

## Foreword

Our annual conference this year was a great success with professionals, children, young people and parents from across Scotland coming together to help ensure all children can get the most out of their education. The focus of the conference was on the Scottish Government's review of the curriculum and how this will work for children with additional support needs.

What's particularly positive, is that there is a new emphasis on a more "flexible" curriculum – freeing up teachers so they can adapt the curriculum to meet individual children's needs. This is particularly important for children who need additional support.

There is also new focus on how important children's overall confidence and wellbeing is to their experience of education. That's why we invited Dr Carol Craig from the Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing, to speak at the conference. Read her views in our lead story below.



Receive this regular newsletter by email. To be put onto our e-list email [info@enquire.org.uk](mailto:info@enquire.org.uk)

## New look website for children and young people

[www.enquire.org.uk/yp](http://www.enquire.org.uk/yp)

Enquire has launched its new-look website for children and young people, designed to provide easily accessible information and resources.

The website is an important part of Enquire's services for children and young people and we appreciate your help in making sure your child knows about it.

The website is a source of information where your child can download useful guides (see list opposite). They can also use the popular 'blog' – an online diary where children can ask any questions they might have or answer other children's questions if they know the answer, air their views and read about what other children think. The site also includes a useful map of youth clubs across Scotland and has been designed to work well for people who use assistive technologies such as screen readers.

Further improvements are planned for 2008 including a completely new information A-Z, which will go online later this year.

If you would like to have a look at the site yourself, and have any feedback, please email Katy or Alex at the Enquire office at: [kmacdougall@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:kmacdougall@childreninscotland.org.uk) or [astuart@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:astuart@childreninscotland.org.uk)

## Enquire Guides

Getting ready to leave school

Getting help with exams

What are additional support needs?

People who can help you in and out of school

Round the table - a guide to going to meetings

What's the plan? - your education and support

Going to secondary school?

Nadia's story (see page 4)

## 'Overprotecting children undermines their confidence'

**"Children should not be over-protected from difficult experiences – or experiences of failure", according to a keynote speaker at Enquire's annual conference 2008.**

Dr Carol Craig, of the Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing, said the drive to help children be confident and creative was, in some cases, leading adults to be over protective of children.

"As a society over the last 40 years we have become much more concerned with people being fragile and needing protection. We find a lot of parents saying, in response to being told that their son or daughter has failed a spelling test for example, 'I don't think they should be doing a spelling test because it's damaging and discouraging.'" But Dr Craig argued that bad feelings have a purpose and can galvanise children to work harder or do things differently. She argued that protecting children in this way undermined resilience and leads to low expectations.

Delegates who attended the conference were overwhelmingly

in agreement that this applies to all children, including those who have additional support needs.

The Scottish Government is reviewing the current curriculum, and refocusing on what the aims of education are. One of the key aims identified is that education should enable all children to be confident individuals – confidence that will help them achieve not only in school but in every aspect of their lives. It was in this context that Dr Craig was invited to speak at this year's annual conference.

Dr Craig said we must therefore be very clear about what "confidence" means. It is not, for example, about being able to speak well in public. "We must be very careful that we don't decide what confidence looks like, or that there is a template for confidence. Shaping confidence is about building up skills and building on previous experiences of success."

A full conference report will be available from Enquire's website [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk) or email Gavin on [gcrosby@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:gcrosby@childreninscotland.org.uk).

## Enquire annual conference 2008

Enquire's annual conference in February focused on the Government's programme of work to improve the current curriculum, and ensure that it will benefit children with additional support needs.

The curriculum review, called Curriculum for Excellence, has set out the aims of education in Scotland. In summary, the purposes of education are to enable your child, and all children, to become:

- **Successful learners**
- **Confident individuals**
- **Responsible citizens**
- **Effective contributors**

One of the key aims of Curriculum for Excellence is to give more freedom to teachers so that they can ensure *all* children are able to benefit from the curriculum and achieve their full potential. This flexibility is particularly important for children with additional support needs. It also has a strong emphasis on encouraging more learning through experiences, important for all children but particularly so for those with additional support needs.

Central to its success is an understanding by everyone involved in delivering education, that the curriculum can be adapted to suit individual children's needs.

The conference heard how Valerie Bleakley, headteacher at Glaitness School in Orkney (see opposite), has worked to ensure that the education provided in her school caters for the needs of all children.



## Glaitness – education for all children

**The following example was used at Enquire's annual conference 2008 to demonstrate how one school is delivering education in a way that ensures all children can benefit, no matter what their needs or abilities.**

Glaitness School in Orkney's main town of Kirkwall is for pre-school and primary-aged children from the age of four up to the age of 12. It also provides additional support for pupils from any area in Orkney whose needs cannot be fully met within their own local school.

The school was refurbished and adapted after Orkney Council decided that too many children who required additional support had to travel off the island to receive their education. The aim was to make sure that Glaitness could meet the needs of the whole island community.

### **How Glaitness School has adapted to meet the needs of all children:**

- The school has developed strong relationships with the NHS, an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist who visits the school twice a week, a visual impairment teacher, a language unit, an early years team and social services, which runs a respite care centre for children with profound and complex needs.
- Partners in the NHS and social services were involved in the school's design.
- Staff and children all sign to each other in the school.
- Songs are also signed.
- The curriculum was "pulled apart and rebuilt around the needs of children..." said headteacher, Valerie Bleakley.
- The four capacities that children are expected to develop whilst at school (see article to left) have been carefully considered but adapted so that Glaitness's

curriculum reflects the specific experiences and requirements of children at the school with additional support needs.

- Planning education so that it meets every child's needs is done together with parents, teachers and the school's partners. "Everyone plans together... Children are the core of the school, followed by parents as experts on their child."

**Parents' comments on their children's experience of Glaitness:**

"My daughter has friends!"

"My child is lining up with the other children – he's so independent now."

"Is he really staying with his peers all morning?"

[www.glaitness.orkney.sch.uk](http://www.glaitness.orkney.sch.uk)

**Glaitness School seeks to promote an inclusive approach towards all aspects of the life and work of the school. This is aimed at developing:**

- An individual and collective identity and pride in the school
- A warm and welcoming environment where everyone's views, needs and ideas are shared and valued
- A vibrant learning community which meets the needs of every individual
- A safe and secure environment where pupils can develop respect for themselves and others and take increasing responsibility for themselves and their learning
- A strong and purposeful relationship with parents and the wider community.

## Young people's voices

**Children and young people made an important contribution to Enquire's annual conference. This section records their views on what is needed to ensure they can get the most out of their education.**

**Pupils from schools in Glasgow and South Ayrshire, who need additional support, highlighted some of the problems they have experienced.**

"The biggest problem is teachers not understanding. This can cause problems between teachers and pupils. It gets in the way of your education and pupils can feel daft."

"If there is no special needs awareness amongst staff and pupils it may lead to bullying."

"Education should happen through the whole day [in order to include pupils effectively]."

"The lack of support [for pupils with additional support needs] is caused by disruptive pupils."

**The pupils had some suggestions for how these problems could be corrected.**

"Hold a meeting at the start of the year where all pupils and teachers can openly discuss the extra help that is needed."

"Make changes to the school buildings to improve disabled access."

"Introduce more computers to school libraries to develop pupils' IT skills and communication."

"Ensure that support teachers address the problem of disruptive pupils."

"Introduce a Personal and Social Education programme (PSE) unit to schools focusing specifically on disability."

## Pupils from schools in Glasgow and South Ayrshire said the ideal teacher is...

Happy	Kind-hearted	Caring	Helpful	Responsive
Intelligent	Someone who gives positive feedback	Fair (with sense of equality)	Inspiring	Grounded
Approachable	Understanding	Open-minded	Patient	
Supportive	Funny	Respectful	Calm	
Honesty			Light-footed	

**Enquire helpline: 0845 123 2303**

Visit [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk). Email enquiries to [info@enquire.org.uk](mailto:info@enquire.org.uk)  
 Opening hours: Monday 9am-5pm ● Tuesday 9am-7pm ●  
 Wednesday 9am-5pm ● Thursday 9am-7pm ● Friday 9am-5pm

## New resource for young people with communication difficulties

*Nadia's story* is a new booklet in our series for children and young people. 'Nadia' is at secondary school and has communication difficulties. The story uses plain language, illustrations and Picture Communication (Boardmaker) symbols to show some good experiences and problems at school. Nadia shows the learning assistant what help she wants, reports bullying and gets help to be part of her review meeting.

Enquire developed the story with a group of young people, thanks to the support of Enable (Stirling) and Stirling Council. They designed the main character, then decided her interests and identified events and issues in her life.

We hope the story will help show pupils with communication difficulties how they can be involved in decisions and encourage them to ask for the help they need. We think other children and young people will also find it helpful.

You can get a copy of the story for your child for free by calling the Enquire office 0131 222 2425 or emailing [info@enquire.org.uk](mailto:info@enquire.org.uk). An audio CD of this booklet is also available.

## Raising parents' awareness and understanding of the law relating to additional support needs

A six-week media campaign will be launched on April 21, to raise parents' awareness and understanding of the law relating to additional support needs.

The campaign will initially only run in the Dundee area and its success carefully monitored. There will be a targeted postcode drop, newspaper adverts and editorials asking parents to consider whether their child could benefit from additional support, and point them to sources of information.

The campaign is being run because a recent report from HM Inspectorate of Education revealed that although parents felt their children were well supported by schools, they were not well informed about either the new concept of additional support needs or their rights under the Act to be involved in making decisions about their child's education.

The media campaign will direct parents to their child's school or Enquire for information and advice.

## Dyslexia Summit paves the road ahead

A landmark agreement between Scotland's seven teacher education universities will help ensure that student teachers and qualified teachers have the knowledge and confidence to support pupils' additional support needs.

The agreement will see, over two years, development of advice and guidance for student and qualified teachers relating to additional support needs. There will be a review of how student teachers are prepared to work with children who have additional support needs, and new toolkits, guides and handbooks. The first materials, produced in the first year to support student teachers and teachers' continuing professional development, will be on dyslexia.

The universities will also work together to develop research into additional support needs.

The plan was agreed at a Dyslexia Summit in January, hosted by Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond.

## Free guide to ASN mediation

A new users' guide to additional support needs mediation has been published for professionals and parents who may be involved in resolving a disagreement relating to a child's education. The guide may also be useful as a source of information for the children or young people involved.

*Additional Support Needs Mediation – A Users Guide* is available free and provides accessible information over six pages on a range of frequently asked questions relating to ASN mediation.



Copies of the guide are available free of charge from RESOLVE:ASL. Email: [smithell@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:smithell@childreninscotland.org.uk) or call 0131 2222456.

## New Autism resource for Scottish local authorities and schools

A new Autism resource for Scottish local authorities and schools will be published in June 2008. 'The Autism Toolbox', has been developed by a multi-professional team from The National Centre for Autism Studies, University of Strathclyde. It will be made available in June by the Scottish Government and through the Scottish Autism Service Network website. [www.scottishautismnetwork.org.uk](http://www.scottishautismnetwork.org.uk)