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All Young People of Scotland Will Flourish Under Curriculum for Excellence: Mainstream Primary Teacher Perception of Additional Support Need Resources in Curriculum for Excellence

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**All Young People of Scotland Will Flourish Under Curriculum for Excellence:
Mainstream Primary Teacher Perception of Additional Support Need Resources
in Curriculum for Excellence**

Author Acknowledgement

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1. INTRODUCTION

An increase in the number of pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) in Scottish mainstream schools brings with it a wide variation of learners' educational needs and corresponding support. Despite this, there is anecdotal evidence sufficient support is not being supplied to effectively to meet these needs.

Given repeated policy statements by the Scottish Executive (2004) and Scottish Government (2009; 2016) that Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) will “enable all of the young people of Scotland to flourish as individuals”, one may call into question whether CfE is indeed a curriculum that can facilitate such promise. The purpose of this research is to investigate the aforementioned perceived problems, with a particular focus on equitable provision for ASN pupils. The research project explores mainstream primary teachers' opinion regarding curriculum, resources and training. Participants comprise of early-career and time-served, more experienced teachers. The research employs mixed-method quantitative and qualitative data collection consisting of online questionnaires and follow-up focus group methodology.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

“Inclusion is not a matter of charity but one of entitlement and basic justice” (Nussbaum, 2009: 340).

Since the document “A Curriculum for Excellence” (2004), the introduction of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and a move to integrate a greater percentage of learners within mainstream education, the concept of inclusive practice has featured largely in policy rhetoric and the general debate on the merits of the Scottish Education system. With Additional Support Needs (ASN) in classes, it is now common for teachers to deliver multi-level learning; lessons must be effectively differentiated to meet a wide range of pupil requirements. This research aims to find mainstream primary teachers opinions, relating to the resources and support currently provided, to successfully educate all pupils within CfE.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) and the Education (National Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 promote meeting pupil's individual needs, with and without ASN, together within mainstream schools. Therefore, the success of inclusion is important to the success of such Acts. ASN

pupils are some of the most vulnerable in our education system, therefore it is imperative pupils and teachers feel suitably supported, with effective resources, to allow all pupils to access the curriculum and reach their full potential. It is also important teacher opinions towards such a crucial part of modern education in Scotland are heard.

Priestley et al. (2014: 198) suggest that as a concept, the overall of CfE may seem positive, and that, while CfE was initially welcomed by teachers, views on its implementation are less positive (2014: 199): in other words, teachers lack of confidence to have it implemented successfully. A report focussing on ASN resources (Priestley and Rabiee, 2002: 379) found many teachers feel sufficient resources, time for planning, training, support and funding would improve the curriculum.

HISTORY OF ASN IN MAINSTREAM – POLICY REQUIREMENTS

In the years following the introduction of The Scotland Act (1980), recommendation for ASN pupils to be educated in mainstream education appeared to increase. UNESCO (1994: 6) found “an emerging consensus that children and youth with Special Educational Needs (SEN) should be included in the educational arrangements made for the majority of children”. This has evolved to the current position in Scotland of presumed mainstreaming, where all pupils are placed in mainstream schools unless deemed impossible to educate within that environment. Section 15 of The Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act (2000) titled “Requirement that education be provided in mainstream schools” (Scottish Executive, 2000: 7) can be viewed as very forthcoming in its positive endorsement of educating all pupils within mainstream environments. Point 3 of this act states the only reasons a pupil would not be educated in a mainstream school would be unsuitable ability, insufficient provision or excessive expenditure (Scottish Executive, 2000: 7). Furthermore, acts such as Education (National Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 were later introduced to promote suitable educational arrangements for pupils requiring ASN (Scottish Executive, 2004: 1). Section 4 (1) of the Act states every authority must have sufficient resources available to accommodate the individual needs of pupils (Scottish Executive, 2004: 2), with Section 5 of the act suggesting all education authorities must consider additional support needs when organising school provisions (Scottish Executive, 2004: 3). Furthermore, the paper “Supporting Children’s Learning Code of Practice” was created in conjunction with the 2004 and 2009 (revised) acts of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act. This aims to improve working relations between agencies to better meet pupil needs (Scottish Government, 2010: 28) emphasising requirements to

treat pupils as “individuals and to tailor support to their individual needs” (Scottish Government, 2010: 26).

While since 1980 policy appears to suggest a change in mind-set and emphasis on the education of all, does the current implementation of such policies deliver improved attainment and experiences for all pupils? In the following sections this will be further considered.

INCREASE IN NUMBERS

In recent years’ presumption of mainstreaming continued with the numbers of ASN pupils in mainstream schools steadily increasing. Scottish Government figures (2016) suggest 170,329 pupils have additional support needs, which equates to 24.9% of all pupils in Scotland, and note ASN pupil numbers have increased in the past 5 years as numbers in 2010 were given as 98,523. Moreover, research finds parents were encouraged to have children identified as requiring additional support in 2006 under the slogan “Just Ask”, without any increased funds given towards their education (Riddell and Weedon, 2014). Though one might speculate whether this is a statistical ‘norm’, a lack of previous formal diagnoses coupled with The Disability Discrimination Act of 2005 may explain a sudden rise in pupils with ASN. With increasing numbers of ASN pupils in mainstream education, one could argue increased support and resources are essential if all pupils are to flourish.

The Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 defines pupils with Additional Support Needs as “likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support to benefit from school education provided” (Scottish Executive, 2004: 1). This statement suggests the importance of sufficient support for some pupils and, if not supplied, may mean some pupils are subjected to a negative school experience. According to Riddell and Weedon (2014) ASN pupils merit additional resources to enable them to benefit from education. The view of UNESCO (1994: 12) is “Within inclusive schools, children with SEN should receive whatever extra support they may require to ensure their effective education”, while teachers should “have the right resources and support to hand to ensure each child gets the recognition and help they need to thrive at school” (Mindroom, 2016: 47). A report by Jackson (2006: 68) finds all teacher participants “were concerned that certain arrangements had to be put in place before integration could be successfully carried out. The Scottish Executive (2006: 18) expand on these points, focussing on pupil’s individual needs and support:

One view is that inclusion of many children and young people with ASN cannot work without major improvements in staffing

and resourcing. This view is based on the argument that these children and young people often require amounts of one-to-one teacher or adult support which are impossible in mainstream classrooms.

TRAINING

In order that teachers become better educators of ASN pupils they may require further training (The Warnock Committee, 1978: 234) and be “very experienced and effective classroom teachers” (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, 2003: 71). Training may need to be extensive as it is currently speculated there is a large variation of pupil needs which all schools must support (Doran, 2012: 9). Despite this, Florian and Rouse (2009: 596) observe, “there are few nationally approved higher qualifications for working with children who have additional support needs” while Rouse (2008: 7) discovers “with the exception of teachers of the blind and the deaf, there are no nationally mandated qualifications for teachers of pupils with additional support needs”.

A study by Priestley and Rabiee (2002: 72) suggests teachers found ASN training to be of the utmost importance. However, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) (2003: 72) find inadequate training of ASN resulted in a high frequency of complaints from teachers. All more Doran (2012: 19) states The Scottish Government have been supporting National guidelines relating to ASN teaching, which could possibly remove much of the confusion relating to protocol. Although this may appear a positive advancement, recent reports suggest student teachers have concerns regarding a “lack of time spent teaching them about dealing with pupils with additional support needs” and limited “focus on basic skills” (Denholm, 2017). With increasing focus on ASN teaching from policy, it may be somewhat disconcerting to learn that some student teachers believe insufficient time is devoted to its pedagogies.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING ASSISTANTS

Current provision includes Support for Learning Assistants (SLAs) who provide a service of supporting groups of pupils or individuals, allowing teachers' additional teaching time with others. It is understood appropriately trained (Pirrie et al., 2005: 37) and sufficient numbers of support staff aid the development of pupils with complex needs; (Doran, 2012: 21). Priestley and Rabiee (2002) suggest this should be put in place before pupils start attending school (2002: 384). Despite this and the

reported increase of ASN pupils in mainstream schools, a joint statement by fourteen of Scotland's Labour councillors stated "there are fewer teachers, classroom assistants and support staff in our schools than there were in 2007" (Whitaker, 2016), while an article in The Scotsman newspaper (MacNab, 2015) reports the axing of "hundreds of classroom assistants... from Scotland's schools". One may consider at a time when ASN pupils in mainstream schools are increasing; classroom assistant numbers should be increasing rather than decreasing. A recent Inquiry by the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee (2017), documenting teaching of ASN in Scottish Schools finds, due to a lack of resources, a number of parents and teachers believe inclusive education to be unfeasible (2017: 11). It is also implied numerous pupils feel less included in mainstream schools as the current "policy to include is having the opposite effect in some circumstances due to a lack of resources" (Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee, 2017: 1). If additional resources are essential to the success of inclusive education, a large investment to facilitate this may be required.

INVESTMENT

Nussbaum (2009: 343) states including ASN pupils in mainstream education "requires a lot of affirmative measures and extra expense". Despite this, reports have indicated a decrease in local council budgets causing some to express concern; "council chiefs warned that the spending plans risk "undermining" efforts to close the attainment gap in schools and may harm the life chances of young Scots" (Whitaker, 2016). Research suggests teachers have concerns regarding investment and query "how transformational change could be achieved in an age of austerity" (Priestley and Minty, 2012: 5). This is supported by Allan (2010: 8) who suggests: "fragmentation of provision threaten to undermine inclusion" (sic). It may be fair to speculate teachers understand, as a policy, CfE has the potential to meet all pupils' needs, but support may not be available for its successful implementation.

However, The Scottish Government (2016) argue a £579 million expenditure on ASN provision by Education Authorities should be available, while Wilkins (2017: 21) found over 2,300 schools are to receive extra funding as part of an initiative called the Scottish Attainment Challenge. One wonders whether this investment will improve pupil learning or do little to resolve the previous mentioned concerns regarding decreasing staff numbers and resources. Peters (2007) speculates viewing education as an expense and not an investment can have serious ramifications for Education For All (EFA):

If future policy discourse does not remove its caveats and special conditions when it comes to the education of children and youth with disabilities, progress toward EFA and inclusive education for the majority of individuals with disabilities may continue to be elusive (2007: 107).

If it is to be successful, the drive for an inclusive education system may need to promote all pupils as an investment and provide all with equal learning opportunities. Overall, judging from current research, one may speculate a degree of uncertainty: as to whether CfE can, indeed, enable flourishing for all, or if, ultimately, its success will be impeded by its own implementation gaps.

Overall summary of reading

Some teachers believe inclusive education can provide positives for all pupils (Priestley et al., 2014: 198) but implementation appears to be lacking the support and funding it requires. A reported lack of training for teachers can be seen as a concern as teacher support has been cited as the most common form of help ASN pupils receive (Bradshaw et al. 2012). Figures from the Scottish Government (2016) show nearly a quarter of all pupils have ASN, therefore one could argue additional support is now essential for all pupils to reach their potential. Despite the increase in ASN numbers, research suggests decreasing numbers of teachers, classroom assistants and support staff (Whitaker, 2016) and no comprehensive teaching qualification for teaching ASN pupils (Rouse, 2008: 7). This may suggest that without appropriate provision, in terms of increased staffing numbers, training and resources, pupils will not be supplied with the support their individual needs require. Without such support pupils will not access the curriculum on an equal level, therefore it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine how all pupils will flourish despite the current emphasis on curriculum policy.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a mixed method approach. Quantitative research is conducted through the distribution of questionnaires, disseminated to five different primary schools within one Scottish council via the online platform SurveyMonkey. Questionnaires query teacher views on knowledge and confidence to implement CfE policy as well as suitability of resources and training. Questionnaire responses are used to steer questions for a focus group concentrating on four sections:

Curriculum for Excellence, Support Staff and Physical Resources, Training, and Curriculum Suitability. The questionnaire comprises of 10 main areas of focus, some containing sub questions with most questions requiring participants to answer using a 1 – 6 Likert scale (6 representing strongly agree and 1 representing strongly disagree). A focus group activity was later conducted in order to further explore initial participant responses as per questionnaires. The researcher conducted this interaction in a semi-structured format to allow for further questioning of the participants, based on previous discussion. The researcher recorded the discussion to allow for additional questions to be asked based on responses while also documenting styles of speech and reactions. All participants provided permission to be recorded. The researcher informed all participants of research that information would remain confidential and all were free to withdraw participation and information at any time. Permission from both Glasgow University and the local council ethics committees was granted before research began.

4. ANALYSIS and DISCUSSION

Background of research methods and findings

While the original expectation was for a sizeable number of around 30 - 40 returned questionnaires, only 15 were returned which fell short of original expectations. Original plans for collecting qualitative data included conducting two focus groups of 6 participants each. Ultimately, out of 5 schools invited, only one school agreed to participate in focus group interaction, with 4 participants volunteering to take part from the accepting school. Once again participation fell short of original expectations.

Of those returned, 26.67% of participants have 0-4 years teaching experience, 26.67% have 5 - 9 years teaching experience, 13.33% have 10 - 14 years teaching experience, 20% have 15 - 19 years teaching experience and 13.33% have 20+ years teaching experience. Respondents with 5 – 9 years' experience have the most ASN pupils in class with an average of 5 pupils. Respondents with 15 – 19 years' experience have the least number of ASN pupils in class with an average of 1.33 pupils.

The focus group consists of 4 teachers with differing years teaching experience. Participant 1 has 15 – 19 years teaching experience, Participant 2 has 20+ years teaching experience, Participant 3 has 5 – 9 years teaching experience and Participant 4 has 10 – 14 years teaching experience. Questions are formulated

based on previously received quantitative data and reading, as the goal of qualitative data collection is to delve deeper into the reasons behind questionnaire responses. Focus group interaction main points of discussion are: Curriculum Implementation, Support Staff and Physical Resources, Training, and Effectiveness of Curriculum. Questioning in both quantitative and qualitative forms are driven by a number of key findings from policy documents and academic literature on inclusive education. The following speaks to the broad headings within both questionnaire and focus group activity.

Research Findings

What is your understanding of implementing the policy of Curriculum for Excellence and how do you reach the goals set out by the curriculum? Is this clear to you?

Data gathered from questionnaires suggests teachers do not feel knowledge of curriculum policy aids ability to successfully teach all pupils, with the average response delivering a low opinion of 2.73/6. All focus group participants suggest the goals of CfE to be “woolly”, “not particularly clear” and large numbers of policies being “cyclical” and changeable as “the goals are forever shifted”. Participant 1 (15 – 19 years’ experience) suggests cooperative learning is now being discouraged when it was previously a highly recommended form of practice, this prompted Participant 2 (20+ years’ experience) to claim “everything is just a flavour of the month”. When asked if participants feel training sessions on correctly implementing CfE would be beneficial, Participant 2 responds “It seems like the horse has bolted for that doesn’t it?” All participants agree individual perceptions of the curriculum are operating and have been for a long period of time. These responses are of contrast to Priestley et al. (2014: 207) who states policy must be “framed clearly to facilitate practitioners’ understandings of its key principles and purposes, and the methods by which it might be enacted”. These responses bare more similarities to Allan (2008: 3) who found teachers believed they are working “without any clear steer from policy and legislation”.

Focus group interaction shows participants feel policy has introduced more non-teaching responsibilities, citing initiatives such as tooth brushing, duties relating to The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and Free Meal Entitlement (FME). All participants agree the role of the teacher and the parent is becoming increasingly blurred. The whole participant group also consider, while additional tasks and responsibilities are increasing, class contact hours and pay

remain the same, resulting in increased pressure: *“The more political agenda in education, the more this will get flagged up and the more people will leave because the pressures are ridiculous”* (Participant 1).

Participants indicate a perceived hypocrisy within the policy of differentiation. Participant 1 suggests all teachers of pupils with ASN are *“directed to the autism toolkit”* but argues it is not suitable for all ASN pupils. Participant 3 (5 – 9 years’ experience) believes this highlights insincerity towards differentiation. Participants suggest teachers are expected to differentiate but when concerns are raised to specialists, all pupils are directed to the autism toolkit, *“So you’re not treating them as an individual”*. These statements are of contrast to The Scottish Government (2016: 26) who suggest pupils should receive *“tailored”* support for their needs.

**What are your thoughts on the availability of resources and support staff?
What would you like to see done to improve this?**

Much like the response to policy implementation, questionnaire responses suggest teachers are generally displeased by the lack of availability of support staff and physical resources. A low average score of 2.6/6 feel pupils in class receive sufficient assistance. A low average score of 2.13/6 feel adequate support is given in classrooms. A low average score of 2.2/6 think they, as teachers, are supplied with sufficient resources to teach ASN pupils. A low average score of 2.53/6 believe pupils in class are currently having their needs met. A moderate average score of 4.8/6 consider pupils in class to require further additional support, and that current provision is inadequate. A moderate average score of 4.73/6 accept a large amount of time has been focussed on individual pupils with ASN to the detriment of others and a moderate average score of 4.93/6 find at some point a pupil with ASN has affected the work of other pupils. Finally, a high average score of 5.33/6 think an additional member of staff can help in these situations. When asked what could improve the support ASN pupils receive, most questionnaire responses suggest an increase in SLAs, while many also desire additional time with specialists.

Focus group interaction and discussion suggests participants feel SLA support is insufficient and an SLA should be available in every class. When asked about support staff provision, Participant 2 alludes to a *“sliding scale, more inclusion and less support. Literally like that... [using hand movement, one up and one down]... SLAs are disappearing and not being replaced”*. This statement resonates with MacNab (2015) who suggested large numbers of SLAs have been cut from schools.

Discussing the availability of tangible resources, all participants reveal they frequently make resources such as worksheets, games and activities, due to a lack of supplies in school. Participant 4 (10 – 14 years' experience) states teachers are making more resources, with fewer supplies and less time as “*every local authority's budget has been slashed*”. When asked by the researcher if participants are expected to use their own money to create resources and deliver the curriculum, all participants strongly agree and add that, there was an expectation to undertake this in personal time:

“There's not enough money to do this...yet we're expected to be able to do it...somehow. Without training, without resources, without time” (Participant 3).

These comments differ from The Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 which recommends local authorities must provide sufficient provision for pupil's individual needs (The Scottish Executive, 2004: 2). Findings also contrast the suggestions of Mindroom (2016: 47) who state in order for pupils to succeed in school, teachers must have effective resources and support.

What do you think could be done to improve training? In your opinion what should teachers be trained in and how do you feel training should be conducted?

Participant questionnaire responses indicate the majority of participants have received additional training for teaching ASN pupils (73.33%). However, responses show teachers are not overly impressed by its effectiveness. Of teachers who received ASN training, the average questionnaire score in response to, who consider this prepares them for any challenge pupils may deliver, is a low 2.42/6. When participants were asked if training is applicable to the majority of ASN pupils experienced in their career, the average score is a low 2.82/6. When asked if training is applicable to the range of needs experienced throughout their career, the average response is a low score of 2.42/6. When asked what can aid pupil learning and development going forward, many participants suggest more effective ASN training.

Questions regarding the standard of training teachers receive invoked a strong vocal response from focus group participants:

“I wouldn't even say the training is average, I would say it's below average. I'm not talking about the quality, I just meant in general, what's offered” (Participant 2).

Managing a large variation of pupil needs proves concerning for participants. The general consensus is that requirement for additional support has risen to such a level that meeting pupil needs is becoming increasingly complex. Participants feel training is inadequate to support such varying needs, as Participant 4 considers professional teacher's knowledge of ASN is "*limited*". This is contrary to the suggestion by Doran (2012: 9) that training should be extensive, as there are large variations of needs schools must support when teaching ASN pupils. This also contrasts research by Pirrie et al. (2005: 37) who states local authorities must consider "appropriately qualified staff and sufficient training" essential to the success inclusive education.

Participant 4 feels teacher education institutions should increase ASN inputs, suggesting teacher training did not enhance knowledge of ASN: "*at no point at university was I ever sat down and trained in autism or ADHD*". In light of this, all participants reflect that student teachers should be widely trained in ASN techniques before entering the teaching profession as inevitably, a range of individual needs will be apparent throughout teaching life. This bares similarity to research by Doran (2012: 19) who found The Scottish Government is supporting National guidelines relating to the teaching of ASN pupils.

Overall questionnaire responses were mixed regarding CfE and inclusion's ability to educate all successfully. Why would you think this to be the case and what do you believe could be done to improve teacher's confidence in inclusion? Is the whole curriculum needing changed or tweaks?

Questionnaire responses show an overall negative opinion towards current inclusion in mainstream schools. A low average score of 2.8/6 have a positive view towards current inclusion in mainstream education. When asked, if participants agree with the belief that teacher expectation is too high considering the resources teachers and pupils have at their disposal; questionnaire responses deliver a high average score of 5.57/6.

This is echoed by focus group participants when appearing disillusioned with Scottish education in its current form. Participant 1 feels the introduction of inclusive education was rushed:

"Inclusion was pushed in from the side-lines without any training for teachers and it was accepted teachers were just expected to know about all of these different pupils under our care".

Participant 3 expands, “*You’re spinning plates basically and they’re handing you more plates*”. All participants feel against “*inclusion for inclusions sake*” as support to meet all pupils’ needs is already insufficient. Participants 1 and 4 ponder if parents of ASN pupils could see how teachers struggle to accommodate some pupils, it would be clear pupil’s needs would be better met in an environment where the teacher can dedicate more time to individuals. Participant’s voices begin to display an apparent air of despondency; however, all seem exercised:

“*The morale of teachers is dropping all the time*” (Participant 3),

“*I think an all-time low*” (Participant 4).

This interaction between Participants 3 and 4 highlight teacher’s lack of enthusiasm for the current climate of Scottish education. Responses show similarities with research by Jackson (2006, 68) that teachers feel effective planning and resources must be in place before introducing pupils with varying support needs to mainstream schools. Interaction also bares similarities with The Scottish Parliament’s Education and Skills Committee (2017) report which states, a number of parents and teachers believe inclusive education to be inoperative due to insufficient resources (2017: 11).

Overall initial analysis suggests teachers do not hold a positive view towards current Scottish curriculum and its benefit to pupils. This was best highlighted in a dialogue between Participant 4 and 2 discussing CfE and the previous curriculum 5 - 14:

“*CfE and 5-14: do I think the children are at a different point, do I think they’re further on? What do you think?*” (Participant 4)

“*No*” (Participant 2).

This vignette may be of interest, as this shows similarities with The Scottish Parliament’s Education and Skills Committee (2017: 1) statement that “policy to include is having the opposite effect in some circumstances due to a lack of resources”.

5. CONCLUSIONS – AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

The initial intention of this project was to discover teacher opinion regarding the availability and quality of support and resources supplied to teach the diverse range of learning needs currently in mainstream education. However once additional knowledge was obtained, opinions on how the teaching of all pupils can be improved became an additional focus. Results suggest problems are greater than

originally expected with most participants expressing negative views in both the questionnaire and focus group, regardless of teaching experience.

A review of literature on inclusive education finds a number of reported benefits of the policy. The opportunity to learn in a mainstream environment can be suggested as supplying pupils with equal rights and “human dignity” (Peters, 2007: 99), while The Scottish Executive (2004) speculate social inclusion between pupils can develop tolerance and accepting attitudes. It has been proposed, inclusive education helps develop confidence within ASN pupils to interact with mainstream counterparts and “feel part of the school community” (The Scottish Executive, 2006: 20). One could argue that pupils who feel included in every day school life will become happier and more engaged in learning – and consequently may be able to develop capacities that allow them to feel valued and able.

Quantitative research was conducted through request participation of a questionnaire which asked opinions on current provision, training, expectations, specialist help and policy. Research finds opinions of resource provision to be particularly negative, with a large number of participants believing additional support staff could improve pupil support. Returned questionnaires stated most respondents have received additional training in ASN, but few believing training was adequate. Questionnaire respondents believe CfE policy is unable to successfully educate all pupils within a mainstream environment, with most believing their knowledge of curriculum policy does not aid their ability to successfully teach ASN pupils. Finally, less than half of respondents hold a positive view of CfE and inclusive education in its current form.

Qualitative data was obtained through conducting a focus group which aimed to return broader opinions of Curriculum Implementation, Support Staff and Physical Resources, Training and Effectiveness of Curriculum. Focus group participants display signs of confusion in terms of implementing policies as the curriculum is described as “woolly”, “not particularly clear” and “cyclical”. Due to a range of policies regarding pupil welfare, focus group participants find the role of teachers and parents is becoming “blurred” and such initiatives take time away from teaching. Participants lament a lack of support staff in relation to pupils requiring additional support: “There’s a sliding scale, more inclusion and less support”. In relation to tangible resources, participants disclose creating and paying resources due to a lack of such resources available in schools. Participants also feel training is “below average” and find teacher knowledge of ASN to be “limited”. In order to rectify this, participants feel extensive training in ASN strategies should

be provided before beginning a career as a teacher, believing such training is lacking in both Initial Teacher Education and CPD.

Due to the ethos of CfE and the inclusion policy, opportunities for success are evident, such as promoting diversity and acceptance; however, in order to achieve success, a number of changes must be implemented. First and foremost, to successfully educate all pupils within mainstream education, it is imperative sufficient resources and support staff be made available. This is recommended by the Scottish Executive (2006: 18), who argue educating ASN pupils in mainstream education “cannot work without major improvements in staffing and resourcing”. It is also advised that sufficient support must be in place before integrating ASN pupils into mainstream education to best allow for maximum levels of learning (Priestley and Rabiee, 2002: 384). Furthermore, it is suggested by HMIe (2003: 71) that pupils with ASN are supplied with “very experienced and effective classroom teachers”, with comprehensive teacher training, as pupil needs are now very diverse (Doran, 2012: 9). Without such requirements, some pupils will not receive the support needed to allow them to access the curriculum equally to others.

Finally, if teachers are to implement inclusive education effectively, clear policy strategies and targets for teachers must be readily available. Priestley et al. (2014: 207) state “policy and guidance should be framed clearly to facilitate practitioners’ understandings of its key principles and purposes, and the methods by which it might be enacted”. It can be suggested teachers hold some control of pupil agency; therefore, clear goals will aid teacher’s ability to help all pupils to flourish. It can be suggested that insufficient resources, ineffective training and unclear curriculum targets are curtailing pupils’ chances of developing, ultimately preventing pupils from flourishing.

The goal is for “all of the young people of Scotland to flourish as individuals, reach high levels of achievement, and make valuable contributions to society” (The Scottish Executive, 2004). One could argue, based on the findings of this research, all pupils will not flourish within mainstream Scottish education due to an unclear curriculum, insufficient resources and unsatisfactory training for teachers. If inclusive education continues in this form, it appears unlikely that the policy will deliver success for all pupils.

People are entitled not only to mere life but to a life compatible with human dignity, and this means that the relevant goods must be available at a sufficiently high level (Nussbaum, 2009: 335).

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