

PMLD LINK

SUPPORTED BY the MENCAP City Foundation

AUTUMN 1991

Issue No. 11

By this time most readers are probably up to their eyes in Christmas preparations - perhaps some of you will be able to send photos of Christmas productions, Carol concerts or whatever your school puts on, to be included in the next issue. In this issue you will find information about a Christmas tape made to raise funds for the work in Romania. This is just one of the things which are "on offer" and there is a page of extra application forms at the end so that you do not need to photocopy or cut out forms if you want to send off for anything.

Do any of you do specific health and sex education activities with your pupils/students and, if so, do you have any curriculum policies, guidelines, schemes of work you would be willing to share with others? If so, send the information to me by the end of February for next term's issue of PMLD-Link.

Thank you once again to all those people who found time to send in the articles which have made this such a varied issue. Keep writing!

A Happy Christmas and best wishes to you all for 1992.

Carol Ouvry

THE SENSORY APPROACH AT REYNALDS CROSS SCHOOL

In March 1990, I attended a B.I.M.H. course on "The Use of Light Stimulation" and returned both "enlightened" and "stimulated". Thankfully my enthusiasm for this and other aspects of the sensory approach to the curriculum, stirred the interest of my colleagues and we set out on the fund-raising trail. Just the transformation of a small 1:1 teaching room into a sensory area was our initial intention.

The sale of dried flower arrangements, a raffle and sale of crafts made by staff brought in the first £100, which I'd been assured could purchase the basics required. However, by this time, our wider staff (transport escorts etc.), parents and our surrounding community were becoming interested. Soon we were sponsored by "Calendars" restaurant, who raised £1,300 in our name. It was then that greater potential than the 1:1 room was apparent and we were fortunately able to set aside a much larger area for our sensory room.

We were given a Solar 250 projector and purchased a bubble tube, fibre optic spray, mirror ball, blackout curtaining and black and white paint (we wanted contrast). A bus driver and escort volunteered to paint the room, a lady from a local church, to make the curtains, a staff member's husband to put up shelving etc. Additional power points were installed and the wiring was checked by the Local Authority's electrician.

These were the basics with which our official opening of the Sensory Room took place in May 1991.

As a staff, we have had the foresight to realise potential benefits for every child and consequently the room is used and enjoyed by the whole school, every age and ability, also by groups of mainstream pupils during our periods of integration.

Our senior pupils (both S.L.D. and P.M.L.D.) integrating with junior mainstream pupils, recently worked on a project to make reflective objects for use in the Sensory Room and to make their own bubble tubes to help them understand how the electrical bubble tube operates - this project had benefits for all pupils involved, not only from a sensory angle.

As we know there is a strong overlap of all areas of the curriculum not least using a sensory approach - this was evident in the work carried out by our senior pupils with S.L.D., on shadows. Using the Sensory Room to create the shadows, their work was then extended in Art, English and Further Science.

Monday afternoon is time for massage and relaxation for some F.E. students and senior pupils with P.M.L.D. A contrasting atmosphere to their general day-to-day life - the slow movement produced by the light equipment, calm music (a chance to be cultural!) and aromatic oils, create a gentle setting. There are noticeable changes to physical attitudes and voice levels and usage by all the children. Most apparent is the stillness of one particular child with athetosis. This is one of the few times he is totally still and he revels in it. We've wondered if badges stating "Please treat me gently, I've just been sensory!" could be the way to ease the harsh contrast experienced when emerging from this atmosphere.

All our children have found that the Sensory Room is an aid to focusing attention. Having times when all other distractions are removed is rare for our pupils, the Sensory Room is one area where this is possible.

The responses of individual pupils, whether in the Sensory Room in a group or on a 1:1 basis with an adult, are worth noting.

After several group sessions of quiet relaxation, one child who finds it necessary to fill any period of quiet with chatter, has managed to be silent, with occasional speaking by an adult, for up to 20 minutes - a big achievement for him.

Another child, who interacted very little with either people or her environment, has made definite responses toward stimulating light materials in the Sensory Room (1:1) by turning her head to look at the adult and vocalising for more. She is now beginning to use this interaction in other settings.

This has been a glance at the uses of and some responses to the sensory materials. We are aware that we are "early learners" with respect to the sensory approach to the curriculum but we are also delighted with the initial responses made by our pupils.

Our next stage is to introduce 'sound stimulation'. This will soon be realised due to a donation of £1,000 by "People in Need" charities group. This contact having been made by a parent. We are extremely grateful to our ongoing benefactors for making possible this and our parallel scheme, which is a joint project between our school and a mainstream comprehensive school, sponsored by Powergen, to construct a Sensory Garden, the first stage of which was completed in July.

Overall, the Sensory Approach has, so far, been an interesting and stimulating way to learn for pupils and staff and we look forward to its more expansive use.

Mandy Riding

Mandy Riding - Teacher
NOVEMBER 1991



with the Compliments of
REYNALDS CROSS SCHOOL
Head Teacher: Ms. M. Daniels M.Ed.

Kinelon Green Road Olton Solihull
West Midlands B92 7ER Telephone 021-707 3012

THE CURRICULUM FOR 'ALL' - Hope or Hype?

With all the thought and talk about the National Curriculum in SLD schools, it is hard to see the wood for the trees. On the face of it this might seem strange. After all, the Curriculum's aims are not in dispute and, once you know the jargon, its format is clear enough.

So why is it that accessing the National Curriculum to PMLD and SLD pupils is such a problem?

For me, useful starting points for answering this question are the Curriculum's title and its claim to be a Curriculum for 'all'. There has been some fudging here which clouds the issue, and gets in the way of finding solutions.

For instance, fudge (1) the 'National' Curriculum was not planned for the nation as a whole but only for that part of it which attends state schools; fudge (2) the Curriculum's content was not devised for all pupils in all state schools but only for those in the mainstream sector; and fudge (3) since the Curriculum's structure makes no allowance for ability levels outside its own norms it cannot be called a Curriculum for 'all'. In view of such discrepancies, it is not surprising that, as it stands, the National Curriculum is largely irrelevant to many pupils with severe learning difficulties, and totally so to those with profound and multiple handicaps.

Put like this, Curriculum access in SLD Schools sounds depressing, frustrating and (if I dare to say it) even pointless. But stay with me. Things are not as bad as they seem. There really is hope within the hype of making the National Curriculum practically relevant to all PMLD and SLD students.

Over the past three years or so I have been looking very hard for an answer to this access problem, an answer which was of practical use to teachers in SLD schools and which also had theoretical integrity. Both aspects were essential because accessing the National Curriculum depends on what teachers actually decide to do in the classroom, and accountability rests on being able to justify their decisions in terms of individual pupil programmes.

A key factor in my search and research has been working with experienced teachers in SLD schools; no fudging there if you valued your professional skin - time was short and tempers liable to become so at any hint of waffle. The result of thrashing out the practicalities of my ideas with 'real' teachers in 'real' school is what I have called a "Levels of Complexity Rationale".

In general terms, this is a developmental framework with answers to awkward 'Curriculum' questions built into it. That is to say, by accounting for and integrating particular access factors found in SLD schools, the Rationale enables teachers to relate the National Curriculum consistently to PMLD and SLD pupils, simply by using the framework to plan their work.

Basically, the Levels of Complexity Rationale is a way of interpreting the National Curriculum Key Stage 1 in terms of the learning process of PMLD and SLD pupils. This is a useful approach because:

- (a) since both the Curriculum's subject content and its criteria for assessment (the Statements of Attainment) relate exclusively to pupil 'performance' at mainstream ability levels and ages, the Curriculum as it stands cannot possibly have direct relevance to PMLD and SLD students; this being so, some form of interpretation has to be found
- (b) it is a means of bridging the intellectual gap between the performance of PMLD/SLD pupils and that of their mainstream peers; this is essential because the 'gap' is one of the main stumbling blocks to Curriculum access in SLD schools
- (c) it provides a common thread in terms of which to relate different levels of performance (whether in special or mainstream schools) to each other, as well as to core Curriculum content; this is really the crux of the access problem in SLD schools, and has to be sorted one way or another.

The Levels of Complexity Rationale puts its 'interpretative' approach into practice by serving six key purposes:

- (1) it accounts for learning process at different levels of ability.
- (2) it relates learning process to observable behaviour.
- (3) it shows a progression from lower to higher levels of learning ability, which spans the performance of PMLD/SLD and mainstream pupils.
- (4) it relates the kind of understanding implied by the performance of PMLD and SLD pupils at different ability levels to that prescribed in the National Curriculum Statements of Attainment within Key Stage 1; in my opinion, this rationale function meets the most fundamental requirement of accessing the Curriculum in SLD schools;
- (5) it provides a simple way of showing how a pupil whose level of learning ability does not match that implied by the national Curriculum can be said to relate to it; this is essential because so many SLD and all PMLD pupils come into this category, and it is also very helpful in National Curriculum assessment and recording.
- (6) it suggests what would be appropriate, in terms of planning individual programmes, to help a pupil to develop his or her understanding in relation to that implied by the National Curriculum within Key Stage 1.

There is not room in this article to cover the structure and, more importantly, the practical use of the Rationale in detail.

However, the full text of the framework does show step by step how this is done, and has been successfully put to the test in SLD schools and inservice-training workshops.

Judging from the response of teachers to it, the main advantages of the Levels of Complexity Rationale seem to be that:

- (a) it is practically simple but has theoretical integrity;
- (b) it both accounts for and integrates all levels of learning ability in any SLD school as well as mainstream ones within Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum;
- (c) It enables teachers to access the National Curriculum by integrating it with their existing School Curriculum, both in terms of individual pupil programmes and topic work, or other group learning frameworks such as outings, stories, songs, etc.;
- (d) because the Rationale has a developmental basis it fits naturally with familiar and proven approaches to learning in SLD schools;
- (e) by relating SLD pupils to the National Curriculum in terms of learning process, the Rationale is not necessarily tied to a particular subject and so lends itself to cross-curricular planning;
- (f) it provides a simple and consistent basis for assessing and recording National Curriculum access for all PMLD and SLD students.

In conclusion, although the Levels of Complexity Rationale is a closely reasoned package, it is in no way intended to be prescriptive and does not get in the way of individual teacher expertise. It simply offers a possible way through National Curriculum hype to National Curriculum hope for pupils and teachers in SLD schools.

Pat Lennard 15. 10. 91
4, Tamar Terrace, Sand Lane, Calstock, Cornwall, PL18 9QU

CASTLE SCHOOL OUTING

We took our senior special care class out for a day in July, to the Child Beale Wildlife Trust at Pangbourne, near Reading, Berks. The Trust is well signposted and is open April to October from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. We were able to park our minibus next to the entrance, and were given pass out tickets, so that we could get back to the minibus at lunchtime, to get our packed lunches.

We took 9 PMLD children, some are in wheelchairs, and some are ambulant. I booked and paid for a ticket which was sent in advance, but I was given money back for a child who was unable to go at the last minute. We paid 2.00 for each child, but the adult carers were free, and there is no charge for the minibuses or for parking.

Toileting facilities are good, there are changing tables, disabled toilets and large bins for pads which meant we did not have to carry them back with us.

There is a restaurant. we all had coffee, but we could have bought lunch or sandwiches had we forgotten to bring our own. Some of our children had an ice cream or lolly.

There is a gift shop, a mini adventure playground and a sandpit. One of our children (and myself) enjoyed a paddle in a small paddling pool. Some of the children spent their money on the miniature railway (50p.).

There were birds to see, lovely peacocks, and children's animals. Suzanne loved the pigs, and several enjoyed stroking the rabbits which were lifted out for us to hold.

Several playgroups, and another school were there at the same time as us, but the place is quite spacious. All you need is a nice day, and congenial companions!

Alison Laughton - Teacher of Senior Special Care Class
Castle School, Love Lane, Newbury, Berks
July 1991



Lincolnshire County Council

Sandon School
Sandon Close
Grantham
NG31 9AX
Telephone Grantham 64994 STD 0476

Headteacher
I S Walker M.A., B.Phil., P.G.C.E.

16th July 1991

Carol Ouvry
2 Rotherwood Road
Putney
London
SW15 1JZ

Dear Ms Ouvry,

In response to PMLD-Link Issue No.10, yes, there are two seven year old PMLD pupils alive and well at this school. As we administered SATs KS1, at County request, one year early, we are able to comment on them - but would like these comments viewed through the frame of a school very much in favour of a National Curriculum and the broadening of provision that it encourages. I make this statement as I have found that any remarks at all critical of any aspects of the National Curriculum seem to result in a general assumption that the whole of the National Curriculum is being called into question. We took on board the potential advantages of the National Curriculum, both in the entitlement it advocated for our pupils and the scope it gave in demanding extra provision to provide that entitlement very early on. However, we have always felt that the assessment side of the package would present difficulties. This has been borne out by our experience of SATs which was as follows:-

Faced with the compulsory Attainment Targets - En2 (Reading), En3 (Writing), En4 (Spelling), En5 (Handwriting), Ma1 (Using and Applying Mathematics), Ma3 (Number), Sc1 (Exploration of Science) - we identified one area which might be appropriate, En2 (Reading):

What to do -

1. Ask the child to choose a familiar book and tell you the reasons for choice. (There is no need to use any particular wording in conversation. Satisfy yourself that the child is showing interest in books by talking about this or by other non-verbal means such as pointing or facial expression).
2. Ask the child to tell you about the book.
3. Ask 'where does it tell me what to say?'

Two problems -

One of the children has redefined the word 'inscrutable' and the other child was much more interested in the human contact than the book and, in fact, saw the book as a positive interference with that contact. End of this particular SAT.

None of the other SATs in the compulsory section proved attainable. We moved on to the two groups of constrained choice Attainment Targets which cover Maths and Science. One Target has to be chosen from each area.

(Continued)

We selected Ma5 (Number Algebra) as a possibility. This involved showing a child a pattern which the teacher had made using two colours, asking the child to copy the pattern and then continue it, asking the child to devise a pattern of their own. The combination of colours and patterns caused great problems and frustration. We tinkered around with the requirements for quite a while but, in the end, had to acknowledge that we had altered the task to such an extent that the original mathematical concept had been lost somewhere along the way. Also, it seemed that the teacher's judgement on what level each child could cope with the task was being used so extensively that the purpose of the SAT, i.e. moderating teacher assessment, had been totally negated.

In the Science constrained choice Attainment Targets, we did find one area that produced a result, Sc3 (Processes of Life) where, using pictures, a doll or the child, each child was asked to point out or name five different parts of the body chosen by the teacher and then five different parts of the face. This did produce a result - so successful that we are now spending a great deal of time stopping the child touching various body parts.

The SAT itself did not actually provide us with any information we did not already have. What we ended up with were two Record forms consisting almost entirely of Ws standing for "Working Towards". This seemed to us both unhelpful and, in some cases, dishonest - it implies that all pupils will reach Level 1. In fact, many PMLD pupils will clearly not do so. It also eliminates the prospect of ever recording any progress for many of our children.

In conclusion, we did not find the SATs relevant to our children. They demonstrated what our children cannot do and not what they can. It seemed that the children's often painstakingly acquired skills received little or no recognition and that the whole exercise produced a very negative situation in a school which tries to take a very positive view of our children and teach to their strengths. We are in no way opposed to the monitoring of teacher assessment but would suggest that an inter-County or even an inter-region system of moderation, possibly run by inspectors/advisors with some knowledge of special education, would be more relevant. This view was shared by the SAT moderator when she visited this school. As a footnote, and in a climate where parental demands and expectations are very rightly being taken much more into consideration - we sampled parental response to SATs. Probably the most telling comment was from a parent who observed that we had spent two years building up his belief in his child's very real abilities and were now presenting him with a written list of what his child was unable to do. He wanted to know why. Explaining that, though his child had been stated to have her needs met in a school of this type, we were requiring her to go through an exercise designed for mainstream children did not sound entirely convincing.

Yours sincerely,

B. Walker

Brookfields School,
Moorfield Road,
Widnes,
Cheshire.

July 18th, 1991.

Dear PMLD Link,

We all know how important food and feeding are. Food sustains life and feeding is a preparation for speech, a social skill, a vital sensory experience, and a pleasurable one. It can also be facilitated.

The senior speech therapist at Brookfields School and I (class teacher) worked long and hard on detailed assessments and formulation of feeding programmes. We then pulled in someone off the street, paid them peanuts, put a spoon in their hand and asked them to feed a profoundly handicapped child!

We decided that to improve the skills and status of the midday assistants and to let them know how important and valued their job is, we would offer a series of training workshops designed to raise awareness and invite discussion on various aspects of feeding and the dinnertime environment.

After consultation, we ran 7 workshops, all largely practical, one every fortnight for half an hour before the dinnertime began. They were to be entirely voluntary in the first instance, because there was no funding available to pay them. Unsurprisingly, the seven assistants who turned up were the best already - keen, sensitive, understanding and eager to learn.

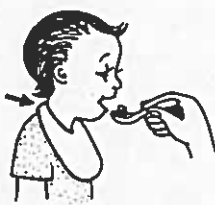
The workshops covered blindfold feeding, positioning of feeder and child, biting, chewing, swallowing, consistency and texture, feeding each other and watching others being fed. Each session was accompanied by a printed sheet of the main points. They were all great fun and the midday assistants were delighted to have training and improve their skills. One lady was thrilled to show her husband the certificate we gave out at the end - her job was now worthy of training, proving it to be of importance and worthwhile.

The spill over into the dinnertime environment has been obviously considerable, with the assistants advising and supporting each other, and the improvement to the childrens feeding experiences being incalculable.

The next step will be to extend the training to all the assistants in the school, whether they are involved with PMLD children or not, and the headteacher has strongly supported us in this, making training a condition of employment.

I have enclosed a copy of ED, which was produced out of discussions in the second workshop and covers points to consider when giving a meal to a child.

Sally Slater.



MEALTIME

Here is ED



How is ED feeling today?

Does ED know you?

Is the room very noisy - will it distract ED from his food?

Is ED in a comfortable position?

Is ED in a good feeding position i.e. head in the middle, shoulders stable etc.

Are you in a good, comfortable feeding position?

Is the food the right consistency for ED?

Does ED know what's for dinner. Have you told him what it is ?

Has ED seen or smelled his meal?

Is the food too hot or too cold?

Is the spoon the right size for ED?

Is there too much food on the spoon?

Have you asked him if he is ready for the first spoonful and waited for his response?



Is the spoon going directly to his mouth and waiting for ED to show he is ready?

Have you given ED enough time to attempt to take the food off the spoon?

Has ED swallowed and ready to receive the next mouthful?



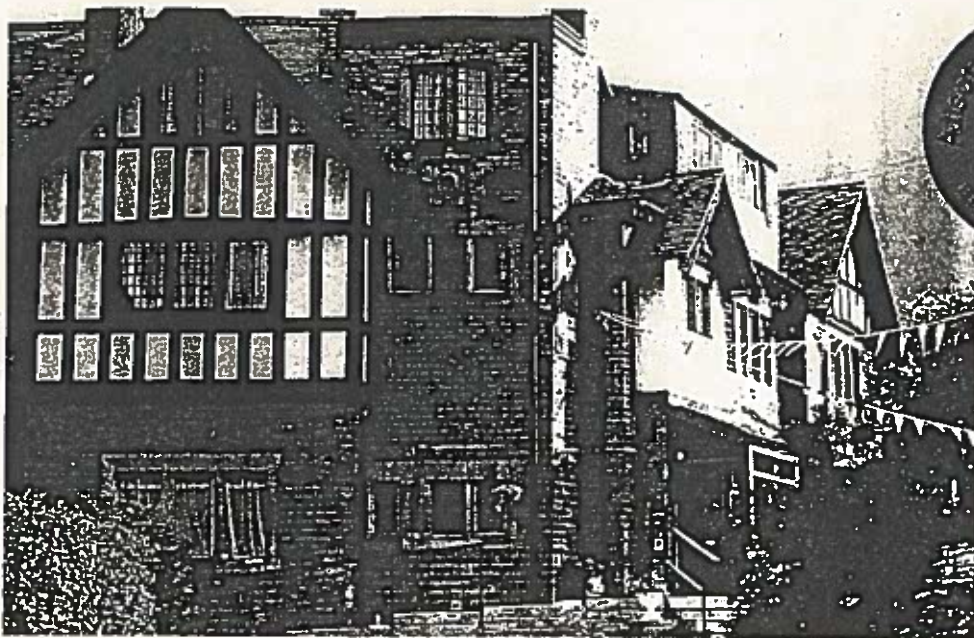
Has ED had enough to eat - how has he let you know?



Is ED's mouth dabbed clean?

Did ED enjoy his meal?





Alison Park Hotel

3 Temple Road,
Buxton,
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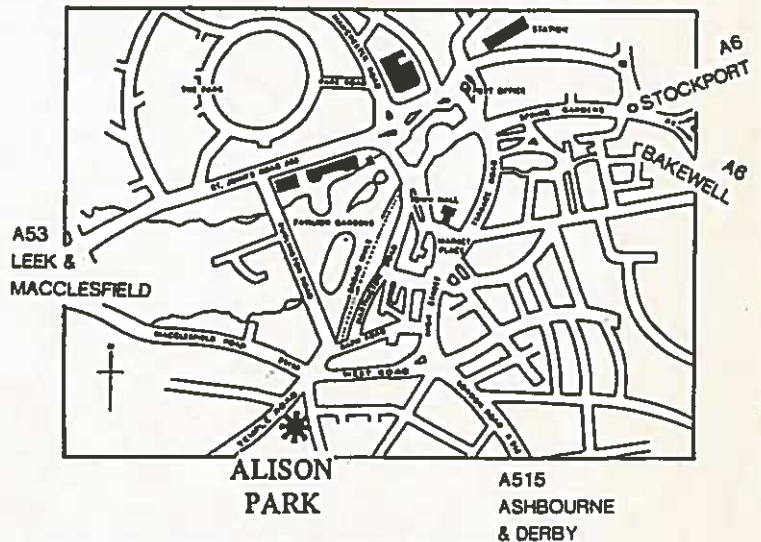
Wheelchair accessible bedrooms on Ground and First Floor

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Lift

BUXTON



The ancient Roman town of Buxton is now a thriving rural community in the heart of the Peak District. Lying high among the Pennines, the town is noted for its natural mineral spa and includes amongst its amenities the internationally acclaimed Opera House (which stages many productions to suit all tastes, as well as the annual festival), an extensive, compact shopping centre. Also in the town are the Pavilion Gardens, Park, Spa Water Swimming Pool and Leisure Complex, two Golf Clubs and Pooles Cavern and Country Park.

The 'Alison Park' Hotel is situated only 5 minutes walk from the town's shopping centre, near to the Pavilion Gardens and to the Opera House, and is within easy reach of both the railway and bus stations.

There are also many places of natural beauty and historical interest within easy reach of the town.

HOLIDAY 1991

For the third year running, myself and 2 nursery nurses took 6 children (in two groups of 3) onto the specially adapted narrowboat St. Clare.

It is a marvellous holiday for PMLD children, with constantly changing scenery, light and movement.

The boat has a hydraulic lift, lifejackets, mobile phone, bed guards, mosquito 'eater', shower, etcetera.

It costs £50 per day/night and that includes 2 man crew, fuel and heating.

The boat operates out of Leicester, but came up to Cheshire for a six day booking and will travel around.

Further details and enquiries from Mr and Mrs Halsey (Trustees, The Baldwin Trust) 29, Fern Crescent, Groby, Leicestershire. 0533 876966.

Sally Slater, Brookfields School, Cheshire.

Mark Little, Headteacher of Valley School writes that the school has used the Alison Park Hotel several times with PMLD children. Facilities are good and the staff helpful. Alton Towers is not far away. The staff are very welcoming and by writing in advance they got a good reduction.

Mr. MARK LITTLE
Head Teacher

—
Telephone
061-439 7343
061-440 0338

VALLEY SCHOOL
WHITEHAVEN ROAD
BRAMHALL
STOCKPORT
SK7 1EN

RNIB Information Service on Multiple Disability

RNIB's Information Service on Multiple Disability was established in 1987. The service is for staff and carers of people aged 16 to 64 who have visual and other disabilities. However, in the last four years, the service has worked almost entirely with involved with adults with profound and multiple learning difficulties, who may also have a physical disability, hearing impairment, and/or behavioural or emotional problems. This includes people who become disabled as a result of severe illness or accident.

The Information Service aims to respond to individual requests for information on a wide range of topics. We are commonly asked about communication, assessment, sight testing etc. From time to time we get really unusual requests, and have nearly always been able to deal with them or link them up with somebody doing similar work, or has experienced a similar problem. There is no way I alone could answer all the questions I get asked - but I always know a woman who can.

We publish a range of factsheets which are available free of charge. These are deliberately basic as we are well aware that most staff working with blind adults with multiple disabilities have had no training whatsoever in visual disability.

Three times a year we publish our newsletter, Focus, which is for staff working with adults with visual and severe learning disabilities. This is available on subscription - £4.00 for three editions - but we will always send a sample copy to anyone.

Further information from:-

Gill Levy/Julia Wensley
Information Service on Multiple Disability
RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street
London
WIN 6AA

Telephone: 071-388 1266 ext 2449/2275

RNIB Training Service on Multiple Disability

The Training Service works closely with the Information Service and organise courses for staff working with visually disabled people. Mark Gray, the Training Officer, is able to provide individually-designed training courses to be run in-house for statutory, private or voluntary bodies. Whilst most agencies actually require basic introductory courses, Mark is able to design more complicated training packages, bringing in a variety of different experts from other organisations.

Mark's main role is to develop a National Training Strategy on Multiple Disability, which we hope will be validated by CCETSW, ENB and NVQ. The training course is being piloted in four different parts of the country, but we hope that the completed pack will be available for sale in England for next year, with pilot projects to run in Scotland and Northern Ireland at a later date.

Further details from:-

Mark Gray/Janice Evans
Training Service on Multiple Disability
RNIB, NMC
1 The Square
111 Broad Street
Edgbaston
BIRMINGHAM B15 1AS

Telephone 021-643 9912

THE WHITE TOP CENTRE, DUNDEE

The White Top Centre is at present being designed to provide a day service and short term respite facility for adults with profound intellectual disabilities and multiple physical and/or sensory impairments. Though there is no upper age limit, the initial group of fifteen young people will be between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

The Centre building is being funded by the White Top Foundation, Dundee and the Gannochy Trust, Perth. It was on the Foundation's initiative that research identifying the initial users of the service was undertaken by Dr Philip Seed of the Social Work Department, University of Dundee. The White Top Foundation and the University have also collaborated in establishing a new Chair of Profound Disabilities. The holder of this post, Professor James Hogg, will be director of the White Top Centre, as well as having responsibility for developing research in this field in the University.

Tayside Regional Council Social Work Department will be responsible for running and resourcing the Centre. Tayside Health Board have agreed to provide therapy and nursing staff.

The White Top Centre will offer a comprehensive, interdisciplinary service, with a strong emphasis on involvement in the wider community. It will also act as a resource centre for others working in this field, and will provide a focus for innovative research and training.

The White Top Centre is due to open early in 1993, though key staff will be appointed in advance throughout 1992. Staff will include a Depute Director, Senior Skills Tutor, Clinical Rehabilitation Officer, Development officer, Senior Residential Officer, Physio, Speech and Occupational Therapists and a specialist Nurse, as well as a number of more junior tutors, care, and support staff.

For further information, contact Professor James Hogg, Department of Social Work, Frankland Building, The University, Dundee DD1 4HN.

19 September 1991

BOOK REVIEW

CHILDREN WITH PROFOUND/COMPLEX PHYSICAL AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

By Sally Clark (1991)

Publisher: N.C.S.E.

Price £2.95

This publication, in the N.C.S.E. "Special Interest" series, arises from Scotland, out of work at Kingspark School, Dundee, where Sally Clark is Deputy Headteacher. Fortunately, it does not fall into the trap of the other recent Scottish publication ("Children with Profound Handicaps" - Philip Seed) where clearly his definition of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties did not correlate with that used in the rest of the U.K.

This handy booklet shows a familiarity with the key texts in this field, and fulfils its goal of complimenting these texts by illuminating classroom practice.

The title of the book incorporates again the increasingly familiar term "complex" learning difficulties. (As this reviewer pointed out when writing about the excellent series of books by Fagg et al, if this seemingly helpful turn is to have widespread use it requires national debate and definition).

In just 72 pages this booklet looks succinctly at such issues as population definition, problems arising from the handicapping condition, impediments to the learning process, the nature of "education" for this pupil group, resource needs, "partnerships" with other professionals and parents, and a review of the over-arching management implications.

The book is eminently practical and includes useful appendices on handling children with profound/complex learning difficulties, compiling pupil profiles, and a passive motor programme incorporating music.

For me there were two particularly perceptive points in this book which merit mention. The first was the acknowledgement in the section on "Medical Aspects" that this particular child population is not only growing but changing in its composition. The children of drug addicts and the youngsters with the Aids virus are adding to the already complex curriculum scenario for this group, and making further demands on the skills of the teacher.

Secondly, the sensitive discussion of "death" both in relation to staff and family needs. This is very much a reality when working with children with profound/complex learning difficulties, and needs to be recognised and managed in a supportive and caring manner.

Throughout this booklet the rights of the individual and the personal dignity of the child shine through. We are urged to enable each child to achieve, through their educational entitlement, a rich and fulfilling life.

Barry Carpenter
Inspector
(Special Educational Needs)
Solihull



"Switch to Play"

by Pat Atkinson, Joy Blakeney, Peter Head,
Suzie Mitchell and Ron Stephens.

" Since the most fundamental human skills and knowledge are learned through playful activity, children with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities may need help to achieve as much active play as possible. The deprivation that immobility, reduced awareness and sheer powerlessness may cause in a child can lead to frustration, withdrawal or passivity. These children are in danger of becoming observers of life rather than participants."

"Switch to Play" explains what microtechnology can offer children with special needs. Packed with specialist information and advice, it is an invaluable resource for all parents and carers.

It describes the use of a wide variety of switched playthings and the skills and more advanced use of equipment to which they can lead. Many sources of information and practical help are indicated with a list of suppliers and some do-it-yourself ideas.

"Switch to Play" is available from Play Matters/NTLA and costs £3.00 for members or £3.50 for non-members. For a copy fill in and return the slip below.

I would like to order copy(ies) of "Switch to Play".

I enclose a cheque for £..... payable to the National Toy Libraries Association.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

TOY LIBRARY.....

MEMBERSHIP NO.....

RETURN TO: Play Matters/NTLA, 68 Churchway, London NW1 1LT, tel: 071-387 9592.

storm clouds at Christmas

A NEW SONG



Supported by Solihull MBC

Education Dept.

Price: £1-50

By Carra Bosworth
& Solihull school children

all proceeds will
go towards the Romanian
Children's Appeal

ORDER FORM

CONTACT NAME _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____ ADDRESS _____

NO. OF TAPES REQUIRED _____ SUM ENCLOSED _____

Please make cheques payable to "Storm Clouds Appeal", and return this form
to Whitesmore Arts Theatre, Whitesmore School, Chapelhouse Rd., Chelmsley Wood.
BIRMINGHAM B37 5JS TELEPHONE 021 770 4431

Have you sent your subscription for 1991/92? If not, there is a form on the back page. This is the first time the labels have been printed by the computer from the database and, if it has worked properly, only those people who are fully paid up for 1990/1 or 1991/2 will receive a copy. This is thanks to Rod Boyes of Brilliant Computing who has given up many weekend hours to help to set up the database and sort out all the teething problems.

Re: Music for Romania Appeal

Many of us working in special education well respected the work of Flo Longhorn, who recently retired from her Headship in Bedfordshire.

Flo is now working in Romania and Albania with children with disabilities.

In a recent letter, Flo described how impoverished the orphanages in both countries were, lacking in books and toys for the children. Everything is passed on through oral tradition, and she is endeavouring to develop staff training materials, alongside working with the children and their carers.

In order to support Flo in her work, I have organised an appeal in Solihull. I have worked with a musician and two groups of children from our schools in Solihull, who have now made a tape entitled "Storms at Christmas". The song particularly describes the plight of Romanian children.

This tape is now on sale throughout Solihull, price £1.50. Naturally, there is nothing to stop us selling it further afield, which is why I am writing to you.

If you would like copies of the tape, I would be happy to post them to you. I am attaching an order form, and hope that you will feel able to support this venture.

With best wishes.

Barry Carpenter
Inspector
(Special Educational Needs)

You can use these forms to
order any of the materials
mentioned in this issue.

ORDER FORM STORM CLOUDS AT CHRISTMAS
CONTACT NAME _____
NAME OF SCHOOL _____ ADDRESS _____

NO. OF TAPES REQUIRED _____ SUM ENCLOSED _____

Please make cheques payable to "Storm Clouds Appeal", and return this form
to Whitesmore Arts Theatre, Whitesmore School, Chapelhouse Rd., Chelmsley Wood.
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Academic Year 1991/92

P M L D Link

Subscription Form

Name:

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I/we enclose a cheque/postal order for £4.00 for 3 issues of
PMLD Link - Autumn 1991, Spring 1992, Summer 1992

* This is a new subscription/renewal of my subscription

Signed: Date:

If you require a receipt please tick box
and enclose a stamped addressed envelope

* delete as appropriate

Cheques should be made payable to 'PMLD Link'

Please return this form to: Carol Ouvry
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Putney
London S.W.15 1JZ