

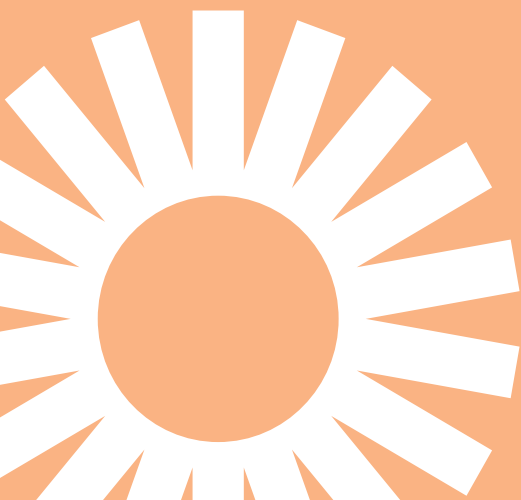


Inclusive education: What are the benefits?

Inclusive education has a range of advantages for all students. These benefits extend to life beyond school. The benefits for all students lead to long-term impacts which demonstrate that making education inclusive means we are setting up our children and young people for future success in a society that includes all.

“Even though my children don’t have any additional needs, they’ve seen the inclusion that the school promotes through their inclusive education in the classroom and with other students out in the playground. It’s just something that they observe, and they see occur very naturally. It’s something that they demonstrate every day and even when we are out in public, it’s something that carries on.”

— Karen, mother of two girls who attend an inclusive school



Benefits for students with a disability

The dignity of being included and accepted is an important outcome of inclusion for students with disability. Research shows that students with a disability also experience others benefits such as:

- significantly improved academic outcomes₁
- lower rates of bullying₂
- better reading comprehension and language skills₁
- greater chance of living independently₁
- higher levels of employment and higher wages after graduation.₁

Having equal access to education equips these students with a range of skills that have a significant impact on their lives. For students with a disability, inclusive education leads to better employment outcomes, an increase in further study and more independent living.

Benefits for students without a disability

There are a broad range of positive impacts that students without disability experience from learning in inclusive environments. Overall, evidence indicates that having students with varying needs in the same learning environment does not take away or negatively impact upon the education of students without disability, but it can improve their experience.

The benefits for students without a disability include:

- equal or better academic outcomes₁
- increased tolerance of others₁
- more effective communication skills₁
- warm and caring friendships₁
- increased self-esteem and sense of belonging.₁

In addition to these benefits, students without disability show stronger positive attitudes towards inclusion than their peers who learn in non-inclusive school environments.₂

Benefits for all students

True inclusion involves emphasising common ground while also respecting differences. The research on the impact of inclusive schools paints a picture of improvements in social, educational, emotional, and life

skills for all students.₁ There are many shared benefits that are experienced by all students including:

- reduced disruptive behaviours and fewer disciplinary referrals₂
- higher chance of enrolling in post-secondary education₂
- improved ability to both give and receive help₂
- improved patience and trust.₂

By building and supporting inclusion in schools, we are working both to minimise the exclusion that students with disabilities regularly experience and making the future a brighter and more welcoming one for children and young people with all different abilities and needs.

“As an educator of over 15 years, I’ve worked in many different settings and I can truly say that working in a school where inclusive practices are in place, we get to see the benefits for the whole school community. It’s not just for the students. It’s the staff, it’s the parents, it’s the wider community. We get to see that all children get to achieve their personal best at their level.”

— Melissa, Leading Teacher of Inclusive Practices (Primary school)

For more information about what inclusive education in schools means and how it works, see the other information sheets in this series including ‘Inclusive education: What is it?’ and ‘Inclusive education: What does it mean for you and your school?’.



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References

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