

## **International review of the literature of evidence of best practice models and outcomes in the education of blind and visually impaired children**

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### **Abstract**

In May 2008 the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) invited tenders to conduct an international review of the literature of evidence of best practice models and outcomes in the education of blind and visually impaired children. A team from the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (School of Education, University of Birmingham, UK) and St Patrick's College, Dublin responded to this invitation and were awarded the contract. The work was carried out in autumn 2008 and then modified in response to feedback from NCSE in spring 2009.

The approach to the literature review involved: agreeing a broad topic framework for the literature; stage 1 review (initial review of key visual impairment literature); appraisal of the topic framework based upon findings in stage 1 review; and stage 2 review (broader systematic searches of electronics databases).

The literature review resulted in approximately 325 relevant references associated with nine 'review focus' topics (under the broader headings of 'access to the mainstream curriculum' and 'access to the additional curriculum'). The review focus topics are:

#### Access to the mainstream curriculum

1. Assessment of learning needs
2. Pedagogy and teaching strategies to access the curriculum
3. Access to public examinations
4. Print literacy
5. Braille literacy

#### Access to the additional curriculum

6. Mobility and independence
7. Social and emotional inclusion
8. ICT
9. Low vision training

The report presents an analysis of the literature for each of the nine topics. Each of the topics has an associated evidence-based recommendation. A final section of the report considers the review in the Irish educational context and draws upon a wider

range of 'review context' literature (including international policy documents and expert views). This section presents six 'Implications for Ireland'.

### **Speakers:**

Dr Graeme Douglas (BSc (Hons) Psychology and Computing; PhD) is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Education, University of Birmingham. He has carried out social and educational research in the area of visual impairment since 1993 and has a particular interest in visually impaired people's views and circumstances, education and visual impairment, and various aspects of reading and visual impairment. He is co-director of the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) and joint-Editor of the British Journal of Visual Impairment.

Dr Mike McLinden (BSc; MEd Child Development; PGCE; BPhil; PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, University of Birmingham. He is joint-programme coordinator of the *Mandatory Qualification for Teachers of Children with Visual Impairment*. He has been involved in a range of funded research activities that have focused on reducing barriers to learning and participation for children with visual impairment, and has a particular interest in children and young people with multiple disabilities and visual impairment. He is co-director of the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) and joint-Editor of the British Journal of Visual Impairment.

Ann Marie Farrell (BEd, Grad Dip in Advanced Studies in Special Education, MSc in Education and Training Management) is a lecturer in the Special Education Department, St Patrick's College of Education, Dublin. She is the co-ordinator of the special education input on the BEd and Graduate Diploma in Primary Teaching programmes and is also involved with the Graduate Diploma in Special Education, Graduate Certificate in ASD and MSEN programmes which are certified CPD programmes for qualified teachers. She has carried out research into special education provision in mainstream post-primary schools and in special schools and classes.