



NALDIC Response to the DfES consultation on 'Inclusion, equality and diversity: data'

Introduction

1. The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the DfES Consultation on Inclusion, Equality and Diversity: Data.
2. NALDIC believes that collecting data through monitoring provides support for developing educational strategies to overcome discrimination and that comprehensive and accurate monitoring at school, Local Authority (LA) and national levels is essential in establishing whether current policies and practices are addressing inequalities effectively.
3. NALDIC welcomes the new data being sought on first languages, faith and disability. However, the proposed additional data will not illuminate the discrimination facing pupils learning English as an additional language as their stage of English as an additional language acquisition is not recorded nationally in a consistent way, nor is it captured through national curriculum achievement data. As such it is an aspect of inclusion, equality and diversity which has not been addressed nationally and leads to discrimination in terms of both learning opportunities and educational outcomes.¹
4. NALDIC believes that equality monitoring data should enable schools, LAs and the DfES to target resources to meet the diverse needs of pupils and to help measure school effectiveness. It is therefore vital that the DfES reconsiders its position on stages of English as an additional language acquisition and includes these within its monitoring, providing clear guidance for schools in order to obtain as accurate information as possible.
5. NALDIC agrees that there is a key role for all local authorities in providing leadership and support to their schools in the collection of data to inform inclusion and equal opportunities strategies at school and LA level. NALDIC therefore welcomes the emphasis given to the role of local authorities.
6. Set out below are NALDIC's detailed comments on the proposals in the order in which they appear in the DfES document. NALDIC has commented only on those aspects of the consultation document which fall within its area of interest and which it believes require amendment, clarification or further guidance.

¹ Further information on the assessment of pupils learning English as an additional language is contained in the NALDIC briefing paper on the subject which can be found at <http://www.naldic.org.uk/docs/resources/documents/BriefingonAssessment.pdf>

Collecting and Recording Pupil Data on Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

(1) Introduction

7. NALDIC shares the belief of the DfES that data can help schools to provide for pupils' diverse needs and ensure effective learning opportunities for all pupils. However, NALDIC believes that it is important to make a clear distinction between the collection of data and the monitoring of outcomes. The process of collecting data can provide helpful information. For example, information on the first languages of pupils can inform policy on the development of language teaching in schools. The analysis of data can help schools and LAs identify where pupils are not benefiting from educational provision or 'learning opportunities' in terms of outcomes.
8. NALDIC is concerned that the guidance itself does not provide any framework advice on how equality data, once collected, can be used. The use of such data as a tool for raising achievement is a complex process and schools and professional associations will need to be involved in discussions on the creation of any guidance which may be issued at a national level. It is particularly important that any such guidance is applicable to all schools and authorities and is not only aimed at those with 'diverse' populations in terms of ethnicity, first language, faith or disability.

Comprehensive inclusion data

9. NALDIC welcomes the DfES' attempt to ensure that the existing best practice at school and LA level is extended through the national collection of data on first language, faith and disability. However, failure to include stages of English language acquisition means that inclusion data is not comprehensive.
10. Detailed analysis of educational achievement data is not possible to undertake without data concerning the language development of EAL learners. Without this, any monitoring data will lack a highly significant pupil variable and one which is proven to be of significance in local, national and international research.

(3) Benefits of collecting inclusion, equality and diversity data

11. The benefits outlined in this section are broadly similar to those outlined in the 2001 consultation on ethnic monitoring to which NALDIC responded. NALDIC is particularly concerned that reference is once more made to the 'effective allocation and targeting of resources to meet identified needs' when a particular need, the need to acquire English as an additional language, is relatively unrecognised either in PLASC collection or national curriculum terms. The current position of allocating resources on the basis of 'EAL' (as

opposed to 'not EAL') ethnicity, and free school meals is simplistic and has led to considerable unfairness.

3.1 Section E Collecting Data on Pupils' Ethnic Background

E5 Reporting on Pupils' Ethnic Background

12. The aim of E5 appears to be to advise LAs not to produce summary achievement statistics in terms of 'White' (which includes many minority ethnic groups) but this section is rather confusing. It could be read as suggesting that LAs summarise achievement data in terms of White British and Minority Ethnic which would not necessarily be best practice either. These considerations could usefully be dealt with in more substantial guidance on the use of equality monitoring data as suggested in 8 above.

3.2 Section L: First Language Data Collection

13. NALDIC strongly welcomes the suggested inclusion of first language(s) data. Indeed, in our submission to the 2001 consultation we argued that

collecting linguistic information during this exercise would significantly improve the identification of barriers to achievement, inform strategies to raise standards, improve targeting of additional funding and remove the need for piecemeal surveys.

14. The new language list is comprehensive in terms of the coverage of local languages and the information available nationally from its collection will be exceptionally useful particularly in terms of curriculum provision.
15. In a complex, multilingual society such as England we would welcome clearer guidance on recording multiple first languages as well as guidance which indicates clearly that first language(s) refers to an important aspect of each child's personal language history rather than their current proficiency in that or any other language. Information would ideally be augmented by further information on pupils' language(s) expertise and affiliation and all languages should be treated equally for recording purposes.
16. It would be useful if the section on 'home', 'second' and 'tuition' language were strengthened so that schools would be using these categories in a similar way.
17. NALDIC would argue that the DfES should urgently review its current position on the use of EAL levels or stages and support the collection of EAL data by nationally agreed EAL scales or stages similar to those which have been developed and incorporated into the curriculum of most other English speaking countries including Australia, Canada, and the United States.
18. NALDIC agrees that "schools may require extensive support from LA data management, language specialist and technical staff." As this has resource

implications, both at school and LA level NALDIC urges the DfES to cost this exercise and make funds available to schools and LAs accordingly.

19. It would be useful for the DfES to arrange for the translation of the model letter to parents into all the language on the 'look up list' and to make an enhanced 'look up list' available on its website with translations of each language name into that language. This is relatively inexpensive for the DfES and would be very helpful to LAs and schools to support parents and pupils in their self identification of their heritage language.