

REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland, Vol. 24 No. 2 (2011), 66.

Editorial

This journal contains a welcome and informative article on the emotional wellbeing of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). The need for specific early interventions based on assessment is highlighted (Coughlan). The lack of access to mental health services/professionals in many schools results in undiagnosed conditions and delays in treatment and gives rise to serious concern for this vulnerable group of children and their families. It is hoped the article will generate further discourse on mental health issues for children with SEN.

Special schools are the focus of two articles. Despite some uncertainty as to their future role, their principals remain optimistic, believe they are facilitators of quality learning within their schools and express concern as to the efficacy of inclusion (O'Mahony). Merrigan describes the Outreach model as a way forward for special schools, enabling them to support the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream settings. The special school sector anxiously awaits the deliberations of the *Circular 0038/2010 Staffing Arrangements in Special Schools Working Group* recently set-up by the Department of Education and Skills. Its focus includes the designation of schools, pupil profile and staffing levels. In the current difficult economic circumstances it is hoped that the type of provision available to the children with the most complex SENs in these schools will not be adversely affected. The recently issued *Circular 006/2011* highlights the revised arrangements for the allocation of special needs assistants and has capped their numbers in schools with immediate effect. It remains to be seen how this will impact on pupils with SEN in all schools and what new model will be in place for the forthcoming school year.

Erratum: Day, T. and Prunty, A. (2010) The Role of Special Schools and Special Classes in Ireland, REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland, Vol. 24 (1), pp 3-23.

This article was based on a Research Report on the Role of Special Schools and Classes in Ireland (www.ncse.ie) and not on a paper presented at the Twenty-Second Annual Conference on Special Education, IATSE, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, June 11-12, 2010, as reported at the beginning of the article.

The next REACH Journal will focus on the 'voice of the child'. I would like to invite readers who have a particular interest in this area to submit an article for possible publication in this issue.

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Editor

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