

For Immediate Release (3 December 2020)

nasen responds to Ofsted's Annual Report

nasen, a charitable membership organisation that supports and champions those working with, and for, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and learning differences, and host of Whole School SEND, has today responded to the *Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2019/20*.

Professor Adam Boddison, CEO of nasen and Chair of Whole School SEND, said: "We welcome Ofsted's ongoing commitment to ensuring that children and young people with SEND receive a quality education. The key focus on SEND provision and support in this year's annual report is no surprise given the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated pre-existing challenges for children and young people with SEND, their families and the workforce that supports them.

"In England alone, there are over 1.3 million children with SEND¹ – that's 15.5% of all pupils. Schools and settings are under increased pressure to not only support and identify children and young people with SEND, but to also support those who are experiencing developmental gaps or social and emotional challenges as a result of the pandemic. It is critical that there is sufficient support in place to ensure that early identification is prioritised and that those with less complex SEND needs don't slip through the net. Over 1 million children (80%) require help at the SEN support level and I hope that this will be a key priority in the government's forthcoming SEND Review.

"The report highlights a long-standing concern shared by nasen around accountability in SEND and a lack of clarity over who is responsible for this. The SEND Code of Practice is very clear that every teacher is a teacher of children and young people with SEND and in order to realise this, we need every leader to be a leader of SEND. This will allow SEND to be prioritised at all levels from the classroom to the board room and paves the way for meaningful coproduction and child-centred provision. Fundamentally if we get high quality universal provision right for those children and young people with SEND, we get it right for all children."

The Ofsted Annual Report included a significant focus on the provision of special education needs and disabilities (SEND) in mainstream schools and settings, special schools and alternative provision and reviewed the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on children and young people with SEND.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2020>

Boddison continues: “The Annual Report positions the importance of early reading and phonics as the foundation for later success. Whilst nasen recognises that a structured phonics programme will work for many children, it is not always right for all. We must empower and trust teachers to identify the right interventions to support children with SEND as they understand their pupils’ particular needs best.

“We remain concerned that a disproportionate number of children will start 2021 with social, emotional and mental health needs and social interaction challenges. In addition to supporting our children and young people, we must also recognise and support the mental health and wellbeing needs of our education workforce who are dealing with increased stress and new ways of working. In many therapeutic roles in health and social care, there are arrangements in place to routinely support workforce wellbeing. Following this extended period of national challenge, a similar arrangement could be explored in education.

“At nasen, we are committed to ensuring that our expertise in SEND is available to every school and setting in the UK, which is why from January 2021 our membership will be free for all individuals across the UK.

“It is more important now than ever before that we work collaboratively, share good practice across mainstream, special schools and specialist settings alongside bringing powerful partnerships to fruition that can help all children and young people, particularly those with SEND, to learn and thrive regardless of their background or need.”

nasen leads targeted programmes and projects to deliver widespread improvements, offers a structured programme of professional development, accredited training and conferences as well as a package of paid-for SEND services throughout the UK and internationally.

nasen also hosts the Whole School SEND Consortium, which brings together schools, organisations and individuals who are committed to ensuring that every child and young person with SEND can achieve their potential at school.

A wide range of free resources, information and support are available from nasen and Whole School SEND to support schools, settings and local authorities, including:

- nasen information, research and resources including free webinars on how [SENCOs can respond to COVID and transition back to school](#) and the [identification of SEN following the pandemic](#) alongside [nasen’s Resilience Development Pack](#) featuring practical activities and guidance for families and practitioners in the early years.

In addition, case studies are available sharing [difference approaches to annual reviews in the current COVID-19 landscape](#) and [nasen’s Identifying SEN in the early years report](#), authored by Dr Helen Curran. Additional resources can be found at nasen.org.uk/resource-listing.html

- [Whole School SEND bank of resources](#) including the COVID-19 SEN Review Guide, advice on returning to school after a significant period of absence and condition specific videos. Additional information is available on the [Whole School SEND YouTube channel](#).
- Findings from the [National SENCO Workforce Survey](#) – the 2020 survey results are being published by nasen and Bath Spa University in January 2021.

To find out more about nasen and the Whole School SEND Consortium, please visit: www.nasen.org.uk and www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send/

Further Information

For further information or to speak to Professor Adam Boddison, please contact Lisa Church and Laura Smith at lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk / 07467945661 and lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk / 07467945848.

Notes to Editors

- nasen is the National Association for Special Educational Needs – a charitable organisation that exists to support and champion those working with, and for, children and young people with SEND and learning differences
- nasen seeks to ensure that all education practitioners across early years, schools, post-16 and wider settings are given the information and support required so that children and young people, particularly those with SEND and learning differences, can thrive
- From SENCOs to senior leaders, teachers to TAs, local authorities to leadership boards and beyond, nasen works to ensure that every part of the education workforce is equipped to understand, identify and support those with SEND and learning differences
- For almost 30 years nasen has worked in partnership with over 25,000 education practitioners across 7,000 schools and settings and are committed to ensuring that their expertise in SEND is available to every school and setting in the UK
- Rooted in research and evidence-informed best practice, nasen provides free resources and support while offering structured programmes of professional development, accredited training and conferences as well as a package of SEND services throughout the UK and internationally
- Their work spans the delivery of international programmes of support through to direct, ‘on the ground’ engagement with schools and settings in the UK through the DfE-funded, Whole School SEND consortium and wider project and programmes
- For further information, visit www.nasen.org.uk
- Follow nasen on Twitter @nasen_org, Facebook @nasen.org or LinkedIn @the-national-association-for-special-educational-needs-nasen