

**Submission
No 13**

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO
STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS**

Name: Ms Kim Moran

Date received: 7/12/2009

7th November 2009

Attention: Mr. Ray Collins

C.C: Linda McNeil

Director of Catholic Schools

We are practicing Catholics in the Paterson region. My Children attended & attend catholic schools in the Maitland area. Timothy, 21yrs, Nicholas, 18yrs HSC, Sarah, 14yrs and Karley, 12yrs. They have attended St Vincent's then St Joseph's East Maitland going onto St Peter's & St Mary's. They are all academically high achievers representing the schools in sport, Public Speaking and Debating.

I am on the sacramental team that has been newly formed for 2011 year and completed season for growth/ stepping stones. I am registered with the CSO, working in local catholic primary schools. I have been employed as integration assistant (kinder) and integration assistant special needs. I have applied for many jobs with no success. I work in Pre- schools with special needs children as support teacher.

My Daughter Karley has Down Syndrome and has been successfully integrated into main stream schooling at St Joseph's East Maitland since Kindergarten. We started the process of High School around eight months ago. I visited all schools in the Maitland area. I had a few choices but our choice was St Peters or Maitland High. St Peters were going to give me approximately 26hrs per week, which is quiet generous but not in the correct setting for children with additional needs. After considerable deliberation and investigating we chose Maitland High. Maitland High has a Special Education unit which adequately supports children with additional needs. The core subjects are in the unit then the other subjects are integrated into main stream school. This is what Karley is used to. Mixing and learning with regular peers. Her peers are her role models and she has made supportive, caring loving friendships in the schools catholic environment. This is what we wanted for all of our children. It saddens, frustrates and angers me that there is nothing adequate for our children with special needs within the Catholic High schools that works effectively. I spoke to St Pius X at Adamstown they seem to have something

close to Maitland High; this could be available in all our Catholic High Schools. It should part of the principal's role in each High School to take this on board. They shouldn't have a choice. Ask the parents! I spoke to Jo Caster and Linder McNeil you know about my plea as I made an appointment with the Bishop expressing my concerns. Nobody wants to know about it as no one has been in touch with me. If this can't happen for Karley this year may be in the future. Having a unit would be more viable cost effective and more successful than full integration into classes in a high school setting. These children can't cope with the change in teachers every hour. They encounter 5 different teachers in 5 different class rooms this is really difficult for our children.

These children won't stop coming, because they were sent by God to teach us about acceptance and to accommodate their needs. They are a part of our Catholic family and it is not right to keep them out of the Catholic system by not being willing to support their needs. This sends a clear message that you don't want them, that you are not willing to move from your comfort zone to support families and children with special needs.

I am not the only parent and I won't be the last to encourage these issues to be addressed. I will push for this to happen and prove it is more viable. Why should Karley have to go!!! It's not fair. Karley now has to leave her comfort zone, which is a part of her everyday life

I want to meet with you to show how well this can work.

In faith,

Kim Moran