

# Evaluation of the impact of the DFE investment in initiatives designed to improve teacher workforce skills in relation to SEN and disabilities - 1st interim report

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This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> Interim Report of a longitudinal study to evaluate the impact of investment by the Department for Education (DfE) to improve teacher workforce skills in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The evaluation started in December 2008 and this report covers work carried out over the period January 2009 – July 2010. The evaluation continues until March 2011.

The two main developments are the Training Toolkit developed by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) for students in initial teacher training and the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) developed by the National Strategies for teachers in practice. Each comprises the development of materials and has a planned national dissemination strategy with phased implementation. The TDA Toolkit was made available to providers of primary undergraduate courses in initial teacher training (ITT) in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Phase 1 (2008-09), followed by materials in 2009-10 for providers of secondary undergraduate courses and providers of the PGCE primary/secondary. Phase 1 of the IDP (2008-09) comprised two sets of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) materials focusing on speech, language and communication needs and on dyslexia respectively. Materials for supporting pupils with autism spectrum disorders (2009-10) and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (2010-11) then followed and were disseminated in Phases 2 and 3.

In addition there are further initiatives within the programme designed ultimately to improve the achievement and well-being of pupils with SEND, including the Stammering Information Programme and extended placements for trainee teachers in special schools or specialist provision in mainstream schools. Together these initiatives add up to an innovative and challenging programme of work which represents a comprehensive attempt to enhance the knowledge, skills, and confidence of the teacher workforce nationally, through both initial teacher training and the CPD of teachers. The strategy of developing the IDP as both a SEND and school improvement issue has the potential to avoid its marginalization as 'only' about pupils with SEND, to bring school leaders into the initiative and also to embed SEND as central to whole school development.

This report presents some of the research carried out during the first two years of the project. Not all work is reported here, especially where we are seeking to compare developments over time and need later comparative data. The research continues and a final report will be produced at the end of the study in March 2011.

### **Main findings**

- The dissemination of the initiatives for both initial teacher training and Continuing Professional Development for teachers has grown over the 18 months to July 2010, with increased awareness and take up by schools.
- The TDA Training Toolkit on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has been well received by higher education institute providers of undergraduate initial teacher training who value its contribution and are incorporating it into their undergraduate programmes.
- The extended placements for trainee teachers in specialist settings are offering important benefits for both staff and trainees, with over 9 out of 10 participating trainees rating them good or excellent in terms of preparing them for teaching pupils with SEND.
- The cluster meetings for SEND tutors in ITT were highly valued as forums for sharing ideas and learning from colleagues.

- The regional hubs were highly regarded by local authority (LA) leads for the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) as an effective support for dissemination.
- The National Strategies' role in disseminating the IDP was welcomed by LA leads, supporting the alignment of the IDP as both a school improvement and SEND issue.
- The Pathfinders' effectiveness was limited by their starting at a similar time to non-Pathfinders.
- Initially the engagement with the IDP was stronger at LA than school level, as expected, reflecting the stage in the dissemination strategy.
- There was a high level of engagement of both head teachers and SENCOs at LA events. This indicated that the strategic objective of bringing together both SEND/inclusion and school development/improvement was being achieved, supporting a whole school approach to teaching pupils with SEND.
- By 2010 dissemination was more established in schools with many examples of effective practice.
- There was wide variation in implementation at both LA and school levels reflecting the voluntary nature of take-up and a sense of local ownership of the national initiative.
- Problems were identified following feedback from teachers/education professionals with the Phase 1 materials for speech, language and communication needs and for dyslexia, but these are being addressed by a review and revision process. The Phase 2 materials (autism spectrum) were generally viewed more favourably although here too there were accessibility difficulties resulting from IT incompatibility in many schools.

## **Detailed findings**

### ***Initial teacher training***

#### *The Training Toolkit on SEND*

- By 2010 almost all ITT tutors had incorporated selected material from the Toolkit into their teaching materials for SEND.
- Among those tutors familiar with the Toolkit, 9 out of 10 or more found it 'effective' or 'very effective' in enhancing a range of trainees' knowledge, skills and understanding around SEND.
- 9 out of 10 tutors found most aspects of the *format* of the Toolkit 'useful' or 'very useful'. The DVDs, the memory stick and the ability to tailor the Toolkit for personal use were particularly valued.
- Trainees rated the teaching on SEND they had received as significantly more effective and felt more prepared to teach pupils with SEND if their course had incorporated the Toolkit.

#### *The electronic network for SEND tutors*

- The electronic network for SEN tutors, hosted on the teacher training resource bank (TTRB), was rarely recognised and there appear to be few if any active users.

#### *The extended placements in specialist settings*

- In 2010, three quarters of courses had taken up the offer of the extended placements in specialist provision, an increase from two thirds in 2009.
- 9 out of 10 or more of those trainees who had undertaken a placement rated the effectiveness of different elements 'effective' or 'very effective'.

- Positive views about the extended placement in special schools or mainstream resources or units reflected three themes: helping to equip students with important skills and knowledge; enabling tutors to enhance their own knowledge and awareness around SEND; and that they were valued by colleagues in special schools.
- A third of tutors believed there was particular value in placements in special schools arguing that the special school sector had been sidelined in ITT for too long.
- Trainees who had undertaken a placement were more likely to consider a career in a special school or mainstream school with a specialist unit or resource base.
- They also rated the teaching of SEND on their course more highly and felt better prepared to teach pupils with SEND than those who had not had a placement

### ***The Inclusion Development Programme***

#### *Role of National Strategies and development of materials*

- The role of the National Strategies in the IDP was seen as supporting the alignment of SEND and school improvement work at LA level and as adding 'clout' to the initiative in terms of engaging schools.
- There were a number of teething problems in the dissemination of the IDP including a substantial time gap between the launch of IDP and the availability of materials. These resulted in criticisms of 'lateness' and consequent difficulties for LAs and schools to include Phase 1 (SLCN and dyslexia) in their school development/improvement planning for 2008-09.
- Most early criticisms concerned accessibility, as familiarity with content was at an early stage. Views about the Phase 2 materials (autism spectrum) were more positive although there were again accessibility difficulties resulting from a mismatch between the more advanced technology used and the IT system in many schools.
- These early concerns were addressed, including through revisions (refreshment) of the materials, and by 2010 teething problems had largely been resolved.

#### *Role of the SEN regional hubs*

- The hub IDP strand meetings were a strength of the national dissemination model.
- The key benefits of the IDP strand regional hub meetings highlighted by IDP strand leads were the impetus they gave to the initiative, the opportunity to focus on the IDP, to meet with others from outside their own LA, to share resources and ideas (including via hub websites), to share ways of disseminating the materials to schools, to share experiences, and to provide a forum for educational professionals to learn from each other.

#### *Role of the Pathfinders*

- The Pathfinders provided limited benefits as a means of modelling dissemination to schools from which other LAs could learn. This was mainly because the Pathfinders had not been implemented far enough in advance of roll-out in other LAs.
- IDP leads in Pathfinder LAs valued the involvement of staff from I CAN and Dyslexia Action because of their knowledge of the IDP materials and of SLCN or dyslexia respectively.

- By 2010, only two of eight IDP leads from Pathfinder LAs reported a sustained impact on IDP dissemination arising from the Pathfinder - one Model 1 (cascade) dyslexia Pathfinder and one Model 2 (buddy system) SLCN Pathfinder.

#### *Role of hub IDP strand lead*

- The system of each regional hub having one of the constituent LA leads as a hub lead was beneficial to the dissemination.

#### *Role of IDP lead in each LA*

- The requirement for each LA to have a lead person responsible for the delivery of the IDP has facilitated dissemination.
- The lack of funding allocated to free time to undertake the role, however, is a significant limitation.
- The degree of alignment between SEN/inclusion and school improvement varies at strategic planning level and in operational delivery to schools.
- Dissemination models to schools varied across five main dimensions (approach, level, pitch, school phase and IDP module). Within each dimension, there were also a range of options. LAs varied in the options selected. This meant that each LA created a 'pick and mix' model.
- All the IDP leads reported positive learning from Phase 1 and almost all made changes for dissemination and delivery in Phase 2.

### **Impact**

#### *Early*

- By May/June 2009, many of the IDP leads in our sample were reporting high numbers of schools having attended an event about the IDP but relatively low numbers of schools that had actively engaged with the IDP in the sense of using it within the school.
- Most LAs in the sample involved both the head teachers and SENCOs in information and training about the IDP, which supported the IDP as both a SEND and whole school improvement initiative.
- The IDP had an impact on the CPD offer around SEND; in some cases, this included a refocusing of CPD support on Wave 1 from Wave 3.
- The main barriers to a quick impact on school-level CPD were the timing of the Phase 1 roll out, which was too late to be included in schools' planned 2008-09 CPD programme, and the presentation of the materials themselves, which were perceived as not working as a training package that could be picked up and used straight away in schools.
- In schools that had used the IDP during 2008-09, overall, teachers in each school shifted up one category of the 'focusing, developing, establishing, enhancing' continuum, relative to where they had been prior to the IDP training.

#### *By 2010*

- Impact was becoming evident in schools which had developed their practice as a result of the IDP.
- Impact was enhanced where the IDP was embedded in the LA's regular CPD programme
- In these schools, impacts were reported at the levels of teacher confidence and increased empathy with pupils' barriers to learning; increased thinking about and reflection on current practice; increased understanding of the SEND domain (dyslexia and/or SLCN); specific changes in teaching practice

and/or in the learning environment; and increased confidence about being able to talk to parents of pupils with dyslexia or SLCN.

- It was clear from the interviews with teachers that impact was greatest when the CPD had used active learning techniques – opportunities to discuss, reflect, plan, try out and review were key to subsequent impact on practice.
- The most successful area of impact was the raising of awareness of the importance of SEND in mainstream classroom teaching.
- Factors affecting the implementation of the IDP include:
  - CPD
    - Relation to the school's development/improvement plan
    - Nature and level of LA support
    - Nature and level of support from other services e.g. speech and language therapists
    - Accessibility of the IDP materials
    - Quality of the CPD delivered to the school
    - Extent of CPD follow through, review and monitoring of practice
  - Inclusion
    - School climate around inclusion
    - Individual teachers' views/ beliefs about inclusive education in general and more specifically about Wave 1 inclusive teaching in mainstream classes.
  - School context
    - Level of support for implementation of IDP, including specialist staff
    - Staff factors, e.g. turnover

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations arising from the first year of the evaluation were made direct to the DfE, TDA, National Strategies and other key stakeholders in spring 2010. The following interim recommendations take into account that process and the fact that the research has another six months to run. It is also recognized that this is a period of change in terms of organisational structures and budgetary constraints, with implications both for what might be funded and by whom (e.g. nationally or locally). The following recommendations take account of these issues:

- The Toolkit should be made available to relevant new members of HEI teaching staff.
- Consideration should be given to updating as necessary the Toolkit materials, to keep them current, for example the materials on legal aspects of SEND education and inclusion.
- Consideration should be given to making extra provision of the Toolkit, particularly the memory stick and DVDs.
- Consideration should be given to the continuation of the regional cluster meetings in relation to SEND, ITT and CPD.
- Consideration should be given to the future of ITT extended placements in specialist settings.
- Consideration should be given to interactive models of IDP dissemination longer term.
- Consideration should be given to the LA role as a facilitator for sharing learning and good practice among professionals, including through high quality CPD such as the IDP resources for teachers of pupils with SEN.

- Consideration should be given to extending the induction CPD for NQTs by extending beyond the NQT year in order to better support teaching of pupils with special educational needs within mainstream schools. Induction CPD for NQTs should include a focus on Wave 1 inclusive quality first teaching extending beyond the NQT year.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of the study**

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> Interim Report of a study to evaluate the impact of investment by the Department for Education (DfE) to improve teacher workforce skills in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The evaluation started in December 2008 and this report covers work carried out over the period January 2009 – July 2010. The initiative continues until March 2011.

This project includes several strands each of which comprises research into initiatives designed to further the government's policy of increasing workforce skills. In this case the focus is on pupils with SEND. A second major policy driver, the development of inclusive education, was also fundamental to the initiatives within the overall programme for which this study provides research evidence. More recently there has been a greater emphasis on the well-being and achievement of pupils with SEND and their families. The fourth policy driver is the emphasis on school development and improvement. The evaluation takes account of these complementary contextual elements.

The research reported here was undertaken during the first two years of the initiative and provides a comparison to allow examination of change over time. The final report will include data in the third year and so allow examination of the extent and effectiveness of the development and dissemination of the various initiatives within the programme as a whole.

### **1.2 Background**

Children and young people with SEND pose a substantial challenge to the education system. They have needs that are identical to those of other young people but they also have needs that are specific to groups of pupils who share some of their difficulties; also, as with every other child, they have needs that are unique. Furthermore, there is no simple match between categories of SEN or disability and needs. For example, it cannot be assumed that all pupils with severe or profound hearing loss have the same needs for intervention to engender optimal progress.

Fundamental to the successful education of pupils with SEND are the knowledge and skills of teachers. These take on an even greater importance because of child variability and the challenges posed by the range and diversity of their learning needs. In order to produce effective education, therefore, a key element is the support and development of teaching skills and knowledge. This applies to teachers primarily and also the teaching assistants they manage within their classroom. Furthermore, the development of collaborative practice such as that between speech and language therapists and education staff requires other professionals also to develop skills necessary to optimise this way of working.

Those undertaking initial teacher training (ITT) feel uneasy about their levels of competence in relation to teaching pupils with SEN and so lack confidence. For example, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (2009) reported in a recent survey that only about half of newly qualified teachers considered that their initial teacher training was good or very good in preparing them to work with learners

with SEN<sup>1</sup>. Ofsted (2008) was critical of the lack of consistency in the quality of ITT in preparing teachers to raise the achievements of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

To make progress it is necessary to improve teachers' knowledge, skills, confidence and behaviour. These are interdependent and require a programme that includes both initial teacher training and a sustained, collaborative programme of continuing professional development (CPD). In *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004), the DfES addressed these issues, including identifying raising expectations and achievements through developing teachers' skills and strategies as one of four key areas of improvements in meeting the needs of children with SEN and disabilities. The resulting programme of implementation led, among other initiatives, to the Inclusion Development Programme and new standards for teachers regarding SEN.

In *The Children's Plan* (G.B. Parliament. House of Commons, 2007), the Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF: the predecessor to the DfE) committed to an £18 million investment to support improvements in outcomes and provision for children with SEND, stating that, 'Government wants to ensure that every child with SEN gets an education that allows them to achieve their full potential.' (p78) This investment includes:

- support for the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and others to improve initial teacher training and continuing professional development;
- further support for the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP), specifically regarding workforce skills around the teaching and learning of children with speech, language and communication needs, dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorders and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties;

As a separate, but related, initiative, in April 2008 the DCSF announced funding of £340 000 over three years for the Michael Palin Centre ([www.stammeringcentre.org](http://www.stammeringcentre.org)) to develop the Stammering Information Programme to provide schools across England with information, advice and training materials on how best to support pupils who stammer. In addition, *The Children's Plan* committed to asking Ofsted to review progress on SEN in 2009, in the context of greater personalised learning and the Disability Equality Duty on schools. Their findings were reported recently.<sup>2</sup> The Coalition Government has also expressed its commitment to addressing the well-being and achievement of pupils with SEND and a Green Paper is due at the end of this year.

### 1.3 The Study

The present research study addresses a number of initiatives designed to improve the initial training and continued professional development of teachers with respect to children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

#### 1. *Initial teacher training (ITT)*

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<sup>1</sup> 49% primary and 56% secondary teachers rated their preparation good or very good, unchanged from 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Ofsted (2010). *The special educational needs and disability review*. Ref: 090221 <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/The-special-educational-needs-and-disability-review>

The following initiatives are being carried out under the direction of the TDA.

- The roll out, from September 2008, of new study units on SEN and disability, developed for providers of primary undergraduate teacher training;
- The roll out, from September 2009, of similar materials for providers of secondary undergraduate courses and, from January 2010, providers of the PGCE primary/secondary;
- The promotion of extended placements for trainee teachers in special schools or other specialist provision;
- Publication of guidance and exemplar material, designed to strengthen and reinforce the experience acquired by newly qualified teachers during their induction period;
- The introduction of resources to support consistency of assessment when institutions are assessing trainee teachers against the SEN and disability elements of the Professional Standards for qualified teacher status (QTS);
- New electronic and other facilities to help tutors network effectively;
- The introduction, from September 2009, of DfE funded places on mandatory qualification courses for specialist teachers of children with sensory impairments.

2. *Inclusion Development Programme (IDP)*

The IDP is being carried out under the National Strategies:

- The Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) – CPD training materials designed to bolster the confidence of serving teachers and other staff, commissioned and disseminated by the National Strategies. Phase 1 (2008) focused on children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and those with dyslexia; Phase 2 (2009) focused on children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and Phase 3 (2010) on behavioural, emotional and social difficulties;
- Support provided for the embedding of IDP through DfE-funded regional hubs and DfE-funded Pathfinder activity involving specialist voluntary sector organisations.

3. *Stammering Information Programme*

The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children received a grant to develop and disseminate a Stammering Information Programme.

Not all of these elements have developed sufficiently to be included in this 1<sup>st</sup> Interim Report, which focuses on the roll out of the TDA materials and extended placements for primary and secondary ITT (Section 2) and the Inclusion Development Programme (Sections 3 to 6). The Stammering Information Programme was under development during the period covered by this report and findings will be presented in the final report.

## 1.4 Methods

A description of the methods used to collect data for this report is presented in Appendix 1. A brief summary is provided here.

### *Initial Teacher Training*

- Interviews were held with 30 of 40 providers of primary undergraduate initial teacher training (ITT) in 2009.

- In 2010 this was replicated with 37 of 40 primary undergraduate ITT providers and five of nine secondary undergraduate ITT providers.
- On-line surveys were conducted with ITT students, providing data from 306 students (2009), 459 (2010).

#### *Local Authorities and Schools*

- A sample of 30 LAs was selected to reflect a cross section of all LAs. Interviews were held with Inclusion Development Programme leads in 28 of the LAs in 2009 (10 were regional hub leaders, seven were Pathfinder LA leads and 11 were leads from other LAs).
- In 2010 leads from all 30 LAs were interviewed (10, 8 and 12 respectively).
- Interviews were held with the following school staff in 2009 (2010) respectively: SENCOs: 24 (21); head teachers/senior leaders 17 (11); experienced teachers 22 (12); and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) 18 (14).
- On-line surveys of NQTs provided data from 156 (2009) and 139 (2010) NQTs.

### **1.5 Plan of the report**

The findings concerning the ITT initiatives are presented in Section 2 with the findings concerning the Inclusion Development Programme in Section 3. A brief Section 4 Conclusions is also presented.

## **2. THE INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING INITIATIVES**

This section reports on two major initiatives to support initial teacher training (ITT): the TDA Toolkit comprising new study units on SEND and the extended placement of students in special schools and other specialist provision. In addition we report on the cluster groups of tutors designed to support developments and the introduction of the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP), designed primarily to assist the continuing professional development (CPD) of qualified teachers. We report on the views of both tutors and trainee teachers of these developments and also consider the overall impact on the priority given to developing confidence, knowledge and skills of trainee teachers to enhance their preparation to teach pupils with SEND.

Findings are presented, where appropriate, to include comparisons between our research in 2009 and 2010 as the initiatives were rolled out and then started to become consolidated.

### **2.1 The TDA Toolkit**

The TDA Toolkit was produced by Nick Peacey and his colleagues at the Institute of Education, London and published by the TDA. The Toolkit was rolled out first to primary (2008-09) and then to secondary (2009-10) undergraduate providers of ITT. Materials are available to download free and comprise 18 sessions. There is also guidance with respect to the extended placements in specialist SEND provision discussed in Section 2.2. In this section we explore tutors' and students' views of the Toolkit, focusing on its content and use.

#### **2.1.1 Using the Toolkit**

##### ***The TDA Training Toolkit on SEND***

###### *Using the Toolkit*

In 2009, just over two-thirds of HEIs had incorporated selected material from the Toolkit in existing elements of primary undergraduate teaching at the time of interview; others expected to do so before the end of the academic year. The 2010 interviews showed that, with three exceptions (all primary ITT provision), all HEIs had incorporated material from the Toolkit into their teaching. The overwhelming majority of providers had adopted a 'mix and match' approach to the Toolkit. For example, one tutor explained:

'The TDA have made it clear from point one that it's been put together with an "adopt and adapt" philosophy, and that's certainly what we've taken on here [...] We had existing systems and structures and sessions for trainees that we were relatively happy with, but when something of that magnitude and amount of work that's gone into it, and currentness as well, comes along, it's foolish not to adopt and adapt. It's been quite a useful audit tool in terms of that up-to-dateness, and looking at what we do and identifying gaps, both in terms of what all trainees receive and also in terms of the option modules.'

The use of the Toolkit as an aid to auditing was a familiar theme, with providers reviewing their provision, identifying areas that could be enhanced by Toolkit use, and encouraging teaching staff to incorporate new elements into their teaching. Examples of this process included:

'This year what we were able to do with all the units was to look to see where they would enhance what we already do [...] - it was a question of saying "where does this fit?", because it's very comprehensive, this Toolkit, extremely comprehensive [...] We located where the sessions best fit with existing seminars, within modules.'

In 2009, in two institutions the material was used as a stand-alone module; this had risen to four in 2010. For example, one provider had introduced a 30 hour stand-alone module in Year 2 of its degree entitled, 'The TDA SEND Project'. In another case, the Toolkit had acted as a spur to additional SEND education within the degree:

'What we've done is we've taken all of the TDA SEN materials; we've used that as a framework to build the whole module round about that, so it's provided a really good structure for us. What we've done is we're taking some of the money the TDA have given to create within our library structure here, and within our own intranet, a special site for all of the SEN materials.'

Estimates varied widely of the numbers of students exposed to teaching based on the Toolkit; figures depended on the institutions' intakes and year groups involved. Collectively they amounted to around 3,000 in 2009, a figure that had risen notably by 2010, with single HEIs delivering TDA Toolkit material to up to 1,000 students.

### **2.1.2 Toolkit format and content**

#### *Tutors' views*

In 2009, most tutors found the *format* of the Toolkit – the DVDs, the memory stick and the ability to tailor it for personal use – 'useful' or 'very useful'. This continued to be the case in 2010, with the memory stick and the DVDs continuing to be seen as particularly useful. For example, one tutor explained:

'What was particularly good in the format was the electronic copy on the memory stick because trying to take that file home to do some work was like doing weightlifting, so it was much better for me to have the electronic copy and to give them [the resources] to them [the students] electronically, and they really appreciated those.'

Tutors' few negative comments concerned a need for the greater provision of memory sticks, and the lack of user-friendliness of the disks which were in short supply, as were hard copies of the Toolkit. This demand for greater resource provision was also linked to questions concerning the future updating and provision of the Toolkit – will it remain in publication so that additional copies of the pack and the memory stick can be ordered? Will an online version remain and be updated?

The Toolkit *content* was generally well regarded, with interviewees being more familiar with the content in 2010 than in 2009. In both years, the majority found it 'effective' or 'very effective' in enhancing students' knowledge, skills and understanding around SEND. Depending on their existing knowledge base and experience, individuals found different aspects of particular use, but overall it was viewed very positively, e.g. 'For me, it's been a really good tool from where I've been at, as a starting point in trying to develop this course'.

The material on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was particularly welcomed; for example, one tutor stated, 'We've certainly used a lot of Implementing the

Disability Discrimination Act, the CD [...] that's been quite useful'. Although some interviewees felt that some of the Toolkit material was too prescriptive, they were, nonetheless, aware that there was scope for adaptation. Tutors also made suggestions for some strengthening in the Toolkit including:

- to increase clarity about the shift from the medical to the social model of disability. The interviewee who raised this would have like more on some of the specific conditions, such as BESD, along with more specific information to help students apply the learning in the classroom
- to increase opportunities for students to be 'a little more reflective and analytical' – 'I think the content is very handy in terms of overviews of things that students can read, but what I want them to do is to engage with what it's saying a lot more, at times.'
- to extend the overview of research around disaffection/alienation, particularly at secondary level, as well as a need for 'more on physical disabilities and VI and HI in terms of removing barriers, especially for the students who want to focus on that'.

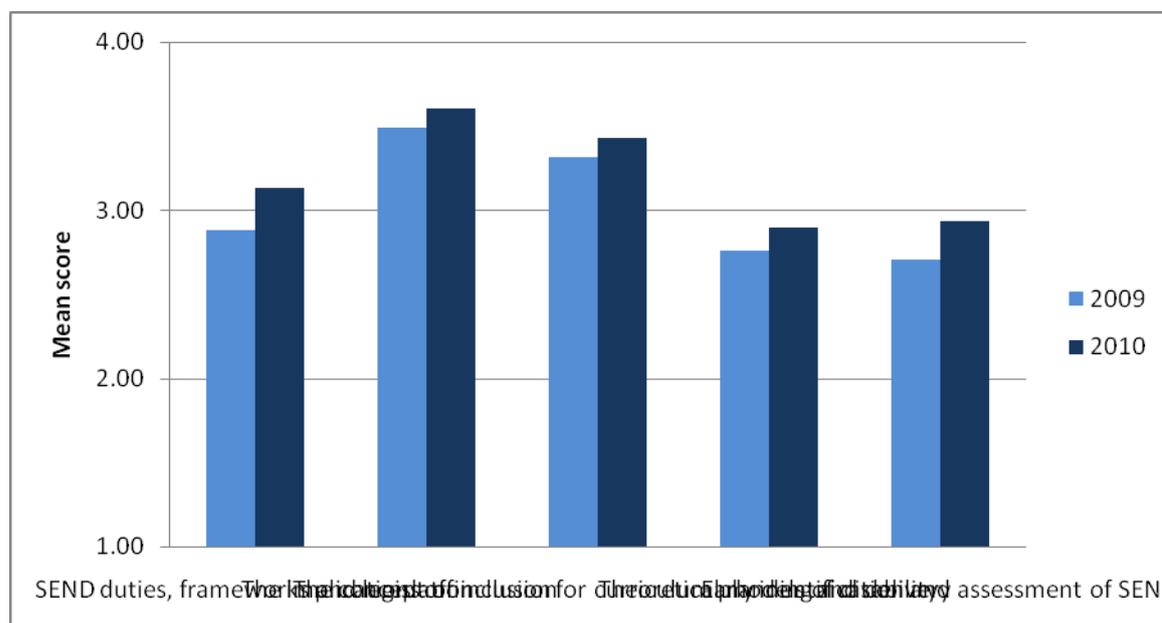
#### *Trainees' views*

ITT courses vary in structure including how and when SEND is included over the period of training. Trainees reported both compulsory and optional SEND modules, the most commonly in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year but with examples over all three or four years of training. In 2010 42% of trainees were aware of the Toolkit compared with 53% in 2009. Of these the majority (72%; 2009: 53%) reported that the Toolkit had been incorporated into their course.

In 2010 taught sessions on general SEND issues were generally positively rated. For example 91% rated teaching of the implications of inclusion for curriculum planning and delivery as effective or very effective. Figure 2.1 shows the improvements in average (mean) ratings of effectiveness of teaching of five topics in 2010 compared with 2009 suggesting a positive impact of the greater embedding of the Toolkit into the teaching. In addition, significant differences in ratings in both years between trainees who reported the Toolkit had been included and those who reported it had not, suggest that teaching effectiveness was related to the inclusion of the Toolkit material in the teaching sessions.

Taught sessions on specific areas of need as set out in the SEN Code of Practice concerning inclusion, diversity and SEND, were also rated positively. For example, 'Making adjustments to teaching and learning for pupils with SEND'; 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)'; and 'Working with other adults in the class (e.g. Teaching Assistants)', were rated by over three-quarters of respondents as 'effective' or 'very effective' in these areas (80%, 78% and 81% respectively).

Figure 2.1: Comparison of effectiveness of teaching for enhancing knowledge, skills and understanding of general SEND issues in 2009 and 2010.



Courses in 2010 were also rated as more effective in enhancing knowledge and skills around various areas of need set out in SEN Code of Practice when the TDA toolkit was incorporated into the course. This was also the case for teaching pupils with SLCN, ASD and BESD, for planning and making judgments for pupils with SEND and for removing barriers to learning (not shown on this graph). Trainees also felt more prepared to teach pupils with SEND. It is also of interest that those who had taken an extended placement (see Section 2.2) gave very significantly more positive ratings of the teaching they had received for each of the areas of need discussed above.

## 2.2 Extended Placements in specialist SEND provision

### 2.2.1 Tutors' views

A second initiative for undergraduate primary ITT was the use of extended placements in specialist provision, intended to provide trainees with firsthand experience of pupils with SEND and especially the specialist provision that is available. Funding was provided for 10 placements of four weeks per course.

#### *Taking up the special placement opportunity*

Typically, in both 2009 and 2010, the special placements were welcomed as providing a much-needed opportunity for ITT students. In 2009, just over two-thirds of HEIs had taken up, or planned to take up, the offer of the extended placements in specialist provision. In 2010, 33 courses offered extended placements from a total possible 42 Primary and Secondary courses (37 and 5 respectively) in the 38 HEIs interviewed, an increase from two thirds to three quarters.

Among the nine courses not offering the special placements in 2010, five offered another opportunity for students to undertake a placement in specialist provision varying in length from two to seven weeks. Of the remaining four, one was unable to

access sufficient places, and three had internal difficulties that prevented the running of the placements.

In 2010, unlike 2009, there were some reports of limited capacity among schools to take special placement students. For some HEIs in 2010, the availability of school places was one of the main factors which determined whether placements increased or remained the same as the previous year, and in one case the lack of capacity had prevented a HEI from offering the placements to its students.

#### *HEI staff views on the special placement opportunity*

In both 2009 and 2010, positive views about the four-week placement in special schools or mainstream resources or units reflected three themes: helping to equip students with important skills and knowledge; enabling tutors to enhance their own knowledge and awareness around SEND; and that they were valued by colleagues in special schools. The opportunities provided by the special placements were welcomed across the HEIs, and regarded as an important addition by those institutions that had little or no previous history of special placements. In some cases, there was an intention to embed fully the special placement as an elective part of the degree programme. For example,

‘For next year [2010/11], because of our experience of the extended placement, we’re looking at actually launching a fully assessed placement in special schools for those students who elect to do it; rather than using the extended placement model, we’re extending that [the special placement] to replace one of the mainstream placements with a special placement.’

#### *Recruiting students to the special placement*

Students were chosen for the special placements in a variety of ways. In 2010, more students were required to make formal application to undertake the placements. In most cases, more students wished to undertake the special placements than there were places available. A variety of application methods were used by HEIs to identify students for the special placements. The criteria established by the TDA guidance underpinned most selection procedures, especially the stress that those taking up the placements should have done well on their mainstream placement. Nonetheless, there was a range of selection processes in place. An example of a detailed selection process for the special placement was provided by one tutor:

‘The students visited at least two special schools to help them make an informed choice, because there is a difference between “I think I want to” and “I really want to”, and also they had to do a reflective statement ... about why they wished to do it. And one of the criteria also was looking at, with their personal tutors, how they’re coping on the course, and also their previous practice. So, we have very stringently siphoned the kind of students that we feel would be successful.’

This contrasted with the process for secondary education undergraduates at another HEI, where students simply put themselves forward for the special placement:

‘It was purely self-selection. Because it is a non-assessed placement it’s a little bit freer in terms of the constraints we might need to operate, so they self-select, and then we chose four [special] schools [...] we’ve already got a good relationship with, who’ve been involved in a placement before.’

The numbers of students undertaking the special placements varied around the TDA figure of ten. A shortage of special school placements, or of staff to mentor the

students, limited the number of students in some cases to fewer than ten. In two provider institutions, resistance on part of staff to the special placements *per se* seem to have impacted on the numbers of students taking the placements. For example, one secondary education provider interviewee explained:

‘Originally we’d hoped to have up to ten students in January/February, and, of course, it had to be put to the students as an offer rather than a compulsory requirement. It was one of their assessed placements in the secondary programme, and I worked very closely with those who volunteered. We had five in the end who came forward, and three, interestingly, I think, were partially dissuaded by their subject tutors. I think that was possibly because the subject tutors work very, very hard to get placements in their subjects in secondary schools with whom they have a very strong partnership, and didn’t want to let them down at the last minute; but that’s part of something that we’re researching here as well, to look at those attitudes to the placement.’

Generally, however, more than the recommended number of ten students undertook the special placement. Some HEIs were able to build on a prior history of placements in special schools, stretching back nearly a decade in one case, and by adding the TDA placement on top of existing special placements, HEIs were able to raise the number of students going on these placements to 50. Other providers had negotiated extra places with special schools, with, for example, one HEI increasing its offer from 15 (2009) to 26 in 2010.

Only two of the providers interviewed were not offering the special placement in 2009/10. In one case the reasons were both internal and external to the HEI, with course structure and a lack of appropriate special placement schools being offered as reasons. In the other case, a change in departmental leadership and focus had impacted upon planning for the special placements, but there were other problems too:

‘The difficulty that we have, ... is that currently we do not have special schools working with us within our partnership provision, and that’s something that I would like to develop ... Geographically, there aren’t a great number of schools within our immediate locality, so I would have to move out to some of our further geographical areas to contact those schools.’

In both institutions, nonetheless, there was an intention to move towards offering special placements for their students.

#### *Types of need covered*

In both years, a wide variety of types of need were covered in the placements covering a spectrum from mild to profound and multiple learning needs including: mild/moderate learning needs; profound/complex and multiple learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; autistic spectrum disorders; severe physical difficulties; language difficulties; hearing impairment; and dyslexia.

Students were typically offered the opportunity to undertake a special placement from a range of needs. The majority of the placements took place in special schools, with some in specialist provision in mainstream schools.

#### *The TDA guidelines*

In both years, the TDA guidelines for the operation of the special placements were generally followed. For example, one tutor explained that, ‘We go to visit the school, and brief the mentors, train the mentors, provide the materials and arrange the dates,

and the students go in for an induction day, and then go in for their placement, with TDA tasks.’ In a few cases, the guidelines had been taken to be obligatory requirements. There was, however, a range in duration of special placements. In some cases where the four weeks model had been adhered to, these were completed as two periods of two weeks each. Where the special placement was for more than four weeks, this was a result of two considerations: to undertake teaching practice and improve understanding, together with embedding the practice and optimise sustainability, as one tutor commented:

‘The rationale behind it is more and more students are expressing an interest in special needs, and just working from the kind of visits offered to them, they actually wanted to do teaching practice, and they wanted to have a longer time. The other thing that has driven it as well is the course is very packed, very rigorous. For them to do an additional something would be very difficult, and I think our students struggled last year [2008/09], the ones that did it as an extended placement voluntarily [...] and part of the reason for this was to embed fully in the degree, so that it would continue even if the TDA funding is withdrawn in the future.’

#### *Building links with special schools*

The special placements had enabled HEIs to build stronger links with special schools in their area, especially in 2010, which was strongly welcomed by HEIs and special schools. About a third of interviewees in years believed there was particular value in placements in special schools, arguing that the special school sector had been sidelined in ITT for too long. For example, one interviewee argued:

‘I think one of the things that special schools decry really is the fact that they are very marginalised from teacher education, teacher training and that very often the placements that they are offered are informal and not supported by normal partnership arrangements. So they are hungry for this kind of opportunity.’

In both years, reported feedback from participating special schools was uniformly positive, with head teachers welcoming what many thought as overdue attention being paid to special schools. They also welcomed the possibility that the placements would lead to students opting for careers in special education. The tutors also expressed positive views on the links that they had been able to make with special schools; for example, one interviewee explained how the special placement had acted as a catalyst for improving SEND education in her HEI:

‘... There’s a sort of breaking down of barriers, there’s an increasing understanding that’s happening amongst colleagues, and that seems to be facilitating different types of conversations when we meet. I have a sense that we’re not now seeing special schools as something very, very separate, planets out there where various people visit from time to time, but part of our community here.’

Interviewees also frequently referred to the positive impact on themselves and other provider staff of the new links with special schools; for example:

‘I can’t tell you how fantastic it was last year! [2008/09]. It was absolutely brilliant! I was a teacher doing different things in teaching for 22 years, but I hadn’t been in a special school, and from a personal point of view what I learnt was just brilliant, and it’s really sparked an interest for me. I think, for myself, being involved in this project, I have just learnt so much [...] about autism, speech and language, communication [...] I’ve understood or

developed an understanding about the flexibility of the settings, how I've had to be in different types of settings myself.'

The interviewee noted that the response from the special schools was that 'they were falling over themselves to be on board with this'.

#### *Impact on ITT students*

The providers were enthusiastic about the impact of the special placements on their ITT students. A number of tutors made strongly positive claims for the impact of the special placements on their students. For example:

'My personal view is that it is fantastic [...] it should be for all students.'

'I'd like to see every single trainee teacher in the world getting into a special school [...] it absolutely is the making of every single trainee teacher.'

Tutors also believed that the learning that had taken place during the special placements would have a positive impact on SEND education in mainstream settings when the students began teaching.

#### *Student feedback*

Monitoring and feedback systems for students taking the special placements had been, or were in the process of being strengthened for 2010, compared with 2009. Student feedback was typically very positive, and there was a minority of students who expressed an interest in careers in special education as a result of their placement experience. Feedback was gathered in a range of ways – formal reporting by students, debriefings which included students and participating staff, presentations by students to staff and to students from later cohorts at the HEIs, and informal contact between students and tutors. For example, describing a focus group of students held immediately after the placement, one tutor comment:

'The comments from the [12] students after only four weeks were very, very insightful. What we were amazed at was the high level of confidence of dealing with children with really quite severe and complex difficulties, a huge growth of confidence. So, we've done that again this year [2009/10], and we had the students in again last week, and we did the same thing, and we're getting the same sort of responses back.'

#### *Issues with the special placement*

In both years, a small minority of HEI interviewees expressed negative views on the placements – for example, that they did not help students to achieve the practical experience needed to reach the professional standards in mainstream schooling. One HEI tutor, interviewed in both years, questioned the function of special schools in terms of an inclusion outside of mainstream schooling. In consequence, the placements were undertaken on a split basis – with two weeks in a special school and two weeks in a mainstream school 'that had excellent practice in including children with special needs'.

### **2.2.2 Trainees' views**

In 2010 almost two thirds (61%) of the 2010 cohort were aware of the opportunity to have an extended placement in a special school or in a mainstream school with a specialist unit or resource base. Just over three-quarters (77%) indicated that such

opportunity attracted them and at the time of the survey a third (31%) had taken part in an extended placement. These were the majority of those interested as only 10% of those who had not taken part in an extended placement indicated that they would do so in the future.

Trainees were generally positive about a range of topics: the with over 90% rating the experience either good or excellent for all developmental experiences: school inclusion policy (93%), assessment of pupil needs (93%), intervention strategies/resources (94%), personalised learning (91%), setting appropriate targets(90%), working with other teachers and TAs (96%), and working with other specialists such as therapists (91%).

Trainees who had experienced extended placements were significantly more likely to want to teach in a special school, a mainstream school specialist unit or resource base, or to qualify to teach pupils with hearing impairment (although not those with visual impairment, though the difference was close to significant). Furthermore, they were also significantly more likely to feel well prepared to lead pupils with SEND.

### **2.3 The Cluster Groups**

Cluster groups of tutors were held regionally to provide support and an opportunity to share their experience. These were very successful. Typically, by the 2009/10 academic year cluster meetings were held at the frequency of one per term. Almost five-sixths of the interviewees had attended the cluster meetings designed to support the use of the Toolkit similar in 2010, with the majority of interviewees having attended more than one cluster meeting. In both years, cluster meetings were highly valued as a place to focus on SEND, and interviewees typically made strongly positive comments concerning their experience of cluster group meetings, for example:

‘I think it has been very useful in terms of being able to discuss commonality of issues; certainly it’s made links with other things so these things spin off into others and so it gives us an opportunity to get together when we wouldn’t normally do so. So I think that that’s been another useful element of it just to know that we’re regularly going to be getting together and also to know that we’re able to almost endorse the way we’re interpreting what we’re doing I think has been useful as well really.’

The meetings were seen as forums to share ideas with and learn from colleagues, to problem solve together, to develop networks, and to draw upon invited expertise in the area of SEND education. Some interviewees regarded the cluster meetings as the most valuable form of HEI formal networking that they had experienced.

#### *Cluster group activity*

Typically, cluster groups had undergone continued development since their inception, a process that had seen the numbers involved, and the scope of activities, increase. Initial updating moved onto examining the implications for the PGCE and possible research-related working. The tutors also explored collaboratively the optimal ways of using the Toolkit materials in their HEIs and the specialist placements.

The larger number of cluster group meetings appear to have developed a meeting model that combined member discussion and sharing of practice, experience etc, with invited speaker sessions. For example:

‘The last group we had input on special schools and the merits of them and how they work; we had input on ADHD in one session. That’s been very helpful professionally to hear somebody speak and to be able to talk and ask questions, so the mixture of that with half a day sharing practice. I think we’ve got a good network that will keep in touch in the future. It’s been very, very useful in that respect and we’ve taken students as well.’

The cluster group meetings had also led to spin-off conferences on SEND education being arranged. One interviewee explained that her cluster was organising such a conference, with a range of stakeholders being invited. Some 100 attendees were expected. Other conferences were planned for the summer term 2010, and there were further spin-offs, with, for example, one group of cluster members in the process of writing a book on SEND provision in schools and the role of SENCOs.

#### *ITT students at cluster groups*

A notable development in 2010 was the incorporation of ITT students into cluster meetings. Student attendees provided feedback on SEND education and the special placements, as well as being involved in student-focused SEND activity, and peer group discussion. The inclusion of students was valued with both HEI staff and students gaining from their contributions. Students also received additional input from tutors, which, in turn fed into tutor discussions at the cluster.

#### *Cluster group sustainability*

There was a widespread belief by 2010 that the cluster meetings would be maintained, although a small minority of interviewees feared that funding issues, and, in one case, the reluctance of a HEI to release staff for out of campus meetings, might threaten attendance. This was an important concern for some of the interviewees, who were concerned about their possible loss of access to a highly valued forum:

‘The funding makes a huge difference because you say “I’ve got to travel to the [cluster], I’ve got this job to do. I will buy myself out of this and I will make sure it happens’ and it has. I think you don’t realise how much in isolation you are until you join a group like that and you think,” Gosh this is really good.’

The one other concern with regard to sustainability was made by an interviewee who raised the issue of HEI management policies, saying that, ‘I think the only thing that jeopardises any of this is the fact of the demands on our time because not all universities are happy to release people. It’s terrible isn’t it? ‘.

## **2.4 Priority given to SEND education in HEI ITT provision**

The majority of interviewees in both years explained that SEND education had always been a priority in their HEI. Nonetheless, there was a predominant view that the TDA Toolkit and the extended placements in specialist provision have reinforced the importance of SEND education in ITT provision. These initiatives had acted as a catalyst to reviewing and strengthening SEND education in HEIs. They were particularly welcomed by interviewees who had a strong personal commitment to SEND and inclusion in that they believed that these national initiatives gave added weight to arguments for an even greater priority for SEND in their ITT provision:

‘It brings it higher on the agenda for managers [...] within the department, so it’s been good to be able to say this is a priority across the programme.’

There was also an appreciation that the provision of the Toolkit had enabled the overall delivery of SEND education within HEIs to be strengthened. The Toolkit was seen to be an important contribution to the knowledge base of non-specialist tutors. For example, a specialist SEND tutor noted:

'It's not so much just a priority, it has enabled us to deliver at a higher level of expertise ... [...] There's about three or four of us who have got some specialism in special needs ... [but] most tutors are not and it is the support it has given to the non-specialist tutor where the real difference has been made.'

## **2.5 The Inclusion Development Programme**

Two thirds of HEI interviewees were aware of the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) for schools, although only a minority had sufficient familiarity with the materials to offer opinions on their value.

There was a range of engagement with the IDP during the two years. Some HEIs incorporated IDP material into their ITT courses, some gave students access to all the IDP material, others expected students to engage with the material as independent learners, while other HEIs merely made their students aware of the IDP material. Tutors who were aware of the IDP also described how it was signposted to students within the undergraduate ITT programme but not incorporated into the curriculum. They had:

- informed students about the materials and directed them to the IDP website;
- given all students a copy of the DVD, with additional copies available in the students' resource room;
- given trainees access to the materials and highlighted the relevance of the materials during taught sessions, especially those by speakers from schools;
- given Year 1 students the DVDs; signposted all students to IDP link on the Moodle.

In one HEI, the trainees had been given access to the IDP materials on their virtual learning environment (VLE) but the materials had also been incorporated into the teaching and learning programme with different student groups looking at different aspects from the programme and then using it within an interactive teaching session. Final year students also received a lecture covering dyslexia, SLCN and autism spectrum disorders based on the IDP.

### **3. INCLUSION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

In this section we report on the roll out of the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) over its three phases: SLCN and dyslexia in 2008, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) 2008-9 and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties 2009-10. The evidence is drawn from interviews with IDP leads from 30 LAs, some of whom acted as a lead for their regional hub, and with SENCOs, senior leaders, experienced teachers and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in 28 schools across 21 LAs. We also report surveys of 156 NQTs in 2009 and 139 in 2010.

#### **3.1 Local authority and regional level**

The dissemination of each phase of the IDP was implemented at regional, LA and school level. This was an attempt to support the initiative by carefully organized broadening of those involved. As an initiative to support qualified teachers (and teaching assistants – not addressed in this report but to be reported in the final report) this is a form of continuing professional development (CPD), initiated centrally, supported by centrally produced materials, but delivered locally and taken up voluntarily. The National Strategies provided support at a regional level through the regional hubs.

##### ***3.1.1 National meetings of IDP strand leads with National Strategies***

The regional hub IDP leads valued the hub system and their own meetings with the National Strategies when interviewed in 2009, and were even more positive when interviewed in 2010. There was a general uniformity of opinion about the meetings, almost all views being positive. The ten hub strand leads identified the following aspects of the national meetings as being of particular value:

- That they were a method of receiving information and updates from the National Strategies
- There was a strong feeling that feedback from the IDP hub leads to the National Strategies was listened to and acted upon
- There was a sense that the IDP hub leads felt that a partnership had developed with the National Strategies
- The meetings enabled IDP hub leads to obtain a wider perspective on developments in other regions
- The meetings had developed into a forum for the sharing of ideas, experiences, materials, documents and resources
- The chance to listen to specialist speakers was welcomed
- IDP hub leads had been able to develop valuable networks with other regional leads that they had drawn upon outside of the national meetings

Overall, the national meetings were appreciated as being an essential support element in the dissemination of the IDP. There was a strong feeling that initial fears that the meetings would simply be a ‘top-down’ method of driving forward the initiative had proved unfounded, and that they had developed as an effective and useful forum, with members feeling at ease with each other and with, as one hub lead commented:

'agendas which facilitate the generation of good ideas and the trading of information and a real collegiate response and approach for the work: so it's much more of a partnership I think with the National Strategies'.

The belief in the value of meeting with peers engaged in the same task of the dissemination and embedding of the IDP was universal.

### **3.1.2 Regional Hubs**

In 2009 several regional hub IDP strand leads made clear that there had been opposition to the shift away from SEN regional *partnerships* to the more centrally directed regional hub model. This issue had delayed the setting up of hubs in some regions where LAs were resistant to 'being told what to do' – which then had a knock on effect of delaying the implementation of the IDP in some LAs. A second issue raised about the new SEN regional hubs *per se* was the model of one LA taking a leading role. There were two aspects to this: in some areas there was a capacity issue and so no single LA was keen to take on hub leadership; in other areas, there was a positive desire to share out the leadership across a number of LAs. One region opted for a federated model where one LA took leadership of each hub strand and partnered with another LA, thus involving eight LAs. Thus, in a number of regions, the IDP strand hub lead did not come from the designated regional hub lead LA but in all such cases this sharing of the work involved in the SEN regional hubs was seen as beneficial. All the IDP leads felt that IDP strand hub meetings and the IDP strand hub LA contacts were worthwhile in supporting the national dissemination.

By 2010, the problems identified in the previous year had been overcome, and could be seen as 'teething troubles' arising from the changes to SEN regional organisation. The regional hubs had developed as highly valued organisations, with the ten IDP hub leads and the 20 LA leads all giving positive assessments of the hubs.

#### *The function of regional hub meetings*

All the regional hub leads and LA leads valued the hub IDP strand meetings. A consistently high level of attendance by LAs at the regional hub meetings (typically 4-5 a year) was evidence of the value of the meetings. The leads argued that the *regional* hub meetings were well regarded for a number of reasons, including:

- They gave LA leads access to the latest information from the National Strategies fed down by the hub leads, and a forum for reflecting back LA views on the IDP roll out
- They were a forum for obtaining and discussing additional information from guest speakers
- They enabled LAs to share practice
- There was a sharing of resources (which was reinforced on regional hub websites) and knowledge
- They enabled LA leads to obtain an overview of IDP implementation across their region
- The meetings provided support for LA leads and other LA staff
- LA leads were able to use the hub meetings to create networks within their region
- The hub meetings provided support for IDP dissemination and embedding
- The hub meetings were open to a range of interested LA staff

There was a very strong, positive assessment of the value of the hub meetings, which had gained in strength as the IDP progressed. These helped underpin LA confidence that they were rolling the IDP out in an effective fashion, supported by the hub. Also, the hub meetings were valued as they gave LA leads access to information from the National Strategies, and the meetings were a forum for exchange of information, knowledge and expertise. Regional hub leads frequently brought other LA staff with specific interests to hub meetings. For example, as new modules of the IDP were rolled out, so relevant LA staff would attend hub meetings dealing with specific modules.

There was a very high degree of uniformity in the hub leads' descriptions, indicating that the IDP regional hubs had developed in similar ways across England. Only one hub lead made what could be regarded as a negative comment - that the sheer success of the hub meetings in attracting LAs meant that meetings had to be very tightly organised and run, in order to accommodate all attendees.

CPD opportunities for LA leads played a part in maintaining high levels of interest in hub meetings, as one lead explained:

'...It's been professional development for the leaders, the local authority leaders, so there's always been some kind of keynote, some quality input in terms of their own CPD around using materials, about quality first teaching, about having a strategic approach to the dissemination. So we've built up the knowledge, skills and understanding of those strand leaders, not only in terms of the materials themselves but in their role as being a strategic lead in their local authority.

#### *The role of the hub in dissemination and embedding the IDP in LAs*

The core function of the IDP hubs is to support the dissemination of the programme to the hub LA leads. The next stage of dissemination, to LA level, has been variable. For example one hub lead's account of dissemination within the region's LAs highlighted not just the high level of engagement between LAs, but also differing patterns of engagement, which the lead felt had differing levels of success. In her view, rolling out the IDP through school head teachers' groups at LA level was, typically, more effective than roll out via SENCO groups at LA level.

The same lead also identified a range of different strategies adopted by LAs to embed the IDP including publications such as a SENCO newsletter, ensuring the IDP was on the agenda of existing meetings, and asking for evidence about the IDP in a new self-evaluation framework. The linkage between school improvement, the roll out of the IDP and SEND was important:

'In [named LA] ... they've just put together a revised self-evaluation framework for schools and they have asked, as evidence gathering, that schools will reference the IDP in a number of sections and that is indicative of a local authority where they've got a very collaborative approach between School Improvement and SEN and I would say probably one of the best examples of that sort of integration.'

The strongly positive assessment by the hub leads in 2010 was an affirmation of the similar views expressed by hub leads in 2009. The same benefits of attendance were identified in 2009 as in 2010, and just as in 2010, hub leads in the previous year were uniformly enthusiastic about the value of the hubs. For example, in 2009, more than one long-serving LA officer leading the IDP strand reported that, in their experience,

the IDP strand regional meetings had been the most successful inter-LA meetings that they had been part of because the meetings were focused and practical:

'I used to go to the regional partnership meetings for various projects and the attendance was pretty hit and miss whereas, with the IDP, the attendance has been good. And the feedback we're getting from people seems to be that they quite like it because it's very hands-on and it's at their level.'

For all the LA leads the added value of the hub IDP strand for supporting the dissemination and embedding of the IDP in their respective LAs was very closely linked to the aspects which they valued about the hub meetings, especially the ways in which colleagues in other authorities approached dissemination, embedding and evaluation, which helped them work out how best to approach these issues in their own authority. Despite significant differences between authorities (in terms of size, number of schools, and geography), the discussions in hub meetings allowed them to shape the model appropriate to their given situation. The other models thus served as templates which could be tailored to specific circumstance and need, to avoid reinvention of the wheel. As one interviewee put it:

'[It] is about sharing experiences, trouble shooting some of the challenges that we're finding within our own local authorities and I think also there's an element of creativity there as well, which is really important'.

### **3.3 LAs and the IDP – dissemination and engagement**

The role of *each LA* across the country in disseminating the IDP at the outset of the programme was defined as being:

- to establish a strategic plan for local implementation of the IDP;
- to identify a lead person responsible for coordinating delivery;
- to gather baseline information on current levels of teacher confidence in meeting the needs of pupils with dyslexia and SLCN. (National Strategies SEN/LDD e-newsletter, Autumn 2008)

Interviews carried out in 2009 with those IDP LA leads that were not hub strand leads or Pathfinders, indicated that not all LAs established a strategic plan and then identified someone to co-ordinate delivery. More usually, someone was given responsibility to lead on the IDP and that person had to work out which colleagues from across the relevant teams and services ought to be involved in the strategic planning of the IDP roll-out. In 2010, LAs leads reported having learned from the Phase 1 roll-out, adapting their approaches for roll-out of the subsequent IDP modules, where necessary.

#### **3.3.1 Dissemination models at LA level**

Data drawn from both the 2009 and 2010 interviews indicated that a wide variety of models of dissemination were used within, and between, LAs (Figure 3.1).



**Figure 3.1 Dimensions and options of dissemination models at LA level**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Additional comments</b>
Approach	Mail shot	Recipient and message varied according to LA stance on alignment between SEN/inclusion and school improvement.
	Specific briefing	Specially arranged about the IDP
	Embedded briefing	Used existing forums and networks
	Direct training	Could focus on: hands-on use of module/s, <i>and/or</i> planning for use in school
	Cascade training	Could be cascaded: from LA staff to schools from school leaders/SENCOs to other teachers from teachers/TAs to other staff from staff in one school to staff in other schools
	Embedded training	Used existing CPD/training opportunities
	Specialist support	Specialist support (from LA staff or I CAN or Dyslexia Action) to individual schools. <u>Type</u> (face to face, phone, e-mail, web-based) and <u>extent</u> of support (amount of time) varied. Criteria of receipt of specialist support were involvement in dissemination to other schools, either at universal or cluster level, or by request from an individual school.
	Mediated uptake	Used school-facing LA staff to encourage/challenge schools around uptake of IDP, as relevant to role of LA staff member visiting the school
Level	Universal (all schools)	Open to any school
	Group of schools	Could be targeted (chosen by LA) or self-selected (school opt-in)
	School cluster/s Individual schools Individual teachers/TAs	
Pitch	Within schools: Head teachers Senior leadership SENCOs CPD leaders LA staff Health colleagues	Could be serially pitched to more than one group. Different approaches could be used for these different groups.  e.g. EPs, SIPs, advisory teachers, specialist teachers e.g. Speech and language therapists
	Early Years Primary Secondary	Could be aligned with, or different from, dissemination for other phases
IDP module/s	Dyslexia SLCN Autism Spectrum BESD	Could be same as, or different from, dissemination for other modules. Could be covered singly or along with one or more other modules.

Any LA in our sample could be used to illustrate the 'pick and mix' tailoring of dissemination. For illustrative purposes, the experience of one LA is used. A launch event covered at *universal level* both a specific briefing and direct training *approach* and was *pitched* at SENCOs, head teachers, LA professionals and speech and language therapists. This was followed by a cascade training *approach, pitched* at four groups of other professionals, including educational psychologists and language consultants, who then used a direct training *approach* at school cluster *level*. In addition, at group *level*, the eight schools who were part of the Pathfinder project received a specialist support *approach* from LA dyslexia teachers. Finally, the LA added in an embedded training *approach* at *universal level, pitched* to school staff, by including the IDP in its CPD brochure which enabled schools to request a whole staff training with specialist support (individual school level; specialist support approach). All of this dissemination was geared to primary and secondary *school phase* and focused on the dyslexia *IDP module*.

LA leads were aware that even adopting a variety of dissemination strategies from the outset, did not guarantee very high levels of engagement by schools. There was frustration that extensive dissemination work did not always produce the desired outcomes. Nonetheless, LA leads had developed their strategies over the two years of roll out to boost engagement among schools. One lead interviewed in 2010, explained that even when the LA was sure that schools had been alerted to IDP material, problems still arose. An increased understanding that this problem was widespread, and that schools that were expected to engage did so, while those which did not have a record of engaging, did not, led this lead, like others, to modify the dissemination strategy in 2009-10:

'So I've learnt lessons, big lessons around things like that that we delivered them [The IDP materials] and we got them signed for so if the schools said they hadn't had it I can come back and say "Actually Mrs Smith signed for it on the...". Things like that really, you had to be bib and braces, it wasn't enough that you'd invited everybody, it wasn't enough that you then went out and delivered all of the packs, nothing was enough and people still say, "Never heard of it, never had it; never got it".

This IDP lead then followed up by going to school consortia and offering sessions to SENCOs and Head Teachers. As a result of the lead's increased efforts to encourage engagement, she felt that take-up among schools was improving. However, she was uncertain whether increased take-up was a result of the developing dissemination mechanisms, an increased general awareness of the IDP, or a greater demand for the later modules of the IDP, in particular that for ASD.

The stress on the linkage between SEN and school improvement was identified by LA leads as being an important variable in the successful embedding of the IDP in schools.

'We have now got greater alignment between SEN and school improvement. IDP is part of the discussion in the school improvement partners' meetings with Head Teachers.'

In some LAs, strategies had been developed to target specific schools that were seen to be vulnerable in terms of not meeting SEN needs. One LA lead had reviewed all the LA's school improvement plans and taken particular steps to 'negotiate their involvement' with the IDP. In another LA expected high school take up of the ASD IDP module did not occur. The IDP lead found that the schools in question felt that their pupils with ASD could be supported by specialists from the LA; that is the

schools in question believed that their own contribution could be minimised. The LA lead saw this as a failure on the part of these schools to understand the purposes and focus of the IDP. She explained her response and the steps that were then taken: 'I kept trying to say to them, "Remember though, this is about quality first teaching."'

In this case, the lead targeted particular schools and achieved 'real measurable impact'. A follow up engagement strategy had identified particular barriers to successful dissemination, which were subsequently overcome.

### **3.3.2 Levels of school engagement with the IDP**

Some LA leads could only provide vague indications of the level of schools' engagement with the IDP by 2010 but the majority had an informed view. Where leads were able to provide numbers of schools engaged in 2010, level of engagement had risen from that in 2009; a development that all leads believed was the case. Leads reported that the differing modules were in demand to different extents. Generally, interviewees gauged the level of engagement on the basis of the number of people who attended particular launch or training events, the fact that the materials had gone to every school, or information they gathered by various means (visits, colleagues, conversations with schools, review of general school data, etc.). However, in a small number of cases, there was evidence of more systematic methods being employed to gauge school engagement, and numbers of schools could be large.

'In the first year [2008-09] we must have had about 80 or 90 schools coming on board with the dyslexia module but again more are coming on board this year.[...]. With the eight project schools, about 80 or 90 with the autism one this year [2009-10]. Speech and language less so. [...] I know about a dozen schools who took up the speech and language option in the first year.'

Two LA leads, who had evidence concerning schools who were resistant to engaging with the IDP, argued that there was an inverse relationship between the level of LA SEND support and school engagement with the IDP; which, in turn, suggested that some schools had failed to understand the contribution that the IDP would make to inclusive teaching in mainstream classes. The lead, who was also a regional hub lead, explained this analysis:

'The big difference, and we've discussed this both in the region and nationally, is between authorities that have big support services and those that don't. If you don't have them then you have massive take-up of the IDP because there's nothing else.'

There was a notable variation in the degree of monitoring of IDP engagement by school carried out by LA leads. Nonetheless, the majority of interviewees indicated that they had some mechanisms in place to capture developments in the various phases of the IDP, but these did not provide an overview of all the schools because not all schools completed requests to provide information on IDP take-up.

### **3.3.3 The quality of school engagement with the IDP and its sustainability**

All interviewees argued that there was a wide range in the *degree* and *quality* of engagement by those schools who had engaged with the IDP. In some schools, the IDP material had not, in fact, been generally encountered by staff, while other schools were working through each module as it was launched, with a third variation

being a differentiated approach to the IDP as a whole, with schools focusing on those modules that they felt were particularly relevant to their needs.

The majority of LA leads recognised that for schools to engage successfully with the IDP in a way that promoted effective dissemination within schools, and built sustainability, it was necessary for senior managers to be involved, and for the IDP to be linked to CPD for staff and school development. The overall message was: 'IDP is here to stay, it is part of school improvement'. Similarly, one lead noted that schools that had really not made an effective engagement with the IDP were those where the IDP 'is not anywhere near their school development plan'. This lead also stressed that she and the LA working group on the IDP had worked with school improvement partners (SIPs) to try and ensure sustainability:

'What we didn't want to do was to add to something that felt like an initiative that would come and an initiative that would go. What we wanted to do was to try to embed it in the work so SIPs had opportunities to look at the materials as well.'

There was also a widespread recognition that, for schools to engage effectively with the programme, head teachers and senior managers had to support fully the embedding of the IDP. Where SENCOs were not part of the senior management team, the use of SENCOs as a route to embedding might well be less effective.

Leads were also aware of the role that the LAs themselves had to play in reinforcing schools' attempts to build sustainability. For most LA leads this was ensured by the IDP being kept a live topic in everything the local authority services offered, for example, by continuous reference to, and use of, the materials in any forum and in school circulars or SENCO newsletters.

Most interviewees referred to building the IDP (or particular IDP modules) into various areas of their work and procedures, including:

- staff training in specialist units
- regular monitoring in school (e.g. standardised reading scores, children's communication checklist)
- review processes for statements of SEN and applications for individual pupil funding
- progression guidance
- Every Child a Talker

These activities prompted conversations at school level in which the IDP materials could be flagged up as useful or necessary resources. In addition, one interviewee pointed out that having the materials on the intranet ensured some sustainability, while another commented that materials date quickly, unless they are kept up to date.

### **3.4 The impact of the IDP**

The interviews with leads that were carried out in the spring and early summer of 2009 indicated a very limited impact of the IDP on schools, teachers, children or parents. This was the result of time factors, in that the IDP was still in its early stages of roll out, and few schools had completed their engagement with the phase one materials. Overall, by May/June 2009, many of the IDP leads in our sample were reporting high numbers of schools having attended an event about the IDP but

relatively low numbers of schools that had actively engaged with the IDP in the sense of using it within the school. Also, most of the schools that had engaged were part of a pilot group in their LA. In some cases, these schools also received specialist support to implement the IDP through I CAN or Dyslexia Action (Pathfinder LAs) or from LA staff. Those engaged through universal level dissemination tended to be small numbers. In consequence, the identified impact of the IDP, at that stage, at teacher, pupil, or parent level was limited.

At LA level, impact was increased where the IDP was embedded into the regular CDP programme, and especially where there was a focus on Wave 1 teaching and learning. Impact was also noted where there was an increased alignment between SEN/inclusion LA staff and school improvement LA staff. Increased partnership working and greater alignment with school improvement could also go hand-in-hand with embedding the IDP in the CPD offer within the LA.

The types of impact identified in 2009 continued to be evidenced in the 2010 LA lead interviews. The most successful type of impact was in terms of raising awareness of the issues addressed by the IDP among relevant LA staff, and of providing a common language with which to engage with SEND issues at Wave 1 level. Even in LAs where leads argued there had always been a high priority for SEND education, the IDP was seen to be of benefit in reinforcing the message. These points were highlighted by all the interviewees, who usually saw the IDP as a useful tool for their own efforts to raise the profile of SEND as an integral part of high quality inclusive teaching in LAs and schools.

By 2010 there was clear evidence that the majority of LAs had incorporated the IDP into their CPD offers for schools, in particular for LA NQT induction programmes.

‘We’ve built in IDP into all of our training so in a sense all of our, for example our dyslexia courses, now have clear reference to IDP as does our NQT programme. We’ve used the IDP materials and done some initial evaluation already so we’ve got in total about 26 people, NQTs, who’ve recently attended training so we did the self-evaluation before and after and we’re already seeing a significant improvement.’

The most successful area of impact of the IDP at school level that emerged from the 2010 round of LA interviews was the raising of awareness of the importance of inclusive teaching in mainstream classes. For example, one lead commented:

‘... at the beginning there wasn’t so much awareness but now when you go to meetings, whether it’s at school level or SENCO conference level, and you just say ‘how many people have heard of the IDP?’ a wide range of hands go up ... It was quite depressing a year ago – what are we doing? We’re wasting our time but again it shows you how long it takes to get these things embedded. ...It takes a long time but it’s well worth the effort and the length of time it takes because it does make a difference I believe.’

Some leads were concerned that their reach, as LA service providers, was limited when it came to schools. The majority of leads recognised that many of the schools that were keen to engage with them and the IDP were often the schools that were quick to take up any offer of additional training or resource provision. However, beyond those schools, the impact of the IDP was often seen to be fragmented. For example, one lead explained some of the difficulties that she faced in engaging schools in her LA:

'I just feel it's very scattered [in impact terms] and I just think it's because ...if I had two people who were working on this on a consistent basis then I think it would be different. I just feel that yes, we have hit some schools. You usually hit the converted, don't you? You're always going to hit the converted and we will always continue to try.

She also commented that,

'The IDP says it's for school leaders and again it's very difficult to get school leaders out, isn't it: how many times can they be pulled out for whatever it is that they're being asked to come for?'

There was a strong sense among the leads that many schools were suffering from 'initiative fatigue', in that they were constantly faced by new challenges and requirements. One LA lead argued that unless an initiative was flagged as being a priority, and support was forthcoming, then it was unlikely to prosper at school level.

Some LA leads were concerned about judging the IDP impact in terms of more inclusive mainstream teaching at this time; it needed to become embedded in schools before its true worth would be apparent. Nonetheless, this lead believed that 'the will is there' in schools, and that the impact would be greater over time, as the IDP fed through to the classroom. The majority of LA leads noted that the process of gathering evidence of impact at school level was continuing, and was still at early stages; they argued that more would be known in future.

### **3.5 Pathfinders**

#### **3.5.1 The role of IDP strand leads in IDP Pathfinder LAs**

At national level, the IDP Pathfinders were a separate aspect of the IDP initiative and not part of the National Strategies' dissemination model. However, at LA level, the IDP strand leads in the IDP Pathfinder LAs had been closely involved in the LA's bid to become a Pathfinder LA. They put in bids for the dissemination model that they thought best fitted the strengths and circumstances of their LA.

The IDP Pathfinders were set up to try out four models of dissemination to school staff. One LA per model focused on dissemination of the dyslexia materials and one on SLCN materials, eight LAs in all. Each involved IDP training delivered by specialist practitioners - from Dyslexia Action for the dyslexia materials and from I CAN for the SLCN materials.

The models were:

- Model 1 (cascade) – training delivered to representatives for primary and secondary schools who then roll out the IDP to all primary and secondary schools in the LA
- Model 2 (buddy system) – training delivered to selected teaching staff from groups of schools working in pairs (a teacher and TA) with follow-up after 4 -6 weeks
- Model 3 (web-based follow-up) – training delivered to teachers and teaching assistants from groups of schools with follow-up through a web-based learning forum facilitated by the trainer

- Model 4 (intensive work in selected schools) – training of staff in five primary and one secondary school plus follow-up on site work in the schools by the specialist staff from Dyslexia Action or I CAN

One key aim of the Pathfinders was to provide feedback to other LAs on the strengths and weaknesses of these four dissemination models to inform the roll-out of the IDP. The main forum for this was through feedback at regional hub meetings. However, the profile of this function varied. Also, the title of ‘Pathfinder’ was judged to be somewhat anomalous, given that Pathfinders were launched at much the same time as the IDP in all other LAs, and that there was no additional funding for the Pathfinder LAs, beyond the access to specialist support provided through the Pathfinder models.

### **3.5.2 Views about the Pathfinders**

From the interviews with the IDP leads from LAs that were *not* Pathfinder LAs, the overall view was that the Pathfinders had had no impact outside of their own LAs. Views on the Pathfinders, therefore, are essentially those of the eight Pathfinder IDP leads (in 2009, 7 were interviewed, 8 in 2010).

In 2009, IDP leads in Pathfinder LAs valued the involvement of the staff from Dyslexia Action and I CAN in the Pathfinder training who were seen as not only knowledgeable in their area, but as specifically knowledgeable about the IDP materials and therefore well equipped to guide LA and/or school staff through the navigation and use of them. The leads also valued having to focus on a small number of schools for the purposes of the Pathfinder evaluation as this provided the LA with a group of interested schools who were actively using the IDP materials and thus also enabled them to feed back into the National Strategies evaluation. Overall, however, the view was that the Pathfinders were of limited value.

All eight Pathfinder LA IDP leads were interviewed in 2010 and asked about what, if anything, schools in their LA had gained from the Pathfinder. Three of the four SLCN Pathfinder IDP leads reported negligible impact, using phrases like, ‘it fizzled out’ and ‘it just died’, while the fourth reported that the Model 2 (buddy system) IDP Pathfinder had been partly responsible for the local speech and language therapy service creating a training package for schools. Three of the four dyslexia Pathfinder IDP leads also reported little sustained impact beyond the schools initially involved while the fourth reported that the Model 1 (cascade) IDP Pathfinder had led to the IDP being offered as a bespoke training within the LA’s central CPD brochure.

### **3.6 Schools’ perspectives on the IDP**

This section presents key findings drawn from a comparative analysis of interview data with selected staff in 28 schools across 21 local authorities (LAs) and from all English regions in summer 2009; and in 23 of these schools followed up during the winter 2009-10. Key findings in three areas are summarised in turn; number of schools using the different IDP modules in CPD; levels of impact in the schools from CPD on the IDP, with illustrative examples; and barriers and facilitators of use and impact of IDP.

### 3.6.1 Number of sample schools using the different IDP modules in CPD

Figure 3.2 shows the number of schools in the sample who had engaged at some level with the IDP modules.

**Figure 3.2 Sample schools engaging with the different IDP modules**

Module	Engagement	Summer 2009 (n = 28)	Winter 2009/10 (n = 23)
Dyslexia	Yes	20	11 continued CPD 7 had finished CPD
	No		5
SLCN	Yes	13	5 continued CPD 5 had finished CPD 2 started CPD
	No	15	11
Autism spectrum	Yes	0	6
	No	28	17

*n* = number of schools

By winter 2009/10, the pattern of engagement with more than one module of the IDP was as follows<sup>3</sup>:

- 13 of the 23 schools had used one IDP module (of which three had not done further CPD around IDP after summer 2009);
- seven had used two modules (of which two had not done further CPD around IDP after summer 2009);
- three had used all three modules (although one reported only minimal use of the autism spectrum module because of technical difficulties).

### 3.6.2 Levels of impact of CPD around the IDP

The *desired* outcomes of the IDP were impact on: pedagogical practice (more inclusive); pupils (improved cognitive, social, emotional outcomes); and parents (greater confidence in the system). The IDP content was designed in acknowledgment that these outcomes had to be underpinned by CPD material and processes aimed at creating improvement in teachers' and TAs' levels of confidence that they had the knowledge and skills to deliver inclusive teaching for the diversity of pupils in mainstream classes.

Table 3.1 summarises, by school, *reported* impact of the CPD around the IDP in the sample schools at both time points, showing that there was impact in half of the schools in summer 2009 and wider impact across the sample by winter 2009/10.

<sup>3</sup> The five schools that did not respond for winter 09/10 had reported CPD around one IDP module for summer 09.

**Table 3.1 Reported impact in sample schools**

Composite judgement <sup>a</sup>	summer 2009 (n = 28)	winter 2009/10 (n = 23)
Yes, some impact	15	18
Mixed views	7	3
No, no impact (see text)	3	1
Too early to say	3	1

Note: <sup>a</sup>Composite judgements derived from interviews with SENCO, senior lead, experienced teacher and NQT. Between one and four interviewees per school.

The reasons for no reported impact (just 3/28 schools) in summer 2009 were school-specific:

- School A – Summer 2009: the format of the SLCN IDP discouraged the SENCO from using it with staff and she chose to adopt an alternative project developing inclusive SLCN provision in the school supported by the local speech and language therapy service. Winter 2009/10: school did not participate.
- School B – Summer 2009: the format of the dyslexia and SLCN material stopped the SENCO and CPD leader from using them as a basis for CPD with teachers, giving them only to a Higher Level Teaching Assistant on whom they had no impact because she was already operating at a level beyond the foundation level knowledge of the IDP. Winter 2009/10, CPD leader had made use of the autism module and reported some evidence of impact.
- School C – Summer 2009: engaged with SLCN IDP module because it was the LA focus (SLCN Pathfinder LA) but, because of years of LA CPD opportunities around SLCN, SLCN inclusive practice was already established in the school beyond the foundation level knowledge of the IDP. Winter 2009/10, had done no further IDP CPD at time of interview therefore shows up as 'no impact' again.

By the winter of 2009/10 most schools (20/23) reported impact on teacher practice, although only a quarter (6/23) of schools reported an impact on pupils and parents (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 Number of schools reporting impact on practice, pupil/s, parent/s**

Reported outcomes – on practice, pupils, parents	summer 09 n = 28	winter 09/10 n = 23
On teacher practice	20	20
On pupil/s	7	6
On parents	4	6

A school example illustrates different levels of impact of the IDP in sample schools comparing summer 2009 and winter 2009/10.

**Example 1: Infant school impact in summer 2009 deepened by winter 2009/10**

*IDP module*

This infant school chose the SLCN because it was already a Dyslexia Friendly School, was also working towards Communication Friendly School status and was implementing Every Child a Talker. Hence, there was a commitment to support pupils with SEND. As the CPD leader stated, 'It's been a whole school approach and a whole school philosophy.'

*IDP dissemination to school*

To SENCO through the SENCO network

*IDP CPD in school*

The SENCO selected from the SLCN module of the IDP and added to it from other sources. This was presented to all staff in a series of short twilight sessions using techniques designed to engage staff and offering strategies to try out in classes afterwards.

*Evidence for impact on teachers' practice – summer 2009*

The SENCO commented that, 'The thing on attention has been employed throughout the school already. Every class have these rules of speaking and listening.' This set an early baseline. At the time of this interview the CPD leader judged it too soon to identify impact: 'It's too early to say. We're still doing the training. We have to live, breathe, work with it for a year before we can assess the impact.' However, an NQT was enthusiastic about her own development, supported by the IDP, for example:

'Making sure they're listening and giving attention before you continue. [...] It's using the buzz words, catching attention, using props, making sure that every child is sitting appropriately and listening. The giving out of listening certificates to encourage. We've actually got some rules called, 'Ginger's Listening Skills', and the children know these off by heart. We have a teddy that goes to the best children that are sitting.'

Even at this early stage she noted changes in her teaching and effectiveness was apparent. 'So I think it really has – it's really very simple and it's really, really been effective. [...] And just to be confident to try different things out for children: to sit them with different groups, rather than sit them with their ability groups.'

*Evidence for impact on teachers' practice – winter 2009/10* By the winter 2009/10, more developments were noted. The SENCO reported that children with difficulties in vocabulary ('those children who talk a lot but don't use a wide range of words' SENCO) had been identified and lunchtime groups taken by a teaching assistant had been set up. Class teachers were all reported using specific strategies learned from the IDP; for example, the CPD leader commented:

'We use all the strategies – the Look, Listen, Think skills – which is one of the strategies we've been doing in the IDP, making them stop, look, listen, not fidget. You can hear that being used every ten minutes now, in assembly times, right through across. It's really good that everybody is

singing from the same hymn sheet, following the same strategy. It's a whole school philosophy now.'

And the NQT commented:

'You're using it all the time as a practitioner to encourage the speaking and listening and understanding skills. [...] Lots of ideas about making your classroom less busy, less colourful, less distracting. [...] The IDP is the underlying skills that it's giving us as practitioners to deliver the curriculum better, - It's quality first teaching, then it's Wave 2 and, within your class, you're always aware and the children with special educational needs are being addressed at all times.'

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*Evidence for impact on pupils – summer 2009*

An NQT teacher commented:

'I just think that classroom behaviour has improved because of the very simple ideas that have been expressed [listening skills rules].'

*Evidence for impact on pupils – winter 2009/10*

The SENCO had carried out standardised pre- and post-intervention vocabulary and grammar and language tests for the children attending the lunchtime group. These showed scores rising by two years over this period of about six months. Teachers noticed that these children were 'much better in class, much better in themselves as well'. SENCO. Further specific examples of reception pupils with delayed speech and a Year 2 pupil with hearing impairment provided more evidence. In the latter case, the boy was identified in Year 1 (2008/09) as not hearing well by the NQT in our sample after experiencing the SLCN continuing professional development through the IDP. She commented that, 'If we hadn't adopted IDP, I don't think he would be getting the excellent service he is now. His Year 2 teacher wears a microphone and he's got special one-to-one sessions to boost him.'

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*Evidence for impact on parents of pupils with SEND – summer 2009*

The IDP is aimed at teachers, with ultimate impact on children's progress, but it is interesting also to consider the impact on parents. The NQT considered that:

'It's [the IDP] very effective with parents because, when you're talking to parents, they often have a better understanding of the vocabulary because it is specialised to their children. I think I am able to recognise more vocabulary and more terminology because of what I picked up from the training. I've been able to explain things [to the parents] in a more simplified form because some parents have ... got the knowledge, not the understanding. So, you know, when we are talking together, it does help.'

*Evidence for impact on parents of pupils with SEND – winter 2009/10*

At this point, the hearing impaired boy was progressing better; a positive impact on his mother was noted in interviews with both the teacher and the mother herself. More generally, the CPD leader stated that parents of children with SLCN were coming up to teachers to check and seek advice on their children's progress.

### **3.6.3 Factors affecting engagement and impact: barriers and facilitators**

#### *Motivations for engaging with the IDP*

In our sample, there seem to be three main motivations for engaging schools with the different modules of the IDP:

- desire to improve practice – schools had already identified a need to improve provision for pupils with dyslexia/SLCN/autism and saw the IDP as a way forward;
- desire to gain external recognition for existing inclusive practice – schools that were seeking to gain or to renew Dyslexia Friendly School status, for example, saw the IDP as supporting that process (in some LAs, engaging with the IDP was made a required part of the process);
- desire to refresh and reinvigorate existing inclusive practice – IDP was seen as enabling this to occur.

This raises the issue of how to motivate schools to engage with the IDP who have *not* recognised a need to improve or sustain their inclusive practice. When the desire to improve practice came from the senior leadership team, this made moving to the next stage, of planning how to deliver CPD on the IDP in schools, much easier. However, we have some examples of SENCOs who managed to deliver IDP CPD without strong backing from the leadership team. For example, the SENCO in one large secondary school reported having to 'fight' to attend an initial IDP LA briefing. She was aware of the need to improve practice and of the care with which she had to present the opportunity offered by the IDP. She shared information about the IDP with colleagues and invited anyone interested to contact her. She followed this up and succeeded in engaging interested staff in a number of departments in further work about which, by winter 2009/10, she had collected data on effectiveness.

#### *Planning IDP CPD in school*

The main facilitators enabling planning and preparation to deliver IDP CPD in school were:

- the SENCO (usually but sometimes with others) was given or took time to plan use of the materials;
- leadership support to book slot/s in the CPD timetable – greatly strengthened if this was included in School Development/Improvement Plan;
- support to make the Phase 1 materials more accessible during LA dissemination to school representatives or at a later date (for example, by providing route maps).

The main barriers reported as delaying or stalling delivery at this stage were:

- lack of clarity about who would lead on the IDP in school;
- SENCO or other lead person not given time to plan;
- staff absence;
- leadership changes (especially new head teacher);
- other initiatives given priority and pushing IDP out of the CPD timetable;
- information and training from the LA perceived as insufficient;
- complexity of the Phase 1 materials; technical difficulties related to the autism materials.

### *CPD delivery*

A key factor in the subsequent impact of the IDP was the quality of the CPD delivered in school. The winter 2009/10 interviews confirmed the findings from summer 2009 that impact was enabled when CPD around the IDP was given sufficient time to allow for active learning through discussion, reflection and planning, action and review cycle and when the CPD was linked to monitoring of pupil progress.

CPD that was perceived as too paper-based or not engaging was less likely to be recalled by teachers later and consequently had less likelihood of impact on practice, unless it was reinforced and followed up afterwards.

### *Action following CPD*

The impact on teachers' practice of CPD around the IDP was stronger when:

- there was a whole school approach (or whole department approach in secondary schools), with agreement to focus on adopting specific strategies;
- review sessions were planned in, for example, at staff meetings or with individual teachers through learning walks with learning fed back to all staff;
- monitoring of agreed action was undertaken by senior leadership visiting classes;
- data about impact of agreed actions were gathered and shared in the school.

Conversely, factors leading to a lesser impact following IDP CPD were when:

- the CPD itself was minimal;
- no specific follow-on actions were agreed;
- there was high staff turnover;
- subsequent changes that deflected efforts to improve inclusive practice – for example, the change in the Science curriculum from knowledge-based to skills-based reportedly undermined work done in one secondary school to improve the accessibility of curriculum resources following SLCN Pathfinder work with Dawn House Special School.

### *School context and climate*

The school climate was a major factor in explaining variation in engagement, implementation and impact of IDP. For example, in one school the IDP was used with SEND support staff but not with classroom teachers because the school climate was such that the progress of pupils with SEND was not viewed by the SENCO as part of teachers' role. Time-specific contextual issues also created barriers for schools around IDP delivery, for example, staff absences in a small school preventing delivery, disruption to CPD plans due to school refurbishment or school closure for severe weather.

External influences and pressures on schools were another main explanatory factor in understanding variation in engagement, implementation and impact of the IDP. Where schools could see a reward for changing, whether intrinsic (e.g. better provision for pupils) and/or extrinsic (e.g. recognition of inclusive practices by Ofsted or award of Dyslexia or Communication Friendly School status), this increased engagement, deepened implementation and helped to create conditions for impact on practice. Local recognition as an LA IDP pilot school, which sometimes also conferred money on the school to enable CPD, acted as a facilitating condition, being viewed as an extrinsic reward for participating.

Conversely, where school leaders felt external pressure to address priorities other than the IDP, they perceived no reward in working on the IDP. This theme came through more in the winter 2009/10 round of interviews. For example, in one school, the SENCO spoke of two other initiatives that had been prioritised over the implementation of the IDP – the creative curriculum and Assessing Pupil Progress (APP). In other schools, though, these initiatives were regarded as meshing well with the IDP; for example, the creative curriculum in another school was viewed by the head teacher as ‘dovetailing’ with the IDP and in another school APP was perceived as supporting the IDP work. School climate was the real factor here – not the initiatives, *per se*.

#### **3.6.4 The process of change affecting implementation of IDP**

The purpose of the qualitative school sample is to enable the evaluation to explore in detail the process of change stimulated by the IDP at individual and whole school level. From comparative analysis of the interviews with school staff in summer 2009 and winter 2009/10, it is clear that the variables identified from the summer 2009 interviews as key factors affecting impact are confirmed by the winter 2009/10 interviews. These are:

##### *CPD themes:*

- relation of the IDP modules to identified needs in the school and so to School Development/Improvement Planning;
- nature and level of support from LA;
- nature and level of support from other relevant specialists such as speech and language therapists or voluntary sector groups (e.g. I CAN or Dyslexia Action);
- accessibility of the IDP materials;
- approaches to, and quality of CPD delivered in school;
- extent of CPD follow-through, review and monitoring of practice and outcomes for pupils.

##### *Inclusion themes:*

- school climate around inclusion and SEND;
- individual teachers’ views and beliefs, especially around inclusion;
- views about Wave 1 inclusive teaching in mainstream classes

##### *School context issues*

- those that support implementation of IDP, e.g. specialist teachers
- those that make it harder to implement IDP, e.g. staff turnover

To illustrate this, Figure 3.3 summarises how these themes affected implementation of the IDP in one secondary school.

**Figure 3.3 Key themes affecting the implementation of IDP**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Illustrative example</b>
<i>CPD themes:</i>	
Relation to identified needs in the school and so to School Development/Improvement Planning	inclusion written in to School Development Plan (as integral part of focus on Assessment for Learning); dyslexia module of IDP written in to Access and Inclusion Faculty plan
Nature and level of support from LA	partnership with local special school on autism and language and communication (hence no perceived need for autism module of IDP)
Nature and level of support from other relevant specialists such as speech and language therapists or voluntary sector groups (e.g. I CAN or Dyslexia Action)	good support from speech and language therapists (hence no perceived need for SLCN module of IDP)
Accessibility of the IDP materials	not raised as an issue in this school
Approaches to, and quality of CPD delivered in school	led by school based specialist teacher in dyslexia; delivered at faculty level; one teacher per Faculty identified to become dyslexia specialist; each Faculty given dyslexia resource pack; IDP module built on previous CPD around dyslexia
Extent of CPD follow-through, review and monitoring of practice and outcomes for pupils	followed through in next academic year with monitoring of SEN pupil outcomes
<i>Inclusion themes:</i>	
School climate around inclusion and SEND	inclusion has high priority with senior leadership team and in CPD
Individual teachers' views and beliefs, especially around inclusion;	SENCO said some teachers in school thought inclusion did not work and that differentiation was not part of their job but that others were becoming more skilled and confident at differentiating
Views about Wave 1 inclusive teaching	head teacher puts strong emphasis on Wave 1 inclusive teaching
<i>School context issues</i>	
Supportive of implementation of IDP	specialist teacher (dyslexia); CPD leader also a dyslexia specialist
Harder to implement IDP	high staff turnover

Source: summarised from two sets of interviews with four members of staff

### **3.7 Newly qualified teachers**

There was also evidence of greater awareness of the IDP among newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

In 2009 only 16% of the NQTs in our survey knew of the IDP whereas this had more than doubled to 36% in 2010, with 54% reporting they had encountered it during their ITT; the IDP was also being disseminated to ITT in addition to the TDA Toolkit. Although in each year about seven out of ten gave positive ratings to the IDP helping them deliver inclusive teaching, those judging it had helped to 'a great extent' increased from 0% in 2009 to 21% in 2010. Furthermore, about eight out of ten of the 2010 cohort that had experienced the IDP rated their pupils to have improved as a result of this training in terms of academic outcomes, motivation and general well-being. Those who had received dyslexia, SLCN, autism spectrum, or BESD training were also more confident than those who had not.

## **4.. CONCLUSIONS, NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

This report presents the evidence from the first 18 months of this evaluation of impact of DfE investment in several initiatives to improve teacher workforce skills in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We have focused on the main strands in the DfE initiative and in particular where we have evidence over two years of research. The report builds on an unpublished report delivered to the DfE, TDA, National Strategies and other stakeholders earlier in 2010 which presented evidence from the first year of the initiative. At this point the different strands were at an early stage and our evidence was mainly formative, indicating where improvements were needed or were underway, and the barriers that were becoming evident as operating or in danger of having adverse effects.

By the summer of 2010 both the initial teacher training (ITT) initiatives developed by the TDA (the Toolkit and the extended placement in special provision scheme) and the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) led by the National Strategies, had become relatively established. This was particularly so in ITT which comprises a smaller unit to engage, just over 40 HEIs. Both tutors and trainees valued the Toolkit and the extended placements, and there is evidence of each initiative having a positive influence on trainees' confidence to teach pupils with SEND. In addition, tutors valued the closer contact with special schools arguing that the special school sector had been sidelined in ITT for too long. The IDP, by contrast, was intended to influence every LA and school in the country, a huge challenge.

In both cases the dissemination models made use of regional hubs (IDP) or clusters (ITT) to support more local activity (small groups of LAs or HEIs). This model builds on earlier practice and was very clearly a positive success here. The pyramid-shaped national dissemination model, with the National Strategies at the apex and schools at the base, has both strengths and weaknesses. The role of the National Strategies in the IDP was seen as supporting the alignment of SEND and school improvement work at LA level and as adding status to the initiative within schools. The SEN regional hub meetings of IDP strand LA leads were viewed as a strength of the national dissemination model.

The quality of the materials, both content and format/accessibility, were also crucial. Here there was more variability with the TDA materials being generally welcomed but more variability in opinions of the IDP materials. However, the phased development and introduction of the latter, and their 'refreshing' within the period, allowed action to be taken to address the issues found in practice: this strategy worked well is working well.

The next stages of dissemination of the IDP required dissemination from LAs to schools and then within schools. This has met with varying success to date both in terms of awareness of the IDP and development of staff using the IDP. This is to be expected in a project on this scale but already indications of effective dissemination and impact on practice are becoming evident. Also apparent are factors that support – or impede – developments. There was negligible impact of the Pathfinders in terms of modelling dissemination to schools from which other LAs could learn. This was mainly because the Pathfinders had not happened far enough in advance of roll-out in other LAs. Nevertheless, IDP leads in Pathfinder LAs valued the involvement of staff from I CAN and Dyslexia Action because of their knowledge of the IDP materials and of SLCN or dyslexia respectively.

There is also evidence of the importance of identifying the IDP as not only an issue about pupils with SEND but also as part of school improvement. This was a deliberate part of the dissemination strategy to address fears that the initiative would be seen 'only' as a matter concerning pupils with SEND and only a minority of staff. The development of policy, nationally and internationally, has been to move SEND issues into the mainstream. This is often driven by a 'rights' agenda – seeking to ensure equal rights for a disadvantaged group of young people. But it is also a matter of effective education, and not only for a small minority of pupils with severe and complex needs, important though this group's needs are. The IDP seeks also to support the development of inclusive mainstream teaching as a universal approach to education at Wave 1, to support the teaching workforce to develop knowledge, skills and confidence to address effectively a wide range of developmental difficulties experienced by pupils. As such, it is clearly a matter for the education system as a whole and each school in particular.

The twin-pronged approach addressing initial teacher training (ITT) and CPD for qualified teachers is innovative. So far it has met with success in each domain but it will be interesting to see the extent to which the two initiatives start to interact, especially in the form of the new entrants who will have experienced both.

#### **4.1 Next steps**

We already have evidence that addresses some of these issues and this evidence base will be further developed in the last phase of the study. In addition to following up the existing work in HEIs, LAs and schools we will also be carrying out a second survey of schools in this autumn, allowing a comparison with data gathered in autumn 2009 to examine progress on a large scale. We will also report on the Stammering Information Programme developed by the Michael Palin Centre and other smaller scale initiatives listed on pages 10-11. The study ends in March 2011 when our final report will present the evidence from the total project.

#### **4.2 Recommendations**

Recommendations arising from the first year of the evaluation were made direct to the DfE, TDA, National Strategies and other key stakeholders in spring 2010. The following interim recommendations take into account that process and the fact that the research has another six months to run. It is also recognized that this is a period of change in terms of organisational structures and budgetary constraints, with implications both for what might be funded and by whom (e.g. nationally or locally). The following recommendations take account of these issues:

- The Toolkit should be made available to relevant new members of HEI teaching staff.
- Consideration should be given to updating as necessary the Toolkit materials, to keep them current, for example the materials on legal aspects of SEND education and inclusion.
- Consideration should be given to making extra provision of the Toolkit, particularly the memory stick and DVDs.
- Consideration should be given to the continuation of the regional cluster meetings in relation to SEND, ITT and CPD.
- Consideration should be given to the future of ITT extended placements in specialist settings.
- Consideration should be given to interactive models of IDP dissemination longer term.

- Consideration should be given to the LA role as a facilitator for sharing learning and good practice among professionals, including through high quality CPD such as the IDP resources for teachers of pupils with SEN.
- Consideration should be given to extending the induction CPD for NQTs by extending beyond the NQT year in order to better support teaching of pupils with special educational needs within mainstream schools. Induction CPD for NQTs should include a focus on Wave 1 inclusive quality first teaching extending beyond the NQT year.

## **Appendix. Methods**

### ***Samples***

#### *Initial Teacher Training*

In 2009 approaches were made to all 40 providers of primary undergraduate initial teacher training; 30 providers with responsibility for SEND engaged with the study. In 2010 37 engaged with the addition of five of the nine secondary undergraduate ITT providers.

Surveys were conducted through ITT providers with responses from 306 students (2009: 93% female) and 459 (2010: 90% female).

#### *Local Authorities*

With respect to the IDP, a sample of 30 LAs was created. This was selected to provide interviewees who would be knowledgeable about the SEN regional hubs and the IDP Pathfinders but also included those from other LAs with less knowledge of and engagement with the IDP. The 30 LAs were chosen as follows:

- LAs taking the lead for the IDP within each SEN regional hub ( $n = 10$ )
- LAs awarded Pathfinder status for the IDP ( $n = 8$ )
- One other LA from each SEN regional hub ( $n = 10$ )
- Additional LAs from two hubs that did not have Pathfinder LAs ( $n = 2$ )

As well as building in a range of levels of responsibility towards the IDP, this sample also provided geographic coverage across England and a range of LA types (London, unitary, metropolitan, and county). Within the 30 LAs, 50 schools that had engaged with, or were about to be engaged with the IDP, were identified by IDP leads as willing to be contacted about the research. Of these, 28 schools (17 primary, 11 secondary) took part.

#### *Schools*

The 2009 interview sample comprised 25 SENCOs, 17 head teachers/senior leaders, 22 experienced teachers and 18 newly qualified teachers (NQTs): covering the range of key stages (13 KS 1/2, 4 KS 3/4 and 1 special school) from 28 schools within 21 of the 30 LAs. In 2010 the sample comprised 21 SENCOs, 11 head teachers/senior leaders, 12 experienced teachers and 12 NQTs. The survey samples of NQTs comprised 156 (70% female 2009) and 139 in 2010 (78% female).

### ***Interviews***

All interviews were conducted using semi-structured schedules with additional probes, developed specifically for the interview group. This approach provides a balance between ensuring consistency of coverage of topics and opportunity for interviewees to raise issues and elaborate their answers. An information sheet about the project was made available and interviewees gave informed consent to the interview being recorded. Anonymity was assured.

#### *Initial Teacher Training*

Interviews were held, either face to face or by phone, with the providers of primary undergraduate ITT during February and March 2009, about half way through the academic year during which the materials developed by the TDA became available, and again in 2010.

## *Inclusion Development Programme*

### *IDP Leads*

Interviews were held in May-June 2009 and again in May-June 2010. The 2009 interviews addressed the role of the interviewee (why they had become the IDP lead person in their LA and what that role entailed); their views about the national dissemination model for the IDP and of its success in engaging schools in their LA; and their views about any initial impact of the IDP in relation to existing professional development practice, teaching and learning, and the priority given to special educational needs and disability (SEND) issues; induction of NQTs; curriculum for initial teacher training (ITT); and parental confidence and satisfaction. The 2010 interviews addressed the same topics one year on: views about role in IDP, regional hubs, permeation and take-up of IDP and impact of IDP.

### *School staff*

Interviews were conducted by telephone. In 2009 they addressed experience of CPD around SEND, practice around SEND in school, experience of the IDP, views about qualifying to become a teacher of pupils with sensory impairment, and awareness of stammering and the Stammering Information Programme. In winter 2009/2010 they addressed any further CPD on the IDP, any other CPD on SEND, impact of IDP.

### **Questionnaire surveys**

On-line surveys were carried out with the students attending the courses of ITT (April – May, 2009; April to July in 2010) and newly qualified teachers (NQTs: June, 2009, June-July 2010).

### **Analysis and results**

Interviews were subjected to thematic analysis. Initial review of the interview data including transcripts and field notes were used to identify key themes. These were confirmed by discussions between researchers to agree the thematic structure for presentation of results. The questionnaire results were used to create SPSS data files for each sample. All analyses were made using SPSS v18. The results from the different research methods are presented within the relevant sections of the report, allowing both qualitative and quantitative data to be presented thematically.

**Ref: DFE-RR058**

**ISBN: 978-1-84775-821-7**

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November 2010