

PMLD LINK

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SUMMER 1991

Issue No. 10

Thank you once again to all readers of PMLD-Link who have sent in articles and information to make another interesting and varied newsletter.

There are many schools throughout the country that have been trialling the SATs this term. Have any of you tried them with PMLD pupils - there must be some 7 year olds somewhere! Do write in for the next copy with your impressions and experiences. Even though there are statements almost weekly from the DES, the Headteachers, the Unions and individual teachers about their viability and validity in mainstream schools, it would be interesting for those of us who have not had a go, to hear your opinions and whether you found them accessible or useful for our group of pupils.

Where do your school leavers go when they leave school? What do they do when they get there? It is good to see that FEU/MENCAP are carrying out a survey on opportunities for learning for adults. Wherever you go, whoever you speak to, there are always concerns about what happens when our students have to leave statutory education and, all too frequently, the intensive input possible in schools is no longer available. Make sure you get a questionnaire and contribute to this research if you are working with over 16s.

Many of you must have been away on school journeys this term. Why not share with us your experiences, good and bad, in the next issue. If you don't have time to write an article, just send in the address of where you went with a very short description of the facilities and whether it was suitable for multiply disabled pupils. The list of places can then be published in the next issue, ready for people thinking about going on a school journey in 1992.

We now have a new member of our editorial team - Tina Tilstone of Westhill College in Birmingham. Many readers will already know Tina, or know of her, and we are delighted that she is willing to take an active part in PMLD-Link.

The number of subscribers to PMLD-Link is still growing. There are now 200 on the computer database - the ones who have paid their 1990/91 subscriptions, and a few who have paid for 1991/2. There are many more (about 100) who have not yet paid for this year's copies, and this will be your last one! Please use the subscription form at the back of this issue if you still have not paid for 1990/91. Subscriptions for 1991/2 are due next term, and you can use the subscription form in the Autumn issue for next year's subscription. If you have joined recently and received back copies (NOs. 8 and 9) you will also need to renew next term. If you are a new subscriber and this is your first copy, you are paid up for 1991/2. If you are totally confused, ring me (evenings) at 081-788-1336.

Keep on sending articles, information, photographs, please. PMLD-Link is only as good as you make it. Items for the next issue should be in at the end of October.

Carol Ouvry

A day of celebration and tribute to the life and work of
VERONICA SHERBORNE

Veronica Sherborne was trained as a teacher of P.E. and in physiotherapy. She also studied dance and the theory of human movement put forward by Rudolf Laban. She used Laban's theories to form the basis of her developmental movement programme which is now referred to as 'The Sherborne Movement Method'

'She has been aptly described as a 'gentle mentor',- as far as I am concerned she was a colossus in the field of Special Education', Stuart Dove, Headteacher, Barrs Court School, Hereford.

This notion was reflected time and time again during a 'Memorial Day' held at Westhill College, Birmingham, on May 11th 1991, to celebrate the life and work of Veronica Sherborne, who died on September 18th. 1990.

After 'arrival and coffee' which rapidly acquired the nature of a 'reunion' with many of Veronica's old students meeting together again after several years, the day began with a movement session led by Carolyn Childs, the Headteacher of Byron Infants School in Croydon, Surrey, and myself (Cyndi Hill)

What an emotional moment that was!- to walk into the gymnasium at Westhill, to see this group of between seventy and eighty people, who had gathered together to honour the memory of this truly inspirational person, sitting on the floor, shoes and socks off chatting, exchanging news, views and experiences while waiting to begin. For many, active involvement in the movement was a new experience, for others it was a time of reminiscence as we steadily worked through some of the movement activities which Veronica had taught us as well as some which had grown out of her original ideas.

A very important part of the legacy left to us by Veronica is in the form of films and videos. Extracts from some of these were introduced to us by Steve Cullingford -Agnew who himself featured in Veronica's last film 'Good Companions' which shows how the movement is being used as a vehicle for the integration of varying groups of pupils within the education system. We also saw extracts from 'A Sense of Movement' which showed John Cannon working with children with severe difficulties, 'A Matter of Confidence' which showed Maggie Kirby working with young children and their parents, and 'Building Bridges' which showed George Hill using the movement with adults with special needs. These videos illustrated some of the ways in which Sherborne Movement is being used, but there are many others. Sandra Christie, writing with Veronica in Special Children, October 1990, describes how it is being used with a group of offenders and young children with severe learning difficulties, whilst George Hill is now being asked to lead 'team building' days for groups of practitioners in Social Services in Avon and elsewhere. From Poland and Belgium comes news of the movement being used by psychologists in early intervention programmes with young children with varying sensory, behavioural and psychomotoric problems, and their families.

After an excellent lunch which Westhill college provided

for us, we spent a some time discussing the future of 'Sherborne Movement'. Veronica's work will continue through 'doing', but it is recognised that there is a need for structured co-ordination and support for practitioner of the future. At the moment there is a 'Sherborne Movement Fund', based on donations already received to support the continuation of Veronica's work. The purpose of this fund is also to support objective research into the movement. This is viewed as one of the most important aspects concerning the validation and acceptance of the movement in the future. The ultimate purpose of the fund- a 'Dream for the future'- is the setting up of a 'Sherborne Movement Centre' somewhere in Bristol. It is intended to transfer the Sherborne Movement Fund to a Trust/Charity status, a move which Sarah Sherborne, Veronica's daughter is investigating at the present time.

Tributes to Veronica and her work were introduced to us by Stuart Dove, who himself featured in Veronica's first film 'In Touch'. As well as the many personal tributes which people present read out to us tributes were also invited from people in the many, many countries where the movement is also being used extensively. Mention has already been made to the work being carried out in Belgium and Poland. Tributes were also received from Canada, Eire, Sweden and Norway. Every one spoke of the high regard that was felt for Veronica both personally and professionally. 'She had the gift of making difficult psychological theories understandable'; 'I feel a great debt of gratitude at having known her and at having experienced her marvellous methods'; 'She enriched the lives of all those who met her and we are all better individuals for knowing her. She was an inspiration to us all', were typical of the thoughts which were shared time and again.

From Dr. Marta Bogdanowicz, a Polish psychologist came the idea for an 'International Family of Movement', an idea which she discussed with Veronica shortly before she died. The Belgians have offered to host the first 'gathering' of the family towards the end of the summer, hopefully in 1992.

Our Memorial Day was drawing to a close all too quickly. We returned to the gymnasium for our final movement session. George Hill worked us through individual and shared activities towards his objective which was to bring us together as a united group for the final reading. This he did very successfully with everyone ending up in what Veronica used to call a 'pile of people', all gently resting on and supporting each other in a comfortable relaxing way.

The closing reading, a poem by an unknown author, which has been in Veronica's family for many years, contains the line:-

'Complete those dear unfinished tasks of mine'

Saturday, May 11th, 1991, was originally scheduled as a 'Memorial Day'. It was also a day for the future shared by many in joy and celebration for the life and work of this unique person, Veronica Sherborne.

*Cyndi Hill,
May 1991.*

*a more detailed account of 'the day' can be obtained from:-
Cyndi Hill . 1. The Vale, Parkfield, N^r Pucklechurch, Avon BS173NW
Tel. 0275 82 3647. Please send a large s.a.e.*

BOOK REVIEW

Fagg, S., Aherne, P., Skelton, S., Thornber, A. (1990)

<u>Entitlement for All in Practice.</u>	<u>£8.95</u>
<u>Mathematics for All</u>	<u>£5.95</u>
<u>Communication for All</u>	<u>£8.95</u>
<u>Science for All</u>	<u>£6.95</u>

London : David Fulton Publishers.

These four books arose from the work of the Manchester Teacher Fellows, based at the University of Manchester, during 1989-1990. They explore the issue of entitlement, in the context of the core subjects, for children and young people with severe and complex learning difficulties, to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

In that this set of four books are some of the first materials to look in-depth at the applicability of the National Curriculum for this pupil group, they have a significant contribution to make to the current educational debate. Attractively typeset with clear illustrations, the books are written with a sense of realism that will be helpful to the classroom practitioner.

"Entitlement for All" tracks the development of curriculum in the field of severe learning difficulties, and links this to some of the important messages to be found in the N.C.C. "Whole Curriculum" series. The three case studies in the book are particularly useful. They take a holistic view of the curriculum, and through a needs analysis chart the routes of access across the subject areas of the curriculum. The ecological perspective built into each case study really does strengthen the notion of relevance in the curriculum. Only where appropriate to the child's needs are National Curriculum subjects blended into the overall curriculum dict of the child. However, our traditional definitions of some subjects will be challenged by the examples given in these case studies.

The three children, Joe, Lorna and Jenny, discussed in great detail, typify the range of pupils usually found in the severe learning difficulties population. In particular, the case study discussing Joe, a child with profound and multiple learning difficulties, is imaginative and innovative in the curriculum programme it generates for the child. Lorna, is described as a child with complex learning difficulties and severe problems of social adjustment and the topic chosen for her is "Interactions and Relationships" for which a whole school approach was essential. The use of "complex learning difficulties" throughout these texts has a strong Manchester flavour; it is a term, which if it is to be used widely, demands some national discussion and definition.

"Mathematics for All" is sub-titled 'An Interactive Approach within level 1', and through its illumination of attainment targets 1 and 9 demonstrates how a range of milestone can be generated within each statement of attainment. This notion of milestones is further extended in 'Science for All', and enables teachers to see in practical terms how their pupils with S.L.D. can register their achievements within the context of level 1 of the National Curriculum.

"Communication for All" adopts a particularly strong philosophical stance which involves examining the process of communication in the context of interactions between speaker and listener. Again, the extended programmes of study and communication processes listed are thoughtfully prepared. There is a heavy focus upon early communication, its nature and function, and the use of non-verbal signals. It was therefore, suprising to find that augmentative approaches, (signs and symbols) had not been interwoven into the basic framework of teaching and learning.

Without doubt these four texts have much to contribute to the implementation of the National Curriculum for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Their hallmark is that they were prepared by practitioners, for practitioners.

Barry Carpenter
Inspector (Special Educational Needs)
Solihull L.E.A.

Special Education and The National Curriculum

The Contributors

Diane Ackerman, Teacher, Leacroft School for Children with Severe Learning Difficulties, Manchester, Pam Aherne B.Ed., Deputy Headteacher, Leacroft School, Manchester, Sheila Clitheroe, Teacher, Grange Hill School, Manchester, Sue Fagg, B.Ed. Headteacher, Piper Hill School (SLD) Manchester, Helen Mount, Head of Lower School, Piper Hill School (SLD) Manchester, Sue Skelton, Cert.Ed., Diploma in Special Educational Needs, Deputy Headteacher, Grange School, Manchester, Ann Thornber, B.Ed., Deputy Headteacher, Melland School, Manchester

IN PREPARATION

Literacy for All

1-85346-188-1 August/September 1991 c128pp c£8.95

Technology for All

1-85346-189-X August/September c128pp c£8.95

PUBLISHED

Entitlement for All in Practice.

A Broad Balanced and Relevant Curriculum for Pupils with Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties in the 1990s.

Uses three case studies to illustrate the need for this broad and balanced curriculum

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1-85346-167-9 September 1990 96pp £8.95 paper

Communication for All

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1-85346-168-7 September 1990 48pp £6.95 paper

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"BROAD, BALANCED, RELEVANT AND IN PERSPECTIVE ?"

Some recent articles examining the problems presented by the national curriculum for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) paint a very pessimistic picture about entitlement, resources, differentiation, assessment and relevance (Tye Green School 1991, Emblem and Conti - Ramsden 1990). The uncertainty of some schools and LEA's outlined in Coussmaker's (1990) study of a random sample of 30 schools for pupils with SLD also adds to the apparent confusion and we are left with a very patchy picture of curriculum variation - some schools wanting to be involved, others wanting nothing to do with it. This difference in provision will cause further difficulties in terms of continuity and progression. The findings of the survey suggest that many schools are operating in isolation from each other and from the mainstream sector even within the same LEA. In-service training was found to be sadly lacking, with special schools often not informed and therefore excluded from that available to mainstream schools. LEA officers were also criticised for not being well informed about new developments.

This is not, however, the whole story and whilst it cannot be denied that the national curriculum was never devised with the interests of pupils with SLD in mind, some LEA's, individual schools and professionals are working together to "rectify a state of affairs which could leave many thousands of children disenfranchised" (Mittler 1991).

Mittler (1991) argues that the main difficulty for special and ordinary schools is the setting up of a whole curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant and which meets the individual needs of the child. There is no reason and no statutory obligation, he argues, which requires teachers to abandon existing objectives.

Groups of practitioners across the whole country are all working to provide a means of access for pupils with SLD. Among these are the National Curriculum and SLD (west Midlands) Group based at Westhill College, Birmingham and the National Curriculum (North West) Group based at Manchester Polytechnic. Both these groups have brought together interested teachers from across the regions many of whom have devoted considerable amounts of their spare time in attempting to provide some access. They have looked at individual subject areas as well as using cross-curricular approaches and examining the implication of the national curriculum for specific groups of pupils like those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

The Manchester Teacher Fellows, seconded teachers based at the University of Manchester produced four publications on access to the national curriculum for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties (Aherne, Fagg, Skellon and Thornber 1990). A group funded by central Government based at the Cambridge Institute of Higher Education and headed by Judy Sebba is also researching ways of developing a curriculum which can accommodate the national curriculum yet still fulfil the needs of pupils with SLD by ;

" broadening the curriculum in special schools, increasing group work through cross-curricular activities, exploring collaborative learning and self-recording, encouraging a more flexible approach to differentiation and establishing better use of mainstream resources." (Sebba, 1991)

In the initial stages of the national curriculum there were great concerns that the resulting curriculum presented in schools would be ' attainment target led' and to some extent earlier work reflects this. More recent developments however, have demonstrated that the programmes of study and not the attainment targets can form a framework which builds on already existing good practice and that relevant access is possible (Ackerman and Mount 1991, Sebba 1991).

Those in favour of attempting to blend the national curriculum with existing special school curricula argue that despite the positive developments of the last ten years, there is a growing need to offer a curriculum with much greater variety and breadth of experience than that currently being offered. The national curriculum has given schools an opportunity to examine their existing curricula and if many are honest it is sadly lacking in some areas.

A survey of special care units (for pupils with PMLD) in twenty five LEA's found that there was "clearly a need for a more balanced curriculum". (Evans & Ware 1987)

This and other studies found that the development of independence was often narrowly interpreted as the acquisition of self-help skills such as feeding and toileting rather than making choices, gaining control over their environment and improving the quality of interaction.

HMI surveys of special schools have also repeatedly highlighted the need to broaden the curriculum. Subjects like mathematics were found to concentrate on the acquisition of number skills to the detriment of everything else and subjects like science, technology, history and geography among others were not much in evidence (Sebba T.E.S. 1991).

Sebba also points out that the range of skills offered is very narrow in some schools and that bad practice is being carried out under the guise of independence skills.

A further criticism is that concentration on individual learning programmes narrows the child's learning opportunities and leads to teacher- led, passive learning (Ainscow 1989).

To some extent it could be argued that inevitably the nature, size, resources and population of schools for pupils with SLD will lead to a curriculum which is "narrow, restricted, and at times restricting " (Ainscow 1989). However, the current work of the groups mentioned above together with that of other individual professionals illustrates that something positive is being done to ensure 'entitlement for all in practice' (Fagg et al. 1990).

If the curriculum of the SLD school has a basic structure which offers balanced and co-ordinated activities then there is no reason why the national curriculum cannot be blended with it and even enhance it as long as there is differentiation to accommodate individual needs.

As professionals we have to take great care not to be paying lip-service to a curriculum which was never intended for our pupils - to do so would be unprofessional and dishonest. However, to exclude our pupils from taking part in a curriculum whose stated aims are about entitlement would deny their basic rights. As more NCC/DES publications are issued in different subject areas and accompanying curriculum guidance is also offered, pupils with special needs are increasingly being considered. It could be argued therefore, that we have a responsibility to at least adopt the spirit of 'A Curriculum for All' (NCC 1989).

The lack of specialism in certain subject area in special schools may require further training but it is no worse than the experience of the majority of primary schools which are suffering similar problems.

At present, more questions are raised than answered and it is very early days in the life of the national curriculum to predict what the long-term outcomes will be for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. It indeed presents many problems which have been outlined and it will be interesting to see whether schools for pupils with SLD attempt to distance themselves via their pupil's statements. However, despite the problems and whatever the critics say about tokenism or irrelevance, for the first time since Warnock (1978) pupils with special needs are being referred to in government documentation in a limited but positive way. The curricula for all pupils should be dynamic and responsive to change and should be developed in accordance with individual need but remembering that those individuals are members of a society and they do not operate in isolation. Those who reject the national curriculum as irrelevant may be underestimating the capability of their pupils and offering them a narrow alternative. It is also fair to ask what is wrong with looking at a long-term goal and breaking it into achievable steps? We do it all the time in existing objectives-based curricula to encourage success so why not in a common curriculum for all children? - it is a matter of differentiation. It may be that if enough pressure is exerted by special schools then attainment targets will be changed so that they become more accessible but that will not happen if we reject it.

A further important point is that if special schools are involved in the same curriculum review and planning processes and school development plans as mainstream schools then this reinforces the position of special schools as part of the same continuum of provision envisaged by Warnock (1978). We cannot influence change in the system or expect an expansion of integration by wanting to be separate from curriculum developments in the mainstream sector. It is only by making our voices heard from within that we can hope to raise the awareness of government and society and make them understand that our pupils live in a democracy and that they have the same needs and the same entitlement as their peers attending mainstream schools.

Helen Mount - MEC Teacher Fellow 1990/91

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GOOD NEWS * * * * * GOOD NEWS * * * * * GOOD NEWS

"RESOURCES for LEARNING DIFFICULTIES - The Consortium" is not after all being closed down by Hammersmith and Fulham. Chris' Pierre, the last remaining member of the Consortium team is now part of a new team "Resources for Development" which is part of the Support, Monitoring and Evaluation Service in Hammersmith and Fulham Education Authority. Part of his brief will be to continue the services of the Resources for Learning Difficulties. For the time being this will be sales of existing materials only, but Chris is hopeful that in the future it will involve development of new resources once again.

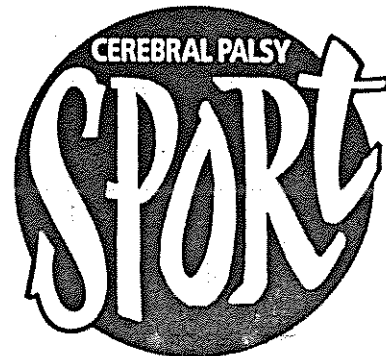
The contact address remains the same as ever:

Resources for Learning Difficulties, Jack Tizard School, Finlay Street,
London, S.W.6

INCLUDING:
reports from the second European workshop
on sport for people with a severe disability



Cerebral Palsy Sport is sponsored by Barclays Bank.



ENGLAND & WALES

THE SPASTICS SOCIETY
FOR PEOPLE WITH CEREBRAL PALSY



**ACTIVITIES
FOR PEOPLE
WITH A
MULTIPLE
DISABILITY**

pro-motion

The Resource Guide

A joint venture between The Spastics Society & UK Sports Association for People with Mental Handicaps.



THE PRO-MOTION GUIDE

A resource guide containing details of sports and recreational opportunities for people with a multiple disability.

Information on a range of activities has been collated over the past twelve months to produce a guide to different activities in which people with a multiple disability can take part. The guide, available from 12th March, is produced by the PRO-MOTION Project, a unique initiative taken on by Cerebral Palsy Sport and The United Kingdom Sports Association for People with Mental Handicap (Greater London Region).

Cost: £5.00 plus postage and packaging, total £6.50.

Over 100 pages of information which include:-

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- * Aromatherapy
- * Sailing - Canoeing
- * Adapted Activities including Meldreth Games
- * Water Based 'Play' Activities

ALSO included

- * Advice as to where to go for equipment
- * Reports on the 2nd European Workshops on sport for people with a severe disability
- * Book Reviews
- * Areas of good practice
- * Support Agencies

I wish to reserve (no of copies) of the Guide and enclose £ Cheques made payable to 'The Spastics Society'.

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Brilliant Opportunities by Nick Pronger

Computing for the more severely handicapped user has come a long way since the staff meeting we had at school in 1980 when the subject of getting the school a "Pet" was discussed. I was not the only one thinking along the lines of a rabbit or a goat rather than a Commodore Pet computer. Needless to say when it emerged that it was a computer being discussed it was rapidly decided that as computers were about using keyboards and as our multiply handicapped children could not use keyboards then the notion of them using computers was insane. As some of us spent more (of our own) time finding out about computers the argument then became more subtle. It went "Yes you can have a computer in your Special Care unit if you can prove the children can benefit from it." To which we had to reply, "How can we prove that they can benefit from something we havn't got." Catch 22.

In the short term the argument was effective. The two of us who were keen left the school and I soon left education completely spending my last pay cheque (of £430) on a BBC computer.

Now 9 years on that same computer has written virtually all the Brilliant Computing programs and I have been back to the original school to show them how to use the computer with their profoundly handicapped children and have even sold them some programs!

While the most severely handicapped are often the last to benefit from technological innovation it is they who often stand to gain the most. It is obviously fun for a bright and able child to relax playing computer games but for an institutionalised child to have the opportunity to INDEPENDANTLY press a switch and make something bright colourful and exciting happen is momentous!

To make this happen first we had to enable the user to operate the computer by making an appropriate interface e.g. a switch. that can then be plugged into the computer. Then, and this was the real problem, we had to find appropriate software. This, it emerged, just did not exist. We then had to write the specification and get it written by a programmer. The result was a program called Switch On.

This proved so popular that Rod Boyes and myself went on to form Brilliant Computing in 1986 and determined to try and prove that the severely handicapped user could benefit from computer technology and make our living doing it! The rest, as they say, is history. We not only managed to earn a living but also persuaded people that we were right.

We tried to produce a range of programs that developed the users' skills from very simple switch operation to make something happen, to using a switch at the right time, to using a switch for communication, to even using the switch for word processing. It was obvious that many users would progress only slowly or even get stuck at one level so we tried to make a variety of programs available at each level. We also developed software for specific hardware devices like Touchscreens, Concept Keyboards, and Joysticks. We tried as much as possible to make software adult appropriate and even went on to write programs specifically for adult users. In short, while the mainstream software industry was starting to move from the more able users to less able we were working from the other end of the ability spectrum.

In 1990 we were very gratified to win two awards one from the Rowntree Foundation as the best publisher of A.V. material for mentally handicapped adults and the other from the Ravenswood foundation for services to the mentally handicapped.

The significance of these awards is that there is an increasing realisation of the part that computing can play in the lives of those who are most disadvantaged in our society and the recognition of this can only bode well for the future.

Adults With Profound Intellectual Impairment and Complex Difficulties

The Further Education Unit is undertaking a national survey of the opportunities for learning currently available to adults who have a profound intellectual impairment and are likely to have additional physical and sensory disabilities.

This work is being undertaken in collaboration with MENCAP, (The Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults)

We would be very grateful for your help in making this survey as accurate and useful as possible.

The questionnaire is available from:

Matthew Griffiths, MENCAP National Centre
123 Golden Lane
London ECLYORT
Tel: 071-454-0454

If you are making educational provision for young people over the age of 16 who have profound learning difficulties your work should be represented.

If you have not received a questionnaire please contact Matthew Griffiths. If you have already received one please complete it. The survey will only be as accurate as the information we receive.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO INCLUDE IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In your answers to the questionnaire please include:

- all opportunities which are specifically planned and structured for individuals to learn

To qualify for inclusion these opportunities must be planned for learning to take place. The learning must be recorded. The record must then be used to plan new opportunities for learning. We are aware that learning can be incidental and can result from any experience. The survey, however, deals only with experiences which aim to stimulate learning and where learning is consciously planned for.

Please do not include:

- "one off" activities
- activities where no records are kept in any form whatsoever
- activities which are set up for something other than learning as their main aim, even if incidental learning may take place.

The Aim of the Survey

The survey is planned as Phase 1 of the development of a learning pack for people with profound and complex learning disabilities.

This national trawl for information should result in the first overall picture of the learning opportunities which are offered by:

- Depts of Social Services
- Local Education Authorities
- Health Authorities
- Voluntary Organisations
- Private Service Providers

Such a picture is not currently available.

We plan to use the information gathered to:

- identify useful examples of practice to guide service development
- select a number of interesting examples of services provided by a range of agencies, either individually or co-operatively. Managers and practitioners in these services will be invited to contribute to Phase 2 of the Project

Phase 2 of the Project will produce a curriculum framework which will enable individual learning programmes to be planned and implemented for people with a profound intellectual disability. The learning programmes will be designed for delivery by the full range of staff who work with this group, in a variety of settings. This includes education, social services, health, voluntary organisations and privately employed staff working in further and adult education, day centres, special care or intensive support units, hospitals and homes.

Phase 3 of the Project will promote the use of the curriculum framework.

A Description of The Group For Whom The Curriculum Framework Will Be Planned

The individuals for whom the curriculum framework will be designed are those with a profound learning disability, over school-leaving age. They will be highly dependent on others for all day-to-day aspects of living, including:

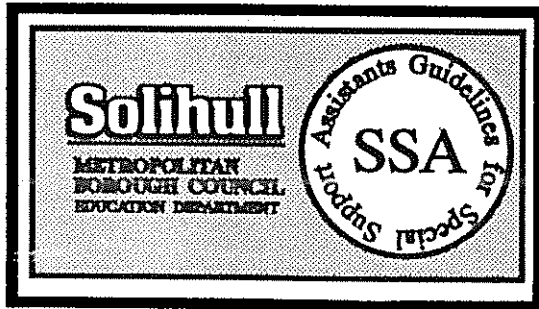
- dressing
- feeding
- personal hygiene
- toileting
- being kept warm
- being kept safe

They will need learning experiences centred on:

- awareness of themselves
- awareness of others
- awareness of the environment
- pre-verbal, elementary verbal and non-verbal communication
- basic movement
- basic motor skills
- elements of self-care

They are likely to need learning experiences adapted to take into account impairment of hearing, vision or physical functioning, in addition to profound intellectual impairment.

They may have difficult behaviours such as screaming, scratching, biting or head banging which need to be addressed as part of their learning and management.



Guidelines for Special Support Assistants

- * *Role of the SSA*
- * *1981 Education Act*
- * *Special Needs - some basic principles*
- * *Introduction to the National Curriculum*
- * *Managing difficult behaviour*
- * *Learning difficulties in mainstream*
- * *Encouraging language development*
- * *Moderate learning difficulties*
- * *Children with hearing impairment*
- * *Children with visual impairment*
- * *Profound and multiple learning difficulties*
- * *Support network*
- * *Special provisions*
- * *What has been written*
- * *Agencies and organisations*

A Tribute to Veronica Sherborne

"See how they run!" she said. But the interesting fact is that five-and-six-year-olds don't really run - not as you, and even I occasionally run. Their head is so heavy, their body so long, their legs so short, their balance so insecure, that when they try to run, as when they try to jump, the way they transfer their weight is peculiar to children of this stage of growth.

Thirty years ago I had not thought of transferring weight. I had not thought of analysing movement to find its qualities. And there were many others as ignorant as I.

In this respect the change in the last twenty years has been great, and for this change the debt we owe to the founder of this centre (Laban) is immense. More and more teachers, and, what is more important, more and more boys and girls are growing up aware of the movement of their body through space and time; aware of the qualities of their movement. For all this we should be profoundly grateful. But the problem, the problem with those five-year-olds thirty years ago, is still not solved. What is the problem?

'See how they run!' she said. Why did they run - if I may use the word for their tottering, shambling movement? Why did they run from one end of the Hall to the other, pause for breath, and run back again? The Hall was just an empty space, and one end was precisely like the other end. There was nothing to do at either.

They ran like that because they *felt* like it. They were not interested in developing their muscles; they were not interested in transferring weight. They liked to *feel* their bodies passing through space, however tottering."

These children had the choice to move; so many of our children cannot initiate that movement for themselves. Veronica recognised that and the necessity for them to feel their bodies passing through space.

"Those fives and sixes running to and fro across the Hall had never had the opportunity to run before. But opportunity is not enough. There was no one there to help them become aware of their movements and the qualities of these. Now there often is. But this is not enough. There is need for a teacher who can help them to grow in their power to choose, to discriminate, to feel. The greatest of those teachers was Veronica Sherborne. Let us recall Veronica as a teacher of teachers too.

"Of course we need more buildings and more teachers, and teachers who know more of what they teach. But this is not enough. We need most of all teachers who realise that education is helping to grow, who know that boys and girls, young men and women, need to grow not only in their mind and body but also in their feelings: we need teachers who are able to educate in this way and such teachers are in short supply.

I have ventured to address you in this way because in movement more than in any other field can emotional development be helped. Movement is the earliest, the deepest, medium of expression". Veronica realised this, and in her visionary style helped us to see it too.

Barry Carpenter
Inspector of Schools
Solihull L.E.A.

May 1991



Academic Year 1991/92

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