Submission from Mandy McCreadie

Attainment of school pupils with a sensory impairment inquiry

How to raise the educational outcomes for children who are Deaf, BSL users with no other support needs is very simple: Give them the same access to the National Curriculum as their hearing peers through British Sign Language

Suggestions on how to improve.....

1. Train and employ Deaf adults as mainstream teachers.
2. Reduce the number of ToDs and replace with BSL Interpreters / CSWs, so the subject teaching comes from the class teacher (who, after all, holds a degree in that subject)
3. Make it compulsory for all Teachers of the Deaf / CSW / Anyone who works with BSL users, to have MINIMUM level 3 BSL skills on commencing their job, and a legal requirement to improve to level 6 within a time frame. (Not “skills at an appropriate level” decided by the local council, as it currently is, and a 5yr timescale to get there. ToDs should not be allowed to work for 20 years at the minimum level required...which is level 1)
4. Quality assurance checks on staff working with BSL users to put a stop to sub-standard support for the children.
5. Ensure Tod/CSW level of BSL matches that of the subject...eg. Someone signing in a Higher subject must have level 6
6. Deaf awareness training for mainstream staff and pupils. The assumptions that Deaf BSL users will not understand or need extra tuition must stop.
7. BSL offered on the curriculum as a subject.
8. Regular training from Deaf adults for school staff and support staff.
9. Regular feedback from the kids to see if we are getting it right. Support them how they want to be supported.
10. Adopt a support model that works and promotes independence, and one which moves with the times. Deaf children with no other support needs do not need 1-1 teaching outwith the classroom.
11. Regular, subject specific, training for CSWs from someone at a higher BSL level.
12. Work with the SQA on providing subtitled video clips for use in the classroom, and examine exam arrangements for BSL users.

Mandy McCreadie. CSW and mum of a Deaf child.