

## Editorial

Special education has always involved a special reaching out. Primarily it has been a response to the reaching out of children with special needs who despite their disabilities or impairments stretch forward to seek their fullest potential. As teachers we draw from their optimism, trust and resilience in our reaching out to assist them. As a teenager with cerebral palsy once told me, "I'm not handicapped – I'm just specially challenged."

This journal REACH borrows from that challenge in its aim to help teachers in special education draw professional strength from reaching out to each other. It has been said that teachers themselves are their own greatest resource. Right around the country there are examples of colleagues whose experience of and thoughtful response to challenging situations could be helpful and encouraging to many – if they were shared.

As our awareness of special educational needs becomes broader, stretching beyond the confines of segregated or semi-segregated provision to the ordinary classroom, it is essential that special education must be seen as the responsibility of all teachers. It is hoped therefore that REACH will not just have a specialised appeal but will invite a response and encourage dialogue with our mainstream colleagues.

Furthermore we must reach out to the first teachers: the parents, and accept their rightful reaching out to us as partners in the educational process – with all the challenge and potential that implies. Articles in this issue on *Home-School Liaison* (Lynam), *Sexuality and Human Awareness* (Blount) and *The Special Family* (Dillon, Murphy and Mulligan) address this important area.

Reactions to these and other articles in this issue will be welcomed. It is hoped to include a letters page in future issues. At present, plans are to publish bi-annually – the next issue is scheduled for appearance in December 1987. On behalf of the editorial board and the executive committee of NATSE may I thank you for extending the hand of friendship to REACH.

**SEAN GRIFFIN**  
Editor