



UCL Centre for Inclusive Education - CIE

Impact Report 2024/25

A year of Engagement

The first year of our new five-year strategic plan laid the essential groundwork for the UCL Centre for Inclusive Education. We established a clear strategic direction, forged robust partnerships, and built advisory and strategic capacity structures to support our long-term vision.

Year two marked a shift toward **Engagement** - a year defined by meaningful connections. We are proud of the relationships we've cultivated with policymakers, families, practitioners, researchers, and individuals with lived experience of special educational needs and disabilities. These collaborations reflect our deep commitment to inclusive practice and social justice.

This report highlights just a selection of those connections and the outcomes they are beginning to shape. It celebrates the recent achievements of our members and affiliates, and showcases a journey marked by growth, intellectual rigour, and increasing public engagement and sustainability.

We are deeply grateful to all who continue to work alongside us, co-creating research and knowledge that drives forward inclusion and equity in education. A special thank you to Zachary Walker, who has actively supported CIE's vision throughout his mandate as Head of Department, and a warm welcome to Amelia Roberts, our new Head of Department from January 2026.

I look forward to continuing this journey in the year ahead and beyond.



Dr Susana Castro-Kemp
Director of UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE)
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology and Human Development
UCL Institute of Education
Principal Investigator of [ScopeSEND](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[UCL Profile](#)

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The Centre

The [UCL Centre for Inclusive Education \(CIE\)](#) is a research and knowledge exchange hub within the Department of Psychology and Human Development at the UCL Institute of Education. Our work is driven by three core pillars: high-quality research, impactful knowledge exchange, and meaningful public engagement, all aimed at advancing inclusive education systems both nationally and internationally.

With 4 core members and over 30 affiliates and early career researchers, we produce and co-create research and professional development opportunities that inform policy and practice, with a strong commitment to social justice and equity for all individuals engaged in education. These values are central to our mission.

In 2023, we launched a five-year strategic plan outlining our goals and anticipated outcomes. The current report highlights the achievements from the second year of implementation of that strategy, celebrating the most significant contributions made by our members and affiliates.

Achievements



Our Director, [Susana Castro-Kemp](#) (Principal Investigator) and colleagues [Jo Van Herwegen](#), [Catherine Antalek](#), and Peter Kemp (King's College London), were awarded a £235,000 grant by the Nuffield Foundation to investigate international SEND policy systems - [ScopeSEND](#). This work is being carried out in partnership with the Centre for Education Systems.

The project began in 2024 and is scheduled to conclude in the Summer 2026. Despite being in its early stages, preliminary findings have already generated significant interest among policymakers both in the UK and abroad, as well as from media outlets. For example, Susana was personally invited to provide [oral evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee inquiry 'Solving the SEND Crisis'](#). The resulting [report](#) quotes and cites Susana's

research extensively. Susana was [interviewed for TES UK](#) (this article was in the top 5 most read, among over 200 articles on inclusion), and [Bloomberg](#), for example.

We look forward to celebrating the successful completion of this project in 2026 and seeing how it will impact the policy landscape in England.



[Leda Kamenopoulou](#), Inclusion Lead for the Department of Psychology and Human Development, is Principal Investigator for a UKRI-funded *Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF)* project titled *Collaborative Knowledge Exchange in Sensory Needs Education* (2025–2026, £5,000), a collaboration with The Seashell Trust that aims to bridge theory and practice in educating children with sensory and complex needs.

Leda is also Advisory Group Member for a major *European Research Council (ERC)* project, *New Insights into Language Processing and Change by Investigating Tactile Sign Language* (2025–2030, £1.5 million), contributing expert guidance to a groundbreaking study in linguistic change, which is led by UCL's Deafness, Cognition, and Language Research Centre.

Lastly, Leda is Co-Investigator on the international project *Growing Up & Being Deafblind*, funded by *Canadian Hearing Services' Global Partnerships for Research and Innovation* (2025–2027, \$100,000), with an additional \$50,000 awarded by the *Canadian Vision Research Network*. This project, which explores comparative case studies to identify enablers of inclusion for deafblind individuals in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, was recently highlighted in *Deafblind International's global video campaign* to raise awareness about research with the deafblind community.



[Joanna Kolak](#), our social media lead, completed her IOE Impact Fellowship, during which she co-created [a flyer for caregivers and educators](#) of preschool children, summarising her research on selecting and using high-quality educational apps. Joanna also led [a campaign](#) with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in London to promote and support bi- and multilingualism in Polish families living in the UK. The campaign produced a

range of resources, including podcasts, videos, booklets, articles, and social media content.

Joanna's [book](#) is a best-seller in Poland, having sold-out within a week of publication!

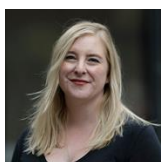


[Panos Rentzelas](#) received £5,000 from the Global Engagement Office for a research collaboration between TISS – Tata Institute of Social Sciences and UCL. He also received an additional award to host Lianne Dhalla. Lianne will be based in CIE, mentored by Panos, and her research will focus on developing a mental wellbeing intervention for secondary school pupils in India.

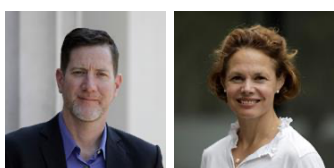


[Julie Dockrell](#) and [Chloe Marshall](#) published a [position paper](#) in the *Language Learning Journal*, detailing how and why Spoken Language must retain its essential place in the National Curriculum. This is particularly important in the absence of references to spoken language in the interim report of the UK Government's Curriculum and Assessment Review. This is a significant piece of work, directly addressing policy and a must read to all following the SEND and general education reforms.

Full citation: Dockrell, J. E., & Marshall, C. R. (2025). Positioning spoken language in the National Curriculum. *The Language Learning Journal*, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2025.2551605>.



[Catherine Antalek](#) led the series of Evidence Reviews commissioned by the Department for Education, with colleagues [Susana Castro-Kemp](#), Fiona Dixon, [Rosanne Esposito](#), [Jessica Hayton](#), [Elisabeth Herbert](#), [Leda Kamenopoulou](#), [Joanna Kolak](#), [Daisy Loyd](#), [Amelia Roberts](#), [Mel Romuladez](#), [Matt Sommerville](#), [Juhayna Taha](#) and Frances Tunks. The [final report](#) synthesises the latest and highest quality evidence-base for identification, assessment and support for SEND provision. An example of true partnership and outstanding teamwork!



[Zachary Walker](#) and [Daisy Loyd](#) are evolving their work focused on strengthening inclusive education practices in different contexts around the world. With the support of IOE International Funds, Daisy visited Aksaray University in Türkiye in March 2025 to talk to students and staff in the Faculty of Education about inclusive education practices in higher education contexts and carry out a focused study with staff and students. Daisy and Zachary will return to Aksaray in October 2025 to share findings from the study and provide targeted professional development.



Daisy and Zachary visited the University of Pretoria in South Africa in April 2025 with the support of UCL's Africa and Middle East Teaching Fund Initiative. They presented to faculty in the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication and started research with special education teachers across four provinces of South Africa about educating learners with disabilities. They also provided training to doctoral students on academic writing and gaining consent from students with disabilities to participate in research.



Zachary and Daisy were delighted to welcome research partners from UAE University in the United Arab Emirates and Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to CIE's [LICIE conference](#).

To find out more about this work or to explore becoming a collaborative partner, please contact Daisy Loyd: d.loyd@ucl.ac.uk

These are only some of our most recent achievements. Our members are world leading researchers and outstanding experts in their field. Follow our updates on our [website](#) to discover more, engage in our events and short courses, all curated by our expert team.

London International Conference on Inclusive Education - LICIE

In 2025 we reached a milestone: we delivered a key element of our strategic plan - the first edition of the [London International Conference on Inclusive Education](#), with over 300 delegates from all continents and 36 countries. With outstanding feedback, we are proud to have created the LICIE brand, a yearly event where we host colleagues from all over the world with expertise, interest and/or lived experience to discuss inclusive education issues, broadly conceptualised.

We had keynotes from Prof Kenneth Poon, Prof Marcela Pozas, Prof Julie Dockrell, Prof Jo Van Herwegen, Prof Rune Simeonsson and Annamarie Hassal MBE. Thank you to our keynote speakers for sharing their time and expertise.

Watch the LICIE experience on our [website](#).



Here is some of the feedback we received:

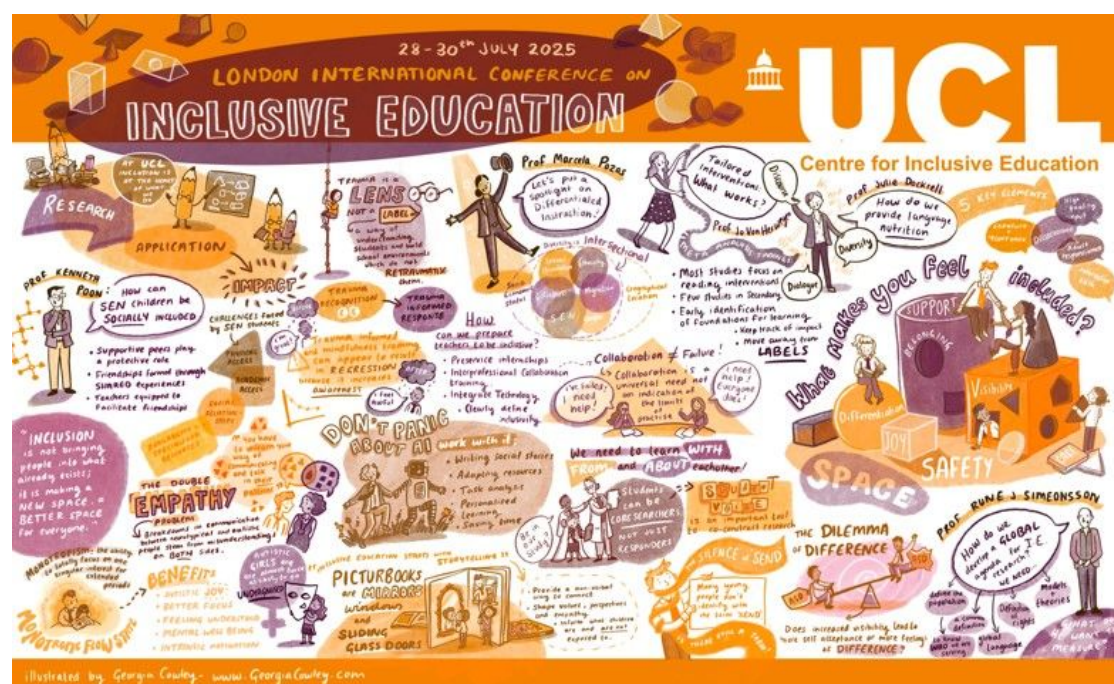
'This is the best conference I have ever attended in years, I have connected to new colleagues more than ever before.'

'Everything was so fantastic. Excellent keynotes and great sessions with so much input. A very inspiring conference! It was a pleasure to be a part of it.'

'Overall content was of really high quality and super interesting'

'An amazing event - wonderful people, fascinating work, created a great sense of belonging throughout and sparked lots of conversations and potential opportunities.'

Thank you to [Georgia Cowley](#), for illustrating our LICIE experience!



All our members played a key role to delivering this event and we could not be prouder of the outcome.

Preparations for [LICIE 2026](#) are already well under way!

Our Courses and research talks

We continue enhancing our [Developing Quality Inclusive Practice \(DQIP\)](#) suite of online course, distributed internationally. These courses cover specific types of special educational needs and disabilities, and inclusive practice and approaches more generally, and are developed by our expert members and affiliates. Research informed, recent and highly interactive, these courses provide a rounded basis for anyone looking to deep dive on inclusive education issues.

We have free and low-fee research webinars every term, with growing international attendance – now c. 100 registrations per talk. Follow our [website](#) for updates. These are delivered by experts from UCL and from all over the world and cover the most discussed topics around inclusive education.

If you wish to be part of our mailing list or access our courses, please email inclusive.education@ucl.ac.uk.

Next Steps

Next year marks a milestone, as we will be reporting on our 3-year strategic goals. As the policy landscape in Education is expected to shift considerably over the next few months in England, we expect that our continuous engagement with policy makers at national level will lead to further impact results of significance.

We will continue reporting on engagement with our research talks and events, and in particular we look forward to showcase the growth of our London International Conference on Inclusive Education – LICIE.

Inclusive.education@ucl.ac.uk