



Ms Liz Robillard
Via email

8 March 2010

Dear Ms Robillard,

Internal Review of handling of Freedom of Information Request

I am writing concerning your request for an internal review which was made in your emails to the Department dated 7 and 29 December, and 18 January.

You originally requested information on how many children sent to 'ABA' or 'CABAS' schools have been successfully transferred to mainstream schools from 1 January 1998 to 1 November 2009, referring to children who no longer need or never needed support after ABA home programmes or schools.

The Department has now completed its internal review process and has carried out a thorough review of the case. I chaired the internal review. I am the Deputy Director of Childcare Division in the Department and I had no involvement in dealing with your original request.

I am writing to inform you that the internal review has decided that your FOI request was handled properly and that you were correctly informed that the Department does not hold the information you requested.

As part of the Review, I have explored further why the department does not hold the information you requested, and it may be helpful if I set out here the reasons why the Department is unable to provide you with this information:

- the Department does not hold a record of how many ABA/CABAS schools there are. The Department is aware that there are ten or eleven schools which are in a mutual support group led by TreeHouse School in North London, but the Department has no record of the names of the schools or if there are other ABA/CABAS schools. TreeHouse is a non-maintained special school (NMSS). As we do not know which schools form part of its wider support group we do not know the status of those schools, but understand that at least some of them are independent schools;
- the School Census data which the Department collects only collects data, including data by type of special educational need, from maintained schools and NMSSs. As many ABA/CABAS schools are likely to be independent, the Department would not have data on their pupils;
- through the Unique Pupil Number (UPN) we would only be able to tell if a child in a maintained school or NMSS had transferred from one such school

to another, but not if they had transferred from one independent school to another, or from an independent school to the state sector, as children in independent schools (and home educated children) do not have a UPN;

- the School Census data would not show what interventions had been made for a child before he or she had arrived at a mainstream school or whether the child is receiving support.

I hope this additional explanation is helpful.

If you are unhappy with this decision, you have the right to appeal directly to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Case Reception Unit
Customer Service Team
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Further information about the Information Commissioner's complaints procedure can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website:

http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints/freedom_of_information.aspx

Yours sincerely



David Fitzgerald
Deputy Director
Childcare Division