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SEPTEMBER 2018 / ISSUE 11

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Find out the latest from Anne Heavey, National Director of the Whole School SEND consortium

Setting the wheels in motion

The first in a series from the SENCO and Learning Support Advisory group



CULTURAL INCLUSION

a manifesto for change

Successful parental engagement

David Hill and Emma Foster talk about their work to help schools develop parental engagement



→ SPOTLIGHT

Cultural inclusion a manifesto for change

Children and young people with disabilities do not have equal access to arts and cultural opportunities. The author of the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto, Paul Morrow takes a look in more detail.

They are under-represented in attendance figures for cultural venues and in employment figures in the arts workforce. Their art and stories are not reflected in the cultural canon and as creative activities are further pushed to the extra-curricular, they are even less likely than their peers to access the arts subjects.

And yet, the power of arts and culture is well understood including a well-evidenced positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

The arts transmit the cultural and societal narrative helping us to navigate our place in the world, helping us to feel our value as a member of society. As teachers and SENCOs do we ensure that children with disabilities;

- see themselves in the photographs and the art on the walls?
- hear their stories in what they read and what is read to them?
- see their experiences reflected in the drama that they perform and watch?

WHAT NEXT?

Working with Every Child Should, we are pulling together examples of great practice tools and case studies on the Cultural Inclusion website.

The first Cultural Inclusion Conference will be held on 18th October at the Lyric Hammersmith, and we hope that arts teachers, SENCOs and cultural providers will join us to share practice and develop joint projects.

I am delighted that we are working with nasen on extending nasen membership to cultural institutions allowing them to tap into the vast amount of learning and knowledge from the education sector and we are working on projects that allow special schools and cultural providers to extend their collaborations.

And — of course — we continue to encourage sign-ups to the manifesto because there is both political and practice power in working together.

One final thought that I'd like to leave you with: culture is the thing that empowers us, it defines us as individuals, but it is also the glue that binds us. It is our common experience and that should be common for everyone.

The barriers to inclusion are several. From the practical (physical access, changing spaces, parking and arts settings that understand the needs of children and young people with profound needs) through to educational challenges (understanding effective inclusive pedagogy and curriculum design). There is also the value we place on both the artistic practice of young people with disabilities and on them as audience members.

There is an opportunity for schools, cultural and arts venues and disability organisations to co-produce better and more opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to engage with arts and culture.

The Cultural Inclusion Manifesto is a statement of intent to work to address this.

In the short time since the manifesto was established, it has gained traction through word of mouth and has so far been supported by music hubs, schools, cultural venues and bridge organisations.

The Manifesto was born from my work at Westminster Special School where my role includes a particular focus on the now annual West London Inclusive Arts Festival. Funded by

John Lyons, this is coordinated in partnership with other special needs schools and cultural partners.

In year two we had four cultural partners and nine special schools and it continues to grow both in terms of its reach and its progressive and inclusive practices, driven by a real desire to work together towards a common cause. As the work unfolded cultural institutions asked for more support and it prompted a conversation around three questions; how could we support others to replicate what we had achieved, what would this look like and how could we make it happen?

It soon became clear that we needed a starting point, a guiding set of principles. This is where the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto started to take form. It outlines a vision of future partnership working and greater connectivity. It looks to be a space to guide, to support and be a bank of best practice to support the ongoing drive towards real inclusion.

It is an approach owned by multiple parties and at the time of writing has over 60 signatories across politicians, cultural organisations, schools, SEND bodies and individuals committed to this area of work.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

The manifesto asks us to affirm our commitment to:

- Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which confers on children and young people the right to a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.
- The spirit of the Salamanca Statement which posits that cultural institutions are also places of learning and key in building inclusive communities.
- And asks us to commit to collaborate to make these rights a reality for all.

The Cultural Manifesto had its first launch at the Lyric Hammersmith in June with teachers and cultural organisations. I was delighted that Dr Adam Boddison confirmed nasen's commitment to the Cultural Manifesto and shared his own story of the power of drama for his son's inclusion in school.



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The Cultural Inclusion
Manifesto is being
incubated by ‘Every Child
Should’ and supported by
Anita Kerwin-Nye, a national
lead on collaboration to
support inclusion



BIO

PAUL MORROW
has spent 12 years
working in SEND
education, teaching art
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Schools. He has an MA
in Art and Design in
Education and a Diploma
in Special and Inclusive
Education from the Institute
of Education. Paul has also
worked as a consultant to
the Royal Academy of Art
and delivered workshops
for the Arts and Special
Educational Needs and
Disabilities Conference at
the Museum of London.
Paul is a practicing
artist. He is the author
of the Cultural Inclusion
Manifesto.

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Rachael Christopides,
a writer and policy
developer within the field
of SEN, helped to craft
the manifesto.