



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

Inclusive learning

2002/3 annual report on curriculum and assessment

This report is based on the activities to investigate curriculum, assessment and qualifications issues in inclusive learning

March 2004

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1. Context

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is responsible for the national curriculum, which is by statutory duty used in all state schools. The curriculum consists of general duties, teaching guidelines and programmes of study for all the national curriculum subjects.

The national curriculum monitoring of diversity and inclusion is a rolling programme that is undertaken throughout the academic year as we seek the views of schools, teachers, parents, pupils, and educationalists on the national curriculum to ensure that we are maintaining an up-to-date and effective curriculum. The Diversity and Inclusion Team monitors the curriculum alongside other areas relevant to QCA such as special arrangements for national curriculum and public examinations, the P-scales and so on.

Following the introduction of the revised national curriculum in September 2000 the Diversity and Inclusion Team is responsible for monitoring the chapter 'Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils' and its attendant issues, in particular in the areas of special educational needs (SEN) and disability, race and gender.

2. Methodology

The monitoring programme for diversity and inclusion for 2002/3 had as its primary focuses SEN and disability together with English as an additional language (EAL). A more limited investigation collected information on race and gender. These areas will be subject to a more thorough investigation during 2003/4.

The impact on schools of QCA's diversity and inclusion publications was also investigated.

All monitoring of diversity and inclusion shares the same model of triangulation:

1. Meetings with local education authority (LEA) advisers and relevant associations to share information and establish issues of current concern. These include:
 - annual conferences for LEA advisers
 - three advisory groups for special needs, race and gender respectively, whose membership includes representatives from Ofsted, DfES, the Learning and Skills Council, the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, together with LEA advisers and headteachers. Also represented are relevant disability, gender and race organisations (eg the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the British Dyslexia Association, the Runnymede Trust and the Fawcett Society).
2. An audit of research and other reports. The issues raised by the meetings and conferences are compared with current research and reports from, for example, Ofsted or the Audit Commission, and key areas for further investigation identified.
3. Questionnaires based on the intelligence obtained from the first two sources. An analysis of the findings of the questionnaires provides a list of key issues that inform the interview schedules used on visits to schools, colleges and work-based learners.

This intelligence is circulated back through to the advisory groups so that there is a continual cycle of feedback and review. This is also supported by discussion

and dissemination at speaking engagements with LEAs, colleges and relevant associations, where practitioners' views are fed into the process.

3. Special educational needs

3.1 Key findings

The following areas were consistently identified as concerns by the members of the advisory group, and were confirmed by our questionnaires and consultations with practitioners and parents and monitoring of schools and colleges.

- There is little awareness of the national curriculum inclusion statement.
- There is too much focus on assessment at the expense of learning experiences.
- Concerns were widespread about 14–19 developments not appearing to be inclusive in their conception.
- There are too many initiatives working in tandem to allow for rigorous evaluation.
- Despite efforts to 'mainstream' there was a perception that SEN had fallen off the agenda in all mainstream high-profile initiatives.
- All respondents expressed strong views that performance tables militated against the inclusion of pupils with SEN in many popular schools.

3.2 Methodology

1. Questionnaires

Three diversity and inclusion questionnaires, one each for class teachers, curriculum managers and SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs), focused on the chapter 'Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils' in the national curriculum handbooks. Questionnaires were sent to stratified samples of schools, including primary, secondary, middle and special schools in proportions representative of those nationally. Schools previously involved in QCA work were excluded. Three samples of 200 schools were contacted. The returned questionnaires were analysed using the Sphinx software.

Use was also made of QCA's annual school sampling project (SSP). The SSP questionnaire contains questions on all the national curriculum subjects plus a short section on inclusion and is sent to a sample of 1,000 schools each year.

2. Focus groups

During March 2003 focus group meetings were held with head teachers and teachers from across the country. Schools were chosen at random and invited to take part in the meetings held in London. Again, schools previously involved in QCA work were excluded. Primary, middle, secondary, inner city and church schools were all represented at the meetings. However it proved more difficult to meet with senior managers of mainstream secondary schools.

3. School visits

During the summer term visits were made to primary, secondary and special schools in a variety of areas including north-east, north-west and south-east England and East Anglia.

Schools for the visits were identified through contact with 40 LEAs who nominated schools. The majority of schools suggested by the LEAs were special schools or mainstream schools with special units attached, so that visits were predominantly to schools with well-developed SEN policy and practice and did not allow the collection of information from 'the typical school'. A small number of mainstream primary schools without attached units were willing to host a visit, but no mainstream secondary schools were identified.

At each visit set questions were asked so that similar data was collected from each school no matter which team member undertook the visit.

4. Partnership groups

The Diversity and Inclusion Team leads policy groups for race, gender and SEN. It also led a teacher associations group during 2002/3. The membership of the groups is drawn from organisations and individuals with relevant interests and expertise in the context of education. The meetings are used to gauge how the national curriculum supports or relates to the issues, and to identify schools' activities to promote further inclusion.

5. Speaking engagements and conferences

Speaking engagements and conferences across the country provide opportunities to speak to and engage with teachers and schools in order to gain insight into current practice and obtain their views on what action might promote inclusion in the future. Forty-five such engagements were carried out in 2002/3.

6. Parent partnerships

A number of regional parent partnerships have been established to act as forums for the parents of pupils with SEN. QCA representatives attended three different regional meetings to consult with parents, one in the South-East, one in the North-West and one in the Midlands.

3.3 'Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils' – investigating the effectiveness of the national curriculum statement on inclusion

General monitoring showed that the statement on inclusion from the national curriculum was most commonly associated with SEN provision, with few realising it has far wider implications for other marginalised groups of learners.

Even within the context of SEN, monitoring shows there are significant variations among teachers and schools as to how familiar the inclusion chapter of the national curriculum is to them. However, there are wide discrepancies between the results that different monitoring tools employed by QCA produce.

The SSP data shows that schools are generally aware of 'Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils'. In the key stage 1 and 2 SSP report 59.2 per cent of head teachers claimed to have discussed the statement with their staff. In the questionnaires produced by the Diversity and Inclusion Team 85 per cent of respondents claimed to have at least seen the statement and 32 per cent had read it fully and examined its contents and implications.

These findings differ from many responses from face-to-face discussions with teachers. Schools had prepared for their visits by reading the chapter. Indeed one school had a day's training specifically provided by its LEA in preparation for the visit by the team. Unfortunately the LEA had focused on the wrong document and it was apparent the school had no knowledge of the national curriculum requirements on inclusion.

Where schools were familiar with the chapter, only approximately one fifth had incorporated it into training. The main driver for this was cited as being Ofsted. For example, schools were looking at the chapter 'because Ofsted has now approved it'. This referred to the new inspection schedules that require comment on inclusion in the final report. Conversely some schools had paid little attention to it because 'it wasn't raised by the "reggie" – I don't think they knew much about it.'

Despite frequent and emphasised reassurance that QCA monitoring visits were not for inspection purposes, and that discussions and observations would not be attributed to any individual, it proved impossible to arrange visits to any mainstream secondary schools. This may be due to the fact that many SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) in secondary schools feel that inclusion is seen as their sole responsibility rather than as a whole school issue.

This raises the concern that the data from the SSP and the Diversity and Inclusion Team's questionnaires does not provide an accurate view. The questionnaires indicate that a high percentage of schools know about the chapter. However, the frequent need to explain what the chapter is and where it can be found during phone or face-to-face discussions suggests that this is not a true picture.

The return rate for the diversity and inclusion questionnaire was 30 per cent for curriculum managers, 31.5 per cent for SENCOs and 17 per cent for classroom teachers. The response rate of 30 per cent is about what would be expected in a survey of this nature, so the 17 per cent response from classroom teachers was disappointing. Ways of improving the response rate for questionnaires should be sought when future surveys are carried out.

A worrying statistic drawn from the Diversity and Inclusion Team questionnaire was that SENCOs were the group least likely to know about the inclusion chapter (45 per cent of those respondents indicating that they had not read the chapter were SENCOs); however, in the focus groups it was the SENCOs who were most likely to be informed about the chapter. This inconsistency makes it difficult to judge the relative validity of the different sources of data.

A high percentage (63 per cent across the three Diversity and Inclusion Team questionnaires) welcomed the chapter and an even higher percentage (74 per cent) supported the key principles of the chapter. However the SSP data suggests that the chapter has not made it easier to provide a curriculum tailored for pupils with SEN (70 per cent of respondents in the key stage 1 and 2 headteacher questionnaire) nor to provide for pupils' diverse social and cultural needs (75.3 per cent of respondents in the key stage 1 and 2 headteacher questionnaire).

Both the Diversity and Inclusion Team questionnaire results and the information from monitoring visits indicated that respondents felt that insufficient resources were allocated to making schools more inclusive. In the questionnaire 71 per cent claimed that resource availability was the biggest obstacle to inclusion. This indicates a misunderstanding of the purpose of the inclusion chapter. Many of the aims of the chapter, for example planning an inclusive curriculum, may not have any additional cost implications.

Whilst relatively low levels of knowledge about the content of the inclusion chapter are indicated, many schools are aware that Ofsted inspects schools on their adherence to its

principles. One hypothesis is that schools look to Ofsted rather than QCA for guidance. Discussions with teachers indicated that it is common for schools to seek advice from LEA advisers with Ofsted training rather than those with expertise in inclusion. This results, in some cases, in misleading advice, particularly about the flexibility offered by the inclusion statement. Some interviews with LEA advisers indicated a reluctance to give a high profile to the national curriculum inclusion chapter. One said that 'we do not want everyone doing their own thing, we cannot monitor this effectively', and another said 'we had put a lot of work in drawing up guidelines before this statement was produced – we would prefer schools to stick to them if possible.'

There were significant differences between types of schools in levels of awareness of 'Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils'. Generally, special schools had more detailed knowledge and were more supportive than mainstream schools, including those with special units. The mainstream schools were less likely to comment directly on the chapter other than to say that they tried to incorporate its provisions anyway and 'always had done'. They were less forthcoming about exactly how they had gone about this and to what extent these efforts had been successful.

Comments from special schools included:

- 'A major improvement on the situation before its introduction.'
- 'Generally easy to follow.'
- 'A positive development for special schools, it has taken too long to get SEN pupils included.'

Comments from mainstream schools included:

- 'It is unachievable.'
- 'Schools could feel like failures, as they are unable to achieve everything that the chapter states.'
- 'Whilst the chapter is fine in principle there is little practical guidance as to how to put it into practice.'

One of the biggest problems identified was the lack of guidance and training on inclusion. Schools felt that, whilst the national curriculum had this chapter within it and its goals were laudable, without more explanation and training they would be unable to fulfil the provisions fully. There was a general feeling that performance tables discouraged inclusion. A major issue was differentiation. Teachers appeared unaware that the national curriculum prescribes what should be taught rather than how it should be taught. It appears that advice to the contrary is received from other sources. Only the special schools and the mainstream schools with close links to special schools appeared to be happy with differentiating the curriculum.

Parent partnership meetings revealed that those parents who attended had not heard of the statement and had received inaccurate information about the demands of the national curriculum. For example, some parents believed that there were a series of daily lesson plans which the school used as a yardstick for deciding whether their child had special needs and indeed whether their child could be educated in mainstream provision. Parents initially complained that the school had set work that was too difficult. Closer examination showed that it was the pace of work that was causing the difficulty. Children were barely grasping one new concept before being given something entirely new, with little chance for consolidation of learning. Parents indicated that teachers had given as the reason the demands of 'coverage' (a term not used by QCA) of the national curriculum.

A typical comment was: 'I wanted my son to stay in mainstream and maybe go back a year. They said this wasn't allowed and that they had to go through everything so fast

because of the national curriculum and inspection. If what you (QCA) are saying is right why don't you tell the parents?'

4. English as an additional language

The 2002/3 monitoring programme also focused in depth on how far QCA's products meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. The methodology involved a literature survey, input from the QCA race advisory group and a conference to identify the key issues.

These issues were covered in a detailed questionnaire on how schools manage the curriculum for learners with EAL. This was sent initially to 600 schools. It should be noted that the questionnaire had to be sent to a further 600 schools owing to a particularly low initial return rate (4 per cent). Out of 1,200 schools, 146 returns were obtained. This return rate is significantly below that normally expected from a survey related to inclusion.

A series of three regional focus groups of 18 practitioners (nine from LEA and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant teams, and nine from schools) were held to explore the findings further.

4.1 Key findings

Main concerns expressed by the QCA race advisory group and confirmed through research with practitioners, learners and LEA services were:

- that whilst the situation was improving, historically the interests of such learners had been marginalised when compared with higher-achieving young people
- that performance tables and centralised targets exacerbated this situation
- that performance tables appeared to lie behind some decisions not to admit lower-attaining young people to some institutions
- the lack of inclusion of such young people in the initial conceptualisation of mainstream initiatives, for example, the key stage 3 strategy
- that selection of tiered courses at GCSE was condemning EAL learners to the bottom tier two years before they were ready to take the exam
- the lack of a coherent policy for effective intervention to raise the attainment and participation of EAL learners in aspects of the education system.

4.2 Methodology

1. Questionnaires

From a representative cold sample of schools, information was sought about the proportion of pupils from ethnic categories based on the census classification, and then about the numbers of EAL learners.

We asked about respondents' knowledge of the 'Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils' chapter from the national curriculum handbooks.

Respondents were then asked what support they felt they needed to meet the needs of EAL and minority ethnic group learners.

Finally we explored respondents' views of three QCA products:

- *Respect for all – valuing diversity and challenging racism through the curriculum* (web-based curriculum resources)
- *A language in common* (assessment criteria and guidance for assessing progress in English for EAL learners)
- national curriculum tests.

4.3 Findings

We invited all those who responded to the questionnaire to seminars in London, Manchester and Birmingham. We also invited EAL practitioners from the locality to these meetings. These sessions were attended by 120 delegates.

1. Questionnaires

Fifty-four per cent of schools had over 80 per cent of pupils classified as 'white European'. Around 2 per cent of schools had fewer than 20 per cent of pupils classified as 'white European'. Eighty-four per cent of respondents gave statistics indicating that fewer than 10 per cent of their pupils were black, with 67 per cent indicating that their Asian pupils represented fewer than 5 per cent of their total cohort.

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents indicated that pupils with EAL comprised fewer than 5 per cent of their cohort. Twenty per cent of respondents had EAL pupils representing from 10 to 30 per cent of the cohort. Twenty-six per cent of respondents had a designated teacher for EAL and the same percentage received additional funding from their LEA for EAL pupils.

Although it is known that schools in geographical areas that might be expected to have a far higher proportion of EAL pupils in their intake were included in the survey, only one return from such a school was received.

The schools were asked if they were aware of the QCA publication *A language in common*. This gives assessment criteria and examples of supporting EAL learners to attain fluency in speaking, reading and writing English. Sixty-seven per cent of schools were unaware of the publication. Of the 33 per cent who were aware of it, only 19 per cent actually used the assessment scales related to the national curriculum, which were produced by QCA in 1999. In a number of areas schools used well-established schemes such as LEA ones or those published by organisations such as the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum. Perceived weaknesses of the QCA scales were:

- that they are not suitable for assessing new arrivals entering schools at secondary ages
- that scales do not go far enough for secondary school students, who need to be working at level three or four of the national curriculum if they are to cope with the curriculum independently; also, that older students are less likely to attempt their own writing until confident about meaning or spelling of words
- that in part they appear to be more relevant to younger students
- that secondary students do not always follow reading schemes.

In fact the scales produced by QCA are appropriate for all ages, and when asked to examine the assessment criteria in detail no respondent was able to identify anything age-related.

The intended use of the scales as summative, best-fit judgements has not been disseminated clearly. Many schools mistakenly thought the criteria had been developed to replace more detailed diagnostic assessments used by specialists.

We then asked about *Respect for all*, the QCA materials produced to promote the valuing of cultural diversity through the curriculum. Delegates at conferences at which *Respect for all* materials were demonstrated and discussed were extremely positive about the materials and said that dissemination should be improved. However, 92 per cent of questionnaire respondents were unaware of them.

Everyone who had seen *Respect for all* found the materials useful and informative, and 88 per cent of those who had rated them as very good or better.

No respondents felt the curriculum per se was a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with EAL.

Key areas of concern (with percentage responses) were:

- funding (67 per cent)
- training for mainstream teachers (60 per cent)
- lack of time (57 per cent)
- lack of guidance on flexibility (21 per cent)
- support from parents (21 per cent)
- motivation of staff (22 per cent).

At all stages of this research the issue of training for mainstream staff was raised as a key issue, by both mainstream and specialist teachers.

4.4 Focus groups

The focus groups substantiated the findings of the questionnaire.

Only half of delegates were aware of the statement 'Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils' in the national curriculum. Of these, few demonstrated a working knowledge of its content or status or how it might be applied to pupils with EAL. Less than a third knew that it was a statutory order. Only 5 per cent thought that schools actively implemented this statement.

Around half felt the national curriculum was broad enough to meet pupils' needs (the same half which knew of the inclusion statement). The others believed the QCA schemes of work were the national curriculum. These were seen as 'too hard', 'too narrow', 'tokenistic' and 'not inclusive enough'.

All delegates identified the following areas as issues:

- the inappropriate use of testing to allocate pupils to bottom groups for all subjects
- the inappropriate allocating of SEN status to some pupils with EAL, and conversely some EAL pupils who genuinely did have SEN not being identified. A few authorities have successfully begun dialogue between the two teaching communities and developed protocols for appropriate intervention
- lack of training for mainstream teachers
- lack of knowledge and awareness in some schools, which was unacceptable in contemporary society.

Delegates' opinions were divided in their reactions to *A language in common*. Mainstream teachers found the assessments easy to use as they fitted into existing national curriculum frameworks. Specialist teachers felt the scales were not differentiated enough or would lead to a withdrawal of resources from pupils who were working at national curriculum levels. (The QCA guidance states clearly that some pupils will require

continuing additional support with their English after they are working at national curriculum levels.)

Follow-on discussions covered the nature and purpose of assessment and the differences in demand on various types of teachers' time. All groups agreed that there was no need to adopt an 'either/or' approach as they had initially believed. This suggests that it would be worth having this discourse at a national level.

National curriculum tests in English were seen as sometimes culturally inappropriate for minority ethnic pupils (70 per cent of delegates). All delegates saw national curriculum tests in mathematics and science as being acceptable.

Findings from conferences, QCA's race advisory group, the postal questionnaires and the focus groups, were that:

- *Respect for all* is valued but QCA needs to adapt a proactive dissemination strategy.
- *A language in common* has achieved little penetration.
- It would be profitable to link dissemination with rollout training from LEAs.
- Whilst there is undoubtedly good practice in supporting EAL learners, in some schools they appear to be marginalised and their needs little understood by mainstream staff.
- There is better provision where EAL pupils represent a significant part of the school's population.
- There are opportunities for EMAG teams to share expertise with mainstream colleagues.

5. Other observations 2002/3

5.1 Race and gender

The Diversity and Inclusion Team's work related to race focused on the *Respect for all* website and the organisation of a national conference on 'Promoting the achievement of black and ethnic minority pupils'. Schools and organisations involved in this work appreciated this focus at a time when the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001 has come into force.

Some issues raised indicate the need:

- to reflect on the focus on individuality in terms of flexibility in the curriculum. In terms of race and socio-economic class, different groups have radically different attainment profiles. For example, addressing the needs of an individual African-Caribbean boy does not explain group differentials in attainment between, for example, working class African-Caribbean boys and middle-class Indian girls
- for QCA to address inequality of outcome through its policies and activities
- to make clear the areas of activity that are outside QCA's remit: for example, placing a requirement on LEAs to have targets and action plans to reduce inequality of outcome, or to address issues related to teacher training.

Gender issues will be examined in the 2003/4 monitoring programme. Current concerns that may inform such monitoring include:

- the potential impact of 14–19 developments
- choice of courses, for example, why 85 per cent of girls in one school elected to study courses in child care and health and beauty

- the perception that gender inequality is mainly focused on boys' 'underachievement'.

5.2 Awareness of QCA publications

Schools were often unable to distinguish between materials distributed by DfES, QCA, Ofsted, TTA and LEAs. Schools were most likely to be aware of materials when:

- they were immediately relevant to the school
- Ofsted inspectors referred to QCA guidance
- QCA guidance was mentioned in Ofsted training.

Two positive observations:

- There has been a marked decline over the last four years in cited incidents where it is alleged that Ofsted team inspectors have reinterpreted QCA guidance in a way that contradicts its intention.
- There has been an increase in calls from Ofsted team inspectors requesting clarification of some aspects of QCA's guidance on inclusion.

Schools are informed about QCA publications through a number of different routes:

- QCA mailings
- QCA website
- their LEA
- other schools
- in the case of church schools, through their diocesan education officer.

There appears to be a variation in the effectiveness of LEA dissemination of materials and guidance. Some mainstream schools expressed concern that they do not always receive the materials on inclusion produced by QCA.

Suggestions from schools to improve awareness of QCA publications:

- Distribute a flyer to schools describing the new publication, instead of sending the actual document, so that teachers can order directly those publications that are most relevant to them.
- Encourage LEAs to organise briefings for headteachers to introduce the publication.
- Ensure that guidance and information about guidance is addressed to relevant post-holders.

The most widely recognised publications were the P-scales documentation, joint DfES and QCA publications actively promoted by DfES.

It is very notable that teachers are having their expectations raised by the DfES-produced materials to support strategies such as the key stage 3 strategy, literacy hour and numeracy hour. These are prescriptive strategies that tell teachers what they need to teach a subject and how they should teach it.

Some respondents expressed disappointment that QCA guidance gave examples of teaching strategies but fell short of providing the detailed lesson plans they have come to expect from initiatives such as the key stage 3 strategy. A further issue was the lack of dissemination and training activities accompanying QCA materials.

There was no consensus between schools and individuals on the use of the QCA website. Some schools felt that increased provision of web-based materials would be beneficial; others disagreed. The increase in provision of web-based materials by QCA needs to be accompanied by appropriately enhanced awareness raising. Those teachers regularly using the website found it easy to locate the materials and guidance online, and found it to be very useful. Some commented that the use of search engines to locate QCA's guidance was not effective. For example, QCA guidance on pupils with learning difficulties appeared on page 100 of a Google search for 'SEN-UK', because of the use of more technical and/or accurate descriptors than 'SEN', for example 'pupils working below level one of the national curriculum'.

It was suggested by a number of schools that they would benefit from a central catalogue of materials and ideas on, for example, race and culture or supporting new arrivals to the UK. However, QCA is not able to endorse any work that has not been commissioned by the organisation itself.

5.3 P-scales and assessment

There has been more emphasis on P-scales than on any other aspect of QCA's work on inclusion. Work on the P-scales and their evaluation will be published in a separate report. Monitoring has revealed that significant numbers of teachers and advisers have misinterpreted the nature of the P-scales and that this has led to inappropriate use of them.

Opinions on national curriculum tests varied, with access at all costs being the view of some, even if there were better ways of assessing the pupil. Others felt that the tests were constraining the curriculum. All involved in the monitoring programme believed that the use of performance data in league tables was detrimental to the concept of inclusion.

Special arrangements for tests are reviewed each year and the number of complaints related to such arrangements has fallen significantly over the last two years. Concern was expressed about the content of national curriculum English tests both from cultural and learning difficulty perspectives. There was no corresponding concern about tests in mathematics or science.

5.4 Examinations

The number of complaints regarding special arrangements for GCSE and GCE has risen. In particular the discrepancies between papers, boards and administration procedures have been a cause of growing concern. These have been discussed with the Joint Council, which is putting procedures in place to address these issues. QCA is adjusting to the increasing amount of work involved in this process.

5.5 Vocational qualifications

The number of complaints about particular arrangements has fallen. This appears to be due to better understanding of disability legislation by awarding bodies, and a move away from the notion that the occupational standards are sacrosanct. If these standards are inadvertently worded in ways that make them discriminatory, they are subject to the law. Examples include standards that use words such as 'speak' when they mean 'communicate'. This can lead to candidates who cannot physically speak being told that they are not eligible for an award in situations where speaking is not even a core competence in the occupation concerned. Cases of this type appear to have decreased but improved monitoring is needed.

6. Conclusion

1. There is conflicting evidence relating to the awareness and use of the national curriculum inclusion chapter, with data from questionnaires providing a more positive picture than that obtained from more in-depth, face-to-face surveys. Whilst there are many examples of good practice, in some schools there is a perception that inclusion is the sole responsibility of the SENCO rather than a whole-school issue.

Recommendation:

QCA needs to investigate the discrepancies in findings on inclusion issues and raise awareness of the requirements of the statutory inclusion statement and its accompanying guidance.

2. There is a demand for resources to support inclusion and a perception that few are available. Where teachers are aware of QCA guidance and support materials they are highly regarded and deemed practical and helpful. However, awareness levels of some guidance are low.

Recommendation:

Support and guidance materials should be given a higher profile with specific, relevant target groups.

3. Confusion about the respective roles of QCA and Ofsted may have led to an unwillingness in some mainstream schools to host QCA monitoring visits. In addition, some schools appear to have received misinformation about inclusion requirements when anticipating the implementation of the new Ofsted framework, with its increased focus on inclusion.

Recommendation:

QCA needs to increase its profile as an organisation that champions the learner, and ensure that schools understand how monitoring activities contribute to this.

4. There is a need to balance the focus on the needs of the individual with actions in response to what is known about underachieving groups of pupils.

Recommendation:

QCA needs to include in its priorities actions to identify and highlight the barriers to learning for underachieving groups of pupils; and play its part, with others, in taking action to overcome these barriers.