

Editorial

In April 2010 the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) published a report on a national review of the role of special schools and special classes in Ireland. Given the significance of this report in relation to the education of students with special educational needs (SEN) this issue of REACH contains an exceptionally lengthy article on the findings and recommendations of this report (Day and Prunty). The editor welcomes responses to this article from the various stakeholders for publication in the next edition of the journal.

The review acknowledges that students currently enrolled in special schools and special classes now have more diverse and complex SEN. While the review envisages a role for special schools and special classes on the continuum of provision for students with SEN it also addresses threats to this continuum. The development of greater links between special and mainstream schools is discussed and the issue of suitably qualified and trained specialist staff within the special school system is highlighted as a concern. As we enter a new school year facing further cutbacks in education it is important that the area of continuous professional development remains a priority and that teachers and schools are adequately supported to engage in further training as expertise is developed among staff.

Parent rights within a legislative context are addressed by Mac Giolla Phádraig and while the principle of partnership is enshrined in legislation, it is the structures and procedures in place both nationally and locally that ultimately determine real partnership between schools and parents of children with SEN. The topics of assessment and physical education are addressed through small scale studies and the development of physical competence for students with SEN can support participation and greater inclusion in a variety of educational contexts (Monaghan).

REACH journal has reached another landmark whereby journal articles for the past ten years can now be accessed online. Journal articles are currently available on the Education Research Complete database located on the EBSCOhost website (www.ebscohost.com). Readers are advised to contact their local third level institutes/colleges to access journal articles online via the database on the EBSCOhost website. The journal will continue to be published in hard copy and the REACH index of articles is available on www.iatse.ie.

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