

the Ministry has completed its research into this area, it will consider what further action may be required.

I acknowledge that children will achieve their best when they have access to skilled and well-trained classroom teachers. There are already opportunities in place for New Zealand teachers to gain skills in working with children with learning difficulties on an individual basis, and to reinforce these skills:

Practicing teachers have access to professional development opportunities that focus on effective literacy teaching, including intensive support delivered by regional School Support Services advisers, school participation in the National Literacy Professional Development Project and through the numerous Schooling Improvement projects across the country.

Teachers can also access additional support from Resource Teachers: Literacy and Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour. These professionals assist classroom teachers to develop strategies and approaches to meet individual students' needs. Resource Teachers: Literacy are specialist teachers who help school staff meet the needs of students in Years 0-8, including students with special education needs, with reading and writing difficulties. Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour may provide direct teaching, or demonstrate teaching strategies and behaviour management techniques. They provide learning programmes and behaviour management systems for teachers to use in their regular programmes to help individuals and groups of students.

Government is also providing further help to assist children with learning difficulties: Last year the government provided \$45 million to support literacy learning in schools, including specialist support for children experiencing reading and writing difficulties and will continue to prioritise support for this essential learning area. In addition, over \$126 million is used to resource schools with a range of services to support students with learning difficulties across a number of curriculum areas.

You may already have sought support for your son's educational support through these channels. If not, I would encourage you to discuss these options with your son's school.

Thank you for taking the time to bring your concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely



Hon Ruth Dyson
Minister for Disability Issues