



## CHAPTER ONE

# Inclusion: what it is and why it's good news for everyone

The aim of this chapter is to increase your knowledge of how to develop an inclusive setting. It gives an opportunity to assess how inclusive you currently are. It outlines the benefits of inclusion for your setting and business, as well as explaining the benefits of inclusive practices for parents, children and practitioners. Students, tutors and advisers will find this chapter a good starting point for discussing issues of inclusion.

The chapter sets out:

- ▶ How being Inclusive is good news for your business, parents, children and practitioners
- ▶ 20 ways to develop an inclusive setting
- ▶ A starter quiz – How inclusive is your pre-school?

It also offers suggestions for additional activities designed to build on the topics covered in the chapter, and a list of recommended further reading.

## Being inclusive is good news for your setting

Increasingly, society is becoming more diverse and our pre-school settings are beginning to reflect this.

Children with additional needs are present throughout all layers of our society. Some of those needs may be short term and others may be lifelong conditions.

### Parents and pre-schools

Working parents and those who want some form of pre-school education and care for their child are increasingly faced with many choices when it comes to choosing childcare. Some opt for home care using family members, au pairs, nannies or childminders while the increasing majority are choosing from all kinds of pre-school provision.

The market is competitive and parents are always looking for the very best care for their child.

Some factors parents consider when choosing a pre-school are:

- ▶ Can they be sure the well-being of their child is central to the ethos of the setting?
- ▶ Are the relationships within the setting good?
- ▶ Does the setting have caring adults?
- ▶ Is the setting well regarded within the community?
- ▶ Are any children excluded or disadvantaged within the setting?
- ▶ Will their child have a rich and stimulating experience based upon his/her individual needs?
- ▶ Will there be a special person in the setting that their child can depend upon?

A good reputation is usually well earned and always deserved. An inclusive setting is able to offer all of the points outlined above. It follows, then, that an inclusive setting will rank high in popularity as parents see that all children are valued and cared for.

Parents in an inclusive setting can be confident that their child will be valued and will receive the highest possible care.

## Ofsted and the Sessional and Full Day Care National Standards

All pre-school settings need Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) registration. There is currently a cycle of inspections in places, the outcomes of which are important to all practitioners. While some see the inspection as an opportunity to display their good practice others view an inspection as something to be survived.

Whatever your viewpoint in regard to Ofsted, being well prepared and organised for your inspection is a must.

Ofsted inspectors will refer to 'Outcomes from *Every Child Matters*' (DfES, 2004) together with the '*National Day Care/Sessional Standards*' (DfES, 2001).



Outlined below are some of the factors that may be considered by inspectors when visiting pre-schools in relation to inclusion and provision for those children with a Special Educational Need.

**Standard 10** of the National Standards covers the main area of Special Educational Needs. It states:

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is proactive in ensuring the appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties. (DfES, 2003, p. 5)*

Pre-school settings are also judged against the five outcomes from *Every Child Matters*. While *Outcome 3* (Enjoy and achieve) and *Outcome 4* (Making a positive contribution) cover issues of inclusion more specifically, all outcomes can be considered relevant.

To satisfy themselves that provision for children with special educational needs is being met, inspectors may address the following issues during their visit:

- ▶ *Children's records*
- ▶ *Your written statements about special needs*
- ▶ *Your arrangements for caring for children with special needs*
- ▶ *How you share information about your provision for children with special needs with parents*

Throughout this book you will find advice that will help you work towards becoming a fully inclusive setting.

Chapters 2 and 5 particularly support practitioners as they prepare for their inspections. Examples of the following can be found both in the chapters and on the CD-ROM that accompanies this book:

- ▶ Planning for individuals' needs using the proformas provided
- ▶ Sample policies available for direct use or adaptation
- ▶ Information and suggestions on communicating with parents

## **Everyone benefits from inclusion**

Being an inclusive setting enhances the reputations of any pre-school. Inclusive settings are usually a commercial success due to their popularity with parents. These settings can also expect their efforts to be recognised by Ofsted.

Here is a summary of the benefits of being inclusive for parents, children and practitioners.

### *Parents*

- ▶ Feel less isolated as they become part of the wider community
- ▶ Begin to see that all children are valued and appreciated
- ▶ Develop strong bonds with nursery staff as mutual respect is developed
- ▶ Gain a wider view of a diverse society
- ▶ Develop understanding and empathy with other parents
- ▶ Learn techniques and skills from practitioners
- ▶ Are given reassurance that society values their children



### *Children*

- ▶ Learn that all individuals are different and unique – including themselves
- ▶ All experience the same opportunities and experiences
- ▶ All benefit from a broad and balanced, enriched curriculum
- ▶ Feel they belong and are part of the community
- ▶ Develop tolerance and empathy as individuals
- ▶ Experience a growth in self-esteem and social skills
- ▶ Experienced social integration and equality
- ▶ Learn to be confident and reach for goals
- ▶ Have all of their needs met
- ▶ Benefit from extra staffing and the involvement of outside professionals

### *Practitioners*

- ▶ Benefit from additional training provided by local authority staff and staff from voluntary agencies
- ▶ Become able to cater for a range of different needs
- ▶ Gain confidence in their practice and expertise
- ▶ Learn how to liaise and communicate with outside professionals, e.g. speech therapists or peripatetic teachers
- ▶ Work together as a team, supporting and learning from each other
- ▶ Develop close links with parents/carers
- ▶ Gain greater satisfaction from their chosen profession

### *Note for employers*

Good staff are hard to find and employers need to be able to offer jobs that stretch individuals and offer job satisfaction. An inclusive setting provides much satisfaction and challenge for practitioners.



### **Hands-on activity**

**Role-play or discuss the following scenario:**

During a staff meeting a member of the team says, 'I don't know what all this fuss is about. I don't see why we should have to accommodate all types of children here – it's just too much trouble.'

On the following pages you will find useful criteria to help you recognise some of the features of an inclusive setting. In order to help you see how your own setting measures up to these we have included a quiz. This can be done either individually or as a staff team. This will help you to begin to consider the wider issues of inclusion.

## 20 ways to recognise an inclusive setting



1. The setting is used by a wide cross-section of the local community
2. The staff are flexible and responsive and team work is evident
3. The environment has been carefully considered in terms of accessibility
4. Practitioners have time to reflect and discuss their practice
5. Strong links exist between the setting and community
6. Good use is made of LEA and health service professionals
7. Staff attend outside training and have regular in-house training sessions
8. A key worker system is being used
9. The setting Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) has time and resources to carry out her duties effectively
10. Pictures and displays represent a diverse society
11. Staff have criteria for choosing equipment and books
12. Transition in and out of the setting is well established and effective
13. Planning is led by the interests and needs of the children who attend the setting
14. Children's views are sought both informally and formally especially regarding individual targets
15. Each parent/carer feels valued by practitioners; their views and opinions are regularly sought
16. The setting has a vision and ethos which includes meeting the needs of those children with additional needs
17. The setting is well organised with good policies and procedures in place
18. All children are equally welcome to attend
19. Staff have developed sound methods of communicating with parents
20. Procedures are in place to support staff to identify children who may have an additional need

**Starter quiz**  
**How inclusive is your pre-school?**

1. Is your pre-school used by a **wide cross-section** of the local community?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) A few
  - (c) Not really
  
2. Do you have links with local schools and other pre-schools in your neighbourhood?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Some
  - (c) Not really
  
3. Do you link with health visitors and other health care professionals such as speech and language therapists?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Sometimes
  - (c) Never
  
4. Do your staff receive training on special needs or inclusion issues?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Sometimes
  - (c) No
  
5. Do you have a SENCO who has allocated time to carry out her duties?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Have a SENCO but she has no allocated time.
  - (c) No
  
6. Are all staff confident in identifying children who may have additional needs?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Some of them
  - (c) No
  
7. Is your planning differentiated to include children who may have additional needs?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Sometimes
  - (c) No

8. Do you talk to the children about what they do and involve them in planning activities?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Sometimes
  - (c) No
  
9. Do you meet regularly with parents to discuss progress and exchange information?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Not often
  - (c) No
  
10. Are staff and parents aware of your Special Educational Needs/Inclusion Policy?
  - (a) Yes, both are
  - (b) Staff aware, parents not
  - (c) Neither are aware
  
11. Do your displays represent society and your local community in all its diversity?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) Usually
  - (c) No
  
12. Do you have a clear criterion for choosing new books, toys and resources?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) A rough guideline
  - (c) No

### **Scoring**

For each answer (a) score 3 points; answer (b) score 2 points; answer (c) 1 point.

*Score between 28 and 36*

Gold star awarded – you are well on your way to becoming a fully inclusive setting. This book will help you go the extra mile.

*Score between 20 and 27*

Silver star awarded – you are half way there! Well done. This book will help you to clarify your ideas and plan for the future.

*Score between 12 and 19*

Bronze star awarded – you still have quite a long way to go. HOWEVER, you have made a good start by consulting this book. We are sure you will find the following ideas and suggestions helpful. Go for it!





## Hands-on activity

Use the insights you have gained in Chapter 1 to discuss and/or write an inclusive Admissions Policy for a pre-school.

During an Ofsted inspection you are asked about your arrangements for caring for children with special needs.

Devise an answer using the List of '20 ways to recognise an inclusive setting'.

As a group see if you can offer several positive answers to this question.

Look at the 'starter quiz – How inclusive is your setting?' Check your results.

Write a five-point action plan which will enable you to achieve a better score next time.

Discuss within your staff group how you can implement these changes.

Imagine that you were interviewing prospective staff for your pre-school setting.

What would you tell them about your staff team's attitudes to inclusion?

What question would you ask them in relation to how they would support this positive ethos?

Use the 'Everyone benefits from inclusion' section to help you do this.



## Further reading

Allez, A., Arnott, G., Henderson, A., and Toff, M. (1996) *Equal Chances*. London: pre-school Learning Alliance.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2001) *National Day Care Standards*. London: DfES.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2003) *Day Care: Guidance to the National Standards – Revisions to Certain Criteria*. London: DfES.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*.

Nutbrown, C. and Clough, P. (2006) *Inclusion in the Early Years*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.