

# Lamb Inquiry

Special educational needs and parental confidence

**Special Educational Consortium, RNID, 19-23 Featherstone Street,  
London EC1Y 8SL**

Rt Hon Ed Balls MP  
Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT

September 25<sup>th</sup> 2009

Dear Ed,

I met with Sir Alan Steer last week as part of our respective interests in behaviour, SEN and disability. We had a most productive meeting and found, as when we have met before, that we are very much of one mind on the way that behaviour interacts with SEN and disability.

I understand that he expects that the Department will shortly be launching a new behaviour strategy to implement his series of reports, along with statutory guidance on behaviour partnerships. Alan and I are both clear about the importance of early intervention and of identifying the learning difficulties that often underlie behaviour difficulties. Alan's February report, in particular, emphasised the SEN and disability issues that can get tangled with disciplinary systems in schools and, ultimately, exclusions from school. I am also very conscious of the latest figures from the Department showing that pupils with SEN are eight times as likely as their peers to be excluded.

It is my view that this needs to be addressed urgently and we should ensure that these issues are integrated with the Department's overall approach to behaviour issues. I am therefore concerned to make sure that requirements on SEN and disability are firmly embedded in the strategy and any statutory guidance to implement Alan's recommendations for the Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships. Further I want to ask for your assurance that part of the remit of the Partnerships will be to identify and work with others to reduce the over-representation of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs in exclusions from school.

I look forward to sending you my final report in October. I am still receiving evidence that I want to take into account in my report. I have now received the report on the local authority learning from the eight Lamb projects. This provides useful insights into how local authorities working with parents can improve parental confidence in the system of assessment and provision at both the statutory and pre-statutory stages. Local authorities have worked closely with parents and involved them in a range of different ways. In one of the projects, parents were trained and are now centrally involved in the decision-making process at the statutory stages. The transparency and openness of the procedures are crucial to parents' confidence in the system. I want to endorse the recommendation in the national study and recommend further pilots to include a range of ways in which parents can have easier access to assessment and confidence in the independence of the advice offered.

With best wishes,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Lamb".

Brian Lamb OBE