunswick but the government has supported many efforts to help build an inclusive system. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has committed to have a formal "inclusion policy" for early learning in place within the next year. Even in its absence there has been significant training and support provided to the sector to create early learning facilities that include all children. It is still a work in progress, but evidence shows that many children having an inclusive experience in early learning before they get to kindergarten. It is clear that this better prepares them for the inclusive public education system and also allows families to see the real benefits of inclusion even before their children reach public school.

Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010. This ratification involved the support of all provincial and territorial governments and the Parliament of Canada. And now the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in New Brunswick states on its website that "Inclusive education is the foundation for ensuring an inclusive New Brunswick society."[28]

February each year is National Inclusive Education month in New Brunswick. The week creates opportunities for schools and communities to celebrate the work they are doing to value each and every member of their community.

28. https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/rdi.html

SECTION 3:

Inclusive education – learning from Finland and New Brunswick, Canada

After twelve years at the Alliance for Inclusive Education, which leads and facilitates the inclusive education movement here in the UK, and the work I have done in other countries related to disability and education rights, I was clear what my research focus needed to be during my time in Finland and Canada. As with any social, political and educational issues there are barriers to change and progress and drivers that enable and encourage change.

So I chose the following areas of investigation to frame my analysis of what works in Finland and New Brunswick, recognising that if they are not aligned ideologically with inclusion they can present as barriers.

Q: Do legal and political frameworks support inclusion?

Inclusive education in New Brunswick works, not perfectly, but it is a reality for ALL pupils and students because there is no legal alternative – there is no segregated provision. Bill 85 and subsequent policy documents are focused on enhancing inclusive practice in schools and providing support, training and resources to build the capacity and confidence of teachers and support staff.

Finland, which has all the necessary elements of an inclusive system, is not over the line because of the existence of special schools. The constitution and legal frameworks are strongly in support of inclusion and equal access to high quality education, but a combination of political consensus, resistance from the national teachers' union, almost complete autonomy and a legal system that makes it difficult for parents to challenge decisions made by powerful professionals pushes in the opposite direction. It is unclear what it would take to get Finland over the line and make a 100% commitment to inclusive education for its Disabled children and young people.

Talking to NGOs in Finland, it is clear that the National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNCRPD doesn't go far enough in terms of timelines for change. There is also an appetite amongst NGOs to challenge current political consensus that is stifling leadership for change and attempts to kick start the

special school transformation programme that would re-provision them as community based Development Centres focused solely on building the capacity of mainstream schools and staff to include a more diverse pupil and student population.

Changing the law in New Brunswick ("Bill 85" in 1986) to outlaw segregation and create the framework and resources for inclusion to happen has essentially been the "game changer" and I am in no doubt that such action would be required in any country for an education system to be fully inclusive.

> "We have had inclusive education here for 30 years now. We would never go back to a time where we would separate out certain groups of children. It's not perfect here but it's the right thing to do."
> – Kim Korotkov, Head of Education Support Services, Dept of Education and Early Childhood Development

Tara with Kim and her team at the Ministry of Education

The publication of Policy No.322 in 2013 following the Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools review is particularly helpful in terms of offering guidance to schools and parents on building inclusion capacity. I think it is particularly interesting that Policy 322 doesn't mention disability. According to Gordon Porter this is because "the assumption is that all kids go to their local school and they are served."

Tara with Kayla and Jill

> "Today, thanks to inclusion and diversity in our schools, children barely see difference. They just see people, and when they're adults, they'll be prepared for a diverse world where everyone has the right to belong. Hopefully, in 20 or 30 years debates about inclusion will be a thing of the past and schools, workplaces, and community events will be inclusive as a norm"
> – Kayla, parent

Q: Do schools have the flexibility to be Inclusive?

In Finland schools have real autonomy both in terms of the curriculum subjects they choose to teach, but also how they organise the learning of their pupils and students and how they assess their knowledge and skills. There is a core National Curriculum, but schools have the flexibility to deliver curriculum subjects that reflect the local community.

I visited five schools in and around Helsinki and found a very similar approach in each. There is a strong focus on culture, the arts, handicrafts, community and nature. I found an ethos of learning not for school, but for Life.

Handicrafts are important in Finnish schools

Head teachers all talked about their love for teaching and for their children. Marja Perkkiö, Head teacher, Westendinpuiston koulu in Espoo told me:

> "We don't see difference as a big deal so the children pick up on this - we see all diversity as a good thing - it is just the ethos of the school - children and teachers respect each other"

Tara with Marja Perkkiö, Headteacher and Merja Rukko, Lionmothers group

The flip side of this of course is there can often be big differences in levels of inclusion of Disabled pupils and students and the support practices between municipalities (the UK equivalent would be Local Authority areas).

Finnish schools are well funded so class sizes are generally limited to twenty pupils. In Westendinpuiston koulu, Espoo, for example, the policy is to reduce class sizes in classes that include a Disabled student.

In both Finland and New Brunswick, education is a shared endeavour. School work is organised to enable teachers and support staff to work together and share the workload. As a result individuals working in school settings have a clear idea of their role in achieving the school´s educational goals. I found that in both Finnish and New Brunswick schools the cooperation between adults, including collaborative teaching, works as a model for pupils and students.

National Authorities	Teacher's Union	Social/ Community Partners	Parents
Local Authorities	Research Institutions	Pupils & Students	Relevant Stakeholders

I was struck how warm and welcoming the schools I visited were. In Finland staff and pupils rarely wear shoes and instead wear socks or slippers. In New Brunswick the Elementary schools I visited were very focused on creating safe and nurturing environments for their students as a preparation for the transition to Middle and later High School. Heather Hallett, Principal of New Maryland Elementary School talked to me about her role in helping her pupils and students "to have confidence in their ability to learn as a building block for their future".

Welcome sign

Kiss and Go zone at Park St School

Shoes are not worn in Finnish classrooms

Tara with a ‘grandparent’

Finnish and New Brunswick schools seem to value their role as a community focussed service. In Granhultsskolan, which is Swedish speaking school in Helsinki, they currently have a volunteer programme which welcomes retired people into the school to help children in the classroom, but also to provide a family feel to the school. They are known as “‘grandparents”.

In both Finland and New Brunswick, teachers and support staff are trusted! Neither country has an equivalent to OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills), and my reflection is that in both cases their education systems are the better for it. Finland used to have a central education inspectorate in charge of evaluating school performance, but this has been replaced by a National Evaluation Council. This council differs from an education inspectorate in that it serves to evaluate national policies rather than individual school performance. Schools are only formally evaluated periodically, with an exam administered to a sample of students in grades 6 and 9 across the country. Teachers are expected to use professional judgment and discretion, take collective responsibility for the education of their students and be accountable to their peers.

I have already talked about the autonomy of schools in Finland; the situation is somewhat different in New Brunswick in that School Districts, and in particular the Superintendent of the School District, have a number of responsibilities including the day-to-day operation of schools, the District budget, curriculum development, oversight of the District performance report and the placement of students.

In the classroom, however, teachers make the most important decisions at the local level on how to manage their classrooms and personalise the delivery of the curriculum for each student in their classroom.

Q: Are schools creating inclusive learning environments?

I think this is more the case in New Brunswick than it is in Finland. There is no doubt that in Finland pupils and students are encouraged to recognise their own way of learning, to learn with others and in different environments and to play an active role in their own learning, which interestingly includes some setting their own learning targets. In all the schools I visited teachers talked about the work they do to encourage pupils and students to reflect on and analyse what they are learning. Finnish schools place a lot of value on helping pupils and students to be problem solvers and to create space for intellectual curiosity, experiences and creativity.

At Westendinpuiston koulu, Espoo, the Headteacher, Marja Perkkiö talked to me about "really getting know our children as individuals" and the "focus on learning rather than testing" and how the school supports "the activity, enthusiasm, natural interest and motivation of every child at the school".

It is standard practice in Finland that schools teach in non-selective flexible groupings of pupils and students.

Real life Inclusion

Westendinpuiston koulu has 300 Year 1 – 6 pupils. Each learning session (class) lasts no more than 45 minutes with a 15 minute break outdoors. Non-academic sessions such as handicrafts and gym are usually an hour because the learning is less intensive.

Year 4 to 6 pupils are encouraged to act as "godmothers/fathers" to Year 1 & 2 pupils to foster a more caring attitude from pupils. Godmothers/fathers look out for any children that are isolated during lunch and breaks and take action to include them in play with their peers.

Parents of pupils and students are actively encouraged to get involved with the school and to meet staff with the idea that any issues can be identified and resolved early on.

In testing knowledge and skills, schools have the autonomy and flexibility of teacher-led evaluations of their pupils and students. Pupils and students themselves are also encouraged to learn as well as develop self-assessment skills. Certainly in all the schools I visited skills and knowledge were tested on coursework primarily with more focus on final assessments in their last year of basic education.

I talked to teachers about the assessment methods they use and these include written and verbal as well as individual and group assessments. Teachers consistently talked about the importance of giving feedback to pupils and students that focused on their successes and the progress of their learning.

However some Disabled pupils and students are being let down, in Finland, because there isn't sufficient incentive for schools to differentiate the curriculum to enable Disabled students, particularly those students with learning difficulties, to participate in it. Pirkko Mahlamäki, Secretary General, Vammaisfoorumi ry (Finnish Disability Forum led by Disabled people) told me that "students are being failed by schools because of an increase in the focus on academic results."

Tara with Pirkko

In New Brunswick thanks to Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiation of the curriculum and class activities is at the heart of the education system. The principle behind UDL starts with the learning needs of the majority of pupils and students being met by developing accessible learning programmes, services, practices, and learning environments. When this measure alone is insufficient to meet the needs of an individual student or groups of students, accommodations are required. What is important to highlight is that these accommodations are universal – therefore available to any/all students. (see Appendix No.2 List of Universal Accommodations).

Real life Inclusion

Park Street Elementary School has a classroom with a range of seating options including sit down individual and group desks, standing desks, floor mats, car seats, comfy seating and a couple of exercise bikes! The Principal of Park Street Elementary school, Rien Meesters explained that this is about providing pupils & students with choice and encourages them to make decisions. The static exercise bikes help those students to burn off excess energy to be in a better frame of mind for participating in learning. The school have also found that the bikes work well for students with labels of Autism or ADHD because it helps them focus their attention.

Real life Inclusion

Fredericton High school is one of the largest in New Brunswick with a pupil population of over 1900 students Grade 9 to 12. The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that includes a wide range of vocational courses as well as a variety of extracurricular clubs.

When I heard there was a Life Skills study pathway I was suspicious that this would be set up as a discrete course for Disabled students, usually students with learning difficulties, as these courses have become widespread in the UK despite evidence that they create merry-go-round limitations for the students who attend.

In Fredericton High, however, Life Skills courses are genuinely open to any students interested in the opportunity to learn essential skills for life, including cooking, health and hygiene, managing money, team working and parenting. I sat in on one of these classes and was impressed by the collaboration between students. Assessment of learning is practical and based on project (course) work.

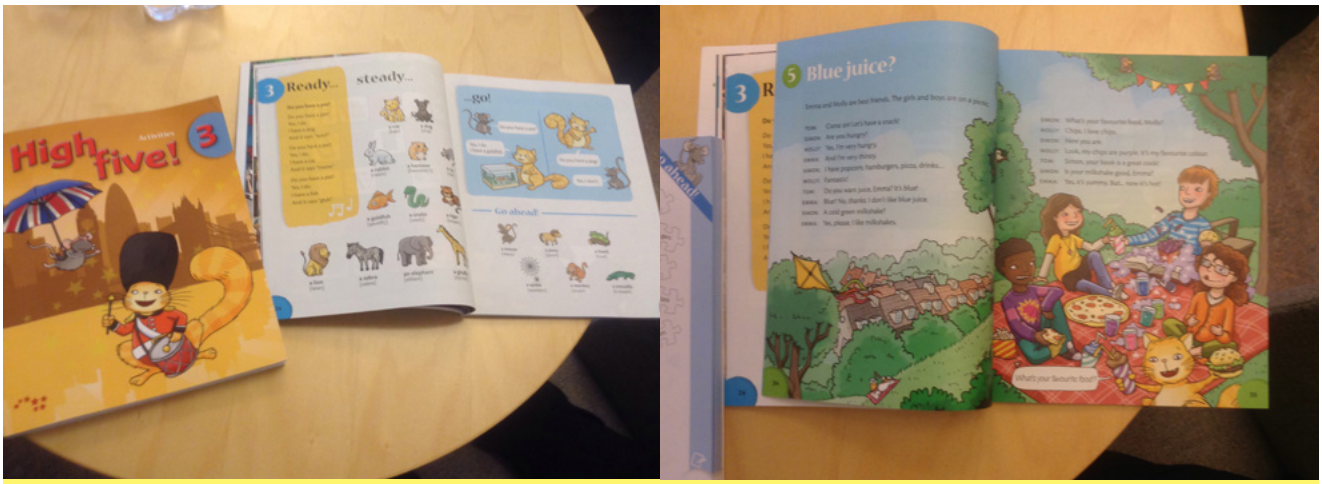
Nathan Langille, Vice Principal told me “we think it is important that all students get a well-rounded education that includes learning about being a good citizen”.

Real life Inclusion

Devon Middle school is situated on the outskirts of Fredericton, which is the capital of New Brunswick, and very close to a First Nation community reservation. Until recently First Nation pupils & students were disproportionately represented in the school's exclusion statistics. So the Principal, Patty Oxford and her team took the decision to actively recruit teachers from the First Nation community to lead language, culture and history lessons. Initially these classes attracted First Nation pupils & students only, but the school have noticed an increase in the numbers of non-First Nation pupils & students attending the classes. In fact part of my tour of the school was led by two young girls, one from the First Nation community and other not who had become friends as a result of being in the First Nation language, culture and history lessons. There is much more that needs to be done to foster equality between the two communities, but the work being done at Devon Middle school is really positive.

Q: Is there Inclusion focused support for teachers?

Teaching is a highly valued and respected profession in Finland. Those training to be teachers must achieve a Masters degree as a minimum to be able to teach at any level within the education system. Class instruction time is low with the school year only being 190 days per year. This enables teachers, who have addtional time, to participate in continuing professional development opportunities. There is one national teachers' union, the OAJ[29], which has secured enviable terms and conditions of employment for its members. Despite a wide range of resources available to schools and teachers, created by the NGO sector (KVL, FDUV etc) to assist with the development of inclusive education practice, there is considerable resistance to the inclusion of Disabled pupils and students. I think that resistance is due, in part, to the limited time and focus on inclusive teaching methods that trainee teachers receive whilst at university.

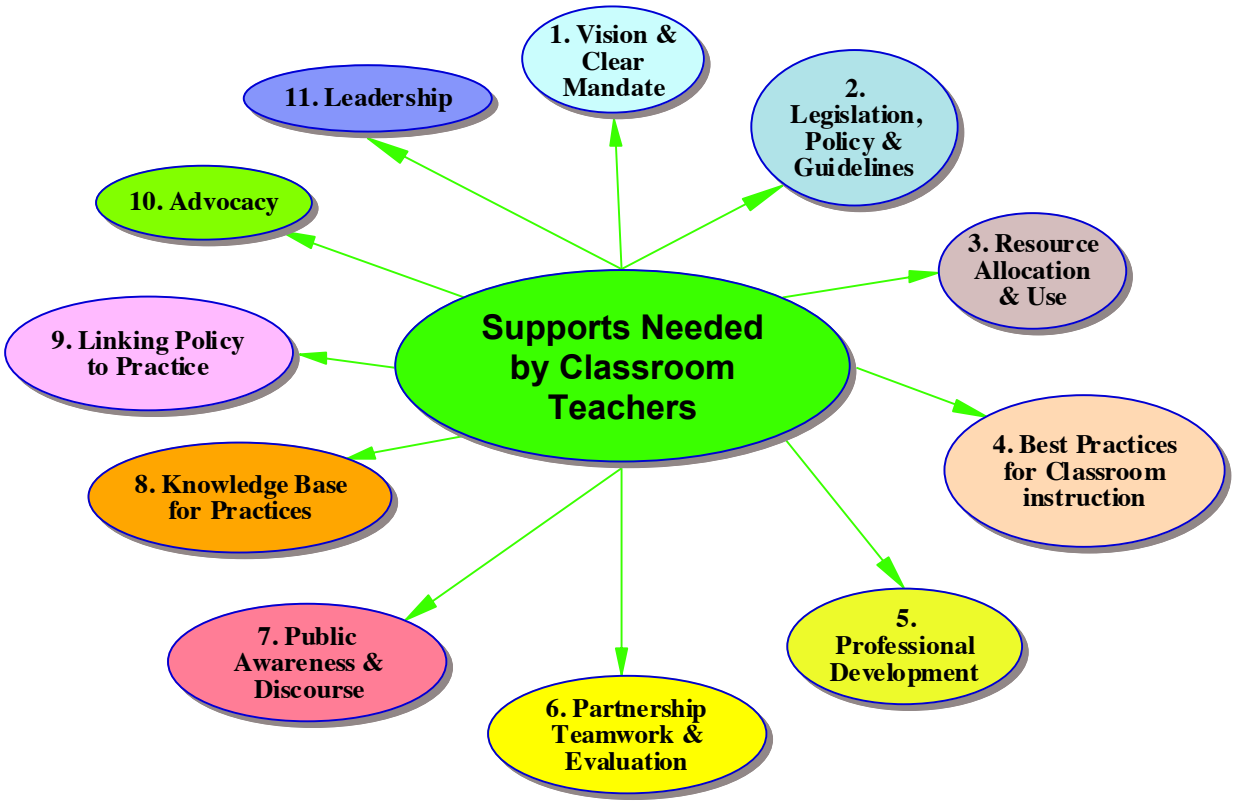


Differentiated teaching materials

Emotion bear figures to assist children to talk about emotion and behaviour

29. https://www.oaj.fi/en/oaj/

In New Brunswick, whilst there are limited modules on inclusive teaching methods for trainee teachers there is a well organised and resourced Education Support Team (EST) in every school, overseen by the School District Education Support Service; this provides a wide range of capacity building initiatives, training opportunities and bespoke interventions. The support map[30] below explains the range of support identified and available to teachers in New Bruswick:



Real life Inclusion

I met a 7th Grade student (14 years old) in Devon Middle school with labels around communication, autism and 'challenging' behaviour who was spending most of her time outside the classroom because she finds the noise and movement of others difficult and it was clear that she felt more comfortable learning if she was able to move around or stand. I was really impressed by how teachers and Resource staff (Resource staff are qualified teachers whose role it is to capacity build the staff team and provide additional learning support for pupils & students with Individual Learning Plans) were working together collaboratively to find ways for the student to learn on the move and develop strategies to enable the student to be in the classroom for short periods of time so she didn't become isolated from her peers.

30. Gordon Porter 2018

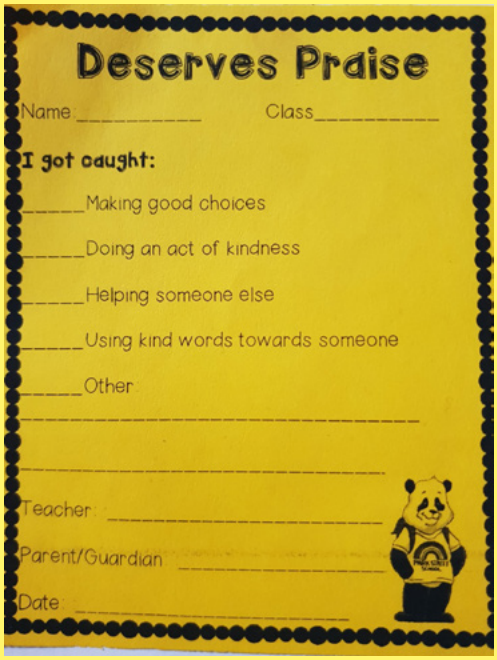
Real life Inclusion

Generally the education system response to children with 'behaviour that challenges' in Finland and New Brunswick, was very different and much more young person focused than the UK.

I was particularly impressed with New Brunswick schools who consistently respond to students with 'behaviour that challenges' by seeing the behaviour as communication of need/s that haven't been met.

School District Board Education Support Services and school based Resource teachers are available and have access to a range of materials and initiatives that bring together classroom teachers, support staff, parents and the young person to review existing support arrangements to ensure all adjustments are still relevant and appropriate. Then develop a plan that might involve additional small group learning, reduced course workload, and any additional strategies for managing stress and anxiety.

Park Street Elementary school focuses on encouraging students to be kind to each other. The school has a Kindness Card that students and staff can use to celebrate instances of kindness. Kindness and collaboration is encouraged in the classroom too. I sat in on a combined Grade 2 and 3 English class where there children were sharing their stories about what they had done the previous weekend. This involved the children writing down their stories in small groups and then coming together to share their stories with the class. Students were then encouraged to give positive and constructive feedback about what they liked about the story and one idea for how their fellow students could make the story even better.



Q: Are Disabled pupils and students getting inclusion focused support?

Effectively every pupil and student is considered to have additional learning needs (Finland) or as needing some accommodation (New Brunswick) and every and any pupil/student can receive support for learning at any point in their education.

Despite a commitment to rights and equality in education both the Finnish and New Brunswick education systems still seek to separate out and label those children who require specific and/or ongoing support in school as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) or ”exceptionalities” (New Brunswick). Accessing specific and ongoing support often requires an overly medicalised identification and assessment process. Access to support (as explained in Section 2 of this report) is often determined by the diagnosis of an impairment or health condition. For example in New Brunswick, the Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development now guarantees 20 hours of school support per week to a child with an Autism label. I think this guarantee was created with all best intentions and to ensure that children with Autism labels get the support they need at an early stage, but the result is a spike in the number of children being diagnosed as autistic because parents may well see this as a route to securing 20 hours of guaranteed support.

In both Finland and New Brunswick the identification and assessment of support requirements leads to individualised education or learning plans which usually focus on specific learning outcomes for the individual pupil/student. For those pupils and students identified as having significant learning or support requirements, their plan is likely to include some personalised learning activities which are different from the core curriculum.

There is always the danger, as is true of the UK, that the more a Disabled pupil/student is identified as needing individualised learning, the more likely they are to be away from the mainstream classroom or school. I think the New Brunswick description of a common learning environment is helpful here because it allows for the flexibility of learning to happen in a variety of places within a school, with the focus on supporting pupils and students to access additional learning opportunities to enhance their participation in ”inclusive learning” not as a replacement.

A focus on individual learning/education plans can also limit the attention that should be given to any practical / practice changes the school needs to make to be more inclusive. What this highlights is how education systems have traditionally taken a Medicalised/Individual Model of Disability approach to the

inclusion of Disabled pupils and students rather than embedding a Social Model of Disability approach that seeks to identify and remove the barriers to learning. I think New Brunswick is closer to taking a Social Model approach to the inclusion of Disabled pupils and students in terms of the role Education Support Teams play in supporting the 'whole school' to be inclusive.

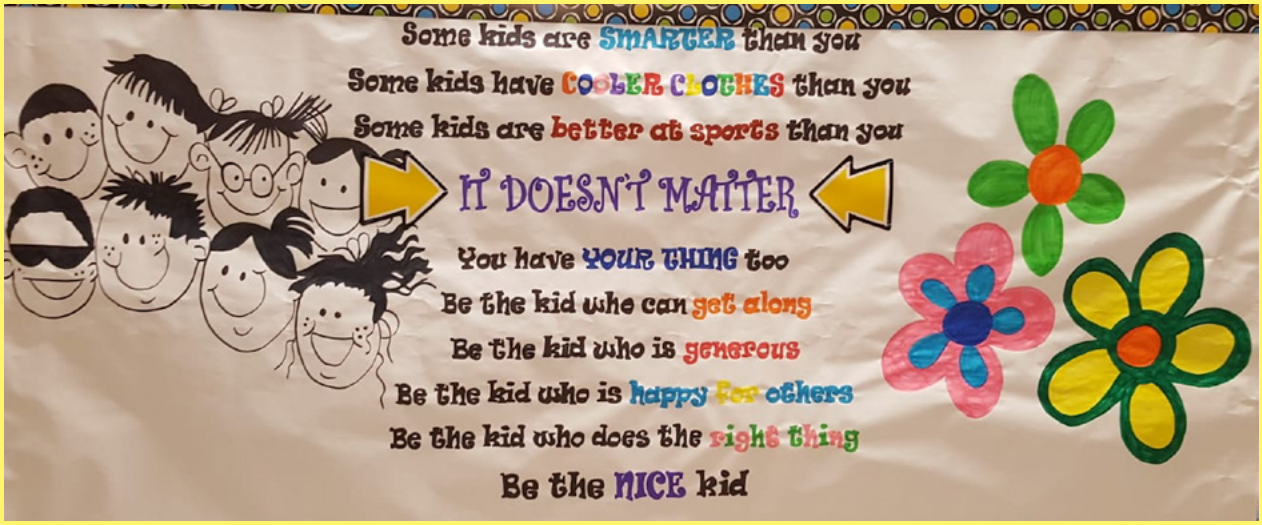
Real life Inclusion

All schools in New Brunswick have Guidance Counsellor whose role is to support the emotional wellbeing of the pupil/student population.

In New Maryland Elementary school, Heather Hallett, the Principal, has placed emotional wellbeing at the heart of the school. Mr Patterson is the Guidance Counsellor and prioritises friendship and relationship building between student. Mr Patterson talked to me about the 'importance of children feeling they belong helps them be in the best place emotionally to learn'.

I was shown around the school by two Grade 5 students who talked about how 'everyone in the school is valued the same'. The school recruits Grade 5 students to be playground buddies to help their fellow students feel included during recess and lunchtime breaks.

The school is built around a central hub that has many functions –small group and large group learning, quiet space for those that need a break from the classroom. This is where the three rabbits are kept, but my visit guides Rebecca and Riordan told me the rabbits move around the school depending on who might 'need a cuddle'.



As with the UK the language used to describe Disabled people generally in both Finland and New Brunswick still feels quite traditionally medical.

Interestingly in Finland there is a reluctance to describe children and young people as Disabled and yet they use the language of SEN.

Tara with Jukka

Jukka Kumpuvuori is a Disability Rights Lawyer who has taken on a number of education related legal cases and he is clear that for Disabled children in Finland, the power lies first and foremost with "psychological, medical or social welfare professionals" and secondly with the Principal of the school, in terms of identification and assessment of learning support requirements. I had a similar conversation with Pirkko Mahlamäki, Secretary General, Vammaisfoorumi ry (Finnish Disability Forum led by Disabled people) who talked to me about the problem of the labelling of Disabled people in Finland and the increasing difficulty of getting the support needed to be included in education.

> "The identification and assessment system in Finland is a real problem, like it is in many other countries, this is because the goal seems to be about reducing the number of people entitled to services. The disability discrimination law here is good on paper but there have been many cuts to education services, particularly vocational education so very difficult for Disabled students to be included."

In New Brunswick and despite special educational needs language being removed from the legal framework in 2013, SEN language is still used by most of the teachers I met, but other descriptions are also being used in an attempt, I was told, to move away from the medicalisation of language used to describe Disabled pupils and students. A number of people I met are now using the language of "person with exceptionalities" which I personally do not like because it is still being used to separate out a particular group of pupils and students. The language of 'students with exceptionalities' was also removed from the law but as with SEN continues to be used by many of the education professionals I met whilst in Canada.

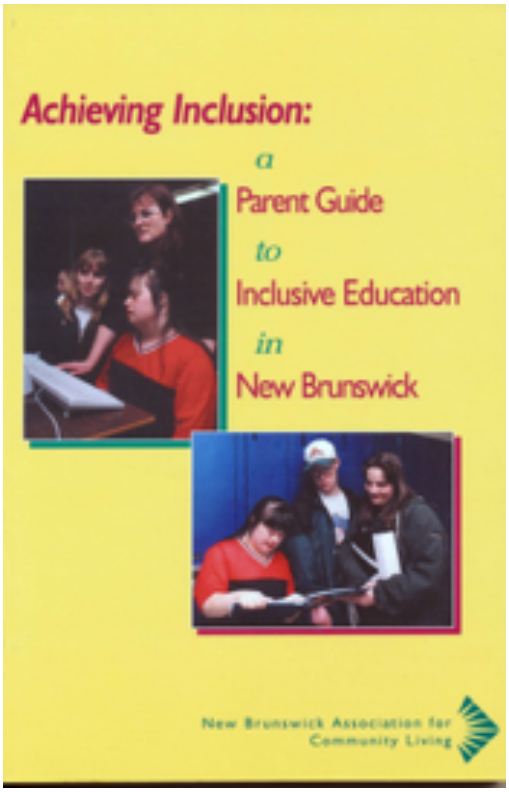
Q: Is there a demand by parents and families for inclusive education?

Parents and families are key stakeholders in the development of an inclusive education system, but unless they get the support they need to be an ally to their Disabled child, decisions that parents and families make are more often than not driven by the over medicalisation of their child and concerns, fuelled by professionals wedded to a traditional approach to disability, about how the child will cope in mainstream. This is particularly the case for Disabled children with an impairment/health condition they were either born with or acquired in early childhood. The arrival of a Disabled baby is still in many cases, met with a sense of disappointment or loss fuelled by the flock of multi-disciplinary healthcare professionals that gather round the family. In the UK and, I am sad to say, in Finland and New Brunswick the training and culture of healthcare professionals remains entrenched in a Medical Model of Disability approach that identifies the Disabled child as the problem to be fixed and interventions are often focused on treatments, therapies and equipment to normalise the child. Inevitably parents and families can be heavily influenced by such "experts" and so their early hope and aspiration for their child is diminished.

So when it comes to making key life decisions for a Disabled child, parents and families can be persuaded that some kind of special service is required. I certainly felt that in both Finland and New Brunswick "experts" in child development and health were the dominant voice in the design and delivery of community support for families with a Disabled child.

That said I was struck by how well organised and resourced parent-led groups are in both Finland and New Brunswick. This meant I got to meet lots of parents who were knowledgeable about their rights, but struggling to secure the right support for their family and their child, both generally and in education.

The real difference between Finland and New Brunswick was the aspiration parents and families had for the inclusion of their child in a mainstream school. In Finland many of the parents I met wanted their child in mainstream but were worried about whether the right support and funding would be in place, whether the teachers would be welcoming and/or whether their child would be better in a separate school. Parents told me how difficult it is to challenge schools that refuse to admit a Disabled child, when an Individual Education Plan is being ignored or when the support isn't being provided. There is a legal process, but it is time consuming, paper-based and many parents felt is biased in favour of medical or teaching staff opinion.



In New Brunswick, I spent time with the New Brunswick Association for Community Living which started out as a parent support group and is now a lead advocacy voice in support of inclusive education, working with the New Brunswick Government on policy and law as well as creating resources for schools to support inclusive practice and guides for parents. I met parents whose children were the pioneers of inclusion, being the first children to be transferred from special schools into the mainstream. These children are now all adults in their 40s and are living inclusive lives. Of course things are not perfect but the consistent message from parents was the real aspiration they have for their adult children and the belief in their adult child's right to be part of the world.

I also met parents who have Disabled children in school now who talked about the challenge of securing the right and timely support in school, also the need for additional funding, but it was genuinely moving to hear them talk so positively about their children and the welcome they expect the child to receive when starting school.

> "I see inclusion working every day my son goes to school, when I sit at a team meeting and plan for his learning, when I see his teacher and resource teacher discussing his needs, and when I speak with the principal, who values my son and assures us that everyone will continue to work to ensure he thrives. I see inclusion working when my son colours envelopes for birthday party invitations for his classmates, children he wouldn't know or be friends with had he been segregated from them." – Kayla, parent

The schools I visited talked to me about the work they do to encourage parents to be an integral part of their child's learning experience. One principal told me that "by working together parents and teachers experience mutual support and satisfaction showing positive changes in children, helping not just achievement but self-esteem and attendance."

So New Brunswick has done a lot to build expectation and confidence in parents and families of Disabled children and young people, which is what, I think, keeps the education system alive to challenge and improvement.

In England the support available to parents with Disabled children and young people is driven by eligibility criteria and availability of local resources which leads to an inconsistency across the country. Parents in England talk about support only being made available when the family hit crisis point. It is no wonder then that the numbers of Disabled children and young people being separated from the families and communities and placed in full time residential institutions.

The message I took from parents in both Finland and New Brunswick is how important it is that families get the support they need to nurture and encourage their Disabled child to be the best that they can be, to be happy, have friends and live a good life. For me the learning is just how much more the UK needs to learn about how parents and families with Disabled children are supported to seek out and expect inclusion from the start.

Inclusion – a question of money or leadership

I think every teacher, parent and service provider I spoke to in Finland and Canada said they needed more money to make inclusive education happen more effectively. The lack of funding is often used as a reason to exclude and segregate those pupils and students that are considered expensive or time consuming to support. In fact in February 2019 the national teachers' union of Finland organised a national protest about the cuts to education budgets[31].

I think, however, this is a red herring because it is often those same countries where funding is highlighted as a barrier which are busy funding an entirely separate segregated school system for Disabled pupils and students. ALLFIE has been advocating for many years, in the UK, the need to re-direct the vast and disproportionate funding used to segregate more than 100,000 Disabled pupils and students into building the capacity of mainstream schools to become inclusive. Interestingly Riia Palmqvist at the Finnish National Agency told me:

> "A political push is more important than more resources. Teachers need more support to be inclusive and thinking about how we spend our money. It is difficult to move forward on inclusion when we are funding two types of schools. We need to use the money to help mainstream schools to be inclusive."

31. https://areena.yle.fi/tv/oma#historia

There will always be a need for more funding and no education system will ever be perfect or reach a stage where all aspects of an education system are fully inclusive because pupils and students, as well as those working in education, are not homogenous. Disabled pupils experience impairment and health conditions differently and face a range of disabling barriers. Teaching and support staff respond differently to skills development.

What brings those differences and challenges together to remove disabling barriers is strong leadership that values the learning ability of ALL pupils and students equally and seeks innovation and creativity to remove the many barriers to learning.

According to Gordon Porter and David Towell, co-authors of the "Advancing Inclusive Education: Keys to Transformational change in public education systems" pamphlet[32] published in 2017:

> "Transformational change [in education] requires a significant investment in developing transformational leadership, not only among policy makers and professional staff, but also among parents and students. Such leadership involves:
>
> — Understanding the importance of change;
>
> — Working with others to develop a vision that inspires transformation and communicating this throughout the system;
>
> — Encouraging a wide variety of innovations to demonstrate the vision in practice;
>
> — Assisting innovators to build networks for sharing knowledge across schools and communities and celebrating successes; and
>
> — Gradually consolidating progress into laws, policies and the culture of schools;
>
> Such leadership needs to be found and nurtured.

32. https://inclusiveeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/07/Porter-and-Towell-Advancing-IE-2017-Online-FINAL.pdf

In New Brunswick the shift away from segregation to inclusion required visionaries such as Gordon Porter, Julie Stone, Ken Pike and others who came together in the 1980s to challenge the then approach to separating out Disabled children into segregated special schools and create the legal, policy and practical building blocks for an education system that is genuinely for all pupils and students whatever their learning style, ability or difference.

Tara with Ken Pike (NBACL)

Tara with Gordon Porter

Tara with Julie Stone and Sarah Wagner (NBACL)

Great leaders in education focus on discovering the unique ”spark” in each child which lights them up and the world around them. Good leaders ensure that all children have equal opportunity to achieve without discrimination, intolerance and other barriers to learning. Good leaders are not afraid to try new ways of doing things and learn from things that don’t go well. Mostly importantly and as I saw in New Brunswick schools particularly, good leaders take full responsibility for promoting and realising an inclusive ethos and fostering positive relationships at every level, no matter how challenging the situation.

> "What was different about New Brunswick was it [inclusive education] was a province wide undertaking. The district where I lived was a leader, but other districts weren't far behind – there was no alternative – it's the law. Separate systems cost more. In New Brunswick children go to the school that other kids in the family or kids across the street go to."
> – Gordon Porter

Q: Nothing about Disabled people Without Disabled people – slogan or reality?

As the Director of the Alliance for Inclusive Education I take it for granted that the voices and experiences of Disabled people are a key part of any campaigns focused on education related equality and inclusion issues. So I was surprised and more than a little disappointed about the dearth of Disabled people and our organisations leading similar campaigning work in Finland and New Brunswick.

In both countries there is a vibrant voluntary and community sector, but it was very hard to find any Disabled Person led Organisations (DPOs) involved or leading education focused campaigning in a similar way to ALLFIE. In fact the only DPOs I could find were NEADS (National Education Association for Disabled Students) and the Carleton Disability Awareness Centre, both based at Carleton University in Toronto. Both are doing some great advocacy work but only focused on Disabled students in higher education.

That's not to say there aren't DPOs in Finland and New Brunswick – they exist but their focus seems to be on Disabled adults and wider equality issues, particularly independent living. Inclusive education is a key pillar of Independent Living[33], but as with the UK, most DPOs focus on other aspects including housing, transport, self-directed support etc. Threshold which as previously mentioned is the national DPO of Finland and is the leading voice on human rights and equality for Disabled people and implementation of the UNCRPD, however on education issues they tend to work in collaboration with parent led organisations and service providers.

> "Threshold Association domestically and Abilis foundation in the field of international work have been the torchbearers for the true participation of disabled people in Finland. In the topic of genuine participation Finland still has

33. https://www.xbyxbromley.com/resourcebank/independentliving/#what-is-il

a lot of work to do since due to Finnish history disabled people themselves have not been active duty-bearers even in their own organisations.

This is due to long history of special education and a rather beneficial social welfare system that has led disabled people to be out of the workforce with very few exceptions until the 21st century. We are still coming to terms with inclusion and first disabled people - led campaigns for referendums (2019) and organisations with a quota for disability leadership (1973, 1998, 1999) have slowly emerged.

There is still a major gap in our official commitments and policies on the ground yet disabled people themselves have been observed by us to have achieved slightly more prominence only in the last few years as we are moving from charity based welfare mindset to one of equal participation. Unfortunately we suffer from low or non-existing punitive measures when disability legislation is not followed and this is why Finnish laws are not well implemented when compared to our respective neighbouring countries or US/Canada"

– Tuomas Tuure, Development Coordinator of Threshold Association and the Advocacy Officer of Abilis Foundation

Tara with Tuomas from Threshold and Paulina from Turku University

In Finland I met a number of Disabled people leading change in academia as well as service provision, but also I met Merja Heikkonen who, during my time in Helsinki, was the Ministerial Advisor and General Secretary of the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Merja is a Disabled person with real influence:

Tara with Merja

> "My job is to oversee the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I wrote the implementation action plan and I am responsible for ensuring that government departments do their job in making changes that fit with our commitments to the Convention. The Finnish government is also very committed to the voice of Disabled people here. Since ratification of the UN Convention there are now local and regional councils of Disabled people who can advise their municipalities about the changes they have to make to improve things for Disabled people."

Merja is now Director at Threshold.

Tara with Christyne and Brian from the Premier's Council on Disabilities

In New Brunswick I really struggled to find DPOs, Disabled people in leadership positions or Disability rights activists, which is interesting or strange perhaps given the ground-breaking work that has been done on inclusive education and community inclusion. The Premier's Council on Disabilities in Fredericton is a group led by Disabled people with direct links into the NB Government so is very influential, but I thought it was odd compared to the general vibrancy of the voluntary and community sector that Disabled people are not more visible or indeed central to the work being done in their name.

In Ontario I had an opportunity to meet Disabled leaders from the National Education Association for Disabled Students and the Carleton Disability

Tara with Frank, Brett and Sarah from NEADS & CDAC

So based on my learning from my time in both Finland and Canada there are a number of key findings that set out what critical concepts are necessary to transform an education system so it is truly inclusive of ALL students:

- The need for a legal framework that outlaws segregation and enables inclusion;
- Resourced and welcoming schools that have the flexibility to be inclusive;
- Schools and classrooms to become common learning environments focused on mixed ability learning where knowledge and skills are equally valued;
- All students get the support they need to participate in all aspects of learning and school life;
- Training and support for teachers and staff to build confidence, skills and leadership in inclusive teaching;
- Structures that encourage collaborative decision making and problem solving between schools, pupils, their families and communities.

SECTION 4:

Conclusion and recommendations for change in the UK

So where do we need to start or at the very least refresh our work? In the words of Gordon Porter we need to "normalise inclusion". To do this we need to describe our vision and the steps required to get us there. We need to shift the focus away from individualising Disabled pupils and students and focus on taking a whole school approach which seeks to construct community in our classrooms. We need to talk more about moving away from competition and elitism because neither fosters inclusion and equality. We need to acknowledge that inclusion isn't easy and we are unlikely to reach a point in any education system where we can sit back and say we've done it! Inclusion is a process of continued learning, change, challenge and evolution AND that's OK.

We need to provide the training and professional development climate that supports teachers to be teachers of all students. Teachers need the training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to use inclusive teaching methods and the confidence to welcome a diversity of pupils and students, whatever their learning difference and style, into their classrooms. We also need to support Head teachers to become transformative leaders for change.

Schools, colleges and universities need legal and regulatory framework that ensure they are accountable to their communities, but allow them the flexibility to be creative in developing a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the diversity of their pupils and student communities, grounded in principles of inclusion and equality.

We need to ensure that families have confidence that their local school will not only be welcoming of their child, but also that the school has the resource and knowledge to support the child to participate in learning. Lastly we need to find new ways to mobilise the voluntary and community sector to challenge their local education providers to become inclusive and to better reflect the diversity of their community.

For me the Finnish education system sets out what we know needs to change in terms of valuing ALL children whatever their learning ability or style and that equality and love must be at the heart of any education system.

New Brunswick was an affirmation of what ALLFIE has been saying for many years - that inclusive education requires the ending of segregation. New Brunswick is not only the example that proves this, but also the real time case-study that shows how inclusive education is not only possible for ALL pupils and students, but is also dynamic and sustainable.

SECTION 5:

Charter for Change

My recommendations focus on a Charter for Change because in my view the time for tweaking around the edges of what is a fundamentally broken education system in England is over. The current education system is based on the requirements of an industrial past where the job of schools was to create a workforce ready for large scale manufacturing and industry. The view at the time was that Disabled people didn't fit with that model and there was no value in providing us with an education so we were hidden away at home or institutionalised in large institutions away from society.

In the 21st century a very different education system is required, a system whose ideological framework is aligned with inclusivity and human rights and therefore supports and encourages creativity, flexibility and personal and collective resilience. 21st century pupils and students need the skills and knowledge to work collaboratively in diverse and inclusive workplaces, as well as participate in communities that are multi-cultural. An truly inclusive education system provides the environment that nurtures and values the skills and knowledge in ALL its citizens to participate in a 21st century society.

To achieve a truly inclusive education system that is aligned with Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there needs to be a fundamental shift in how education is understood, its purpose and how it practically supports teaching staff to be teachers of all children - and most importantly how it supports and facilitates the learning of all pupils and students. I hope this Charter for Change goes some way in setting out the requirements for that fundamental shift.

Inclusive Education Charter

Role of this charter:

This charter sets out the changes required to create a fully inclusive education system that welcomes ALL pupils and students irrelevant of learning style, ability, access requirement or background. This charter is timely – it reflects the spirit and aspiration of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and particularly Article 24: the Right to Inclusive Education. This charter aims to kick start a revolution in education that shifts the conversation away from singling out certain pupils and students for ”special” segregated services and instead identifies the building blocks of a truly inclusive education system that values ALL pupils and students equally.

- **Legal and regulatory frameworks to support the development of a fully inclusive education system. This means:**
  - The segregation and exclusion of ANY pupil or student is incompatible with a human rights approach
  - Inspection framework moves from scrutiny to evaluation and support of inclusive education practice
  - Appeals and accountability mechanisms support inclusion
  - UK law to be compatible with Article 24 of the UNCRPD
- **A whole school approach to inclusive education. This means:**
  - All teachers are teachers of all pupils and students
  - A right to a broad and balanced holistic and creative curriculum that is flexible and citizen-focused
  - Inclusion-focused Continuing Professional Development
  - Student-led assessments
  - Access to a national database of good inclusive education practice
  - Training resources and strategies for teachers that focus on behaviour as communication and relationship building

- **Build parental confidence and demand for inclusion. This means:**
  - Parents and families have access to good and timely information about the benefits of inclusion
  - Parents and families are supported to become allies to their young people
  - Community support for families is based on independent living principles and brings together separate budgets
  - Support for learning assessments takes a Social Model of Disability approach
  - Advocacy support available to challenge bad practice

- **Support and Funding for Advocacy organisations. This means:**
  - Strategic funding for Disabled People's Organisations to be the lead advocates for inclusion
  - UNCPRD focused empowerment programmes for ALL young people
  - Parent-led organisations encouraged to become allied to DPOs
  - Advocacy organisations seen as partners in the development of inclusive education practice

- **Resourcing inclusion. This means:**
  - A national network of Inclusion Leaders in education to share good practice
  - Incentivise collaboration between teachers, schools and communities
  - Disinvest from segregated education provision to provide additional capacity-building resources for mainstream
  - School funding formula incentivises inclusive education

Education Not Segregation!

Thank You!

I met lots of amazing people during my time in Finland and New Brunswick, Ottawa and Toronto, Ontario. Without exception everyone I met treated me with the utmost respect, was genuinely interested in my WCMT research and answered my many questions with patience and good grace. The list below, I hope, includes everyone that I met and wish to thank you for your time and wisdom:

FINLAND

- Monica Bjorkell-Ruhl, parent of Disabled child
- Melina Candelin, Head of Special Education, Granhultsskolan, Grankulla (Swedish-speaking mainstream school)
- Carina Fronden, Special Education Advisor, FDUV (Swedish-speaking NGO working with families of Disabled children and young people)
- Merja Heikkonen, Ministerial Advisor and General Secretary, Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Katri Helasoja, Psychologist and Counsellor in Student Welfare Services, SPESIA Vocational College
- Lisbeth Hemgård, Director of FDUV (Swedish speaking NGO working with families of Disabled children and young people)
- Jukka Kumpuvuori, Disability rights lawyer
- Marja Kaitaniemi, parent of a Disabled child
- Jari Kinnunen, Employment Counsellor, SPESIA Vocational College
- Professor Joel Kivirauma (Special Education), University of Turku
- Sari Kokko, Director of Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired (IIRIS)
- Pauliina Lampinen, Director of VAMLAS – Supporting Foundation for Children and Youth with Disabilities
- Professor Matti Laitinen (Education Studies) at Helsinki University
- Catarina Lindroos (Ina), Head of Special Education, Topeliusskolan in Helsinki

- Pirkko Mahlamäki, Secretary General, Vammaisfoorumi ry (Finnish Disability Forum led by Disabled people)
- Leenakristina Nummelin, parent of a Disabled young person
- Leea Paija, Manager of the Counselling and Outreach Services, Valteri special school, Hesinki
- Jaana Pakarinen, Director, Vates Foundation (NGO working on education and employment issues related to Disabled people)
- Riia Palmqvist, Counsellor of Education, General Education and Early Childhood Education and Care, Finnish National Agency for Education
- Marja Perkkiö, Headteacher, Westendinpuiston koulu, Espoo
- Paula Pietila, Disability Co-ordinator, University of Turku
- Merja Rukko, parent and Chairperson of the Lionmothers group
- Professor Antti Teittinen, Research Manager, KVL - Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NGO)
- Tuomas Tuure, Development Coordinator of Threshold Association and the Advocacy Officer of Abilis Foundation
- Amu Urhonen, Chairperson of Threshold Association (NGO led by Disabled people)
- Katja Valkama PhD, Principal lecturer, School of Wellbeing, Häme University of Applied Sciences, Hämeenlinna

CANADA

- Lynn Akmens, Employment Programme Lead, New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NGO and service provider), Fredericton
- Shawna Allen-VanderToorn, Vice Principal at Devon Middle School, Fredericton
- Christyne Allain, Executive Director, Premier's Council on Disabilities (led by Disabled people), Fredericton
- Brett Babcock, Programming Coordinator, Carleton Disability Awareness Centre, Carleton University, Ontario (advocacy group led by Disabled people)
- Dr. Sheila Bennett, Professor (EdD), Department of Educational Studies, Brock University, Ontario

— Catherine Blaney, Acting Superintendent of Schools, Anglophone West School District, Fredericton

— Kendra Broad, Subject Coordinator (K-12), Anglophone West School District, Fredericton

— Krista Carr, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Association for Community Living (NGO and service provider)

— Ginger Carson, Teacher at Devon Middle School, Fredericton

— Judy Cole, Communications Director, Anglophone West School District, Fredericton

— Patrick Daley, Itinerant Teacher for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, APSEA (province wide service provider)

— Karla Deweyert, Director of Education Support Services, Anglophone West School District, Fredericton

— Marilyn Dolmage, inclusion campaigner and parent, leader with Integration Action for Inclusion, Toronto

— Nicole Marshall, University of New Brunswick Children's Centre (pre school)

— Rebecca Graham, Transition Planner, Ability New Brunswick (NGO working with young Disabled people)

— Heather Hallett, Principal of New Maryland Elementary School

— Sherry Jonah, Manager of Inclusive Education, New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NGO and service provider), Fredericton

— Susannah Joyce, Education and Behaviour expert, Toronto

— Kimberley Korotkov, Director of Education Support Services, Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development

— Hon, Mike Lake Member of Parliament (also parent of a Disabled young person)

— Nathan Langille, Principal at Fredericton High School

— Diana Lutes, Early Childhood Team, Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development

— Marc-Alain Mallet, Director, New Brunswick Human Rights Commission

— Nicola Marshall, Early Learning Inclusion Facilitator, New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NGO and service provider), Fredericton

— Rien Meesters, Principal of Park Street Elementary School, Fredericton

— Julie Michaud, Learning Specialist (Education Lead) Provincial Autism Training: Autism Learning Partnership, Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development

— Sean Newlands, Principal of Nackawie Senior High School

— The Right Honourable Ratna Omidvar, Senator for Ontario

— Patty Oxford, Principal at Devon Middle school, Fredericton

— Irma and Jim Penner, parents of Yvonne, a Disabled person included in education in NB

— Ken Pike, Director of Social Policy, New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NGO and service provider), Fredericton

— Luke Reid, Disability and Education lawyer, ARCH Disability Law Centre, Toronto

— Merja Rukko, parent of a Disabled child

— Brian Saunders, Policy Advisor, Premier's Council on Disabilities (led by Disabled people)

— Wendy Scott, Sport and Recreation Officer, Ability New Brunswick

— Ann Smith, parent of Disabled person included in mainstream school in Ontario

— Frank Smith, National Coordinator, National educational Association of Disabled Students NEADS (NGO led by Disabled people based at Carleton University, Ontario)

— Jill Sparrow, Case worker with OPAL Family Services (also a parent of a Disabled young person)

— Julie Stone, Inclusionist, author, education professional and one of the architects of inclusive education in NB

— Tammy Strong, Diversity and Respect Coordinator, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

— Sarah Szumlanski, National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) (NGO led by Disabled people based at Carleton University, Ontario)

— Sarah Wagner, Executive Director of New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NGO and service provider), Fredericton

— Pam Whitty, University of New Brunswick Children's Centre (pre school)

— Kayla Wilcox, advocate and parent of three children, two of whom are Disabled

UK

I also want to say Thank you to a number of people at home who have given me their time and guidance in helping me shape my preparations for my visits to Finland and Canada, and my thinking as I drafted numerous versions of this report. So thank you to:

- ALLFIE staff and trustees
- Angharad Beckett, University of Leeds
- Andy Timlin, husband and ally
- Zara Todd
- David Towell, Centre for Inclusive Futures

And last but definitely not least I want to say a very **BIG Thank You** to all the children and young people, teaching and support staff I met in all the amazing schools I visited:

Finland

- Granhultsskolan, Grankulla
- Topeliusskolan, Helsinki
- Valteri special school, Hesinki
- Westendinpuiston koulu, Espoo

Canada

- Devon Middle School (6-8)
- Fredericton High School (9-12)
- New Maryland Elementary school (K-5)
- Park Street Elementary school (K-5)
- University of New Brunswick Children's Centre

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Research Questions

NATIONAL POLICY - General/legal and policy context:

- Is there a legal framework for inclusive education? If so how is the framework implemented?
- Does every child/young person have a right to be educated?
- How are Disabled children/young people identified/labelled? Is this the same system for education support/support for learning?
- Are there any exceptions/caveats to that legal right? If so what are those exceptions/caveats?
- What does educational success look like for Canadian/Finnish children?
- What is the vision for education in Canada/Finland? How are disabled children/young people represented in that vision?
- How are inclusive education / teaching methods incorporated into the teacher training curriculum / CPD?
- In terms of inclusive education, is there a difference between the rural and urban experience?

Education authority (district) decision making:

- Who decides which children go to special school? And how are those decisions made? Can these decisions be challenged? If so by who and how does this work?
- What justifications do schools/local government use to not include disabled children/young people?
- Which groups of Disabled children/young people are more likely to be in special school?

Monitoring development/effectiveness of inclusive education:

- How are schools accountable to local communities/government/parents? If so how does this work?
- How are schools regulated?
- Do schools have performance targets? If so what are the measures based on?
- Is there any research about inclusive education in Finnish/NB schools?
- What capacity building initiatives exist to promote IE (if any) and how do these work?

Schools/education providers:

- Are regular and special schools encouraged to work together? If so how does this work and on what basis – dual placements / training and capacity building / sharing resources and equipment?
- Average class size?
- Do schools have to follow a nationally set curriculum and what degree of autonomy/flexibility do teachers have to change/adapt it?
- How is support provided to Disabled children/young people in school? Is there an assessment process? How does the assessment process work? Who has the decision making power?
- How does school funding work – how is it calculated?
- Are there any disability equality/awareness raising programmes for schools/communities? If so who is responsible for such programmes?
- What programmes do schools have in place to support the building of relationships/friendships?
- What do parents/teachers/government officials think are the barriers to / facilitators of inclusive education?

— What could the UK learn from the Finnish/NB approach to education?

Testing and accreditation

— How is learning/knowledge tested in Finland/NB?

— Is there flexibility in the testing/accreditation process? If so who is eligible and how does it work? What does flexibility look like?

Parents/families

— What is the general response to families when a Disabled baby is born – supportive/stigmatising?

— What early support is available to families? And at different life stages?

— What role do parents play in deciding on a school placement for their child? Is this different for parents with Disabled children?

— Are there any disability equality/awareness raising programmes for parents/communities? If so who is responsible for such programmes?

— What do parents/teachers/government officials think are the barriers to/facilitators of inclusive education?

— What could the UK learn from the Finnish/NB approach to education?

DPO specific questions:

— What is the general situation for Disabled people and their rights in Finland/NB?

— How is disability understood in Finland/NB – medical or social?

— How do Disabled people have their voices heard?

— Is NB/Finland committed to the principle of Nothing About Us Without Us – what is the evidence?

— What is the relationship between the ”for” and ”of” organisations?

— What is the general experience of Disabled young people leaving education, in terms of employment, independent living, and life chances, compared to their non-disabled peers?

— Do Disabled people and their organisations do disability equality training with parents of Disabled children and/or with schools to improve take-up for inclusive education?

— How well is Finland/NB doing in implementing the UNCRPD, particularly Articles 7 and 24?

— What needs to change/be improved for Disabled people?

— What do you think the UK could learn from the Finland/NB approach to Disability?

Appendix 2: New Brunswick List of Universal Accommodations for Students

Manipulatives	Provide tactile / kinaesthetic activities
Dark lined paper	Adjusted expectations for length of assignments
Raised line paper	Written directions read to student
Spell checker	Test outline & preview provided
Large print materials	In-school study programme
Calculator	Extra time for project completion
Classroom FM system	Prioritise homework assignment
Seating arrangements	Reduced number of assigned questions
Near rather than far point copying	Alternate format to written assignments
Photocopied notes	Study broken into several short slots
Key words & phrases only	Quiet, individual or same group setting
PC for note taking	Adjusted test format in lieu of essay
Mind mapping support	Provisional assessment accommodations
Recorded verbal notes	Access to PC/laptop & assistive IT
Point form notes	Practice test provided or example given on test
Copy of teacher's notes	Blank visual organiser with test
Outline provided for all projects	Extra time (usually time and a half or double)
Extra set of text at home	Word choices provided for fill-in-the-blank questions
Mnemonics (memory prompts)	Teacher selects key questions
Strategy cards (step by step direction)	Portfolio of work as evidence of learning/knowledge
Emphasise visual presentations	
Monitor attention(signal systems)	
Frequent activity breaks	
Division of long silence into parts	
Reduced reading level materials	
Simplified directions	