

Equality and Diversity

The intention of this essay will be to discuss issues of equality and diversity and the ways to promote inclusion with pupils. I will also review other points of referral available to meet the potential needs of learners.

Equality and diversity are the primary principles that underpin the educational system globally and nationally. The Equality Act (2010) is so important that it replaced other existing legislation such as the Race Relation Act (2000) and the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). Throughout this essay I will discuss disability, religious beliefs and other issues relating to equality and diversity.

Ethnic or racial diversity policies and practices within a secondary school should adhere to and comply with the Equality Act (2010). This consists of cultural, religious beliefs, morals and traditions that can influence attitudes and behaviours of the learner and teacher. With regards to groups or individual pupils responding to teaching. However, some teachers may not include or adopt these policies recommended by the government. They may continue to deliver lessons in their own style and be reluctant to change, which may, consequently have a negative effect towards the pupils.

An example of this would be if an art teacher was repeatedly teaching about only one type of art or similar artists. This would not give the pupils insight into different forms of art and various artists from diverse ethnic backgrounds and styles, which consequently could influence the pupils' attitudes and limit their respect for art. By restricting the content of the art material for the learners, the teacher would be directly avoiding their responsibility to encourage equal opportunities within the classroom.

Pupils within secondary schools should be taught how to respect different ethnicities and people of various backgrounds. In an art classroom this should be done creatively to educate them and not necessarily becoming obvious to the learners. The promotion of cultural diversity will help break down some of the barriers to learning such as disabilities and dyslexia¹ (figure 1, p. 2).

Teachers in secondary schools across the United Kingdom should be trained to identify pupils that have dyslexia and, to adapt the way they deliver lessons. It is the role and responsibility of the head teacher to make sure that the ethos of the institution is Dyslexia Friendly and in line with the British Dyslexia Association Quality Mark².

Norwich et al. (2003) states that 'Here parent partnership is in relation to an interest group, such as dyslexia, linked to a specific version of school inclusiveness, the notion of dyslexia friendly schools.' (p.3)

This may be linked with attitudes of the pupils, teachers or behaviour by staff, assistant teachers and cover supervisors.

Allowing all staff members to be aware of and have a more pragmatic approach if a pupil has learning disabilities will promote positive inclusion within the school and classroom environment. It will ensure that these pupils are not isolated. For example, if they need a green plastic wallet to read text on a white paper that has been handed out for class work the teacher should provide a variety of colours to all of the learners in the classroom. This method will work more successfully and meet the potential needs of the learner and not allow embarrassment to permeate the pupil.

Pupils in a secondary school should have the opportunity to work with disabled learners. In the classroom setting and during extracurricular activities, this will help learners to have the right perspective and attitudes regarding this matter. When they have contact with disabled learners they will see that they are similar to non-disabled pupils and enjoy the same things as they do like playing computer games.

The school should take practical measures to help disabled and handicapped pupils such as allowing extra time for them to get to classes and provide lifts where there are stairs so they do not compromise their safety or are late to lessons.



1 A general term for disorders that involve difficulty in learning to read or interpret words, letters, and other symbols, but that do not affect general intelligence.

2 British Dyslexia Association Quality Mark is the philosophy of changing practice to accommodate dyslexic individuals often results in good practice for everyone.

Not lost for words
DYSLEXIA AWARENESS WEEK, 31 OCTOBER

Only a few years ago those suffering silently at school with what we now know as dyslexia were branded "stupid". But it's a burden shared by many famous figures. Read more with Dyslexia Action, the UK's largest dyslexia charity. www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

1. ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955)
He may have devised the theory of relativity but he never learned how to tie his own shoelaces properly. The diagnosis was made on the grounds that despite his genius, he failed to remember the simplest of things – such as the months of the year. Learn about helping dyslexics with memory in a resource shared by jalsgate.

2. HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN (1805-75)
The author is said to have overcome dyslexia to become the creator of the Emperor's New Clothes, The Princess and the Pea and The Little Mermaid. After his father died, Hans attended grammar school, but his dyslexia made the experience difficult. Follow prompt cards by JMM's to help improve reading.

3. HENRY WINKLER
Best known as the Fonzie in *Happy Days*, the actor did not realise he was dyslexic until the age of 31. In September this year he was awarded an honorary OBE for his work helping dyslexic children – including his story about Hank Zipzer, a boy with dyslexia whose experiences are based on the actor's struggles. Learn more about Hank at www.hankzipzer.com

4. TOM CRUISE
The star has said he suffered abuse as a child – partially because he was dyslexic. His father was tough on him when things went wrong and he dropped his surname at the age of 12. He went through 15 schools in 12 years and says he was also badly bullied. Read more about him and dyslexia at *Being Dyslexic* UK: <http://tinyurl.com/5wvcp9e>

FAMOUS BRITISH DYSLEXICS
One of the world's richest men, Virgin tycoon Sir Richard Branson, has dyslexia, which resulted in a poor academic performance as a student. School, he says, was something of a nightmare for him. Actress Susan Hampshire is a well-known dyslexic and has spoken of the torment of learning lines. And more recently another actress, Kara Tointon of *EastEnders*, spoke movingly about her battle with the condition. She says her aim is "to read a whole novel". Read about teaching children with dyslexia in a resource shared by PTRS.

Figure 1

Written by Michael Butler

<http://www.michael-butler.com/>

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List of Illustrations

Figure 1. TES RESOURCES. 2011. Not Lost for Words Dyslexia Awareness. [article]. London: Pentagram.