



ACHIEVING SUCCESS FOR  
DEAF PUPILS

COUNT US

# IN

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES FROM PRIMARY,  
SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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DEAF PUPILS**

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES FROM PRIMARY,  
SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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## Foreword

*Count us in: Achieving success for deaf pupils* is a timely report. It comes when schools are becoming more confident in dealing with a wide range of additional support for learning needs. Schools are also more aware that they need to personalise experiences in order to meet pupils' learning needs. The report does point to strengths that schools can build on. I am delighted that HMIE can use its inspection evidence both to paint an evaluative picture of the experiences of deaf pupils from a sample of schools while also providing advice on how to improve young people's experiences. This combination of evaluation and advice for improvement is a powerful one.

I also welcome the opportunity to have worked in partnership again with a national body, this time the National Deaf Children's Society. Such partnerships can work very well in making provision for specific groups of pupils better.

This report is part of a wider series being produced by HMIE to follow up our seminal document on inclusion – *Count us in* – which provided a broad view of inclusion and took thinking forward significantly. Generally speaking, highly effective schools do well by all their pupils as we have spelled out in the different parts of *The Journey to Excellence* series. We are currently undertaking a range of tasks that put services for particular groups of pupils under the microscope and will report publicly in a variety of ways – short-life leaflets, on-line good practice resources, and publications such as this one. Thereafter, we will synthesise our experiences and conclusions and re-visit the concepts outlined within *Count us in* to determine if the context in which schools work has moved on such that refreshed general advice on inclusion is needed.

In the meantime, I trust that this publication helps teachers, support staff and managers to make the experiences of deaf children in our schools better.

**Graham Donaldson**

HM Senior Chief Inspector

# Count us in: Achieving success for deaf pupils

## Introduction

*Count us in: Achieving success for deaf pupils* has been produced jointly by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS). The aim of the publication is to report on the quality of education currently experienced by deaf<sup>1</sup> children in Scottish schools, to provide examples of good practice and to identify signposts for improvement which schools can use when planning for excellence.

The guide is for:

- teachers who have deaf pupils in their classes, whether in mainstream or specialist settings;
- staff in peripatetic services supporting deaf pupils;
- management teams in schools for the deaf, schools with units or enhanced resources for deaf pupils and mainstream schools with deaf pupils attending; and
- education authority officers responsible for providing services and monitoring the quality of education for deaf pupils.

Education for deaf pupils is constantly developing and is subject to internal and external pressures for change. Some of the main issues currently affecting the education of deaf pupils are:

- the evidence of underachievement as documented in the survey *The Achievements of Deaf Pupils in Scotland* (ADPS);<sup>2</sup>
- the impact of the policy of mainstreaming;<sup>3</sup>
- the impact of the cochlear implant programme; and
- increased demand for high level British Sign Language (BSL) skills.

The national survey, *The Achievements of Deaf Pupils in Scotland* has tracked the progress of deaf pupils over four years. The last survey of 5-14 national assessments in 2004 showed that the percentage of P7 deaf pupils in primary schools who had achieved in line with national expectations in mathematics, reading and writing was approximately half that of the pupil population as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

Recent legislation has led to developments in the provision of education for deaf pupils. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places duties upon local authorities to ensure that education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children to their fullest potential, and also to raise educational standards. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (ASL Act) requires education authorities to:

- make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support needs for each child or young person with additional support needs for whom they are responsible;
- make arrangements to identify additional support needs; and
- keep under consideration additional support needs identified and the adequacy of the support provided to meet the needs of each child and young person.

1 Throughout this document the term 'deaf' is used to refer to all children experiencing hearing loss, including temporary deafness.

2 The Achievements of Deaf Pupils in Scotland (ADPS) was a project which ran from 2000-2004 as an annual, national, longitudinal database of deaf children in Scotland.

3 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 introduced the 'presumption of mainstreaming', which means that the expectation is that pupils will be educated in mainstream schools except under certain circumstances. A decision may be made to educate a child in a special school if a mainstream school would not suit his/her ability or aptitudes; if it would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other children with whom he/she would be educated; or if it would result in unreasonable public expenditure being incurred which would not normally be incurred.

4 Pupils with additional learning needs were excluded from both samples.



The Act entitles deaf pupils to have their needs identified and met, and to have arrangements for support reviewed regularly. Some deaf pupils may not require high levels of support but still require to have their progress monitored. For others, careful planning and support will be needed to enable them to achieve the desired outcomes. A significant number of deaf pupils also have other additional learning needs which need careful assessment.

Other relevant legislation includes the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled children in education in terms of admissions, exclusions and education and associated services, and the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002, which requires those responsible for schools to prepare and implement plans to ensure access to all aspects of education for pupils with disabilities. This would include deaf pupils.

These significant developments give education authorities new challenges to face, for which they need to develop new ways of working. *Count us in: Achieving success for deaf pupils* contributes to the debate about the most effective ways of educating deaf pupils by sharing with practitioners information about, and evaluations of, the range of approaches being developed across the country.

*Count us in: Achieving success for deaf pupils* is in two parts as follows:

- Part 1: The quality of education for deaf pupils
- Part 2: Planning for excellence for deaf pupils.

### **Self-evaluation and improvement in deaf education**

Over the years, staff in schools<sup>5</sup> and services for deaf pupils have had access to a number of sources of support to help them evaluate the quality of their work. In addition to *How good is our school?*<sup>6</sup> they have received support from individual education authorities. The publication *Self-Evaluation by Peripatetic Sensory Services (2001)* provided advice on self-evaluation for visiting teachers and the schools with which they worked. Staff who provide services for deaf pupils have also contributed to self-evaluation in the schools in which they work. These self-evaluation and development activities have resulted in improvements in the services provided to deaf children.

5 The term 'school' is used throughout this publication to refer to all settings which provide or support education for deaf pupils, including specialist and mainstream schools and peripatetic and outreach services.

6 *How good is our school?*, HM Inspectors of Schools 1996, revised edition 2002 and 2005.

In 2006, HMIE published two key reports which signalled a change of focus in approaches to self-evaluation and improvement in Scotland. These reports were directed specifically at achieving excellence and ensuring success for all learners. The national report, *Improving Scottish Education*,<sup>7</sup> identified strengths and areas for development across all sectors of education in Scotland. It confirmed that: 'Scottish education does many things well and some things particularly well'. It also indicated where improvements could be made, and provided signposts showing how schools could build on established good practice. The publication of Parts 1 and 2 of *How good is our school?: The Journey to Excellence*,<sup>8</sup> built on the findings of this comprehensive review of Scottish education. These publications recognised the strengths of the quality culture and provided practical support for schools in making a step change in the quality and consistency of learning, from good to great.

Part 3 of *The Journey to Excellence* is the revised edition of *How good is our school?*<sup>9</sup> The set of quality indicators it provides remains the core tool for self-evaluation, complemented by the dimensions of excellence outlined in Parts 1 and 2 of *The Journey to Excellence*.

The framework of indicators in Part 3 encourages schools and services to look at outcomes in terms of successes and achievements for all the key stakeholders in schools, but particularly for children and young people and their parents.

The indicators can be used effectively to evaluate the quality of provision for deaf pupils and key aspects of leadership and management, all of which have a significant impact on overall outcomes for pupils. All of those involved in achieving success for deaf pupils, including staff, pupils, parents, partner agencies and management teams should be involved together in using the quality indicators to look specifically at how well deaf pupils are doing. The following indicators, in particular, will help you take a focused look at the achievements and experiences of your pupils.

- 1.1 Improvements in performance
- 2.1 Learners' experiences
- 2.2 The school's success in involving parents, carers and families
- 5.1 The curriculum
- 5.2 Teaching for effective learning
- 5.3 Meeting learning needs.

You can use these indicators to generate specific questions about the experiences of deaf pupils. Part 1 of *Achieving success for deaf pupils* will help you focus on specific features of provision which contribute to success for deaf pupils.



<sup>7</sup> *Improving Scottish Education*, HMIE, 2006

<sup>8</sup> *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence, Part 1 Aiming for Excellence and Part 2 Exploring Excellence*, HMIE 2006

<sup>9</sup> *The Journey to Excellence, Part 3 How good is our school?*



*The Journey to Excellence Part 1: Aiming for Excellence* and *Part 2: Exploring Excellence*, identifies and explores ten dimensions of excellence based on evidence from HMIE inspections of schools in Scotland and consistent messages from national and international research. Part 2 of *Achieving success for deaf pupils* looks at three of these dimensions in the context of education for deaf pupils and provides signposts for you to follow when planning for excellence.

*Part 1: The quality of education for deaf pupils* is based on information gathered between August 2005 and April 2006. The team, which included HM Inspectors (HMI) and staff from NDCS, visited sixteen local authorities across Scotland. They met and talked to deaf pupils in mainstream schools, in specialist resources within mainstream schools and in schools for the deaf. Schools for pupils with additional support needs where deafness was not the main factor giving rise to additional support needs, and pre-school provision were not included. The team also observed teaching and learning in classes for deaf pupils, in small groups and in mainstream classes. They met local authority managers with responsibility for services for deaf pupils, teachers of the deaf and mainstream class and subject teachers. Some visits included meetings with other professionals working with deaf pupils, including speech and language therapists, psychologists and paediatricians. In some areas, the team also met groups of parents. One group of parents also received a separate questionnaire from NDCS which sought their views of the experiences of their children. The report also draws on evidence from inspections of provision for deaf pupils undertaken by HMIE from 2004-06. It should be noted that the report does not draw any conclusions about the impact of the ASL Act on the quality of education for deaf pupils. This is because the ASL Act came into force in November 2005, during the period when the information was being collected for this report, and it was too early to draw any firm conclusions about the effects of the implementation of the Act.

Part 1 is organised under key areas as follows:

- Accessing the curriculum
- Teaching for effective learning
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Partnerships with parents.

Each section also includes a summary of key features which were found to be of significance in ensuring success for deaf pupils. Examples of good practice have also been highlighted.

*Part 2: Planning for excellence for deaf pupils* uses the significant features for achieving success from Part 1 and links them with specific dimensions from *The Journey to Excellence Part 2: Exploring Excellence*. These are referred to as 'signposts to excellence', as building on these and the associated prompts will support the journey to excellence for deaf pupils. Schools can refer to these signposts when planning to improve their practice and the quality of education which pupils experience. *Count us in: Achieving success for deaf pupils* has at its centre the experiences of deaf pupils, rather than the organisations in which they are educated. Part 2 therefore focuses on the two dimensions which reach to the very heart of the learning experience.

- *Engaging young people in the highest quality learning activities;* and
- *Focusing on outcomes and maximising success for all learners.*

Elements of the dimension *Works together with parents to improve learning* are also included because of the significant impact close partnerships between schools and parents can have on how well deaf pupils achieve in school.

The aim of the HMIE study was to identify what really made a difference for deaf pupils. Through focusing on the experiences of pupils and the outcomes they achieve through their education, the team aimed to capture evidence of the most successful practice. This information will help all staff who work with deaf pupils to make their own improvement journey.





PART 1

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## Part 1: The quality of education for deaf pupils

This section of *Count us in: Achieving success for deaf pupils* describes some of the practice observed by HMIE during inspections and in specific visits to evaluate the quality of education for deaf pupils. The evaluation was carried out using quality indicators from *How good is our school?*. Key messages about what is necessary to achieve success for deaf pupils are summarised at the end of each section. These form the basis of the following section on planning for excellence.

### Accessing the curriculum

On the whole, deaf pupils had access to an appropriate curriculum, informed by national and local advice. Well-planned personalisation of the curriculum to ensure choice and coherence was the key to success for pupils. Support from additional staff, including teachers of the deaf, learning assistants or communication assistants was the most significant resource which enabled access to the curriculum.

In the best provision, teachers planned effectively to ensure that there was a balance between programmes to meet the very specialised needs of individuals and ensure access to the same breadth of learning opportunities as other pupils. In most establishments, pupils were consulted about when it was appropriate for them to be withdrawn from the work of their class group for individual work. For example, in most secondary schools, staff worked hard to ensure that pupils had time for individual support work with the teacher of the deaf, but could also choose which subjects they wanted to study. However, some secondary schools always withdrew the pupil from a second language without consultation with the pupils involved, based on the assumption that an additional language would be too challenging for deaf pupils.

**In one area visited, deaf pupils had a positive experience in studying an additional language and were achieving well. The specific focus on grammar and syntax helped them to understand the differing language structures of English and BSL.**



In classes or units with mainstream schools, pupils often studied core subjects within the specialist provision, so that sufficient attention was focused, on, for example, specialised approaches to developing literacy. Close links and good joint planning ensured most pupils also benefited from inclusion in mainstream classes for other curricular areas. In one specialist deaf school which had strong links with its local mainstream school, a liaison teacher was employed to ensure that specialist staff and mainstream staff had formal opportunities to plan together. In this provision, the specialist and mainstream primary school timetables ran in parallel to ensure continuity. In other settings with split placements, some pupils experienced lack of coherence and continuity in their curriculum due to insufficient attention to joint planning and monitoring of their overall experience.



Where pupils attended mainstream schools full time and were supported by visiting teachers of the deaf, joint planning and regular liaison were generally well established. These arrangements ensured staff could plan future outcomes and inform learners what was coming next in the programmes being studied. Teachers of the deaf and support staff prepared pupils for lessons, for example, through teaching some of the vocabulary in advance of the class lesson and ensuring that they understood the aims of lessons and activities.

Pupils who accessed the curriculum using BSL or Sign-supported English (SSE) had support to do so when they needed it. Pupils were very positive about the levels of support they received. Some pupils benefited from support from staff with very good levels of signing and interpreting skills. However, in some areas there were difficulties in recruiting and training staff with the level of skills required. In some classes, the support person interpreted an unhelpfully simplified version of what the teacher said, and did not always ensure that other pupils' answers and discussion were also interpreted for the deaf pupil.

Most schools had made good progress in addressing barriers to accessing the curriculum arising from the physical environment. Increasingly, education authorities were installing soundfield systems<sup>10</sup> in classrooms, and areas such as halls which were used for assemblies. There were also good examples of schools and authorities working together to improve the quality of acoustics throughout the school where there were deaf pupils. However, in other settings the approach to improving acoustics was piecemeal, and while some classrooms had been improved, including the base for deaf pupils, other classrooms remained affected by noise and reverberation.

Within some establishments, deaf pupils experienced well-planned adaptations to the curriculum to meet their specific needs. In a small number of schools, Deaf Studies (the study of deaf language, culture and community) was taught as part of the curriculum, leading to the achievement of National Qualifications (NQs) at Intermediate level 1 and 2.

**One specialist deaf school had a very well developed Deaf Studies curriculum which was valued highly by the deaf pupils.**

<sup>10</sup> Soundfield systems improve listening conditions for all children in a classroom, through speakers placed around the room, and the teacher wearing a microphone.

Deaf pupils studied BSL as part of the curriculum to Council for Advancement of Deaf People (CACDP) levels 1 and 2 in a small number of schools. A few deaf pupils were taught the grammar of BSL on an individual basis to meet their needs. In some areas, pupils using BSL had access to good quality resources in BSL. For example, school reading schemes had been produced in a signed video format. BSL glossaries of curricular signs were also being utilised in some areas. However, overall, most pupils whose first language was BSL did not have sufficient access to formal teaching of the language.

Deaf pupils were helped to improve their skills for independent living through specific learning programmes which focused on strategies to improve their ability to communicate when they did not have access to their customary support. Pupils benefited particularly from programmes which went beyond the school, and helped them develop skills in real life situations in the community.

**One secondary school used a deaf tutor to support pupils to carry out life skill tasks, such as shopping or going to the bank.**

Many deaf pupils had access to a broader curriculum through participation in out-of-school learning activities. Support and encouragement from staff and their willingness to support pupils' initial involvement were instrumental in achieving this. In some areas, local authorities provided support as necessary and facilitated flexible transport arrangements. In other areas, pupils stated that they were unable to attend activities of their choice after school due to lack of transport or lack of support to help them communicate in this setting.

**To achieve success for deaf pupils we should aim to have:**

- Specific adaptations to the curriculum when required, based on a clear identification of the needs of deaf pupils and designed to address and meet these needs.
- High quality support to ensure access to the curriculum.
- Joint planning among professionals working with deaf pupils which is regular, high quality and focuses on learning outcomes and strategies.
- Strong commitment to understanding and valuing deaf culture in all establishments where deaf pupils are educated.
- Deaf pupils who are confident individuals and included in the life of the school.



## Teaching for effective learning

In schools and classes for the deaf, relationships between staff and pupils were friendly and supportive. Whether schools were predominantly for children who used BSL or for those using spoken English, pupils, parents and staff were clear about their school's approaches and values. Within these settings, deaf culture was valued and close links were made with the deaf community.

In the specialist resources, most teachers were skilled in using approaches which were effective in meeting the range of needs of deaf pupils in their classes. They focused effectively on developing communication. Whether using natural aural approaches, BSL or SSE, teachers were skilled in giving pupils confidence and encouraging them to persist in making themselves understood in a range of situations. Teachers at the early years made good use of imaginative play to develop vocabulary, and at all stages teachers made good use of a range of contexts, including real life situations in the community, to encourage the development of language. However, at times, within specialist classes for deaf pupils, very small classes made it difficult for teachers to ensure a range of experiences, in particular, cooperative work with other pupils. Too often pupils related primarily to the teacher, or were following individual programmes of work supported by an adult.

In mainstream schools, relationships between deaf pupils and staff were positive overall and contributed to the development of a positive climate for learning. In particular, deaf pupils valued relationships with specialist support staff, including teachers of the deaf and learning assistants in mainstream schools.

Many teachers regularly adapted materials and teaching approaches to support deaf pupils in their classes. For example, some teachers in mainstream schools incorporated the teaching of signing into their whole-class teaching. They reported that all pupils benefited from this experience. Signing helped to develop communication skills in some hearing pupils as well as their deaf classmates.

**One classroom teacher, aware that deaf pupils are often confused by the meanings of idioms, incorporated specific study of idiom into her class lessons.**

Some teachers were beginning to use alternative approaches to teaching reading and writing to deaf pupils, which recognised their restricted access to the English language. It was too early to evaluate the impact of these approaches.

**With the help of the authority's early literacy development officers, one school for the deaf had adapted an approach to teaching early literacy using a system of visual phonics. This had had a positive impact on the children's reading and writing skills.**





All schools with deaf pupils had provided some level of Deaf Awareness training for all staff, often including janitorial and support staff. However, these training opportunities were often limited, and some mainstream teachers did not have sufficient understanding of the needs of their deaf pupils. For example, they did not always appreciate how difficult it was for deaf pupils to concentrate in a classroom setting. Subject and class teachers in mainstream schools varied in the extent of their understanding and ability to plan a range of learning and teaching approaches to ensure that deaf pupils learned successfully. In some contexts where, for example, deaf pupils had been attending the school for many years, teachers responded well to the needs of deaf pupils. They consistently checked comprehension, and carefully planned how to introduce new and complex vocabulary. In partnership with teachers of the deaf and learning assistants they had developed visual material to support their teaching. In some classes, deaf pupils had difficulty in following what was being said in class and relied almost wholly on re-teaching in tutorial settings with a teacher of the deaf. Frequently they could not hear, or did not have interpreted for them, the answers given by other pupils. Deaf pupils in hearing classes experienced difficulty in participating in group discussions. Teachers did not regularly plan classroom discussions to take account of the needs of the deaf pupils and to help compensate for their difficulties in participating.

### To achieve success for deaf pupils we should aim to have:

- A wide range of learning and teaching approaches which enable deaf pupils to become successful learners.
- Full involvement of deaf pupils in all aspects of learning in the class, enabling them to become effective contributors.
- Teaching which addresses deaf pupils' limited access to incidental learning opportunities.

### Meeting learning needs

Most services and schools had a clear commitment in policy and practice to identifying and meeting the linguistic needs of pupils on an individual basis, and to ensuring these were regularly reviewed with the pupil and parents. However, due to the diversity of deaf pupils' needs, providing what each individual pupil required had become increasingly challenging.

Making decisions about the most appropriate way to support language development for a deaf child is always difficult, and is often an emotive issue for parents. The publication *Informed choice, families and deaf children*<sup>11</sup> although not specifically for a Scottish context, gives a very helpful overview of the issues. In the research for *Informed choice*, parents identified choosing their child's language/communication mode as one of the most important decisions they had to make. A long-held view that a choice needs to be made at an early stage between developing spoken English or BSL as the child's first language has put pressure on parents. However, a number of services and individual schools had adopted a more flexible approach, and recognised that choices were not mutually exclusive and that pupils' linguistic needs should be regularly reviewed. This approach is supported by research which has demonstrated clearly that:

*"These children's rapid development of spoken language suggests that having access to language during the first or second year of life regardless of modality, can provide a base on which skills in a different modality can be built."*<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Informed choice, families and deaf children*, Department for Education and Skills, 2006

<sup>12</sup> Yoshinaga-Itano (2006) 'Early Identification, Communication Modality, and the Development of Speech and Spoken Language Skills: Patterns and Considerations' in Spencer, P. and Marschark, M. (eds) *Advances in the Spoken Language Development of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp 298-327.

**In some areas parents were encouraged to learn to sign, as well as speak, to their very young children, and at the pre-school stage all deaf children were taught to sign. Children could then switch between approaches or modalities and decide for themselves whether signing or oral communication was most effective for them.**

All pupils with moderate to profound hearing loss had been assessed by specialist professionals working with them. The professionals involved included health and educational audiologists, speech and language therapists and teachers of the deaf. Hospital consultants shared information with other professionals and contributed to review meetings and assessment of pupils' needs. Educational audiologists worked effectively with health professionals and teachers of the deaf to identify and monitor pupils' audiological needs. Almost all pupils were supplied with high quality audiological aids, which were well monitored by teachers of the deaf, educational audiologists or others trained to undertake this function. In most areas there were good arrangements for ensuring pupils' aids were repaired or replaced quickly when required, but on occasions pupils were left without aids for short periods of time.

**In some areas, an individual educational psychologist had developed expertise in deaf education, and offered a specialised service for schools, parents and children. This was particularly beneficial for the process of assessment, and when making decisions about how children's needs could be best met.**

Pupils who had been fitted with cochlear implants were well supported and monitored by the outreach services from the implant centres, working in partnership with local services. Overall, staff had a good understanding of the needs of pupils with implants, and the most effective approaches to supporting individual children, many of whom were progressing well in school. However, further training is still required, particularly for non-specialist staff, so that they fully understand the implications of the impact of the implant on the child's ability to hear and understand speech.

Pupils in specialist provision for deaf pupils were well supported by speech and language therapists, but in some areas, pupils who attended their local schools did not have access to speech and language therapy. Within a number of services, teachers of the deaf had developed assessment materials which they used effectively to assess and monitor pupils' language development. In a few services or schools, teachers monitored pupils' language development by filming them at regular intervals.

In some areas, where BSL was the most appropriate medium for children's communication and learning, both the quality of their experience and their progress were limited by the lack of communicators and teachers with suitably high levels of BSL competence to provide effective access to the curriculum. Some pupils said that they did not always understand their interpreter or were not always understood by them. A number of teachers and communicators were well trained and experienced, for example, having achieved the CACDP level 3 (advanced level) BSL skills, or had interpreter qualifications. Some teachers of the deaf and communicators had only achieved CACDP BSL level 1 (elementary level) or were working towards it. In some services all teachers of the deaf were qualified to CACDP stage 2 (Intermediate level). A number of services and schools stated that they experienced problems in recruiting and retaining skilled staff and providing the necessary training to develop signing skills among staff. The skills and experience of communicators were not always reflected in their salaries and grading, and authorities varied in their practice in this. The lack of staff skilled to an appropriate level had an impact on the choices available to pupils and on the effectiveness with which their needs were met.

Many pupils used lipreading and residual hearing and, supplemented by some signed support. They also communicated using voice augmented by some sign or gesture. In most settings, support for pupils using auditory-oral approaches was provided effectively, and their individual needs were well supported. Pupils were encouraged to use all available means of communication, and to request clarification and repetition when necessary to ensure understanding. However, a small number of services and schools, as policy, did not enable pupils to access the curriculum through mixed approaches. They did not encourage the use of signing to supplement and enhance pupils' communication skills. In such settings, pupils' learning experiences were shaped by policies rather than full exploration of their individual needs and personalised planning to meet these needs. As a result, some pupils found themselves reaching the end of their education still experiencing difficulties in making themselves understood clearly, having difficulty in communicating with their friends and without access to alternative means of communication.

All deaf pupils had a high level of access arrangements and support to meet their needs. Pupils who used signing as their principal means of communication almost always had access arrangements in their classes when they needed it. Very small classes in specialist provision and good use of support staff ensured high levels of support for pupils. In the best arrangements, pupils were involved effectively with teachers in planning and making decisions about the support which would best meet their needs. For some pupils, this involved discussing with staff in which of their classes they wanted to have additional support. In the most effective provision, staff had regular detailed discussions with pupils about whether they wanted interpreting, sign support, or a mixture of approaches in classes. This approach helped pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils valued the support from teachers of the deaf and support assistants to help them be actively involved in learning in class.

Recent research has documented that many deaf young people value meeting other deaf young people (NDCS 2001). Some local authorities provided opportunities for deaf pupils attending different schools to meet on a regular basis. This had a positive impact on their self-esteem and also supported the development of appropriate communication. Most pupils found this helpful and supportive, though a small number were not interested in meeting other deaf pupils. However, some authorities did not provide deaf pupils with opportunities to meet as it was felt that this went against the philosophy of inclusion. As a result the needs of deaf pupils were ignored through an interpretation of inclusion which ignored individual needs.

Some services and schools had good links with the deaf community and supported pupils who wanted to become involved with it. For some pupils and their parents these links with the deaf community were important. They helped reduce feelings of isolation, and provided positive role models for adult life. Deaf teachers, deaf support assistants and visiting sign language tutors employed in specialist schools for the deaf and in some mainstream schools also provided valuable role models for deaf pupils. However, staff did not always understand or value the potential impact of deaf role models on pupils' motivation and self-esteem and some pupils did not have sufficient access to deaf adults or other deaf children, both BSL users and those who used voice.

Deaf Awareness was frequently incorporated into the personal and social education programme (PSE) for all pupils in mainstream schools. Deaf pupils in some mainstream schools reported that their hearing peers were helpful in enabling better access to classroom learning, as well as facilitating inclusion in peer groups within school.

**It was the practice, in one school visited, for S1 deaf pupils to have "hearing buddies" to encourage the development of better communication both ways.**

In some settings Deaf Awareness was delivered by senior deaf pupils. Sign language classes for pupils and staff were effective in encouraging greater understanding and respect for deaf pupils and helped deaf pupils to be included in the life of the school. In a small number of schools certificated BSL courses were an option for all pupils in the school.

#### **To achieve success for deaf pupils we should aim to have:**

- Access to high quality assessment and balanced and informed choice about the full range of language and communication choices, at all key points of discussion and review of children's needs.
- Assessments in the classroom and external assessment which take account of the specific learning and support needs of deaf pupils.
- Appropriate levels of support to ensure linguistic access for all deaf pupils.
- Support from staff with appropriate levels of fluency for pupils using BSL.
- Full involvement of pupils in identifying and planning the support and access arrangements they need.
- Access to high quality technological support to promote independent communication and learning.
- Schools which ensure that staff working with deaf pupils are appropriately skilled and aware how best to meet their needs
- Regular opportunities for pupils who want it, to meet other deaf pupils, and to make links with the deaf community.

#### **Expectations and promoting achievement**

In some areas, teachers, particularly teachers of the deaf, had very high expectations of their pupils. They had a positive view of deafness and a determination to support pupils to do well. They provided a high level of pastoral support, building pupils' confidence and motivation, as well as supporting their learning, and preparing them well for assessments. However, there were also teachers who had lower expectations of their deaf pupils, and did not always expect them to achieve in line with national expectations. Teachers were not always clear in their assessments about whether pupils' progress was in line with their potential, and did not always look closely enough at underlying reasons for underperformance.



Most deaf pupils had individualised educational programmes (IEPs) in place, with agreed targets. These ensured pupils had regular interactions with their teachers about their progress. However, pupils were not always clear what they needed to do to achieve these targets. They were not sufficiently involved in discussions with their teachers about what they had understood in lessons and how they might be able to develop further.

Effective assessment procedures, including well-planned Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examination arrangements which met the needs of individual pupils, contributed to good outcomes for pupils. Where pupils had opportunities to undertake examination practice under special arrangements, for example, using signed questions and signed responses, they were more confident and thought they did better in their examinations.

Few schools or local authorities had addressed issues relating to raising the attainment levels of deaf pupils effectively. Because of the small numbers of pupils involved, it was difficult for authorities to identify patterns of performance. Some authority services did track pupils' progress, but did not use the information in a focused way to ensure progress against shared high expectations. The evidence from the ADPS research suggests that the progress of individual deaf pupils should be monitored more closely, barriers to progress identified and action taken to improve learning where necessary.

Pupils who had well-developed language skills, either in English or BSL, and could understand what was being said in class, were most likely to be achieving well. In the most successful examples, this was a result of very well-planned and focused approaches to developing language, such as the use of signing to improve the development of English in children with cochlear implants, and the adaptation of early literacy approaches for deaf pupils. High quality interpretation for pupils had a positive impact on achievement. The increasing use of technology to enhance hearing had made a positive impact for some pupils as it has given them better access to communication in the classroom.

#### **To achieve success for deaf pupils we should aim to have:**

- Regular review and monitoring of the attainment of deaf pupils by schools and authorities and action taken to improve learning where necessary.
- A strong focus on raising attainment and high expectations.
- Achievements across a full range of experiences and opportunities.
- Regular discussion with pupils about their progress and what they need to do to achieve success in agreed outcomes.

## Partnerships with parents

Overall, parents were positive about the information they received about provision for deaf children in their area. They found discussions with educational psychologists and specialist staff helpful and informative, and thought that these specialists were committed to finding the best arrangements for their children. In some areas parents thought that the range of provision and choices available to them was too limited. They felt that professionals wanted children to fit in to the provision available rather than explore the full range of options available.

Staff working with deaf pupils, whether in special provisions, mainstream schools or as peripatetic support services, took active steps to encourage parents to engage with their children's learning. In most areas, relationships with parents were productive, and in many schools partnerships between parents and teachers were very close. Schools and services recognised the important contribution parents made to learning. Parents found home-school diaries, which were used extensively with younger deaf pupils, helped them to understand the role they could play in supporting and improving their children's learning.

Schools and services also engaged with parents informally, explaining curricular approaches in school, and the approaches being used to support children's learning. Videos of curricular signs and reading books available in sign were initiatives which supported home learning. Increasingly parents were finding out more about deaf education by attending training courses alongside staff. However, most parents stated they would like more information about their children's curriculum and how they could support their children.

Parents stated that they would benefit from receiving reports on their children some time before a review meeting to allow them to digest their contents beforehand. Some parents stated that professionals were regularly absent from their children's review meetings. Others suggested that too many professionals were present at review meetings.

While parents were routinely given information about individualised educational programmes for their children, not all were sufficiently involved in contributing their views on appropriate learning targets. Some parents stated that their views were listened to and given due weight, while others felt that their opinions were not valued sufficiently. Although parents could discuss the progress their children were making towards individual targets, they did not always have a clear view of how well they were progressing in relation to national expectations.

### **To achieve success for deaf pupils we should aim to have:**

- Clear information for parents about education authority policies and the choices available to them and their children.
- High quality accurate and balanced information to parents about their children's progress in school.
- Strong links with home which enable learning to be continued there and help parents contribute to their children's learning.
- Active support for parents by schools and authorities to address their specific needs as parents of deaf children.





PART 2



COUNT US

**NZ**

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES FROM PRIMARY,  
SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS



ACHIEVING SUCCESS FOR  
DEAF PUPILS



## Part 2: Planning for excellence for deaf pupils

*How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence* explores what we mean by success for children in Scottish schools. Success involves wanting to learn now, and wanting to carry on learning in the future. It is about realising potential and about achieving. Importantly, *The Journey to Excellence* recognises that the pace of children's progress is varied and that individual children face different challenges and barriers.

*What is certain is that every child can learn. It is up to the people who support them through the learning process to strive to ensure that each and every one of them learns at the pace that is most appropriate for them, and to meet their needs in the best possible way.*<sup>13</sup>

In Scotland, learning is increasingly about developing the four capacities of the *Curriculum for Excellence*. Successful outcomes for deaf pupils, as for all pupils in Scottish education, should be defined in terms of those four capacities. At the end of their school experience, deaf pupils should be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

For deaf pupils this means they should be achieving and attaining in line with national expectations and progressing well in school. They should feel included, and participate in all aspects of school life, as well as having the opportunity to develop a positive deaf identity. This should ensure they are well placed to make positive and challenging choices after they have left school. They should all be able to enter employment, education or training.

Some deaf pupils may not require high levels of support but may still need to have their progress monitored. Others will require careful planning and support to enable them to achieve successful outcomes.

Planning for excellence involves four key collegiate activities.

How good is our school?

- Agreeing the vision and values for your school and for deaf pupils in particular.

How good can we be?

- Identifying your priorities and the key outcomes for deaf pupils which you aim to achieve.

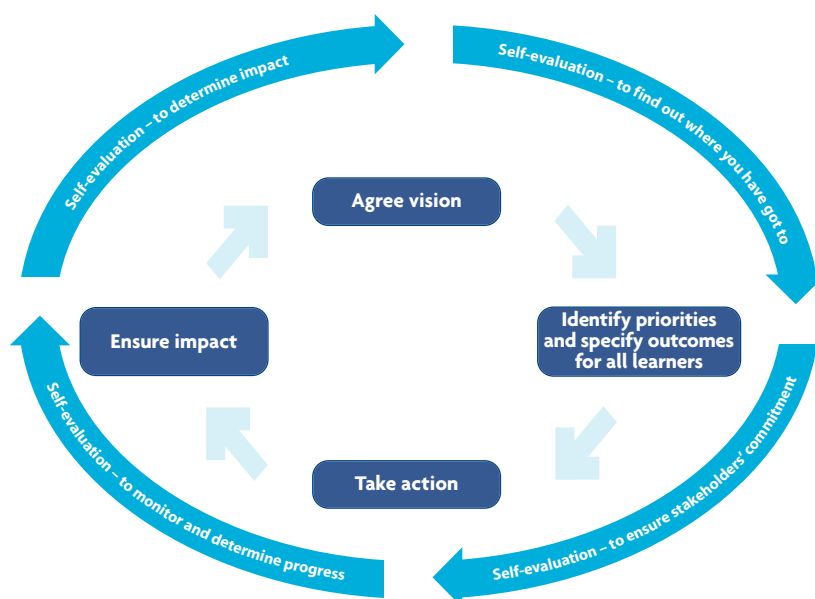
How do we get there?

- Taking action to implement your vision for deaf pupils.

What have we achieved?

- Ensuring the impact of the action you have taken.

## The self-evaluation and improvement process



20/21


COUNT US IN  
ACHIEVING SUCCESS FOR DEAF PUPILS

Your vision will be a rounded and balanced view of what you hope to achieve for the pupils you serve. Your vision will be aspirational. It will be about excellence. The dimensions in Part 2 of *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence* will be a key source of inspiration. Establishing your vision is an activity for the whole school community, including pupils and parents. When thinking about what you want to achieve for deaf pupils you may also want to involve others with an additional perspective of the long-term needs of young deaf people, for example, former pupils, deaf adults in your community, or careers officers and college staff who will be working with young adults.

You may already have a well-established vision and aims for your school or service, but developing excellence is a process which is continually evolving and it is important to revisit and challenge your established vision. If you work in a mainstream school with a small number of deaf pupils, or you support pupils in mainstream schools, the school will have established a vision for all pupils in that school. While this vision will include deaf pupils, there is an additional challenge to consider what this specifically means for deaf pupils.

The outcomes you hope to achieve for deaf pupils will be similar to the outcomes you want for all pupils, with some additional outcomes relating specifically to deaf pupils. However, different and specific issues need to be addressed in order to achieve these outcomes for deaf pupils.

In the following pages you will find a brief introduction to the three dimensions of excellence which are the focus of this document. These should be read along with the full exploration of each dimension contained in *The Journey to Excellence Part 2*. This is followed by a number of *signposts* which are based on the findings reported in Part 1 of this document, organised under the elements of each dimension. These are key factors which were identified as being crucial to achieving success for deaf pupils. Under each signpost there are prompts which will help you think about where you are on your journey to excellence. You can ask yourself if they describe practice in your service or establishment. They may suggest areas where you need to plan action to improve outcomes for your pupils.



You can use the dimensions and these prompts alongside the quality indicators in Part 3 of *The Journey to Excellence*. For example you may wish to look at the experiences of deaf pupils by using QI 2.1 Learners' experiences. From this, you will establish pupils' views of their learning experiences, and gather evidence about the quality of their experiences. To plan improvements in their experiences you can then consider the valuable material in Part 2 *Exploring Excellence* about pupils' learning and link with the particular prompts in this publication. You may also want to consider recent research on learning related to deaf pupils. Publications such as *Deaf Friendly Teaching*<sup>14</sup> and *Deaf Friendly Schools*<sup>15</sup> are also useful sources of best practice in deaf education. You can then agree priorities for action and draw up a plan for improvement. You need to be clear in doing this what specific improvements in outcomes you are aiming for to benefit your pupils. These may be related to achievements or, for example, attitudes to learning and motivation.

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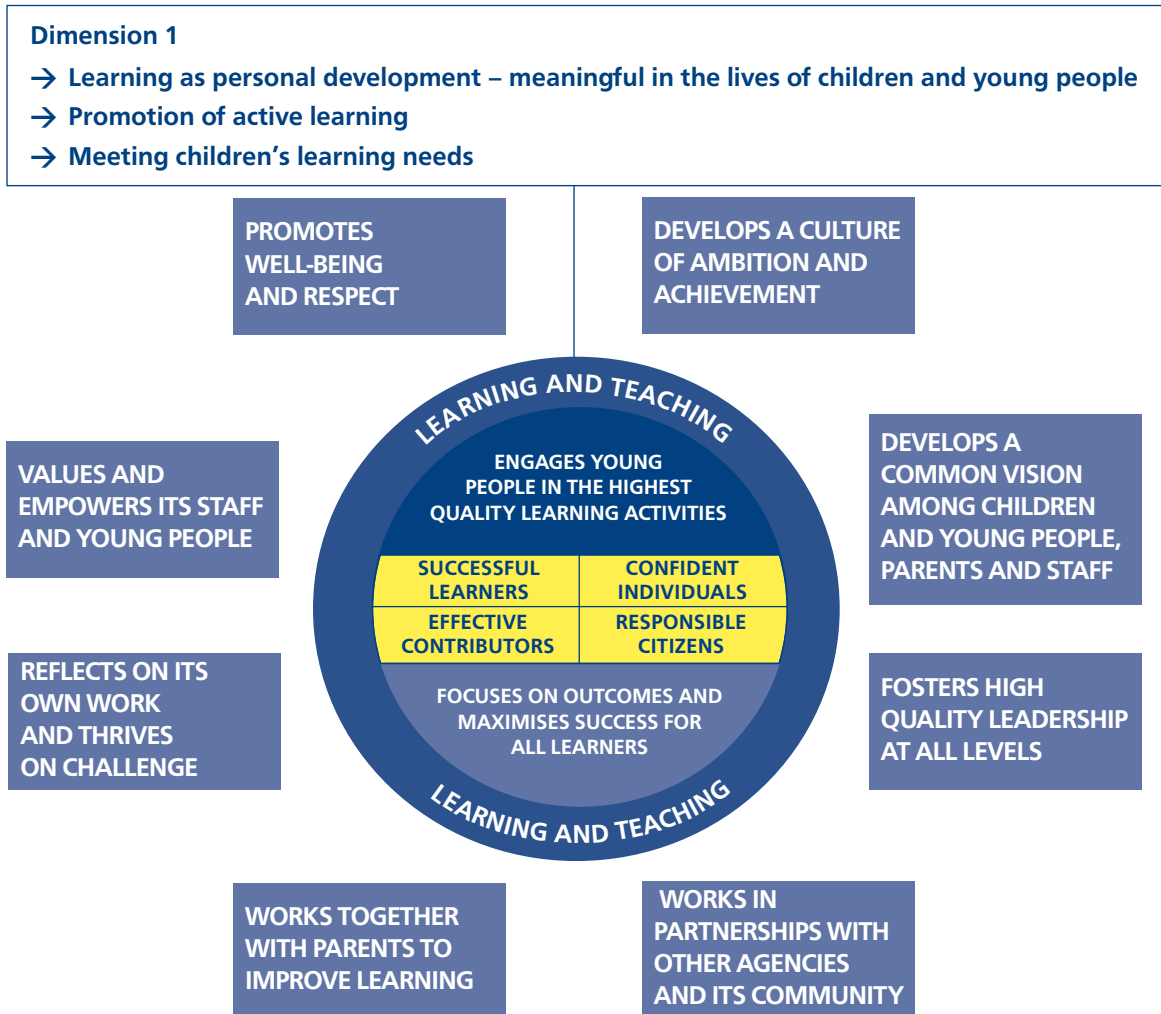
<sup>14</sup> Deaf Friendly Teaching, NDCS updated 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Deaf Friendly Schools, NDCS 2005

# Dimensions of excellence

## Dimension 1

### Engages young people in the highest quality learning activities



This dimension is concerned with the learning experiences of pupils, the teaching process and how well the needs of groups of pupils and of individual pupils are identified and met.

### Learning as personal development

Relationships, emotions and values play significant roles in enabling successful learning. Pupils achieve well within a culture where relationships are consistently friendly and trusting, with a strong sense of community and shared values. For deaf pupils this means a sense of community and belonging within their own local community and the deaf community. For pupils attending mainstream schools, full inclusion and being valued within this community is important but access to the wider deaf community may also be important for a sense of identity.

**SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE**

**Strong commitment to understanding and valuing deaf culture in all establishments where deaf pupils are educated.**

**Prompts**

- Deaf Awareness training for staff and pupils of high quality is an integral part of the annual school calendar in all schools with deaf pupils.
- Sign language classes are available through the extended curriculum and as part of the formal curriculum.
- Deaf pupils have opportunities within the curriculum to learn about deaf culture and community.

**SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE**

**Significant contribution of deaf role models, both auditory-oral and signing, to school life.**

**Prompts**

- Deaf adults and/or former pupils have an active and beneficial role in the school.
- Pupils have regular contact with deaf adults who use spoken communication and those who sign.
- Deaf staff are employed, where possible.



Regular, well-planned and evaluated opportunities for pupils to meet other deaf pupils, and to make links with the deaf community.

#### Prompts

- Staff are aware of the contribution the deaf peer group can make to pupils' learning and broader achievements, and the research which supports this.
- Schools/authorities organise opportunities for deaf pupils to meet other pupils on a regular basis, for example, through provision of transport and high quality well-organised activities.
- Deaf pupils and their families receive information about activities organised specifically for deaf children/families by other organisations and within the deaf community, and are supported to attend when appropriate.

Deaf pupils who are confident individuals and are included in the life of the school.

#### Prompts

- Deaf pupils have regular planned and monitored opportunities to take the lead in learning activities.
- Deaf pupils effectively use a variety of communication methods for contact with other pupils.
- Hearing pupils are taught, and make effective use of, tactics for effective communication with deaf pupils and staff.
- Hearing and deaf pupils understand each other, and communicate at an age-appropriate level.
- Deaf awareness is incorporated into the personal and social education programme for the school and delivered by deaf pupils, where appropriate.
- Deaf pupils participate in all activities available through the school, including study support, and cultural and sporting activities.
- Deaf pupils take on roles of responsibility within the school, and have opportunities to contribute to decision-making within the school.

## Promotion of active learning

Learning is most effective when pupils experience a range of approaches to learning and teaching in a stimulating environment. Pupils become more active in their learning when the purposes of learning are shared, and when they are engaged and aware of themselves as learners. Because of their greater difficulty in accessing knowledge of the world and what is being discussed around them, deaf pupils may have significant challenges in understanding the purpose of what they are learning and how it relates to previous learning. It is important for their teachers to understand the impact of their hearing loss on their learning and to adapt teaching and learning approaches in the classroom to take account of pupils' needs. In particular, they need to be explicit about what they are looking for, encourage deaf pupils to express views and ask questions, and regularly check their understanding of key ideas.

### SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE

**A wide range of learning and teaching approaches which enable deaf pupils to become successful learners.**

#### Prompts

- Pre-teaching and/or opportunities for consolidation ensure pupils have followed lessons fully.
- Teachers regularly check to ensure that pupils have understood teaching points and instructions.
- Teachers understand what deaf pupils are communicating and always take time to hear the contributions of deaf pupils.
- Pupils understand what teachers are saying through audition, lipreading/ speechreading, signed support or interpreting.
- Visual approaches are used to support learning.

### SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE

**Full involvement of deaf pupils in all aspects of learning in the class, enabling them to become effective contributors.**

#### Prompts

- Deaf pupils have appropriate support so that they are able to communicate and develop their own ideas.
- When planning group activities, teachers take account of the needs of deaf pupils.
- In class, comments, questions and answers from other pupils are interpreted or explained to deaf pupils.
- Class teachers or support teachers regularly check pupils' prior knowledge.
- Strong links between home and school enable parents to support development of a wider knowledge base for pupils.

### Access to high quality technological support to promote independent communication and learning.

#### Prompts

- Professionals with appropriate expertise assess what each pupil requires to maximise hearing and access to learning.
- Pupils' audiological needs are fully met through use of the best available technology.
- Systems are in place to ensure that pupils have replacement equipment and fast efficient repair services in case of breakdown.
- Each pupil's ability to manage his/her equipment is well developed over time.
- Classrooms are always adapted to maximise learning, for example through avoiding extraneous noise, reducing reverberation and ensuring appropriate light for lipreading and signing.
- Videos are always subtitled and/or transcripts are available.

### Meeting children's learning needs

Identifying, meeting and reviewing the needs of the range of deaf pupils is a complex process, requiring specialist skills, flexibility and knowledge and understanding of the full range of research into language development. In particular, identifying their linguistic needs, and planning to meet them in order to reduce potential barriers to learning and participation should be recognised as an ongoing process, which may change over time, and which is central to the process of making educational provision for deaf pupils.

### Access to high quality assessment and informed advice about the full range of language and communication choices, free from attitudinal bias, at all key points of discussion and review of children's needs.

#### Prompts

- Professionals with appropriate skills regularly assess pupils' language needs, for example, educational audiologists, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists.
- Pupils and parents are fully involved in discussion about how best to facilitate access to the curriculum and optimise language development.
- Parents have a named knowledgeable person who will give them independent advice and support concerning their child's needs.



**SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE****Appropriate levels and type of support to ensure linguistic access for all pupils.****Prompts**

- Pupils have a range of communication options in school which include lipreading, radio-aids, group aids, sign support, BSL and interpreting between English and BSL.
- Professionals value English language and BSL equally and this is reflected in the advice given to parents.
- Sign-supported English is taught and used to support the curriculum for pupils for whom this is identified as best option.
- Pupils who would benefit from it are taught BSL as part of their curriculum.
- Pupils have access to very good support for developing auditory-oral approaches, including access to speech and language therapy if required.

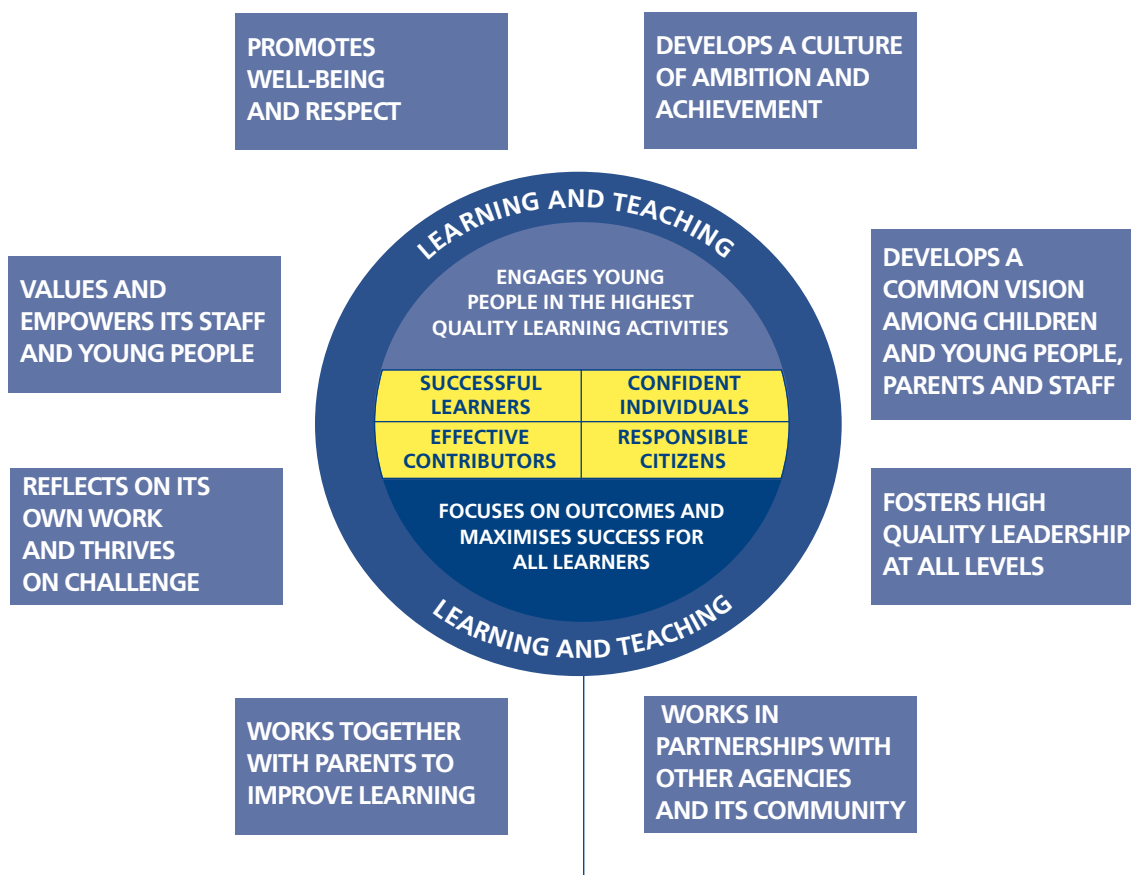
**SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE****The highest quality support which is well planned and delivered by staff with appropriate competencies and experience.****Prompts**

- Pupils are consistently asked about the support they need and how support staff, teachers, communicators and learning assistants can best contribute to their learning.
- Pupils are fully involved in discussion about how to organise any necessary tutorial time, and their views are given due weight.
- Pupils meet regularly with staff to evaluate the quality of their support.
- The support provided meets pupils' needs very well and pupils are positive about their support.
- Where BSL is pupils' first language, they are taught by teachers who are fluent.
- Pupils who require it have qualified interpreters to enable access to the curriculum.

**SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE****Schools which ensure that staff working with deaf pupils are appropriately skilled and aware how best to meet their needs.****Prompts**

- Teachers who wholly, or mainly, teach children who are deaf have the appropriate additional specialised knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to operate as effective teachers of deaf pupils, as defined in Regulation 4 of The Requirements for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005 and associated guidance.
- Teachers or communicators who act as interpreters for pupils using BSL have the appropriate level of skill.
- Teachers who have deaf pupils in their classes, but who do not wholly or mainly teach deaf pupils, have been appropriately trained and supported by specialist teachers so that they can ensure the needs of the deaf pupils are met effectively.

## Dimension 2: Focuses on outcomes and maximises success for all learners



### Dimension 2

- Planning the outcomes of learning
- Assessing the outcomes of learning
- Reflecting on and recording success based on outcomes
- Reporting on success based on outcomes

This dimension concerned with the curriculum, the learning experiences planned for pupils, and their achievements. It also considers how we judge how well pupils are doing, both individually and as a group, in relation to other learners, and how we engage with parents to support their learning.

### Planning the outcomes of learning

Curriculum planning for deaf pupils needs to focus on ensuring that they achieve the outcomes of the *Curriculum for Excellence*. Planning should ensure that pupils have access to the same range of learning opportunities as other pupils, but also that they have their specific needs met through a curriculum designed to address and meet these needs.

**SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE**

A curriculum for deaf pupils which takes full account of the principles identified in *Curriculum for Excellence*, is based on a clear identification of their needs and is designed to address and meet these needs.

**Prompts**

- Deaf pupils have the same access to subject choices in secondary schools as other pupils, with no unnecessary reduction to choice caused by tutorial time.
- Additional tutorial support in primary schools is carefully planned so pupils do not miss out on any specific area of the curriculum.
- Deaf pupils fully understand the purpose of learning activities, and what they have to do to achieve the outcomes required.
- Deaf pupils have access to specific programmes they need, such as programmes for learning BSL and awareness of deaf culture.
- Approaches to learning English language are adapted to take account of specific challenges for deaf pupils, and when pupils are BSL users, make effective use of their first language.

**SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE**

Joint planning among professionals working with deaf pupils which is regular, high quality and focuses on learning outcomes and strategies.

**Prompts**

- Staff who work together to meet pupils' needs, for example, class or subject teachers and teachers of the deaf, have specified times to meet together to plan, coordinate and evaluate their contributions to pupils' learning.
- Staff working together ensure pupils receive the appropriate support to meet learning outcomes agreed in their IEPs.
- Planned learning activities for deaf pupils, whether in class, small groups, or individual have a clear focus, enhance pupils' learning and are regularly evaluated.

## Assessing the outcomes of learning

### SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE

Engaging pupils in regular discussion about their progress in learning and the kind and quality of work required to achieve success in agreed outcomes.

#### Prompts

- Deaf pupils have the confidence and the opportunity to indicate to staff if they have not understood what has been said or taught.
- Tutorial time is used very effectively to help pupils to reflect on what they have learned, and through thoughtful and probing questions helps pupils to identify any areas which they have not fully understood.
- Deaf pupils and their parents are actively involved in assessments and their views are included in assessment reports.

### SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE

Assessments in the classroom and external assessments which take account of the specific learning and support needs of deaf pupils.

#### Prompts

- When pupils undertake any assessments they have the same supports available as they normally use to access the information they require.
- Special examination arrangements are very well planned and have been discussed and agreed with pupils.
- BSL interpreters supporting examinations have an appropriate level of signing skills and subject knowledge.
- Pupils have had opportunities to familiarise themselves with and practise using special arrangements.

## Reflecting and recording success based on outcomes

### SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE

Regular review and monitoring of the attainment of deaf pupils by schools and authorities.

#### Prompts

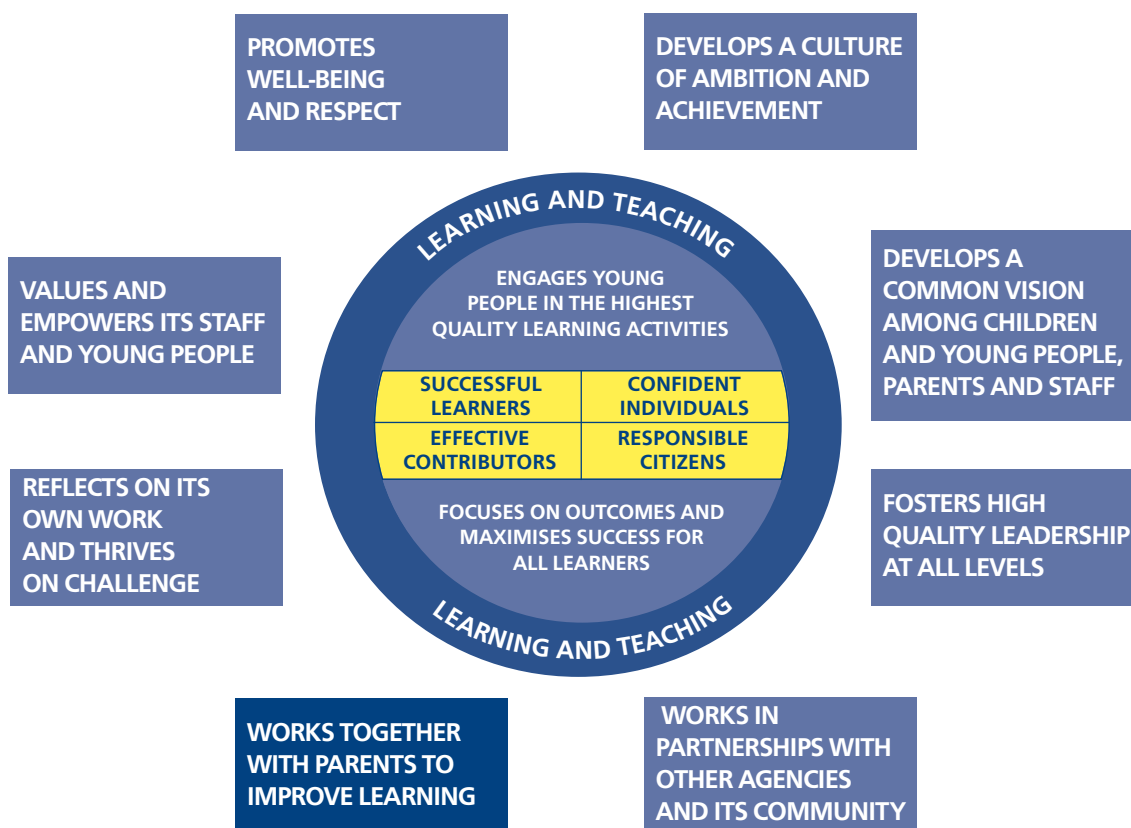
- Information about deaf pupils' attainment is used to identify and address barriers to learning including teaching approaches and levels of support.
- Subject or class teachers regularly review with specialist support staff the attainment of deaf pupils.
- Profiles of attainment for deaf pupils reflect the profile of attainment of all pupils across the authority.
- Clear progression is evident for deaf pupils, for example, through monitoring of individual pupils' attainment levels at all key stages.

A strong focus on raising attainment and achievement, and high expectations.

#### Prompts

- Pupils are positive and ambitious about what they can achieve.
- Pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations for post-school life.
- Pupils have information about the support available for further and higher education and how to access it.
- Leaver destinations of deaf pupils reflect the profile of leaver destinations of pupils generally.
- Deaf pupils achieve as well as their peers in arts, sports, citizenship and enterprise.
- Deaf pupils take part in school councils, and take on responsibilities across the school.

## Dimension 6: Works together with parents to improve learning



### Dimension 6

- Developing parents' support for their children's learning
- Active involvement of parents in school activities
- Collaboration and representation

### Works together with parents to improve learning

Parents of deaf children may have a wide range of experiences of what it is to be deaf, varying frames of reference and different degrees of awareness of the barriers to learning. Some may be deaf themselves. Some may have access to a range of communication approaches. Others may have access to spoken and written English alone. Some may face greater challenges than others in supporting their children and helping them to communicate. Schools and services need to take into account the full range of parents' needs and skills when working with them to improve their children's learning.

## Developing parents' support for their children's learning

### SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE

Clear information for parents about education authority policies and the choices available to their children, based on the principles of informed choice.

#### Prompts

- Parents receive full and balanced information about the options for developing their children's communication and are given the appropriate support to ensure they understand the information provided.
- Parents are informed realistically of the support available for different options, for example, whether there are the skills available locally to provide the curriculum on BSL, or support a child with sign-supported English in class.
- Parents are aware that decisions about support and communication can be reviewed and adapted at any time as appropriate.
- Parents are encouraged to seek independent advice and advocacy as appropriate.

### SIGNPOST TO EXCELLENCE

High quality accurate and balanced information to parents about their children's progress in school.

#### Prompts

- Parents have a named knowledgeable person who will give them independent advice and support concerning their child's needs.
- Information about their child's progress is clear and unambiguous.
- Parents clearly understand their child's current levels of performance.
- When a child is achieving more slowly than his or her peer group, parents and pupils have a good understanding of the reasons why, and of the steps being taken to support the child.
- Parents understand their child's options and progression routes, and staff check that their aspirations are being met.
- Appropriate technology is in place to enable deaf parents to communicate with the school, such as textphone systems.

**Strong links with home which enable learning to be continued there and which help parents contribute to their children's learning.**

#### Prompts

- Workshops and resource packs illustrating work in curricular areas are enhanced by specific advice and help, such as description of new concepts and vocabulary to be covered, visual resources and, when appropriate, signed vocabulary.
- Staff provide parents, particularly parents of younger pupils, with very regular, sometimes daily, information about what their child has been doing in school, to promote discussion and language development at home.
- Staff encourage parents to take active roles in their child's learning, and pay due attention to parents' knowledge of their child's strengths, difficulties and learning styles.
- As a result of the steps taken by the school, most parents help their child engage with learning, sustain their attention, and develop their language and ability to communicate in a range of situations.
- As a result of partnership among school, parents and child, all have high aspirations and pupils are confident.

**Active support for parents by schools and authorities to address their specific needs as parents of deaf children.**

#### Prompts

- Through the quality of relationships among home, school, personnel from the education authority and other agencies such as health, parents have a very good understanding of the impact of their child's deafness on his or her development and learning.
- Parents have access to high quality conveniently-timed classes in BSL.
- Parents have clear easily understood information about technological aids, how these can support their child, and how they can support their child in using them.
- Parents understand the latest technology available and other relevant issues.



# Acknowledgements

**This document is the result of extensive discussion with a range of professionals and fieldwork visits across Scotland. Thanks are due to them all for their contributions.**

## **The National Deaf Children's Society**

The National Deaf Children's Society is a charity dedicated to the support of all deaf children and young people, their families and the professionals working with them.

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Dundee City

Falkirk

East Dunbartonshire

Fife

Highland

Moray

North Lanarkshire

Perth and Kinross

Renfrewshire

South Lanarkshire

Stirling

West Lothian

## **Schools for the Deaf**

Donaldson's School for the Deaf

St Vincent's School, Glasgow

Aberdeen School for the Deaf

Windsor Park School, Falkirk

# References and Sources of Support

Deaf Friendly Schools, NDCS, 2005

Deaf Friendly Teaching, NDCS, updated 2006

Early identification, Communication Modality, and the Development of Speech and Spoken Language Skills: Patterns and Considerations, Yoshinago-Itano (2006) in Spencer P, Marschak M (eds), *Advances in the Spoken Language Development of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children*, Oxford University Press

How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence

Part 1 Aiming for Excellence

Part 2 Exploring Excellence, HMIE, 2006

Part 3 How good is our school?, HMIE 2007

Part 4 Planning for Excellence, HMIE 2007

Part 5 Journeys to Excellence DVD, HMIE 2007

The Journey to Excellence digital website resource: [www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk](http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk)

Examples of excellent practice in deaf education and summaries of relevant research will be placed on The Journey to Excellence website in due course.

Improving Scottish Education, HMIE, 2006

Informed choice, families and deaf children, DfES, 2006

[www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)

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