Children with SEN Are More Psychologically Stressed

Between 18 and 27 per cent of children with SEN have 'high' or 'very high' psychological difficulties scores compared to between 11 and 13 per cent of children without SEN. A main aspect of this data is peer interaction, where children with SEN reported having much greater peer relationship problems, according to a report by the National Pupil Database.

A high 27 per cent of SEN pupils reported having peer relationship issues; they also reported being bullied by non-SEN students.

A second part of the census, called 'Understanding Society' looked at the social wellbeing of children with SEN. It had more positive results aspects. Children with SEN have similar levels of unhappiness to children without SEN regarding their appearance, their family and life as a whole.

The big differences come only when we look at the results from the classroom.

A different study carried out by the City University of London and the DfE titled the 'Wellbeing of Secondary Age School Pupils with SEN' showed very similar results

Children with SEN have similar levels of unhappiness to children without SEN regarding their appearance, their family and life as a whole, but there were differences when looking at other areas of their lives, particularly those to do with school.

Children with SEN are more likely than children without SEN to be indifferent) about:

- the school they go to (19 per cent compared to 7 per cent)
- their school work (13 per cent of children with SEN compared to 6 per cent of children without SEN),
- their friends (8 per cent compared to 4 per cent), and
- their life as a whole (17 per cent compared to 11 per cent)

The biggest differences between children with and without SEN being 'unhappy' are for their views on their school and their school work.

Talents of children with poor verbal skills overlooked

Learners with high spatial abilities, who tend to think initially in images before converting them into words, can excel in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. However, if these learners also have poor verbal reasoning skills, this can have a detrimental effect on their exam scores and subsequent careers, according to a report by testing company GL Assessment.

The analysis of more than 20,000 pupils, conducted by GL Assessment, has revealed that well over four-fifths of children who had both high spatial and high verbal reasoning abilities achieved A*-B across all STEM subjects and English at GCSE last year. But children with high spatial abilities and poor verbal reasoning skills – approximately 4 per cent of the school population or 30,000 at GCSE level – significantly underperformed.

The gap in exam performance is not confined to English or the humanities. There is also a significant, if less pronounced, divergence in maths and science subjects in which children with high spatial abilities tend to excel.

In last year's maths GCSE, for instance, 89 per cent of children with good spatial and verbal abilities achieved an A*-B. Conversely, only 52 per cent of those with high spatial abilities but poor verbal skills achieved the same, a 37 percentage-point difference.

Exclusions gathering momentum

The rate of exclusions seems to be gathering speed according to data from the DfE and the TES.

In the year 2015/16 6,700 children were excluded permanently by schools according to the annual report from the DfE . This is an increase of almost 1000 over the previous year – up from 5,795 in 2014/15 to 6,685 – which is the equivalent of 35.2 exclusions a day, up from an average of 30.5.

The number of temporary or fixed-period exclusions has gone up from almost 303,000 last year to just under 340,000, with increases in both primary and secondary schools.

There was an increase in the proportion of children temporarily excluded in every age group other than among 17-year-olds. However, the rate of exclusion among those aged four and under grew at a faster rate than any other age category, rising from 2,350 in 2014-15 to 3,035 last year.

The DfE Figures show that almost 25,000 children aged seven or under were temporarily excluded from primary school in 2015/16. More than 15,000 fixed-period exclusions in primary school were for physical assault against an adult. The average length of a fixed suspension was 2.2 days.

A survey from the TES suggests that rates of permanent exclusions this year are seriously outpacing these figures, with 12 responding authorities suggesting rates have doubled in the year 2016/2017. One local authority, Slough, reported a 340 per cent increase.

Some of the causes pinpointed in the survey are the likelihood of academies expelling more pupils after a change of status, a loss of support staff and growing disengagement with a narrowing EBacc focused curriculum.

However, little explanation has been offered for the very rapid rise in children under 7 being permanently and temporarily excluded and the large number of physical assaults being given as the main cause of this.

Left-handedness still causing disadvantage

A former Conservative minister has joined with campaigners to severely criticise the government for its failure to act over the developmental delay arising out of left-handedness.

Sir Peter Luff has written to education ministers saying it was “bewildering” that successive governments had failed to address it and conduct greater research into it and provide specialist training for teachers.

Yet a study by researchers at Bristol University, one of many, founded that left handed children scored, on average, lower in IQ tests.

Mark Stewart , a specialist in the field, pointed out that the government does not even record the numbers of children who are left handed and has no idea about their educational achievement, even though studies have shown that as soon as these children are asked to learn to write they fall behind and a cycle of low self esteem and under-achievement can set in.