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Report of a Committee appointed by

The Minister for Education

on

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

WHO ARE HANDICAPPED BY

IMPAIRED HEARING

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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Chapter Title: CLASSIFICATION

Summary of Recommendations

1. We consider that potential for success in a particular type of school environment should be the guiding principle in classifying children for educational purposes. (2.3)
 2. We emphasise that all the known relevant facts concerning a child should be carefully assessed and that full account should be taken of his abilities, aptitudes and requirements before a recommendation is made concerning his educational placement. (2.12)
 3. The child's progress should be reviewed periodically and an appropriate alteration made in his placement if changes in his development are significant enough to warrant it. (2.12)
- //, We recommend that the scheme of classification outlined in paragraphs 2.13 - 2.18 should be adopted by *all* concerned with the education of hearing-impaired Children. (2.13)

Chapter Title:

DIAGNOSIS, ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE

Summary of Recommendations: Diagnosis, Assessment and Guidance

1. Hearing defects must be discovered as* early as possible in the child's life. (4.2)
2. It is vital that support and guidance for parents be made available without delay following diagnosis of the child's impairment, assessment of his needs and the fitting of a hearing aid where necessary. (4.5)
3. If oral communication is ineffective the parents and others who look after pre-school children should be advised to use manual communication, beginning with natural gestures, progressing to methodic signs and in some cases finger spelling. (4.9)
4. We endorse the recommendations in the Report, 'The Child Health Services' concerning:
 - (i) health screening at birth and in the neo-natal period;
 - (ii) scheduled medical examinations *for* children at the ages of 6 months, 1 year and 2 years;

*'The Child Health Services', 5.11.

4.

(j i i) the maintenance by the CMO of a register of all pre-school children;

(iv) the establishment of additional ENT clinics.

(4.21)

5- The continuation of pre-school guidance in the home should be one of the functions of a national visiting teacher service. (4.23)

6. Steps should be taken to make the general public aware of the nature of deafness, the early signs of hearing defect in infants and the services available to cater for it.

(4.24)

7. It is essential that screening of all school children for hearing impairment be carried out regularly. Screening of new entrants should, ideally, be carried out annually.

"(4.25)

8. We endorse the proposals made in the Report 'The Child Health Services^T for the future structure of the School Health Services in so far as they concern children with hearing defect. (4.32)

9. When collecting statistics the Department of Health should distinguish between hearing defects which may require remedial measures of an educational nature and those which require only medical treatment. (4.32)

10. (i) In each area the CMO should ensure that one nurse who has attended the special course in audiometry would have responsibility for the screening and follow-up of all hearing-impaired children;

(ii) the nurse for this work should be selected on grounds of aptitude and interest and not on seniority only;

- (iii) the nurse's role in the screening process should be very clearly defined;
 - (iv) refresher courses of a practical nature should be arranged at regular intervals to enable the nurses employed in the child health services to keep abreast of new developments in screening techniques;
 - (v) the nurse who has general responsibility for screening should have close liaison with the NRB team and the visiting teacher of the deaf. (4.32)
11. Regional Health Boards should co-operate in the provision of small mobile units to be used for audiometric testing of school children. (4.33) - . . . -
 12. The Departments of Health and Education should ensure that the responsibility for the educational assessment of all children suspected of being in need of any special educational arrangements because of impaired hearing should lie with the NRB teams. (4.35)
 13. In the development of the School Psychological Service the Department of Education should give priority to the needs of hearing-impaired pupils* (4.36)
 14. At least one psychologist on the staff of the Department of Education should be given the opportunity to acquire expertise in the field of hearing defect. (4.36)
 15. The school psychologist who works with hearing-impaired children should maintain close liaison with the NRB assessment teams. (4.36)
 16. A comprehensive guidance service is essential for school-going children with impaired hearing and for their parents and teachers. (4.37)

6.

17. A guidance service for children who have communication difficulties arising from impaired hearing can be provided only by a qualified teacher of the deaf. (4.37)
18. Whether he remains in the ordinary class or attends a special class or school a child with hearing-impairment will need periodic re-assessment. (4.39)
19. The school authorities should arrange for the re-assessment of children attending special schools or special classes for hearing-impaired pupils. (4.39)
20. When re-assessment of mildly or moderately hard of hearing pupils seems desirable the school principal should report the matter to the CMO. (4.40)
21.
 - (i) A well-designed pamphlet for teachers should be prepared setting out the indications and educational implications of defective hearing in school children;
 - (ii) talks by experts on the problem of deafness and its bearing on education should be given to student teachers;
 - (iii) visits to special schools for hearing-impaired children should be arranged for student teachers. (4.42)
22. The School Medical Officer should arrange that teachers in ordinary schools be kept fully informed about pupils who have a hearing impairment. (4.43).

Chapter Title

MILDLY AND MODERATELY HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN

Summary of Recommendations: Mildly and Moderately Hard of Hearing Children

1. It is important that teachers in ordinary schools be made aware of hearing impairment, however slight, in their pupils. They should realize that even a relatively minor hearing defect may cause some degree of educational retardation and they should be alert for signs of learning difficulties. If retardation becomes significant the pupil *in question* should be re-assessed. (5.2)
2. All mildly hard of hearing pupils must have their hearing examined periodically. (5.3)
3. The facilities which moderately hard of hearing pupils need may include favourable hearing conditions in the class, tuition in lip-reading, speech correction, suitable hearing aids, and supervision of their school progress by a teacher of the deaf. (5.0)
4. favourable conditions in the class¹ should be understood to mean that the classroom in which the hearing-impaired child spends most of the day should be one in which extraneous noise is reduced to a minimum and where lighting conditions are such that the child with a hearing defect will have the minimum difficulty in observing the lips and facial expression of his teacher and classmates. (5.5)

5. A visiting teacher service for hearing-impaired children should be established and managed by the Department of Education. (5.13)
6. Visiting teachers of the deaf should hold the Diploma for Teachers of the Deaf and have adequate experience in a school or class for hearing-impaired children. (5.16)
7. Short courses should be arranged for new entrants to the visiting teacher service. (5.17)
8. The salary, allowances and superannuation rights of a visiting teacher of the deaf should be those of a teacher of the deaf and, in addition, she should be paid an appropriate responsibility allowance. (5.18)
9. Additional Visiting Teachers of the deaf should be appointed as soon as suitable candidates can be obtained. (5.21)
10. If electronic equipment which would enable children with more serious hearing defects to benefit from education in ordinary classes becomes available the Department of Education should allocate a grant for its provision in ordinary schools where its use is considered advisable by the assessment team. (5.22)
11. Initially one boys⁵ school and one adjoining girls^T school should be selected in the Dublin area and designated as schools which enrol hard of hearing children in ordinary classes. (5.23)

6. If children with a serious hearing defect are to be prepared to be happy, self-supporting citizens, capable of competing on reasonable terms with their hearing peers, the content of their education should closely resemble that of hearing children. (6.20)
7. For pupils who follow courses leading to Group or Intermediate Certificate but are unable or unwilling to pursue a course leading to Leaving Certificate, pre-vocational or pre-apprenticeship training should be provided for a period of perhaps one year. (6.26)
8. The pupil guidance service which is being developed in post-primary schools under the direction of the Department's psychologists should be made available to the schools for profoundly deaf and hard of hearing children. (6.27)
9. To ensure that school leavers receive the help and advice they may need after placement *in* employment the services of a full-time social worker should be available for the purpose. (6.27)
10. In the special classes and schools 'curriculum' should embrace not merely courses of study but in addition all extra-classroom activities which have as their aim the physical, social and emotional development of the pupils. (6.28)
11. Deaf students whose language development and academic achievements are sufficiently high to enable them to follow courses of higher education should be given every encouragement to do so. (6.34)

12. (a) If the climate of the boarding school is to resemble that of a good family where each member is thoroughly known and respected, it is essential that the residential pupils should be divided into small manageable groups. (6.38)
- (b) In charge of each group there should be a specially trained supervisor with the necessary qualities of mind and character to foster good personal relationships, to provide sound and fruitful leisure occupations and to create a sense of unity in the group. (6.39)
- (c) The authorities of residential schools at which young boys attend as boarders should ensure that female supervisors predominate. (6.39)
- (d) The creation of good home-like conditions in residential schools requires that residences be designed on the principle of small living units or group homes each of which would accommodate a small number of children. (6.40)
13. (a) In the interests of both children and their parents it is important that means be devised to enable the pupils to keep in close touch with their families. (6.42)
- (b) All children should be given the opportunity of returning home at least once a month. The frequency of their visits should be related to the travelling time involved. (6.43)
14. At the primary stage entirely separate school and residential provision should be made for severely hard of hearing and profoundly deaf children. (6.46)

Chapter Title

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR SEVERELY HARD OF HEARING AND PROFOUNDLY DEAF CHILDREN

Summary of Recommendations

1. The special classes for hearing-impaired children in Dublin should be discontinued⁰, pupils who are not capable of benefiting satisfactorily from attendance at classes *for* hearing children in the selected schools should be provided for on a day basis in special schools for severely hard of hearing pupils. (7,8).
2. The two-class nursery unit and the two special classes in Cork should be replaced by a single unit for all severely hard of hearing children and *for* profoundly deaf children up to the age of six. (7.9)
3. The new school for severely hard of hearing boys should be built beside the girls^f school and the highest possible priority should be accorded to this project. (7.15)
4. When it is considered desirable to send young severely hard of hearing boys to a special school they should be enrolled in the girls^l school up to the age of seven years. (7.17)
5. Mary Immaculate School, Stillorgan, should continue to cater for profoundly deaf boys in the age range 3-9 years: it should be a condition of enrolment that parents would agree to the withdrawal of their child from the school if the assessment team recommends for him at any stage education by methods which are not exclusively oral. (7.29)
6. When the new school and residence for severely hard of hearing children have been completed the existing accommodation at St. Mary's School should be reconstructed and, if necessary, extended to provide:
 - (i) a school and residence for profoundly deaf girls receiving an exclusively oral education;

- (li) a completely separate school and residence for profoundly deaf girls being educated through combined methods;
 - (iii) facilities for teachers attending the course for the award of The Diploma for Teachers of the Deaf. (7.32)
7. Adequate physical facilities should be made available at St. Joseph's to facilitate the provision of exclusively oral education for deaf boys who can benefit from it. (7.34)
 8. In order to ensure that appropriate provision is made for pupils who cannot make satisfactory progress through purely oral methods systematic use should be made of combined methods in the non-oral department at St. Josephs. (7.36)
 9. The Irish Christian Brothers and the Dominican Sisters should co-operate in the establishment and management of a co-educational post-primary school which would provide purely oral education for severely hard of hearing and profoundly deaf pupils. (7.41)
 10. Until such time as one co-educational post-primary school can be established, the post-primary departments of St. Joseph's and St. Mary's Schools should co-operate in planning curricula, and in arranging for the sharing of facilities. (7.43)
 11. The possibility of a single post-primary co-educational school for pupils being educated through combined or manual methods should be explored by the schools¹ authorities. In the meantime co-operation between the combined methods departments of the two schools on the lines indicated in the previous recommendation, should be considered. (7.44)

12. Pupil-teacher ratios of 6 : 1 and 8 : 1 are recommended for schools for profoundly deaf and severely hard of hearing pupils respectively; hard of hearing post-primary pupils should be treated as profoundly deaf for staffing purposes. Within the limits imposed by these over-all ratios managers and principals should be free to appoint speech teachers and specialist teachers as the need arises. (7.47)
13. A teacher's aide should be appointed in each class for profoundly deaf children in the age range 3 to 5 years. (7.48)
14. Grants for the maintenance of classroom equipment should be revised to take account of present-day costs, (7.49)
15. If their parents wish them to attend special schools under Protestant management, arrangements should be made to have Protestant children admitted to suitable schools in Northern Ireland or Britain. Alternatively they can attend the special schools in Cabra or Stillorgan. If their homes are located outside Dublin they could reside in the Claremont Institution and be transported daily to the special schools. Where this latter arrangement is implemented appropriate maintenance grants should continue to be paid in respect of children residing in Claremont. (7.50)
16. Where Irish-speaking parents decide that their children should learn to communicate through their home language, it will be necessary to place them in ordinary Irish-speaking schools and to make the best possible arrangements in these schools for their education. Where an effort is made to meet their needs in this way it would be essential that parents and teachers as well as the children in question receive a very great deal of assistance from a visiting teacher of the deaf. Any electronic or other equipment which would mitigate the children's handicap should be provided. (7.51)

Chapter Title

SPECIAL PROBLEMS;

- (1) Children with Perceptual - Motor Learning Disorders.
(11) Multi-Handicapped Hearing-Impaired Children,

Summary of Recommendations

1. A specialist diagnostic and assessment team under the auspices of the NRB and in close association with the special schools should be developed. (8.3)
2. As soon as perceptual-motor learning disorders are suspected the child should be *referred* to the specialist team for observation and preliminary assessment. (8.4)
3. Hearing-impaired children with additional handicaps, who in the opinion of the NRB team require more searching diagnostic and assessment procedures than the team can provide should be referred to the specialist team. (8.8)
4. After diagnosis and initial assessment the hearing-impaired child with an additional handicap should be recommended for placement in the school which, in all the circumstances, is most likely to provide for his needs. Thereafter his progress should be reviewed at regular intervals and *if* indicated a recommendation should be made for his transfer to another school which would be more suitable for him at that particular stage of his development. (8.9)

5. Mildly mentally handicapped children who because of a serious hearing impairment would be unable to make satisfactory progress in schools for the mentally handicapped should be enrolled in a school for hearing-impaired children. (8.13)
6. Deaf children with a serious mental disability should be provided for in a unit associated with a residential school for moderately mentally handicapped pupils. (8.14)
7. If they are capable of benefiting from education at school, hearing-impaired children who suffer from serious emotional disturbance should be enrolled in a school for emotionally disturbed pupils, on the staff of which there should be at least one teacher of the deaf with experience of both oral and combined methods of communication. (8.17)
8. Severely hard of hearing and profoundly deaf children with a physical disability should normally be placed in the special schools for hearing-impaired children. Suitable residential facilities and adequate nursing and paramedical care should be made available however for those whose disability is such that they are unable to move about without aid and to care for themselves. (8.19)
9. Mildly or moderately hard of hearing children with a visual impairment which prevents them from making satisfactory progress in ordinary classes should normally receive their education in schools or classes for visually-impaired children. (8.21)
10. Arrangements should be made to place educable deaf-blind children in an educational centre for such children in Britain. (8.23)

Chapter Title

THE TRAINING AND SUPPLY OF TEACHERS AND OF RESIDENTIAL STAFF.

Summary of Recommendations: The Training and Supply of Teachers and of Residential Staff

1. Because of the acute staffing difficulties experienced by the schools a suitable allowance, in addition to an appropriate qualification allowance, should be paid to teachers in charge of classes for hearing-impaired children. (9.6)
2. A special one-year training course, for which a knowledge of Irish would not be a requirement, should be provided for graduates . who wish to teach in special schools for hearing-impaired children. (9.7)
3. No one should be accepted for special training who has not had at least one year's experience of teaching pupils with serious hearing disabilities. (9.9)
4. Every newly-appointed teacher who has had at least one year's experience of teaching hearing-impaired children should be required to attend the special training course as soon as she can be released for the purpose from her teaching duties. (9.12)
5. The staffs of the special schools should be augmented temporarily in order to ensure that trained teachers are available to replace those attending the special training course. (9.13)
6. Short courses and seminars should be provided for qualified teachers of the deaf to enable them to keep abreast of modern theory and practice. (9.14)
7. Short-term courses should be provided for part-time teachers to make them aware of the problems of deaf children.

8. In the training of teachers, due consideration should be given to the needs of hearing-impaired children attending ordinary schools. (9.10)
- 9 (i) The ratio of care staff to children during out-of-school periods should be not less than 1:12 for children under 12 years and 1:25 for those over that age.

(ii) An appropriate adjustment should be made in the ratios recommended at (i) for hearing-impaired children with additional handicaps, (9.21)
10. The capitation rates applicable to the schools for the deaf should be appropriately adjusted. (9.22)
11. Persons employed as child care staff in the schools for the deaf should receive preliminary training for this kind of work and when they have had adequate experience they should be seconded for professional training in residential child care, (9.23)
12. Training of care staff to meet the specific needs of severely hard of hearing and profoundly deaf children should be provided by means of short in-service courses. (9.23)

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The education of deaf children was the earliest form of special education to develop in Ireland. It will be seen from the historical note in Appendix V that the first of a number of schools for deaf mutes was established as early as 1816. What was achieved by these schools, dependent as they were on voluntary subscriptions in an era of great social and economic stress, was quite remarkable. But the absence of an3' financial aid from state sources throughout the nineteenth century and during the first three decades of the present century greatly limited the capacity of school authorities to keep abreast of the latest developments in this field of special education. The acceptance by Irish Governments during the years immediately before and after the second world war of a growing measure of responsibility for the welfare of handicapped children helped to prepare the way for the very significant changes which occurred in the education of the deaf in this country during the past twenty years. Increasing interest in the teaching of speech to deaf children due to advances in the field of electronics and a growing public concern for the welfare of handicapped children were largely responsible for these changes. In this report we have reviewed the considerable progress which has been made in the education of the deaf in this country and in our recommendations we have endeavoured to provide guide lines for further development.

Throughout our discussions we have kept in mind the generally accepted views that:

- (i) the overriding aim of special education for children with impaired hearing is to minimise the effect of their disability and thereby enable them to achieve their optimum development and adjust successfully to living and working in the community when they leave school;

(ii) handicapped children, especially young children, should not be separated from their families unless this is unavoidable and that where residential education is necessary the period during which children are away from home should be kept as short as possible;

(iii) whenever possible handicapped children should be educated in ordinary schools.

10. 3 In this report we have distinguished between hearing disabilities and the extent to which they handicap individual children and we have classified hearing-impaired pupils in accordance with their educational needs rather than by the degree of their hearing defect. We have recommended a variety of measures which can help to reduce the extent to which these defects may handicap the child and thereby make his educational needs less acute. These measures may be expected to ensure not only that less severely handicapped pupils make satisfactory progress in ordinary classes but that a growing number of pupils whose disabilities are more pronounced are enabled to benefit from ordinary schooling. The extent to which this latter aim can be achieved will be greatly influenced by the effectiveness of measures taken to ensure early diagnosis and pre-school guidance, by the establishment of a visiting teacher service, by technical advances in the field of electronics and by improvements in the staffing and equipment of ordinary schools.

10. 4 It must be recognised that in the foreseeable future a substantial number of children with impaired hearing will continue to require more individual and more specialised help than can be provided in the ordinary classes of our schools. It might seem that the needs of these children could be met through the establishment of special classes in selected schools throughout the country. We were convinced however that the varied needs of the great majority of children who are severely handicapped by impaired hearing could not be adequately met in all-age special classes. Even if the establishment

of such classes were regarded as an educationally sound policy the density of population over a large part of the country is such that many Children would still be dependent on residential education. The establishment of special schools at one or more provincial centres was also considered but as these schools would function primarily as residential schools we were satisfied that the advantages they offered would not be sufficient to justify their establishment.

10. 5 Bearing in mind:

(i) that if severely handicapped pupils are to achieve social adequacy in adult life the provision for them of special educational facilities of the highest quality is of paramount importance

and

(ii) that the existing special schools have acquired very valuable experience and skill in this field of education, we have concluded that the best interest of those hearing-impaired children who cannot make adequate progress in ordinary schools and for whom special day provision could not be made, would be better served by the further development of the existing schools than by the provision of new residential schools at other centres. We have discussed in some detail measures designed to ensure that children attending residential schools are not isolated from their families and from the community and that living conditions in these schools are made as home-like as possible.

10. 6 In order to achieve the fundamental aims of the recommendations made in the Report it will be necessary to ensure close co-operation between all the bodies concerned *in* their implementation i.e. the Departments of Education and Health, school authorities, teachers' associations, the department for the training of teachers of the deaf at University College Dublin, the NRB, local health authorities and, in order to provide representation for parents, the National Association for the Deaf. Because some of the circumstances which have

influenced our recommendations may change radically in the years ahead it will be important to keep developments in this field of education under regular review. We recommend accordingly that the Minister for Education appoint a committee representative of the interests mentioned above to act as an advisory body in matters relating to the education of the deaf* It's envisaged that it would also be the function of the committee to ensure:

- (i) *that adequate instruments are developed for the measurement of educational attainment and, linguistic progress among hearing—impaired children in Ireland;*
- (ii) *that the Department of Education and, bodies engaged in educational research in Ireland, are advised of those aspects of the education of the deaf on which research could usefully be carried out;*
- (iii) *that those concerned with the education of the deaf be kept informed of the results of educational research in this country and elsewhere , which are relevant to their work,*

Recommendation

We recommend that the Minister for Education appoint a committee representative of the Departments of Education and Health, school authorities, teachers' associations, the department for the training of teachers of the deaf at University College Dublin, the NRB, local health authorities and parents to act as an advice body in matters relating to the education of the deaf. (10. 6)

