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## Educational Perspectives

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This chapter endeavours to provide an insight into the underlying themes, core legislation requirements, curriculum frameworks, and education practices and provisions that focus on meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The discussions within this chapter will outline key themes and underpinning theoretical perspectives that have, and continue to influence, educational policy within education in the United Kingdom. The chapter begins by identifying key terms used within educational establishments and considers how they are applied and (mis)understood. A brief discussion of historical issues follows on from this and then contemporary educational approaches and perspectives on special educational needs (SEN) are examined. This chapter aims to offer a critical understanding of best practices that underpin the delivery, monitoring and assessment for short-term educational intervention strategies.

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## Definitions and Key Terms

The exploration of core issues in educational perspectives is dominated by current discourse and societal perceptions of special needs and disability (Frederickson and Cline 2015; Hodkinson 2016; Farrell 2017). One continuing discourse is the use of terminology to conceptualise or define people, places or communities. Within educational contexts, the key terms often referred to are special educational need, disability and inclusive education.

The term special educational needs (SEN) was first used by Warnock (1978) as a replacement for the term 'handicapped' (Frederickson and Cline 2015; Hodkinson 2016), which was imbued with historical social judgements and conveyed a negative, social deficit model of disability. The term SEN was formalised in the Education Act 1981 (and subsequent 1996 Act), which defined children as having a special need if they require *significantly greater provision in learning* than compared to that of their peers or if they have a disability that inhibits them or prevents them from being able to engage in education as provided to their peers (Frederickson and Cline 2015:44). More recently, Farrell (2017:1) defines special education as the provision for pupil and students with various disabilities, specific conditions and impairments and encompasses appropriate provision according to the need to enable all children to achieve and make progress in their learning and development.

Within the UK, special educational provision is often characterised by a mismatched perception of SEN and disability reality (Reiser 2012) and arguably, all-embracing definitions support this ongoing confusion. For example, 'special educational needs' and 'inclusive education' are used in the broadest terms with SEN encompassing anyone who experiences some difficulty in academic engagement, and 'inclusive education' taking a wider scope consideration of provision that is delivered through specified planning and instruction (Hornby 2014). To add to the mix, as part of policy initiatives and funding constraints in UK schools, the term additional educational needs (AEN) is increasingly used as a more general term to encompass children with SEN which arise from a physical or cognitive learning disability, as well as particular groups of children *whose*

*circumstances or background are different to most of the school population* (Frederickson and Cline 2015:38).

For purposes of clarification, the terms used within this chapter will utilise the legal definition applied throughout current legislation and statutory guidance as provided within the Children and Families Act (2014:c.6) Section 20, whereby a child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if:

- (1) *A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.*
- (2) *A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she—*
  - (a) *has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
  - (b) *has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.*
- (3) *A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age (or would be likely, if no special educational provision were made).*
- (4) *A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home.* Children and Families Act (2014:20)

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) suggests that the term ‘inclusive education’ can be used within schools where teaching responds to individual needs for the benefit of all children and to create a just society without discrimination (UNESCO 2005). The World Health Organisation furthers this in terms of community provision as:

*Inclusive education seeks to enable schools to serve all children in their communities but also acknowledges that In practice, however, it is difficult to*

*ensure the full inclusion of all children with disabilities, even though this is the ultimate goal.* (WHO 2011:36)

However, according to Devecchi (2014:955), the meaning of the term ‘inclusion’ can vary depending on its use as an educational provision factor or as a wider societal right. She suggests that:

*For some it is defined either as a policy or as a process whereby students who are in special education programs are placed in general education classes (also known as ‘integration’). For others, it is a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging often by addressing institutional factors and work generally on school development. Inclusion is about the quality of children’s experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school.*

Indeed, Farrell (2017:2) defines inclusion as a philosophical approach that encompasses social acceptance and belief in the capability of the individual learner and responding appropriately to provide for those needs. He emphasises, however, that there is sometimes rhetoric between rights, philosophy and practice usually driven by political decisions and whilst Rioux (2014) argues that education providing inclusive opportunities for all to learn is so important that provision should be made for all through adaptation for their individual need(s), it is largely dependent on the capacity, ability, values and vision of the staff working with children with SEN in ‘appreciating the child, before the difference’ (Elvidge 2013:144).

Emphasising the complexities of terminology used within education provides a framework for critical reflection on the shifting perspectives within discourses of SEN and disability. Throughout this chapter these definitions will be considered further, with the Children and Families Act (2014) legal definition of SEN being adopted within discussions around education for children and young people aged 0–25 years of age as this is the term used in the 2014 SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH 2014).

## Changing Perceptions of SEN in Education

In the UK until the mid-1970s, the medical model approaches dominated in educational provision based on *age, aptitude and ability* (Barnes and Mercer 2010:104). This led to exclusionary practices through prioritising non-disabled children in mainstream educational settings. However, there was also a shift in accountability following the rise in special schools post 1945 under the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) rather than the Department of Education (Barnes and Mercer 2010). During the 1980s and 1990s, in response to growing concerns about the negative impact of segregation for disabled children's future outcomes, the Warnock Report (1978) led the progressive shift back towards inclusive policy expectations, redefining the outdated disabling labels of 'handicap' towards the term special educational needs (Hodkinson 2016; see also Richards 2017 this volume for contextual discussions in relation to policy and provision). Fundamentally, however, it is argued that the epistemology of 'special education' in education remains dominated by diagnoses and labels (Benson 2014) that disregard multiple factors that impact on children's education, including the individual learning needs of pupils and students with impairments, ethnicity, social and economic contexts (Barnes and Mercer 2010).

In contemporary education, the prevalent model of reference is closely related to the sociological perspective of disability and special needs. The ideology within this model implies, as suggested by Bourdieu (1986), that the individual has the potential to acquire and improve their 'social capital' (the attainment of status and social recognition) through social interactions with others within educationally centred contexts, informing and contributing to their development (Bourdieu 1986). Realistically, this requires both an acknowledgement of an attributed value of all children's intrinsic and extrinsic contribution and social engagement by adults in positions of authority. However, regarding the inclusion of disabled children, the reality is that this is rarely given (Qvortrup 1994) and acknowledgement not readily forthcoming (Allan et al. 2009). Davis (2011) argues that social capital approaches combined with the social models of disability are *problematic* as both concepts perpetuate the

individualised *social problem* perspective (Davis 2011:125) which places the onus of responsibility for achievement on the disabled child. This perspective tends to deflect responsibility away from schools and teachers (Slee 1996) rather than developing proactive social justice approaches to and within education to provide inclusive learning opportunities (Davis 2011). On the other hand, the rights-based model of education advocated by Callus and Farrugia (2016:51) suggests that it is essential that children with SEN receive 'an inclusive education as this is the means for them to enjoy their right to education on an equal basis with others'. Furthermore, the right to an education is enshrined across several U N's principles and formalised within key covenants and conventions which have been ratified and formally adopted within international and national law and policy. Although the right to education is threaded throughout many of these conventions, the specific articles underpinning children's special educational rights are contained within: Article 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948; Articles 23 and 28, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989; and Article 24, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability 2010.

Whilst inclusion is seen in social policy terms as a right for all to access mainstream education, Warnock (2006) considered that the impetus of rights had become outweighed by social rejection and bullying (Frederickson and Cline 2015) and, as a result, provision within special needs schools continue to be viewed through opposing perspectives. On the one hand, they are seen as being institutions that reinforce exclusion and isolation from communities resulting in limited academic and future economic outcomes for students Goodley (2017), and on the other as being accessible, enabling environments that provide appropriate and specialised support to empower children's learning and independence (Barnes and Mercer 2010). Fundamentally, however, it should be emphasised that education is about the identification of unique and special attributes that an individual has and the appropriate provision for those individual needs. Therefore, in order that inclusion is effective, there are practical considerations for both mainstream and specialist education provision in terms of resources (equipment) but predominantly in societal attitudes not just in the skills of teachers to provide for the varied and individual needs of all their pupils/students (Benson 2014). However,

whilst it seems a logical expectation that all humans achieve their potential, in reality, society has structures and practices that can limit and inhibit uniqueness (Barnes and Mercer 2010). As a reflection of dominant cultural practices, education perpetuates discriminative practices in terms of access and provision (Barnes and Mercer 2010; Florian 2014). Therefore, special education presents as problematic in terms of theory, policy and, in particular, practice, as policy and practice do not always align (Terzi 2010).

That said, and in line with the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement, the United Kingdom's government has legislated that all schools are required to ensure there is inclusive provision for children's holistic needs through delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum (Education Act 2002; Academies Act 2010; DfE 2014a The UNCRPD Article 24):

*recognises the right of persons with disabilities to education. It further demands that States parties ensure the realization of this right through an inclusive education system at all levels, including pre-schools, primary, secondary and tertiary education, and for all students, including persons with disabilities, without discrimination and on equal terms with others.* (OHCHR 2016)

Inclusive and equitable educational provision for all children should encompass physical, social, cognitive and emotional development and must be inclusive and non-discriminatory whatever the impairment or protected characteristics (Unicef 2004; UN 2008; Equality Act 2010; Barton 2012; Benson 2014). This implies a social model approach whereby social justice-focused strategies should be found and used to overcome disabling barriers to, and discrimination in, education (Oliver 1996; Barnes and Mercer 2010; Shakespeare 2014). Rioux (2014) states that the principles of human rights to education (Unicef 2004) as a social justice entitlement is in reality complicated by current educational practices, pedagogical theory and legislation which are regulated by both hegemonic political and social attitudes. Equally, educational provision is 'Influenced by social, economic and environmental factors' (Rioux 2014:132). Therefore access to, and provision within, education is a matter of social justice and rights and can be achieved through educators drawing upon their knowledge, care and compassion harnessing core

philosophical underpinning ideologies of education principles to impart knowledge to and enthuse within all students a passion for learning (Taylor and Woolley 2013).

## Embracing Rights Through Responsibilities

Within UK legislation, the responsibilities for SEN have been redefined under the Children and Families Act 2014 and through the introduction of the revised SEN Code of Practice 2014 (amended 2015). The overarching responsibility for SEN within educational provision is embedded in the role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and comes within the senior management team post since schools have increased legal accountability for the routine and annual monitoring, reporting, training and evaluation of SEN provisions and attainment of pupils/students with SEN, as well as ensuring collaboration with pupil, student and families (Cheminais 2015). The SENCO is a complex role wherein lies the responsibility for undertaking routine monitoring of SEN provision throughout the school, planning reviews and collaborating discussions with parents of pupils/students with SEN and staff (Cheminais 2015). Florian (2014:9) argues that education policy that supports the work of the SENCO and is designed to promote rights and inclusive practice has 'paradoxically created problems of inequality within education', through the exclusionary practice of separating individuals and maintaining records according to their ability/disability. Indeed, opposing perspectives about defining the focus and emphasis of the roles and responsibility of educational professionals has caused a great deal of unrest. Biesta (2009, cited in Nes 2014:861) goes as far as to suggest that

*there is a tension in the competence discourse between a behavioural approach that emphasizes 'doing, performing, achieving, observing, measuring and, ultimately, control', on the one hand, and an integrative approach ... that emphasizes 'knowledge, skills, understanding, values, purpose and, ultimately, teacher agency', on the other.*

Farrell (2017) broadens this perspective by arguing that educational provision should encompass a school-wide attitude and a more holistic



approach to inclusion that is embedded within curriculum and assessment (including content and structure); pedagogy (methods of teaching); resources; therapy (SLT, psychotherapy, physical therapies); and school and classroom organisation. However, research has highlighted that there is more widely a lack of knowledge and training in terms of the professional educators' competence to plan, deliver and manage provision in special education (EADSNE 2012). In order to address this, some key values have been identified under a European profile of competencies to support educators to adopt a more inclusive approach (EADSNE 2012:11–18). The four key competencies and the attributes, knowledge and skills are:

1. Valuing learner diversity
2. Supporting all learners
3. Working with others
4. Personal professional development

Drawing Nes' (2014) suggestion that attitudes, knowledge and skills are essential to implementing practical requirements in regard to each of the EADSNE (2012) values, further expansion here is useful.

The first core, 'valuing learner diversity' requires settings to ensure that learner difference is considered as a resource and an asset to education. The areas of competence within this core value relate to conceptions of inclusive education, teacher's view of learner difference, areas of competence (EADSNE 2012:11–13) and understandings of disability (Nes 2014:863). Nes (2014:867) recommends that attitudes and beliefs require prioritising recognition of all disability and valuing the diversity of the human condition, knowledge involves clear understanding of the meaning of ableism, and skills and abilities require supporting pupils/students in the development of a positive disability identity.

The second core value, 'supporting all learners' requires that teachers have high expectations for all learners' achievements and actively promoting the academic, social and emotional learning of all learners (EADSNE 2012:13–15), 'especially those with considerable need of support' (Nes 2014:863). In order to achieve this, there needs to be recognition and application of 'effective teaching approaches in and outside heteroge-

neous classes' (EADSNE 2012:13–15). Nes (2014:867) advocates that teachers must have the knowledge of effective teaching strategies and skills to be able to apply these techniques in whatever setting they are in to teach children of all abilities. Equally, teachers should be skilled in communicating effectively with children with speech and language difficulties and also be trained to communicate with children with specific communication needs or bilingual needs.

The third core value, 'working with others' promotes collaboration and teamwork as essential approaches for all teachers and professionals. This fundamentally incorporates working with parents and families, a range of other educational professionals (EADSNE 2012:15–16) and also working with the (school) system (Nes 2014:863). The need for cultural and social respect and sensitivity towards family diversity, within a whole school development framework and training for supporting professional development, for example, counselling colleagues (Nes 2014:868), is an essential aspect of effective collaborative pedagogy.

The fourth core value, 'personal professional development' recognises teaching as a learning activity in itself whereby teachers take responsibility for their own lifelong learning, through reflective practice of teaching and professional learning and development. It is therefore important to recognise that initial education training is the foundation for professional learning and development (EADSNE 2012:16–18). Teaching as a continuing cycle of problem-solving, planning, evaluation, reflection and action in which the professional needs to also evaluate their role and responsibilities in delivery (Nes 2014:868). Equally, Nes (2014:868) advocates the importance of flexibility in teaching strategies that promote innovation and personal learning. Thus teachers have to be both adaptive and inclusive in their teaching for the multi-variant needs of all the children they teach, embracing a vast range of cultural, linguistic, gender and religious contexts and individual needs alongside changing educational policy and expectations to meet the educational challenges of the late twenty-first century (EADSNE 2010).

Although the government has recognised the importance of provision for specific SEN teacher training to ensure effective SEN provision is available in all schools in the UK (DfE 2015; Mintz et al. 2015; Nasen 2016a), it is interesting to note that the current government has yet to

statutorily implement this (Nasen 2016a). Whilst SEN is covered in initial teacher training courses as part of the wider programme, SEN training provision for all existing staff is not compulsory and the DfE has funded an online training option by third-sector provider NASEN (Nasen 2016b). However, Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) evaluation of school SEN provision has specifically focused on all aspects of SEN since the Education Act 2005 and therefore, schools are required to publically provide a separate SEN information report and records of SEN provision in advance of an Ofsted inspection (Ofsted 2016). More recently under the subsequent Children and Families Act 2014, there has been a shift towards joined up service evaluations and this brought about the joint OFSTED and Commission for Quality and Care (CQC) inspections. These joint inspections began in 2015 reporting on all local authority's provision for SENDS (covering health commissioners, local early year's settings, schools and the post-16 further education sector) across the country. However, whilst in broader societal terms some progress has been undoubtedly made over the last few decades in terms of wider participation and acceptance of inclusion within educational establishments, there is evidence of varied practice and success across UK schools in terms of provision and meeting children's individual SEN (EHRC 2017). Since 2016, the OFSTED and CQC reports highlight national variations in educational provision and failings in local authority in joined up working for SENDS (OFSTED and CQC 2016, updated 2017). At a time of global financial crisis, difficult decisions are made about educational funding cutbacks and whilst the decisions as to where huge financial losses are implemented, and direction of the impact within schools is left to head teachers and governing bodies, the impacts on staffing and children themselves have been widely reported (e.g. see the BBC 2016; The Guardian 2016, 2017). However, on a positive note, as a result of recent OFSTED and CQC reports criticising widespread inadequate SEN provision across the country, the government has announced the intention to allocate extra funding of £215 million for pupils with SEN (LocalGov 2017).

Provision for SEN is premised on the principle that all pupil and students learning needs are incorporated and met in the daily classroom teaching practices (Farrell 2017). In practical terms, the delivery of SEN

provision is often built upon an expectation of partnerships and varied perspectives collaborating in goal-orientated target setting and assessments of pupils and students (Hornby 2014). Clearly, contextual factors including teaching, assessment and the environment should be considered here rather than limiting the focus on the biomedical aspects of special needs or disability (Frederickson and Cline 2015). With contemporary education reflecting aspects of both medical and social models of disability, there is more overlap between education and healthcare provision. Shared terminology definitions towards interventions have become ‘universal, targeted and specialist’ (Lindsay et al. 2010:12) and are now an integral part of the administrative processes of identifying, recording and monitoring educational need and provision and whilst specific support, techniques or additional interventions may be needed to more effectively support the learning of children with SEN or disability (Barnes and Mercer 2010; Benson 2014), it is clear that intervention strategies should provide resources and opportunities that enable the child or young person with special needs to effectively engage in learning and development (DfE and DoH 2014; Farrell 2017). Indeed, intervention strategies should be appropriate and the delivery of these should involve reflexive teaching and learning along with setting high expectations of all pupil and students (Ekins 2013) to ensure that the delivered curriculum and specific interventions are effective in terms of quality of teaching, delivery and management to provide accelerated learning for the pupil and student (Pollard 2008; Ofsted 2014; Donovan et al. 2015a; Cheminais 2015).

## Emphasis on Learning or Attainment?

The emphasis in the current education system on assessment and testing (Gorad and Smith 2010; Goodley 2017) results in greater focus on teaching for attainment of the majority and less attention to the individual provisions for those in need of specific support or SEN. Assessment for learning (AfL) is a concept that has long been applied in SEN settings as a valid and reliable measure of engaging children and young people in their own learning and developmental journey (Frederickson and Cline

2015). AfL adopts a more capability approach model of the individuals' knowledge and understanding (Biggeri et al. 2011; Farrell 2017) as 'one size' assessment does not fit all, and for children and young people with SEN the inappropriateness of using standardised tests or testing methods can have a long-term negative effect on the individual (see Ferran Marsa-Sambola 2017 this volume for further examination of issues of identity). For example, traditional assessment approaches testing knowledge and application of taught subjects and topics tend to penalise children and young people with SEN by the expectation of a predetermined level of attainment (Frederickson and Cline 2015). Therefore, it is argued that all assessment strategies should evolve from the capabilities of the individual pupil and be developed appropriately according to the needs of the individual and nature of the condition, so that bias and discrimination are eliminated (Donovan et al. 2015b; Frederickson and Cline 2015). Dynamic approaches in assessment focus on potential, as advocated by Vygotsky's (1978) idea of the Zone of Proximal development, where a child or young person actively seeks to interact with learning opportunities within and beyond the vicinity of their current levels of development. Arguably, proactive strategies tailored to the individual have greater potential for the pupil and student to achieve more with the right support, enabling the child or young person to learn skills and strategies which they can apply in more than one context (Donovan et al. 2015b; Frederickson and Cline 2015).

It is important also to consider the effects that the wider environment has on pupil attainment and learning. Here we draw on Shakespeare's (2014) suggestions that a critical but realistic approach to the context of SEN is appropriate because it goes beyond the medical versus social models of disability and accepts the multi-factorial aspects of disability perspectives and lived realities. However, in reality, Benson (2014) argues that the medical model of disability is so engrained within education provision through the practice of identification and classification of impairment in order to match provision to need, this is no easy solution as within education there remains a prevalence of deficit categorisation in terms of identification of provision rather than rights-based approaches which acknowledge and encompass the capability of individuals (Biggeri et al. 2011). Arguably then, Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological model

provides a more relevant way of conceptualising the interrelated aspects of contextualised needs and reciprocal provision for children and young people with SEN within a layered system of interactions across changing needs over time (Bronfenbrenner 2005; Frederickson and Cline 2015). The bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner 2005) is incorporated and acknowledged in legislation as the need to recognise the wider context and experiences in children's lives in order to fully consider the perspectives of all concerned with the child's needs (Frederickson and Cline 2015). This model is useful in that professionals and practitioners can recognise and identify the significance of environmental factors including the suitability of the environment and resources; social contexts including the networks, organisations and structures that can enable or disable a person; and individualised factors including the child or young person's own ability and capacity and availability in order to make sound evaluations and appropriate provision decisions. Therefore all SEN provision must include consultation with parents and take into account the views of the child or young person themselves (DfE 2014b; DfE and DoH 2014; Cheminais 2015). Lindsay et al. (2010:12) goes as far as to argue that individual or 'targeted' interventions will reduce identified learning difficulties (Lindsay et al. 2010:12) and should be implemented after careful planning and identifying clear, achievable and agreed objectives with the child or young person through knowing and working collaboratively with the individual child (Donovan et al. 2015a, for further examination of the impact of early interventions, please see Hunt 2017 this volume). However, until the dominant focus within educational establishments deflect away from the current emphasis on measurable attainment and targets and onto education and learning, all education settings will be required to evidence academic attainment, thus perpetuating the deficit model of those who can achieve within set standardisation tests and those who cannot. To emphasise this unattainable position further, Ofsted (2014) states that SEN pupil and students' progress will be measured using the expectation that 'expected progress is the median level for pupils' age and starting point in order to make more objective comparisons and judgements' (Ofsted 2014:17:54). It is interesting to note the tensions here between learning and attainment. The DfE (2010) outlines the importance of implementing effective monitoring and assessment of

pupil and student progress to ensure the pupils/students with SEN are making 'good progress' (Cheminais 2015:71), whereas the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH 2014) emphasises that alongside monitoring pupil and student progress, the effectiveness of intervention strategies and effectiveness of teaching and learning should also be evaluated. Furthermore, Ofsted (2014) requires that all pupils/students with SEN receiving additional support or interventions must demonstrate that accelerated or sustained progress been made within a short-term provision, and that SENCOs and senior management teams are able to clearly distinguish progress in their evidenced data collection (Cheminais 2015). This indicates the prevalent current emphasis, driven by policy and legislation (SEND Code of Practice), delivered through pedagogical practice, on the education system to deliver statistical evidence of provision driven by attainment rather than concentrating on the educational needs of the individual. Thus, it is argued that with standardised testing and nationalised assessment comparatives, there is little/no consideration of individual needs and abilities and pupils' capacity to learn is reduced to the biomedical model of ability.

When analysing and applying aspects of learning and attainment, it is necessary to explore the environments of educational provision for pupils with SEN. In doing so, one soon becomes acutely aware that the debates of inclusion and special education are both 'troubling and troubled' (Slee 2008:99). Rights-based agendas have predominantly focused on issues relating to access and paid less attention to about actual capacity to provide for the educational needs of students. Indeed, it is argued that education is driven by disconnected political ideology that is dominantly focused on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment that places the onus on educators having to manage the intersections between ensuring high quality, appropriate and effective provisions for students with SEN with low budgets and continual cutbacks. In addition, the realities of publicly funded educational provision compound the situation whereby funding is subject to financial constraints and political decisions. As a result, schools in England have to provide for pupils/students with SEN or AEN from their existing budgets, but can seek additional funding for SEN provision for children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and pupils/students with AEN may qualify for the Pupil

Premium (Frederickson and Cline 2015:48). In this way, educational policy has shifted towards more economic viability and educational performativity frameworks (Goodley 2017), and in order to accommodate this, there has been a noticeable move to ‘streamlining’ procedural practices and to bring provisions together under single ‘umbrella’ terms. Equally, the move away from individual education plans to EHC plans has reflected the broader shift away from individualised funding and provision, to combined provision through shared collaborative working. Goodley (2017) argues that in practice this is ineffective. In addition, according to the EHRC (2017), since the reclassification of SEN, there has been a decline in the number of pupils recorded with SEN. This is problematic. It raises many serious concerns for the current and future outcomes for some pupils. Those with lower level needs are no longer recorded as having SEN. Therefore, they will not be eligible to access specialist provision. It should be noted then that the education system in England is not only failing to recognise specific aspects of SEN; it is not providing appropriate support for individuals within the system (ATL 2016). Small wonder that whilst the number of students with SEN coming out of education with qualifications is improving, the ratio still remains three times lower when compared to students without disabilities (EHRC 2017).

## Future of Education for Children with Special Educational Needs

Cheminais (2015:66) highlights that over the last few decades, UK governments have invested heavily in addressing the underachievement of vulnerable children and young people, through a range of policies and strategies in education as the means to longer term productive outcomes. Indeed, the Children and Families Act (2014) overhauled the provision for children and young people with SEN (Long 2016) and provided the legal framework for delivery of collaborative, inclusive SEN provision outlined in the joint DfE and DoH (2014) SEND Code of Practice. Combined, the act and code of practice aims to improve resilience, aspi-



rations and long-term outcomes for children and young people with SEN across education, health and social care services (DfE 2014b; Frederickson and Cline 2015). In evaluating the effectiveness of inclusion, Slee (2008) highlights Baroness Warnocks' (2006) remarks that the ideology of inclusion in mainstream education settings in the past had largely failed due to assumptions of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to inclusion. However, as Slee (2008) argues, mainstream schools were not designed for all-encompassing provision, inclusion and broadening participation strategies. Notwithstanding, whilst educational systems and structures may be flawed, it is important to recognise, acknowledge and value the work that individuals and teams of staff and support workers put into educational provision and support for children and young people with SEN on a daily basis, especially when measurements and assessments dominantly only value attainment (Gorad and Smith 2010; Goodley 2017). However, the discussions within this chapter have highlighted the need for significant changes to be made within education systems. The development of more social justice-based approaches in regard to educational attainment in order to ensure that educational content, support and interventions are effective, appropriate and regularly evaluated for their appropriateness in meeting individual educational needs (Bronfenbrenner 2005; Biggeri et al. 2011; Farrell 2017) are clearly much needed. In reality though, the existing network of education institutional structures is unlikely to change and there is a need in inclusive education and within special education more broadly for a change of culture (Goodley 2017). Change comes from awareness of the issues and through making informed choices, and therefore greater emphasis needs to be placed on critical pedagogy that challenges neo-liberal dominant discourses and shifts ideology towards valuing and embracing effective collaborative relationships, broadening curricular content and delivering inclusive cultural practices (Apple 2013; Goodley 2017; Simon 2017). Changes *are* happening. There is a growing social and intellectual movement amongst academics, the social justice movement and educationalists that is questioning the dominance in education practice of competition rather than collaboration, and this is effectively but slowly beginning to challenge the status quo of limiting inclusion practices and educational provision (Apple 2016; Goodley 2017; Simon 2017).

## Final Thoughts

The discussions within this chapter have highlighted that over time, there have been a significant number of policy and social changes relating to the provision of education for children and young people with SEN (Farrell 2017; Goodley 2017). The core of effective SEN provision surely lies in appropriate educational support programmes and intervention strategies with the focus being on pupil engagement, learning and effective assessment strategies for it has been argued that these will move pupil and student learning forward with more positive outcomes. Equally assessing the effectiveness of intervention strategies and the practices used to deliver it are crucial in the evaluation process of any educational intervention (Donovan et al. 2015b) so that learning and pedagogy are progressive and appropriate. There is, and always has been, a healthy debate and constructive criticism of the education system in the UK. The ways in which provision is funded and distributed has always been scrutinised, and the complexities of ensuring appropriate provision for children with SEN will doubtless continue to be debated and advocated (Brooks et al. 2012). However, there is hope amongst and driven by those advocates of and for upholding the rights of those with SEN. Clear communication, knowledge and effective positive relationships with educators passionate about education for all (Taylor and Woolley 2013) are essential to ensuring that children and young people with SEN can build their social capital and independence through having their voices heard and that their right to participate is ensured (Allan et al. 2009).

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