PROVIDING POTENTIAL FOR PROGRESS: LEARNING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Margaret Kinnell Evans
Professor of Information Studies and Head of Department
Department of Information and Library Studies
Loughborough University
Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3TU UK
E-mail: M.Evans@lboro.ac.uk

Peggy Heeks
Research Fellow, Loughborough University, UK

ABSTRACT

This paper considers the purposes, methods, findings and significance of the British Library LESSEN (Learning Support for Special Educational Needs) Project. The focus was on Year 7 students, i.e., in their first year of secondary education (aged 11-12 years), in ten English secondary schools who were on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register because of their learning difficulties. Case studies were undertaken in 10 schools located in five Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Data were collected from documents, observation and an extensive interview program, both within schools and with LEA and schools library services staff. Work with individual children was also undertaken, supporting in subject lessons and in the SEN base, as well as assisting in the library, to provide an action research element to the investigation. Varying levels of library and staffing were found and recommendations were made as to future progress. The project report, *Learning support for special educational needs* is due for publication in 1997 by Taylor Graham.

CONTEXT

In 1994, when the Learning Support for Special Educational Needs (LESSEN) project began, the field of special needs had assumed considerable importance in England and Wales. It had moved further up the government's agenda and become a focus of attention in schools, through the publication of the *Code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs* (Department for Education, 1994) following the 1993 Education Act. This concern at the national level to deliver a consistent policy for special educational needs (SEN) provision followed on from the introduction of the National Curriculum after the 1988 Education Reform Act—the most sweeping piece of educational legislation in England and Wales since 1944 (Kinnell, 1996).

Both in the literature and in schools, the SEN field is perceived as a rapidly-changing one. It is significant that, at the close of the project when we returned to the 10 case studied schools which provided data for the study, to disseminate findings and to reflect with teachers on their actions through the period of the research, all had implemented changes over the intervening period. Many of these related to practical arrangements, several to making implementation of the *Code* manageable. We also found indications throughout the whole project period that more fundamental change was beginning; there was reassessment of both assumptions and patterns of provision. The project was therefore timely and was able to capture many of the change processes being undertaken in schools.

The research was funded by the British Library and undertaken at Loughborough University Department of Information and Library Studies from June 1994 to January 1996, with an emphasis on the links between school libraries, librarians and curriculum delivery for SEN pupils. Over the past decade the British Library has funded a number of school library research programs in primary and secondary schools, but none have paid specific attention to pupils with special educational needs.

Many of the issues considered in this investigation emerged from these studies, so that SEN provision in this project was perceived at the outset to be part of the mainstream concern of all school librarians and teachers. The British library had however identified a gap in research into learning resource support for pupils with special needs, which was reinforced particularly through the work of an earlier investigation of learning resource provision, Delivering the National Curriculum (Heeks & Kinnell, 1994). Even earlier work had also indicated the need to conduct an in-depth study. An investigation of materials and learning strategies appropriate to children with low reading scores was included in the BELL (Berkshire Libraries for Learning) project and reported in *Information resources and skills for pupils with special needs* (Heeks et al., 1988). This showed that there was concern amongst both teachers and librarians over the provision of suitable resources and the most effective exploitation of resources in teaching. There has always been particular impetus from libraries to support those who are disadvantaged (Department of Education & Science, 1978) and this was reinforced during the course of the project by the publication of the Library and Information Services Council, England, Report, *Investing in children*, (Department of National Heritage, 1995).

THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

While some of the research questions emerged from the studies noted above there was also an ongoing concern to ensure that educational and library research was conducted in areas which are particularly relevant to librarians, teachers and decision makers in seeking to ensure the optimal use of learning resources in schools (Burgess, 1991).

As part of the first stage of the research the project team therefore liaised with Her Majesty's Inspectorate to identify their perception of the issues, and to assist in the selection of case study local education authorities (LEAs) and schools. Collaboration with schools library services (SLS) (delivered often by public library authorities as agents for LEAs) at this early stage was also essential, as many of these had developed special collections to meet the needs of SEN pupils and had acquired considerable experience of the problems and issues facing schools. Schools library services have been important in supplementing resources in schools for all ranges of abilities and interests, and ensuring their effective organization and exploitation. Although their existence is now under threat following the impact of local management of schools and the consequent budgetary restrictions for SLS (Heeks & Kinnell, 1992), in many parts of the country their support for pupils with special needs remains significant.

The schools selected for the study after this extensive consultation process were from five geographically and socio-culturally diverse local education authorities (Berkshire, Birmingham, Hampshire, Manchester, Suffolk). The profile of the case-studied schools is as follows:

LEA	No. of Pupils	Age Range	Setting
Berkshire	940	11-18	Settled villige with stable population
Berkshire	508	11-16	Market town serving rural area
Birmingham	600	11-16	Inner-city, girls only. 95% Asian intake
Birmingham	1639	11-16	Mixed catchment. Unit for hearing impaired pupils
Hampshire	733	11-16	Rural village. Youth wing & FE unit
Hampshire	930	11-16	Small town on edge of urban centre
Manchester	1150	11-16	Split-site in city suburb
Suffolk	1030	11-16	Inner-city church school; large catchement area
Suffolk	1580	11-19	Suburb of county town. Large sixth form from wide catchment

Triangulation was achieved by the use of a further 8 associate schools, who contributed data and observations through their librarians. These were also geographically spread across England and

Wales. Additionally, in one of the case-studied LEAs data were gathered in one special school and in another data were gathered in the main feeder primaries of a case-studied secondary school.

PROJECT PURPOSES

The LESSEN Project arose from two different sources: concern in schools about effective resource provision for children with learning difficulties, and recognition by The British Library and within the librarianship profession that this was a neglected research area. At the outset, following consultation and the analysis of findings from previous work, the project had three specific purposes, setting out to:

- assess the support needs of pupils within the target group identified (i.e., Year 7 pupils identified by schools as having special educational needs) with special reference to the National Curriculum;
- document good practice in meeting those needs, in terms of materials, staffing and strategies;
- foster collaboration between subject teachers, learning support staff and librarians in curriculum planning and delivery.

From these purposes more specific questions were framed, which were central to the research:

- How is the National Curriculum affecting children with SEN?
- How are these children best supported?
- How are recent perceptions about SEN affecting school structures and programs?
- How are librarians responding to recent initiatives relating to SEN?
- How is collaboration between subject teachers, learning support staff and librarians fostered?
- How do LEA support services affect school responses to SEN?

Given the complexity of the questions and the lack of control that the researchers would have over events during the research process, the case study method was seen as preferable to a questionnaire survey (Yin, 1989). It was also considered important to include some element of action research through the intervention of the research team in facilitating work in schools to develop collaboration (the third project purpose). This had the dual impact of adding further data and gaining support from schools in participating with the project team.

Documents which were analyzed included school prospectuses, school and departmental development plans, library and SEN policy statements, annual reports and (where available) inspection reports from Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education). In each of the case studied schools semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head teacher, deputy, head of special needs/ SEN coordinator, a teacher from each core subject, the librarian and information technology coordinator (i.e.,12 from each school), a total of 96 interviews. The research questions identified above were used as the basis of the interviews, with particular focus on policy, planning and actions. The project was concerned with all Year 7 (aged 11-12 years) SEN pupils being taught within the case studied schools, as interpreted by schools in light of the *Code of practice*. The associate schools, special school and feeder primaries yielded further documentary and interview data.

Data were gathered in schools from September 1994 to June 1995, with an interim analysis completed in August 1995. Dissemination to case-studied schools was then undertaken from September to November 1995. This phase of the project also ensured further reflection on the interim analysis. Data analysis was completed and the final report written between December 1995 and January 1996.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS AND LEARNING SUPPORT

Defining SEN

In discussing the findings of the project, it is essential, first, to identify what is meant to the various stakeholders by ‘special’ educational needs: to government through the code of practice and

to schools who are charged with implementing it. Parents are a further significant stakeholder group who were not targeted in this study, but whose views were taken into consideration through schools' assessment of their views.

Defining SEN was a key issue. The *Code of practice* uses the same definition of special needs as the 1993 *Education Act*, stating that: "A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her."

A child with learning difficulty is further defined as someone having "a significantly greater difficulty in reading than the majority of children of the same age." From this it can be seen that SEN exist "only within some kind of context of expectations of normality." (Dessent, 1987, p. 9) The National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) produced its own definition in 1992:

> the needs of students which constrain them from the maximum access to the curriculum and the extra curricular activities of a school or institution, together with other resources and facilities which are available to their contemporaries. (National Association for Special Educational Needs, p. 4)

The project schools largely followed the Department for Education definition quoted above, while recognizing that a much wider range of children might need some special treatment on entering secondary school. For example, the feeder schools for one secondary school identified three such categories of children: those who needed to be in a progress (i.e., SEN) group, those who had a specific learning problem requiring some separate attention, and those likely to have difficulty settling into secondary school.

One of the problems which emerged in the study was the vagueness of these national definitions, which appeared as a real barrier to progress in schools in providing more effective learning support: "there is no agreed definition as to what special needs are, and no consensus as to what constitutes good special needs provision." (Dyson & Gains, 1995)

Teachers recognized the lack of consistency, even within the same local education authority, and saw clearer guidelines as a necessary next step. One school noted: "Our selection has been largely intuitive, but now we need more formal criteria. Relative deprivation is important. A child with Reading Age (RA) 9.5 would be deprived in some schools, average in others." And another: "All our children have language needs. About 40% of Year 7 have learning needs. We need criteria for judging support."

Faced with high demand and limited funding head teachers had to make hard decisions about who was special: "A Reading Age of 9 is our cut-off. We do the most we can with the resources we've got. It's budget driven."

The concept of 'special' was not just directed at low achieving children. Nearly all project schools were conscious that the very able also needed support. One school commented: "We define SEN children as those needing additional provision to that made for the majority, whether very able or below average."

Reading age alone was seen as a very restricting measure, excluding many who needed help. One head cast the net even wider: SEN kids are those with baggage, not just learning and physical difficulties. About 50% of our intake find learning and being in school difficult."

In defining who was 'special' and required targeted learning resource support, there were therefore several issues to consider:

- many factors may make it difficult for some children to access the mainstream curriculum;
- very able children may also be constrained by a curriculum which does not match their ability level;
- the problem of trying to make the best use of limited funds.

Developing perceptions

Determining who had special needs in the project schools was dependent not only on the above issues, but also on perceptions which had developed over time. *The Warnock Report* (Department of Education & Science, 1978) gave schools in England and Wales two statistics which are still taken as the norm: approximately 20% of pupils have special educational needs; 2% of pupils are likely to require a statement of their educational needs. However, we found that the percentages of

SEN children in 70% of project schools were above the Warnock estimate. Only one school was below, and two had identified as many as a third of Year 7 pupils as having special needs. A number of new entrants had reading ages of only 6 years, and in one case just half a dozen had a reading age equal to or above chronological age.

The LESSEN figures echo the concern of the team which evaluated the Lower Attaining Pupils Programme (LAPP) (Stradling & Saunders, 1991, p. 24). They found that 40% of pupils were within the LAPP remit, and emphasized, as we also found, that the Warnock 20% hides a much greater problem. However, *The Warnock Report* was of great significance for its recommendations on providing for greater integration of children with learning disabilities into the mainstream of education. Despite the continuing difficulty in reaching a clear consensus as to what precisely constitutes special educational needs it marked the beginning of a more individually-centered approach to special education needs provision.

The 1944 *Education Act*, which had established the pattern of schooling in England and Wales until the 1988 *Act*, classified SEN children as 'educationally subnormal'. Later, descriptions such as 'backward readers' and 'slow learners' came into general use, followed by a major change, post-Warnock, to 'special educational needs'. Now there is a dissatisfaction, apparent among both academics and practitioners, with the terms and methods prevalent in the 1980s following on from Warnock (Mittler, 1992). Partly, there is the difficulty of knowing where to draw the line and the realization that in some cases the line is being drawn for reasons quite distinct from educational ones. There is concern now to ensure that every child's learning needs are seen as distinctive, with equal emphasis on supporting each individual.

> There is an element of absurdity in regarding 20% of the school population as special rather than as an extension of individual differences among children. (Dessent, 1987, p. 21)

The simplistic labels of the past have been found not to correspond with the reality of classroom life:

> Neither category nor continuum models can represent complex reality, or provide an adequate basis for decisions about SEN, and more sophisticated theoretical frameworks will have to be explored. (Brown, 1994)

These findings from previous studies were reinforced by comments from the project schools, for example:

> Our philosophy is to widen the whole aspect of Learning Support. In that respect, all children are special. Both the very able and the less gifted need extra support. Then we have cause for concern identified over all sorts of problems. There is often a story behind the low achievers. It's wrong to set aside just one group. We don't see a dividing line between SEN children and the rest. There's a continuum of need.

Individuation

There was less a movement towards integration in the project schools, but rather a shift to individuation. This concern to address individual pupils' achievement and to identify barriers to success is also being found in gender studies. One is investigating why boys outnumber girls on special needs registers (Barber & Graham, 1995), an issue which has attracted national attention and also interested some of the project schools, for example:

> We have begun investigating why boys do worse than girls: 60% of girls got GCSE passes A-C this year, but only 35% of boys. Boys are also in the majority among statemented children. The percentages decrease slightly as they move up the school, but often these pupils are still struggling. We use a preponderance of group work, and perhaps that suits girls best.

Many teachers interviewed spoke of the importance of addressing under-achievement as well as the more serious learning difficulties which generally attract greater attention. One of the project

authorities, Suffolk, was beginning to look at Year 7 pupils and plot their progress in a Value Added Initiative which received a very positive response from both parents and children.

MANAGING SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

Policy development

How to manage support for SEN children was firstly determined by the schools' philosophies, which were reflected in school policy statements, development plans, and staffing structures. Each of the project schools had some form of policy on special needs prior to the 1993 *Education Act*, and had embarked on revision following publication of the 1994 *Code of practice*. A few schools had completed the task at the time of the fieldwork visits. We found that care was being given to ensuring that policy was owned by all of the school. A continuing thread in policy statements was the recognition that all staff have a responsibility for all pupils, and (conversely) that the SEN unit is a central resource for all staff and pupils. Formulating SEN policy is a prime cross-curricular exercise, as understanding develops within the inter-departmental groups consulting and framing it. It is also a management exercise, as governors and the management team consider the change strategies and resource requirements involved in translating policy into practice.

Funding

The Department for Education accepts a range of models for funding SEN work, and various methods were in operation in the project LEAs. Most importantly, LEAs have to determine how money should be allocated to schools for funding children who are not 'statemented', that is those children whose learning needs are significantly special that they need additional support but are not severe enough that they are individually assessed for a specialist program. Defining SEN children more clearly was seen to be essential to enable allocation of budgets. However, the monitoring of allocations was under-developed. SEN budgets were seen to be under strain, whether for statemented or other pupils. Funds for providing support for pupils with statements were usually held centrally in the LEA, and in one case the LEA expected the school to match the sum per pupil. Comments from schools defined the problem:

> We're under funded for SEN by the Education Department [of the LEA], not the school, but I realize they're under pressure.
>
> There's not enough money centrally [in the LEA] for SEN. Officers see it as a bottomless pit.

The National Curriculum

General attitudes to the new curriculum were less hostile than had been found in a previous study (Heeks & Kinnell, 1994). The National Curriculum (NC) provides a single common language and a single common entitlement (Mittler, 1992) and it was this entitlement aspect which was mentioned most frequently in discussion of the curriculum's suitability for SEN pupils. However, reservations were expressed most by members of senior management teams who felt that it compromised the philosophy of individuation which was now characterizing the SEN debate:

> The NC is a double-edged sword. The strength is that it gives an entitlement to all children, but it's removing flexibility. It wasn't dreamt up with the needs of individuals in mind—either pupils or teachers.

The attitudes of SEN coordinators were generally more favorable. It was felt that SEN children were getting access to a breadth of education not known previously, and that more attention was being paid to adapting work:

> I'm being forced to think how we give access to the curriculum. It was too cosy and lax before. The old remedial departments weren't good. I wouldn't like to set limitations on these children.

Comments from subject teachers showed that they were working hard to make sure the disadvantages of the NC outweighed the benefits, for example:

> The topics we have to do in History are interesting, with follow-up in lots of different forms—visits, designing posters, role play—and that helps children who have problems with reading and writing. I'm working now with S. to design a topic pack on the Civil War, which aims to extend the very bright and be accessible to SEN children.

Teachers were adjusting to the National Curriculum, although many basic resentments lingered. Whatever the merits or demerits of the actual curriculum, the way it was introduced raised many questions and there remained concerns amongst teachers.

The Code of Practice

Opinion on the Code varied not only across schools but within schools, and did not seem to be affected by the extent of support received from the LEA. Typical comments from head teachers were:

> The Code is very prescriptive, very procedure-based. We keep making records saying we're carrying it out, but the energy to deliver may not match.
> The government wants miracles, without putting any money in. We're overwhelmed with systems instead of dealing with kids.

SEN coordinators, too, were generally anxious, in particular that the documentation involved would decrease their contact time with children. Only three of the 10 coordinators interviewed, expressed confidence.

While some staff feel able to take power in their own hands and set their own priorities, regardless of government regulations, it would be wrong not to record the resentment and exhaustion of many teachers. Similar feelings came through in a survey of October 1994 which found that systems in line with the *Code* had already been established in a number of counties in southern England, while "in urban areas, difficulties in following the *Code's* guidance are likely to be acute." (Peter, 1994)

The *Code*, both potentially and in practice, was changing the role of SEN coordinators. Many of the earlier hopes (Bines, 1992) for role development now stand to be fulfilled. In project schools, coordination had become as important as direct teaching, with a prime task being the development of the expertise and confidence of subject staff.

School support systems

The type of support offered to children with learning difficulty reflected school ethos and history. Fullan and Hargreaves have identified two major types of school culture, the individualistic and the collaborative (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. 53), and project schools were observed to be at different points between these two poles. Teachers have traditionally been taught to be independent and self-reliant, but both the National Curriculum and development of SEN work over the past few years have tended to break down classroom isolation. The Code of Practice is advancing this process.

The two main methods of SEN support currently used are withdrawal from class and help in the classroom. Most project schools operated a mixed economy, but with considerable variation in the proportion of time given to each. Providing for both called for a range of management skills, as the SEN coordinator administered the system, collaborated with subject teachers, advised on suitable approaches, and liaised with parents and the governor/s with a SEN brief. Withdrawal was usually looked on as the least desirable form of support: it was reported that children felt isolated, parents were unhappy about it; a stigma seemed to attach itself to withdrawal however hard staff tried to present the system in a positive light. Two of the head teachers interviewed regretted that it now seemed necessary to apologize for withdrawing children. One expressed this view in the following terms:

> We need withdrawal to be seen as legitimate. Support in the classroom is like giving a child a crutch instead of operating on the knee. Schools have become afraid of withdrawal, quite wrongly. It offers some children the individual attention needed to address their problems.

A number of practical problems surrounded withdrawal. For example, usually children were withdrawn from subjects across the curriculum, yet no attempt was made to enable them to catch up in lessons missed. Then, schools reported it difficult to find an economical way of withdrawing SEN pupils from mixed ability classes: "they're scattered through the year group like pepper and salt." We found that the whole area of withdrawal merited further investigation.

All project schools provided some support in the classroom for SEN pupils, and, overall, this was the method most frequently used. In two schools it had been started with some hesitation, as in this example: "We did have trouble getting into the classroom. People felt threatened. But within six months they were wanting more and more."

A key division was between schools using teachers for subject support and those relying on learning support assistants (LSAs)—known by a variety of names. Just a few schools used both. Choice between the two was dictated partly by principle, partly by finance.

Use of non-teaching assistants was growing, in line with national trends which show a 36% increase in ancillary staff since 1989 (*TES*, 1995). Subject staff were usually enthusiastic, but, here again, reservations were expressed about lack of clarity on the assistant's role. We spent considerable time in support work within classrooms and felt that the effect of support on the progress of individual pupils needs further research. At present, much of the pattern of support is based on received wisdom dating from *The Warnock Report*. There is a strong case for fresh thinking, based on firmer foundations.

LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

There were two sources of library support for schools in managing their SEN provision: school libraries and schools library services.

School libraries

Each of the schools had a well-developed school library resource center which was staffed by a librarian, although not all were qualified. However, the organizational structures in the majority of project schools were not helpful in enhancing collaboration between the librarian and teaching staff. In only one school was the member of the Senior Management Team responsible for the library also the line manager for SEN provision and information technology (IT): the ideal combination to bring cross-curricular support together for all pupils.

The libraries' policies were short statements which increasingly are seen to be requiring integration with schools' development plans. School targets such as improving literacy, making greater use of IT, or addressing individual needs were being followed up in library plans. Collaboration between subject teachers and SEN staff was growing in all project schools. Cross-departmental library committees operating in nearly half of the schools were valuable for facilitating this. In one school a Resources Committee, chaired by the Head Teacher, covered the library, IT and reprographics and looked at whole-school issues. A tangible outcome was a Resources Handbook.

The contribution made to school planning by school librarians in the project schools was, however, variable. Where a teacher had a responsibility for the library, the library assistants took little part in planning. Qualified librarians were more heavily involved, especially in the two schools where the librarian had head of department status. There has been considerable improvement, though, since 1984, when it was seen as necessary to recommend that every school library should have a policy with clear objectives (Office of Arts & Libraries, 1984) and the *Ofsted Handbook* now contains a page of guidance setting out expectations of an effective library (Ofsted, 1995).

The funding of each of the libraries had been maintained despite the financial difficulties faced by all schools in 1994-5, and three of the libraries had recently been extensively refurbished and qualified staff engaged. Two other schools were advertising for chartered librarians, with both posts linked to extra expenditure on accommodation and materials. The accommodation offered was of a high standard and there were many signals to 'non-bookish' children that the library held a variety of things to interest them. All libraries were attempting to provide materials in a range of formats: magazines, books, videos, audio-tapes, compact discs, CD-ROMs. The majority used a computer system for catalogues and loan records, and computer facilities were available in the library or in an adjoining suite, with two schools each providing 15 machines.

Involvement in induction for Year 7 pupils was a common feature of library support for SEN work. Depending on Year 7 organization, librarians either planned separate sessions for SEN children and their specialist teacher or differentiated work to be undertaken, helped by the SEN coordinator. Enquiry skills programs could be substantial, as in the school which had a well-developed system taking two periods a week in Years 7, 8 and 9 and run on team-teaching lines. While the focus was on information skills, there was also considerable promotion of recreational reading, usually undertaken jointly with the English Department. One school had an 'Explore a book' scheme operating for Years 7 and 8, which focused on 20 authors for each year group, with a separate collection for SEN children. Many other library activities were observed, e.g., a homework club run after school and a twice-weekly reading club run by the SEN coordinator. There was increasing integration of the library both in the work of the school generally and in the work of the SEN department specifically. Support in providing appropriate materials, helping with in-service education and training of staff, and importantly working with individual children, were further keys to successful library support.

Differentiation was a major interest and learning support staff were in demand as partners in adaptation of tasks and materials. Developing more slowly was their collaboration with the school library, although in previous research we identified the core role school libraries can take in curriculum planning and delivery was identified (Heeks & Kinnell, 1994). Indeed, the idea of the inclusive library, hospitable to all, has been accepted for decades. The inclusive library serves the individual needs of all pupils, whatever their abilities or difficulties, and of the teachers, governors and parents who make up the school community. It follows that it takes a holistic view of needs, embracing the recreational, pastoral and academic, and offers access through a range of media, services and facilities. The inclusive library is cross-curricular, contributing to each subject and helping to make connections between them. This vision has emerged again in connection with innovation relating to special needs.

> Latterly, some schools...have developed out of their libraries and information technology suites resource centers housing books, curriculum materials, microcomputers, audio-visual equipment and, above all, teaching assistance. Such centers tend to be accessible to pupils throughout the school day on demand, and support a process of teaching and learning in the ordinary classroom which emphasizes pupil responsibility for managing the learning process. (Dyson, 1992)

During the period of the project there was evidence of some progress towards the development of libraries as learning centers on this model. Staffing improved, with the appointment of qualified librarians in 70% of the case-studied schools. Structures which brought the IT coordinator, librarian and SEN coordinator together in a Learning Support Department managed by a member of the SMT, became more usual. As one head commented:

> It seemed a natural combination, to bring IT and the library, which are both in danger of isolation, together with learning support. All three are cross-curricular. Our philosophy is to widen the whole aspect of learning support.

Two schools had decided to bring together the resources in the library and SEN base, and a third was considering such a move, which built on librarians' skills and orientation to individual service.

Schools Library Services

All the project LEAs except Manchester operated a SLS, offering support in terms of advice, materials and training. Overall, SLS in England and Wales have suffered financially over recent years (Creaser, 1994). There was wide variation in the funding of the project authorities' SLS, partly linked to the primary aims of the services. Staffing levels reflected the different approaches to schools' needs. The range of support offered by Berkshire SLS reflects the nature of this wide-ranging response to schools:

- Resources for Learning: topic boxes; lending and exchange service; video library.
- Resources for Teachers: professional practice collection; exhibition area; enquiry and request service.

• Reading Point: promotions of reading and libraries through events and pre-packaged displays and loans.
• Advisory Services: pre- and post inspection reports and planning.
• In-service Training Programmes: A mix of free and charged sessions.

SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY

Of the six main issues investigated in this research, a key consideration was how the National Curriculum affected those children defined as SEN. The study was primarily concerned with how libraries and learning resources could best support pupils and their teachers, so that the impact of the curriculum was a major concern. The National Curriculum was conferring entitlement on SEN pupils, although the removal of flexibility was seen as a difficulty. Libraries and librarians have an important role in ensuring that all children have access to those materials which will enable them to exploit their potential to the full and meet the demands of the curriculum. Flexibility in teaching may partly be retained by the use of more imaginative materials and methods. Libraries can support this in various ways: through the provision of appropriate books and other materials, including audio-visual, and through the use of information technology, especially the Internet. The research indicated that further work was needed to explore this potential in particular. Current research at Loughborough University is investigating the place of the Internet in supporting secondary pupils' learning, across the curriculum, and involving librarians and teachers in developing common strategies (Wild & Kinnell).

The project identified several further ways in which libraries and librarians within schools could support learning for SEN pupils. Many of the activities consequent on the Code of Practice open the way for library initiatives. For example, the greater participation of parents in children's reading calls out for library support. The strengthening of links with primary schools and the establishment of cross-phase pyramids and consortia have brought improvements in practice which need to be matched by similar library initiatives. The widespread concern in school to provide appropriately for very able children has an obvious relevance to library resources and programs which, so far, has seldom been recognized.

In the rapidly-moving field of special needs, the role of school libraries looks set to grow. Their contribution can be advanced through the following:

• The librarian's awareness of school aims and initiatives, and of education developments nationally;
• The librarian's knowledge of both the children served and the resources appropriate to them;
• A library development plan which is linked to the School Development Plan;
• Staffing structures which encourage collaboration;
• A library environment which is both welcoming and stimulating;
• A wide range of stock relevant both to the formal curriculum and to children's personal interests;
• Programs which assist development of information skills across the curriculum;
• A library culture of cooperation and collaboration.

REFERENCES

Barber, M & Graham, J (1994, June 23). Looking after Jamie. *The Times Educational Supplement*.

Bines, H. (1992). Developing roles in the new era. *Support for Learning*, 7(2)..

Brown, S. (1994). Multiple Policy Innovations: the impact on special educational needs provision. *British Journal of Special Education*, 21(3)..

Burgess, R. (1991). *Researching school libraries: an agenda for action*. Warwick: Warwick University, CEDAR.

Creaser, C. (1994). *A survey of library services to schools and children in the UK, 1993-94*. Loughborough: Loughborough University Library and Information Statistics Unit.

Department for Education. (1994). *Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs*. London: Department For Education.

Department of Education and Science. (1978). *The libraries choice*. London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science. (1978). *Special educational needs*: *The Warnock report*. London: HMSO.
Department of National Heritage. (1995). *Investing in children: The future of library services for children and young people*. London: HMSO.
Dessent, T. (1987). *Making the ordinary school special*. London: Falmer.
Dyson, A. (1992). Innovatory mainstream practice. *Support for Learning*, 7(2)..
Dyson, A & Gains, C. (1995). The role of the special needs coordinator: poisoned chalice or crock of gold? *Support for Learning*, 10(2)..
Full steam ahead for part-timers. (1995, 17 February). *The Times Educational Supplement*.
Fullan, M & Hargreaves, A. (1992). *Whats worth fighting for in your school*? Buckingham: Open University Press.
Heeks, P. & Kinnell, M. (1992). *Managing change for school library services*. London: British Library.
Heeks, P. & Kinnell, M. (1994). *School libraries at work* (Library & Information Research Report 96). London: British Library, 1994.
Kinnell, M. (1996). Policy for secondary school provision in England and Wales: an historical perspective, In: Clyde, L.A. (Ed.), *Sustaining the vision: a collection of articles and papers on research in school librarianship, in honor of Jean E.Lowrie*. Castle Rock, CO: Hi Willow, pp 177-188.
Mittler, P. (1992). Educational entitlement in the nineties. *Support for Learning*, 7(4)..
Office for Standards in Education. (1995). *Guidance for the inspection of secondary schools: The Ofsted handbook*. London: HMSO, p.119.
Office of Arts and Libraries. (1984). *School libraries: The foundations of the curriculum* (Library Information Series 13). London: HMSO
National Association for Special Educational Needs. (1992). *Educational entitlement: a statement of principles*. Stamford: NASEN.
Peter, M. (1994, 21 October). Hazy days for the code breaker. *The Times Educational Supplement*.
Stradling, R & Saunders, L. (1991). *Differentiation in action*. London: HMSO.
Warnock, M. (1994, 30 September). Crack the code for the vulnerable. *The Times Educational Supplement*.
Wild, P. & Kinnell, M. *The internet and learning in the Community Project.* For further details, contact Dr P.Wild, Department of Education, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. E-mail: P.Wild@lboro.ac.uk