

# Achievements of Deaf Pupils in Scotland

In the last SSC Newsletter we concentrated on developments with our Family Questionnaire. We are almost at the point now of finalising the content after all the feedback we received from parents during the piloting phase. We will keep readers posted with developments in further issues. In this issue, we will focus on updating you with information about our national surveys as well as featuring the work of one of our researchers, Claire Leiper, who has been out and about interviewing deaf pupils around Scotland.

## National Survey Update

The ADPS project began in October 2000 with funding from the Scottish Executive. The project team have established a database of information about deaf children and young people in Scotland. At the time of writing, the third annual collection of data is under way. We are grateful to teachers of deaf children who take the time to provide the information and to all the other groups and individuals who contribute to the design and production of the questionnaires.

The aim is to continue to collect information annually so that we can begin to build up a picture of achievements of deaf pupils and factors which might affect these achievements. Annual updates allow the team to track changes, essential for analysing the effect of various circumstances and characteristics. The response rates to date have been excellent, which is very heartening.

This year the team collaborated with the British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children (BATOD) and their biennial survey team. BATOD would like to see the ADPS survey approach and design extended across the UK. Preliminary negotiations are currently under way. The team has been feeding back to a range of groups, including parents, teachers, deaf people,

local authorities and the Scottish Executive. This is done in various ways:

- presentations of findings to interested groups around Scotland (recent groups include Hearing Impaired services staff groups; parent groups; Scottish Council on Deafness; the Scottish Executive and the Education Consortium of Deaf Organisations);
- articles in relevant magazines and journals, such as the National Deaf Children's Society's 'Talk' magazine and the magazine of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf;
- information days;
- we are currently working on a website where the findings will be presented in the form of tables and graphs.



Marian Grimes

We are also planning to have a conference on 11th February, 2004, so please make sure you keep a note in your diary.

## Teacher survey

How many teachers of deaf children are there in Scotland? Until now accurate figures have not been available about their numbers, qualifications and situations. At this time of great change in educational service provision for deaf children, it is vital that this information is available to the profession as well as to all other interested groups including parents, local authorities and the Scottish Executive.

Earlier this year, the heads of deaf education services and schools across Scotland (part of the Heads of Services Forum), BATOD and

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# otland (ADPS ) - project update

ADPS collaborated in collecting information direct from teachers themselves. The three organisations designed the questionnaire. ADPS then took on the jobs of sending them out; collecting them in and designing a database. We hope to have the findings from the survey available in September 2003. Further information will be available in future newsletters.

## **Funding**

It is very encouraging that the Scottish Executive have recognised the importance of researching deaf children's educational achievement by funding the ADPS. Our present grant is due to run out at the end of March 2004. **We hope that the Scottish Executive will continue to fund our work**, as the annual tracking of changes over time is the most uniquely valuable aspect of the survey.

If you would like further information the ADPS team welcome comments and enquiries.

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## ADPS: Interview with Deaf Pupils



Claire Leiper

My role is to interview deaf pupils on their views and experiences of school. I then have to collate and analyse the results. This will give us ideas on how the statistical results of how deaf pupils are doing in school compare with the experiences of deaf pupils. I will also be involved with the ProDeaf working group (profiling deaf pupils) and their database, making sure that the deaf pupils' views are included in the development of the database.

I arrange interviews with deaf pupils at their home or at school and videotape and audiotape the event (with parental permission). I ask them questions related to school, what it's like for them, the subjects they take, exams, other achievements out of school. It takes up to an hour, sometimes less, to do an interview. I use a qualified sign language interpreter to voice-over my signed questions and

to sign back to me the pupil's spoken answers. In the case of interviews with deaf pupils who use sign language, the interpreter gives an spoken English interpretation of the whole signed interview on audiotape. It's quicker to have an audiotape transcribed by a trained audiotypist than to transcribe it from the videotape. The videotaping has proved valuable however, as occasionally it is not possible to transcribe an audiotape, for one reason or another, so it is a good back-up tool. I can also use it to take into account body language, gestures and facial expressions when I'm checking transcripts against the videotape for accuracy and add this non-verbal information to the transcript as necessary so it makes sense.

I've interviewed 14 pupils so far. The transcripts from these interviews are being analysed along with write-ups of the interviews. I will be doing more interviews in August/September and will also be setting up focus groups with deaf former pupils at colleges and universities.

It's been a long process (I started in October last year). I had a lot of background reading to do as preparation for the actual work of interviewing the pupils. This gave me a good basis for preparing the questions to ask them (not just

anything!) When it comes to arranging the interviews, a significant problem is being able to get interpreters for the interviews. They are very much in demand, so they have to be booked well in advance, up to 3 or 4 weeks at least. However, it's going well at the moment. I'm enjoying it, especially meeting the pupils. It's not easy giving your opinions to someone you don't know, on videotape, but it will lead to better understanding of deaf pupils' experiences at school in general and how it affects their achievements. So I'm grateful to those who agreed to be interviewed.

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