

educational provision for children with MGLD. Researchers and post-graduate students too are also likely to be highly appreciative of the extensive bibliography contained in this book that includes a large number of research studies (particularly from the Irish context), national and international reports and policy statements and documents.

The publication of this book is timely as it coincides with the current debate and discourse on the future of special classes and schools. One would hope that the policy makers currently involved in any review of special education would also refer to this book as part of their deliberations in order to identify the pitfalls of the past and the necessities and challenges for the future in the quest for a continuum of provision that meets the needs of all pupils with special educational needs.

INCLUSION OR ILLUSION? EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH MILD GENERAL LEARNING DISABILITIES by Paul Stevens and Mona O' Moore is published by Blackhall Publishing, Dublin, 2009 and costs €35.00.

Martian in the Playground: Understanding the Schoolchild with Asperger's Syndrome (Revised Edition)

By Clare Sainsbury

Reviewed by ALICE O'DONNELL, a learning support/resource teacher in St. Cronan's B.N.S., Bray, Co. Wicklow and parent of a child with Asperger's Syndrome.

This book would provide an excellent introduction to the world of Asperger's Syndrome for teachers and parents. The author, Clare Sainsbury, has Asperger's Syndrome. She draws on her experience of education as well as accounts from a range of friends and acquaintances, thus giving the reader an array of diverse experiences and views.

This is a revised edition of this book, which was first published in 2000. It now includes updated research information and a comprehensive introduction by Tony Attwood in which he outlines the core difficulties faced by children with a diagnosis

of Asperger's Syndrome. He also discusses the impact that these difficulties may cause in a school setting. An extensive list of books and programmes designed to help children to develop friendship skills is included. Although the accounts in this book relate mainly to the English education system I believe that it is just as relevant in Ireland.

The author aims to equip teachers with an understanding of the challenges that school poses for a child with Asperger's Syndrome, so that our education system can become an autism friendly environment. Sainsbury states that children with the syndrome can be included in mainstream settings without any expense when the teacher has a positive attitude. Teachers are encouraged to identify and use the child's unique learning style and to explore his/her special interests as a way to motivate learning. Strategies to deal with sensory overload are also included.

The book deals with education in a variety of different settings and states that inclusion in mainstream schools can only be successful when a structured programme is put in place to address the child's social difficulties. Simply assuming that the child will learn to act appropriately through watching his/her neurotypical peers is insufficient. Explicit teaching needs to be provided in this area and also with regard to explaining clearly some of the unspoken rules that govern our classrooms. The importance of special classes and schools is recognised and the author advocates the sharing of expertise between schools. She also recommends that a child be able to switch between settings as his/her needs change, or indeed to be able to benefit from a dual enrolment policy.

The need for structure is strongly emphasised and the TEACCH programme is one with which the author finds favour. The chapter on the playground is one I found particularly informative. It explains very well how the chaos of a school playground can affect children with Asperger's Syndrome. Their social difficulties will often lead them into difficulty and can also make them easy targets for bullying.

The tone of this book is positive and hopeful and it is written in a clear and engaging style. It emphasises throughout, the difference that a sympathetic teacher can make. I found this book to be enlightening and informative. It is an excellent starting point for anyone who wants to know what it is like to see the world through the unique lens that is Asperger's Syndrome.

MARTIAN IN THE PLAYGROUND: UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOLCHILD WITH ASPERGER'S SYNDROME (REVISED EDITION) by Clare Sainsbury is a Lucky Duck Book, published by SAGE Publications Ltd., London, 2009 and costs Stg£16.99.

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