Teacher Education for Inclusion
Lessons from NCSE research and policy advice

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Why is teacher education so important?

- Most important factors in student outcomes: teachers and quality teaching.
- Appropriate training of mainstream teachers is ‘crucial’ in teaching children with diverse educational needs: principles of inclusion built into all teacher education programmes (WHO, 2011).
- Inclusive education is the responsibility of all teachers and preparing all teachers for work in inclusive settings is the responsibility of all teacher educators (EADSNE, 2012).
- NCSE international literature reviews echo these sentiments*.

*Refer to full reference list
How prepared are teachers in Ireland?

- All students learn differently. Teachers need to know how students and those with SEN learn and how to teach and differentiate.
- One in four students with a learning or special educational need in every classroom in Irish schools (Banks and McCoy, 2011).

*Our research tells us:

- Teachers feel unprepared to work with children with SEN following ITE (similar to international reports).
- Limited use of a variety of differentiation strategies in schools.
- Inconsistencies and challenges in planning and setting targets.
- Limited and inconsistent measurement of outcomes.

*Refer to full reference list
How prepared are teachers in Ireland?

What does this evidence tell us?
- Challenges for ITE
- Outcomes for students with SEN?
How prepared are teachers in Ireland?

What about CPD?

- 87% (n= 764) resource/learning support teachers in mainstream schools had undertaken some professional development (varied enormously 2 hour session – masters degree).
- 63% had a specific qualification in SEN (O’Gorman and Drudy et al, 2011).

*Yet other NCSE research tells us:
- CPD perceived to be limited and access varied.
- Teachers reported limited knowledge of specific teaching approaches.
- On-going challenges- planning, differentiation and review.

*Refer to full reference list
How prepared are teachers in Ireland?

What does this evidence tell us?

- Teachers still feel not adequately prepared.
- Challenges for CPD (content, access).
- Outcomes for students with SEN?
How have we considered these issues?

NCSE Policy Advice

- Supporting Students with SEN in Schools (2013).
- The Future Role of Special Schools and Classes (2011).

Advice is informed by:

- Extensive consultations with parents; students; advocacy groups; teachers; principals; school management bodies; health and educational professionals; relevant government departments and agencies.
- NCSE and other research evidence.
Initial teacher education

Teachers need to:

- Know about the needs of children with different types of SEN.
- Plan at whole class and individual level.
- Be able to differentiate.
- Know a variety of teaching methodologies.
- Assess for and of learning.
- Teach for literacy and numeracy.
- Know how to use ICT.
- Be equipped for organisational and administration duties.

Standards based on these competencies.

Mandatory components within ITE to address these with placement options in special settings.
NCSE Policy Advice

Existing teachers- CPD

- Children with SEN in every classroom.
- Similar skills and knowledge as above.
- Specific issues for post-primary teachers:
  - Nature and structure of the syllabus.
  - Focus on state exams and preparing students.
  - Organisational and class structure and timetabling.
  - Additional support in teaching literacy and numeracy.

Mandatory levels and frequency of CPD within overall framework of CPD.
NCSE Policy Advice

Teachers in specialist roles and settings
- Additional knowledge, skills and competencies required.
- Professional development required to address complex and diverse needs.
- Mandatory levels and frequency of CPD with placement opportunities.

Principals and deputy-principals
- Important role of leaders for whole school approach to inclusion and making students feel welcome.
- Ongoing programme of CPD for principals and deputy principals.
Context for New Research

ITE

- Issues identified in our research and internationally.
- Developments in ITE.
- Major study to focus on:
  - Content of ITE.
  - How it prepares teachers to be inclusive (EADSNE Profile).
  - Intended impact of changes on student outcomes.

CPD

- Issues identified in our research and internationally.
- Developments in CPD (Cosán framework).
- Initial scoping exercise:
  - Identify and classify suite of CPD.
  - Content and availability of CPD.
  - Bank of information in one place.
NCSE Reference List

- International Review of the Literature of Evidence of Best Practice Provision in the Education of Persons with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. (Parsons et al, 2009)
- Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children: An International Review. (Marschark and Spencer, 2009)
- International Review of the Literature of Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Blind and Visually Impaired Children. (Douglas et al, 2009)
- Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Children with Emotional Disturbance/Behavioural Difficulties: An International Review. (Cooper and Jacobs, 2010)
- Access to the curriculum for pupils with a variety of special educational needs in mainstream classes: An exploration of the experiences of young pupils in primary school. (Ware et al, 2011)
- A Study on the Prevalence of Special Educational Needs. (Banks and McCoy, 2011)
- Professional Development for Teachers Working in the Area of Special Education/Inclusion in Mainstream Schools. (O'Gorman and Drudy, 2011).
NCSE Reference List

- Inclusive Research in Irish Schools- A longitudinal study of the experiences of and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Irish Schools. (Rose et al, 2015)
- An Evaluation of Education Provision for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Ireland. (Daly and Ring et al, forthcoming)
- Understanding Special Class Provision in Ireland- Findings from a Qualitative Study (Banks et al, forthcoming)