

Bolton Data for Inclusion

The Action Research Centre for Inclusion

(Sponsored by: The Barrow Cadbury Trust)

at

Bolton Institute of Higher Education.

Data No 26 :

July 1999

Author(s) :

Lynne Elwell

Title :

The Friendly School for All Children

Abstract :

These are the author's thoughts on how a school should be used to enable all children to enjoy their time spent in education.

For further information contact:

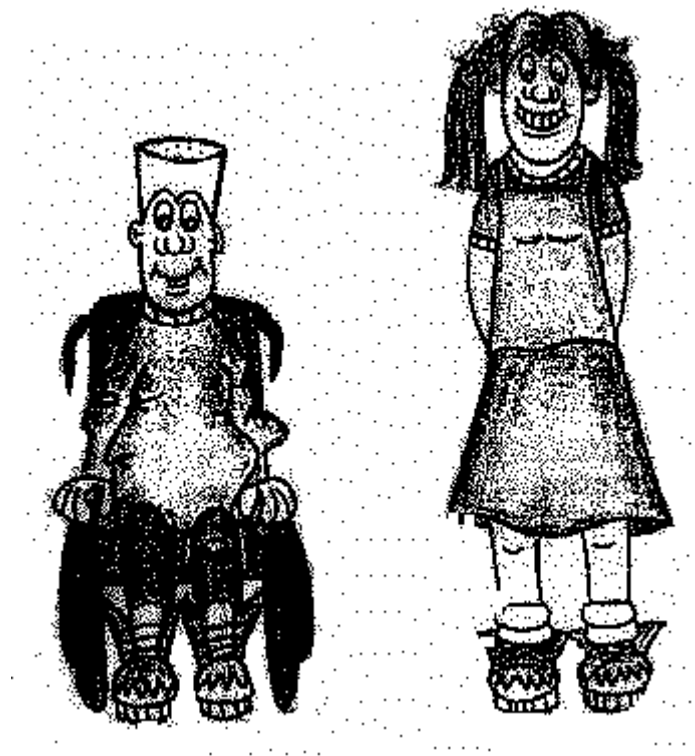
Karen Barton (k.barton@bolton.ac.uk), Bolton Institute, Chadwick Street, Bolton, BL2 1JW, England

The Friendly School - for ALL Children

The Friendly School

Written by Lynne Elwell

For ALL Children



The Friendly School - for ALL Children

What does a Friendly School need to know?

A Friendly School would need to know that all children are:

Unique - a one off - one and only - nobody else is quite like you.

And that, everyone has something special about them, something that they are good at - and that is what makes a Friendly School a better place to be.

Children are good at:

- smiling
- playing
- helping each other
- being in a bad mood
- talking
- listening
- singing
- dancing
- being a good friend
- being together
- being alone

And lots of other things.

What are you good at?

Remember - Nobody is good at everything we all need to get help sometimes, we can ask a friend - teacher or someone you know can help (like a good speller).

The Friendly School - for ALL Children

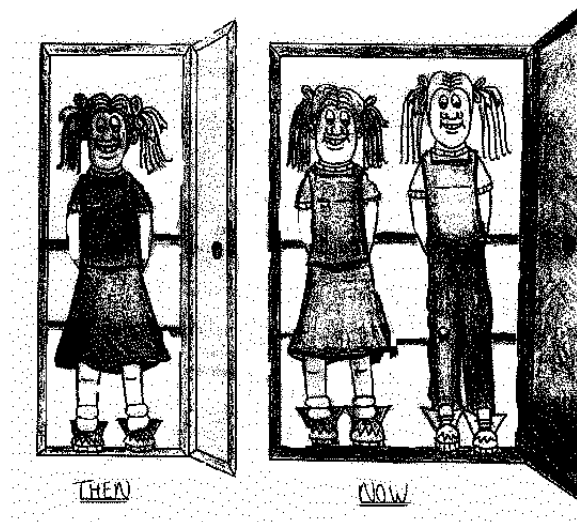
It's not always easy to ask for help, so one of the things we all need to do is to be watchful we need to look out for each other, so that when someone needs help, and it's something we can help with, we are ready.

A Friendly School would have:

Wide Doors

These are useful for lots of things –

- Walking through together with a friend
- If you use a wheelchair
- Getting a big cupboard into the classroom
- If someone wanted to bring their pet elephant into class

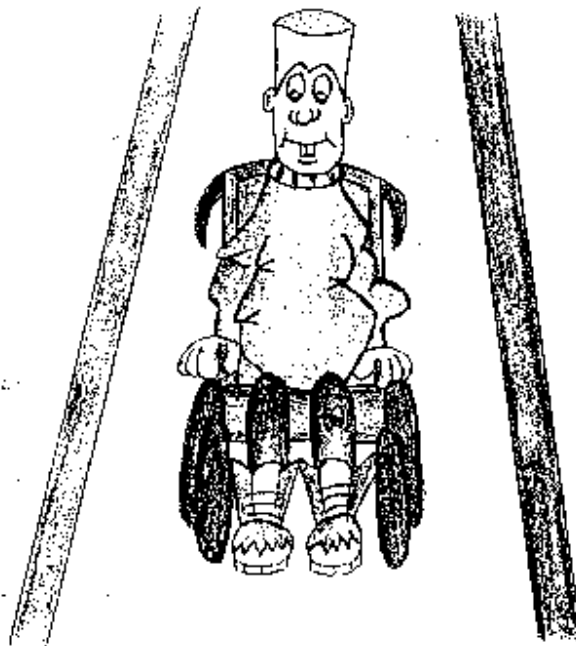


A Friendly School would have:

Ramps

These are better than steps for lots of people -

- People who like playing games like marbles or P.O.G.s.
- For younger brother's and sister's, who need a pram or buggy.
- For people who can't walk up steps.
- For getting things into school that are too heavy to carry.
- For teachers who like to roller skate.



A Friendly School would know:

That there are lots of different ways to communicate

Not just using words:

The Friendly School - for ALL Children

- Friendly school might have a bell or a buzzer for break and home time, but it will also have *Flashing lights* these are useful for:
 - Children who don't hear very well
 - Children who are talking and might miss the bell
 - Teachers who forget to take their personal stereo's off.

Other ways to communicate are:

- Using your face to let people know how you feel instead of words, smile - frown - look surprised.
- Using your hands to give information, instead of words, wave goodbye or hello - blow a kiss - (mime) swimming- driving a car.
- Using touch instead of words, children who can't see need to feel, a hug is nice when your feeling sad, you can push someone away if you are felling in a bad mood.

Can you think of other ways to communicate without words?

A Friendly School would know that:

Children need lots of different things to help them
learn and enjoy school

These are just some of the things:

Words! Pictures! Fun!

To be quiet (sometimes)

A lift (if the school has more than one floor)

Time alone (in the class room or dining room)!

The Friendly School - for ALL Children

Interesting things to feel and smell!

Friends!

A lower hook to put coats and bag on!

A pet frog waiting for you at home!

A nice teacher - who likes children!

To play fight (sometimes)

To be forgiven if you make a mistake and upset someone!

Encouragement to try things that are scary!

Can you think of the things that help you - and make you happy at school?

A Friendly School would have some classrooms that could change.

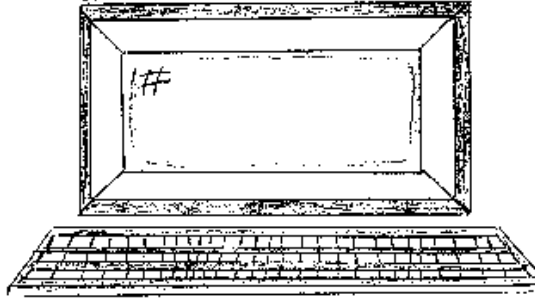
A classroom where children could:

- Work in one big group
- Move the table and chairs around
- Work in pairs or small groups.

A Classroom that could have private places:

- For children who want to work alone - *Quietly ssh!*
- For children who might need to use computers!
- For teachers who like to play hide and seek!

The Friendly School - for ALL Children



What would you do to change things in your classroom?

Things that stop School being Friendly:

- Narrow doors and steps that stop some children getting into school.
- If no-one will be your friend.
- If no-one understands you because:
 - You don't use words to communicate
 - Your skin is a different colour.
 - Your family has different celebrations than Christmas or Birthdays.
 - You can't hear and people think you're stupid
 - You use a wheelchair instead of walking.
- You can't go to the same school as the other children in your street because you learn in a different way.
- You are unhappy at school because some children like hitting better than talking and being friends.
- There are no quiet places in school.
- Some of the grown-ups who work in your school don't like children.

All these things make children sad - what makes you feel sad at school, and what would make that better?